



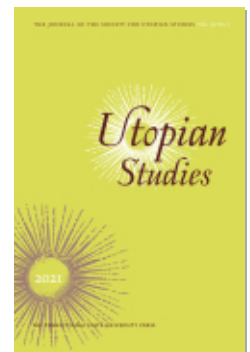
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Enacting Utopia: Utopia's Investment in Canada's Land and
Its Settlement-Building Past

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Enacting Utopia: Utopia's Investment in Canada's Land and Its Settlement-Building Past

Beth Moore Milroy

ABSTRACT

Land is essential to actually built utopias. Literature regarding built utopias pays next to no attention to the land under them or how it was obtained. Currently Canada's national conversation increasingly pivots around colonization by Europeans and the still unresolved takeover of lands of long-resident Indigenous peoples. The article's objective is to explore a present-centered approach to studying built utopias for its potential to explain how a Eurocentric conception of utopia was invested in the land. The approach draws on James Holstun's 1987 study of Puritan utopias to analyze the circumstances utopists encountered contemporaneously with building and maintaining settlements. The test case of 7,000 Mennonite biblical pacifists left detailed information about how actualized utopia works. The expectation is that research from many such past concrete experiences could astutely and practically inform the next inevitably land-related utopian vision, which, it seems, will be ecologically inspired.

KEYWORDS: *Canada's colonization, utopian settlements, land, Mennonites, Indigenous peoples*

Introduction

This article is about actually built utopian settlements in Canada. While over 500 such settlements were built between the seventeenth and mid-twentieth centuries, there are no comprehensive surveys of them similar, for instance, to the encyclopedia of American settlements compiled by Timothy Miller or works of this kind by others. A few compendia exist highlighting selected built utopias in regions of the country as well as a number of individual settlement biographies in monographs, theses, and articles.¹ By and large, however, Canada's experience in this area is barely explored or explained. That may signal a lack of appetite for any works about these particular kinds of settlements. Or, disinterest may be because treatment of such settlements has so far been narrowly focused on utopianism and left largely unconnected to the broader development of the country. Whatever the explanation, these putative utopian settlements are orphans of mainstream Canadian settlement history. Their era is over; an ecologically inspired utopian image is now part of contemporary cultural dialogue. However, examining how utopia was deployed as a cultural concept to claim land and redefine its meaning during their era could yield useful lessons for the future.

A premise of this research is that utopia, a concept common to the cultures of Canada's French and British colonizers, contributed to the country's land development and settlement-building prior to 1945. The aim of the overall research project is to investigate instances where that Eurocentric conceptualization of utopia resulted in investment in building utopian settlements. This is not to attribute agency to the concept of utopia itself but rather to the people who use the concept rhetorically to persuade others to invest, or take a stake, in a material or spiritual project that holds promise of a future reward.

The article's examination of utopia's investment in land follows the experience of one group who built over 100 clustered, closed villages. The settlements were built in the province of Manitoba by about 7,000 Mennonites who began arriving in 1874. This group became known as "the Kanadier" to distinguish them from several other waves of their co-religionists who moved to Canada over the centuries. They had been living in southern Russia where their ancestors had settled in the eighteenth century to escape religious persecution. They have been called biblical utopians. A century later when these Mennonites again feared persecution for their pacifist beliefs

Canada gave them land for their exclusive use, land that was traditionally used by First Nations and Métis peoples. There they built villages very like those they had lived in in Russia.

The objective of this article is to explore a present-centered approach to studying built utopias for its potential to explain in detail how a Eurocentric conception of utopia was invested in the land. “Present-centered” is described in a moment.

Relevance of Land

Such a seemingly obscure case as the Kanadier might look irrelevant today. However, a shift in Canada’s cultural dialogue is reason to pay attention to it. The national conversation increasingly pivots around the country’s founding problematic: colonization. A key element of colonization was Europeans taking over lands and resources of long-resident Indigenous peoples.² As a result, these peoples were frequently displaced and their cultures erased, or nearly so. Disastrous policies piled harm upon harm, propelling Indigenous peoples into disarray.³ Some of the utopian settlements built by European settlers occupied a great deal of land. For example, the Kanadier were granted approximately 900 square miles (2,300 square kilometers). Those settlements contributed to the cultural collision already well underway regarding who would control not only the land itself but the meaning of land. Left inadequately addressed in previous centuries, these issues are front and center in today’s public discussions.

The widely diverging cosmologies of Indigenous peoples and settlers have been an issue since contact. Overly simplifying, the heart of the matter is that their worldviews rest on fundamentally different creation stories of how planet Earth and everything associated with it came into being. Flowing from each are constituent belief systems shaping social, economic, and legal practices for inhabiting this physical world. Their incommensurability is starkly illustrated in depictions of the Euro-Christian cosmology as linear and the Indigenous as circular.⁴ Linearity is manifested spatially as a hierarchy topped by a single, all-powerful God as creator and, just beneath, human beings who command all the rest of creation, answering only to their God for how they do this. In that narrative, people are encouraged to transform the physical world provided by God however they see fit.⁵ Land and whatever lives on, under, or over it are resources for human projects. Linearity also applies to time, as progressive forward movement, without feedback loops.

By contrast, Indigenous societies in Canada have traditionally tended to believe the physical universe was created by many creators, and that all the elements of the universe, human and nonhuman, have spirits that must be treated with respect. All are intertwined; no one portion is self-sufficient or complete in itself. Feedback loops are a central feature. Gift reciprocity systems reinforce recognition of and respect for the elements of the universe and their interdependence. For example, the deer, in being killed to provide food and clothing, must be thanked and respected by those who kill it for giving the gift of sustenance. Indigenous peoples' image of land in this narrative refers to "not only the ground that supports their feet" but also includes "waters, plants, animals, fish, birds, air, seasons,—all the beings, elements and processes encompassed by the term 'biosphere.'"⁶ Entirely different attitudes and practices regarding land flow from the linear and circular starting points, and these will be seen in the case to be described. Despite some modifications to these views in the last decades, the country's vision of land, and relationships to it, remains contentious.⁷

For built utopias, land is a *sine qua non*. In this regard they are unlike utopias that forever remain on pages as dreams or hopes. Utopists who aspire to literally build their ideas must necessarily acquire land (or some form of real estate) and interact in some manner with owners, users, and officials of the jurisdiction in which the land is situated. Information is all but absent in the literature regarding the land under built utopian settlements. For example, Lyman Tower Sargent said in his review of Timothy Miller's encyclopedia mentioned earlier that he was surprised by the huge quantity of land taken up by the 2,500–3,000 intentional communities in the United States. He also wondered how the land had been financed, and why these thousands of settlements had not been mapped to show their location and density.⁸ My own informal review of two dozen compendia describing built utopias in Canada, the United States, and Australia found little data on how land for settlements was acquired and paid for, and no country-wide mapping. Land information is especially important for analyzing built utopias in the so-called new world. It's not that information is unavailable: the processes by which imperial powers, colonizer governments, and commercial agents took control of land, established ownership regimes, and transferred land to settlers have been and continue to be studied.⁹ It's that we who study utopian settlements do not appear to take much advantage of it.

This article presents an example of how land, settlement, and the European concept of utopia were linked and expressed in church and state policies and practices especially during the 1860s–1880s in Canada. It must be stressed that utopia was only one of several tools invoked by governments and churches in practices that transferred Canada's land to benefit settlers and disadvantage Indigenous peoples. A focus on utopia is by no means meant to obscure other tools used including those leading to starvation, forced schooling, duping, and much more. My aim here is to add evidence about the influence a cultural concept like utopia can have in the hands of powerful church and state institutions in a specific time and place.

Research Approach

The research approach used here was inspired by James Holstun's work on Puritan utopias.¹⁰ Holstun sought to escape the convention of focusing on a utopia's future, an approach that leapfrogs over its emergence (10–14). For him, the conventional approach begins from the *a priori* assumption that a utopia will create circumstances fundamentally opposite to the present—so, for example, if people are starving, their utopia will have ample food. An inversion is supposed whereby a bad is turned into its opposite, a good. He calls the emphasis on what a utopia will be like in its hunger-free future the “effacement of present-ness” (12), an inattention to the nonutopian conditions lying between the bad situation and its inversion.

My present-centered analysis focuses both on the complicated circumstances in which an actually built utopian settlement is created and its ongoing efforts to continue as a utopian entity. I use, first, Holstun's idea of conjunctural analysis in which nonutopian and utopian phenomena interact in the creation and maintenance of a utopian settlement. Before actually building, parties to the process will likely need to adjust their ideals, positions, policies, or conventional practices regarding both the land involved and how utopists and the surrounding population will relate to each other. Those adjustments feed into the utopian group's rhetoric and practices so that the resulting utopian settlement is partly contingent on its relationship with nonutopian phenomena.

Second, and again in the interests of a present-centered analysis, I have adopted Holstun's view of utopia as simultaneously comprising three elements: a textual form, a political rhetoric, and a social practice (14). This differs from

conventional thinking, including the popular separation of built from unbuilt utopias.¹¹ On the first element, textual form, Holstun argues that almost without exception a utopia has its roots in already existing models of governance found in texts whether Plato, the Bible, Thomas More, Robert Owen, or other sources—where “text” refers to a set of acquired ideas, myths, images, reasoned treatises, and the like that codify a group’s organizational principles. In the Puritan cases and the one presented here, denying the textual element would lead to misrepresenting how utopia works. As we will see in this case, an interpretation of a section of the Bible influenced practices. Then the practices became models of how to make real-life utopian experience work. In effect, the practices were converted to textual enunciations of idealized, real-life utopian experience.

Regarding the second element, utopia also engages political rhetoric: proponents look for an audience to convince to see matters in a certain way. Directed to adherents, this “instrumental discourse” (17) is fundamental to the very nature and existence of utopia. The third element, social practice, seeks to implement aims. Discipline in the group is facilitated by establishing ways to distinguish group members from others. These may take forms such as physical enclosure mechanisms, placement and orientation of settlement structures, children’s education, or other ways to keep people and institutions outside the settlement from influencing those within. The central argument of the triune thesis is that if utopia as a form of social practice is appealing enough to attract people’s support, then it does so in some measure by also resorting to rhetoric and, more often than not, to an existing utopian textual form as well.

This present-centered approach also seeks to account for the discontinuity inherent in utopia. No utopia lasts forever; it inevitably wears out. While a particular embodiment of utopia may dissemble, parts from it may continue, whether in an inverted form, or another effort at separateness, or by helping its core idea transition to a societal norm. However, the eventual decomposition of specific utopias happens, it cannot be taken as an “argument against their historical reality” (299). If they existed in historical reality it follows they are relevant to settlement history.

I ask about utopia’s investment in Canada’s land by applying Holstun’s present-centered elements—conjunctural analysis, the triune thesis, and discontinuity—to the Kanadier settlements. The discussion begins with the overarching context within which the settlements were built. Then the focus

narrows to the context of the 1870s when land was requested and offered within specific contemporaneous conditions. This is followed by a discussion of the enactment of a living utopia—its construction and maintenance and its subsequent discontinuity. The final section addresses findings from applying this present-centered research approach to the built utopia data.

Overarching Context

Territorial Occupancy

Before all else, one must acknowledge and respect the fact that the land that became Canada was occupied and in use by Indigenous peoples for millennia before Europeans arrived. Indigenous peoples of several origins ranged all over the continent. Practices flowing from their traditional worldviews sketched above dealt with a full range of societal concerns including leadership, governance, heredity, education of youth, medicine, death, burial, mourning, and celebration. These societies also developed trading and peace alliances, with associated protocols, for dealing with nations other than their own Indigenous group. They were complete societies with dynamic systems capable of continued change.¹²

Christianity + European Imperialism

Especially from the late fifteenth century both church and state, in their various configurations and for their respective reasons, ambitiously sought to bring more land, resources, and peoples into Christendom. Navigators sailing under the flag of a European dynasty claimed sovereignty over land they declared they had “discovered” in the name of that state. Indigenous peoples on those lands automatically became subjects of that state and subject to Christianization efforts by the Catholic Church and, later, in Canada, also by various Protestant denominations. These principles of discovery and conversion flowed from the Catholic Church’s fifteenth-century doctrine of discovery, and were loosely tied to the idea of *terra nullius*—that the land was unowned and thus able to be claimed.¹³ The land that became Canada was claimed piece by piece for kings, sometimes French, sometimes English. “Under this doctrine, imperialists could argue

the presence of Indigenous people did not void a claim of *terra nullius*, since the Indigenous people simply occupied, rather than owned, the land. True ownership, they claimed, could come only with European-style agriculture.”¹⁴

The case at hand is directly related to that history. Explorers for the king of England, acting on assumptions and practices circulating in 1668, claimed territory defined by the Hudson Bay drainage basin (almost 3.1 million square miles; nearly 8,000,000 square kilometers). It became known by two names: Rupert’s Land and the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) lands. Manitoba, where the Kanadier settled, was carved out of that land. Even though the doctrine of discovery has long been denounced by Catholic leaders, the effects of having applied its basic principle remain entrenched even today in laws and policies regarding sovereignty and land title. The country’s current national conversation includes, among other subjects, wrestling with the assumption that sovereignty over land claimed by the British or French under the doctrine of discovery has devolved over time exclusively to the Canadian state, thereby erasing Aboriginal title.¹⁵

It goes without saying both church and state changed greatly over the centuries as did their degree of influence. The French and British crowns each held sway over different territory and peoples at various times; Catholicism and Protestantism periodically gained and lost power relative to each other. However, while the institutions and their manifestations continuously evolved, they never completely disappeared or ceased to have competitive and cooperative relationships with each other. They created the powerful texts, policies, rhetoric, images, and practices resulting in population displacement on both sides of the Atlantic. Church and state influence derived from their ability to use those cultural devices to communicate their interests over enormous reaches of time and space, and to adapt their communications to suit new circumstances, backed by military power if necessary. They assuaged people’s fears and conveyed hope in ways that aligned with their separate or combined institutional interests.

Christian imperialism was itself regularly portrayed as necessary in order to realize utopia. The state’s utopian promise to all was wealth and opportunity by turning supposedly unused, unowned land into productive assets; the churches’ utopian promise was a happy afterlife of rest and reward in heaven for those who accepted the Christian God before death and, until then, lived lives obedient to the beliefs of institutionalized Christianity.

A Christo-imperialist Utopian Genre

“Christo-imperialist” describes a collection of putative utopian settlements in Canada dating from the seventeenth century. It denotes a utopian genre specific to a period and to the colonization of those lands. Holstun calls this type of genre “the product of a new encounter” between a body of texts and their subject matter—the displaced population. (34) The combined dominance of Christianity and imperial states in the context of colonization in Canada comprises a new set of ideas, or “texts,” with their own rhetoric and practices. It champions European civilization and culture, declaring them superior to those of Indigenous peoples. It justifies moving Indigenous peoples from their hereditary lands “for their own good” to lands chosen for them by settlers, converting them to Christianity, and educating them in European ways with the intention of making them disappear as distinct peoples. The name incorporates Christianity explicitly because its agents strongly influenced the cultural dialogue regarding settlement and utopia in which both Indigenous peoples and settlers participated. “Christo,” or having Christ as its center, also refers to Christendom, “the territory subject to God’s rule” which speaks to this article’s spatial foci—land, settlement, and built utopias. “Imperialist” serves to highlight the transfer of imperial culture to Canada, specifically the cultural use of utopia.¹⁶

A common Euro-Christian conceptualization of utopia is that it’s a good nonplace, a place that is not where you and I currently are, but somewhere else—whether now or in a potential future, and whether located metaphysically such as in heaven or physically such as in the Garden of Eden. After explorers gave up trying to find the actual place called Eden, utopia became what people themselves created with God’s guidance; or, still later, without it. This conceptualization of utopia was not indigenous to the peoples living on the land that became Canada. It arrived with Christian European governors, explorers, travelers, missionaries, and settlers as part of their cultural imagery. Indeed, Euro-Christian utopia was closed to unconverted and nonsedentary Indigenous peoples.

Utopian Aspirations Meet Contemporaneous Conditions

Utopian Aspirations of the Kanadier Mennonites

Mennonites are one of the groups to emerge in the sixteenth century out of the religious ferment that fragmented the Catholic Church of the Holy

Roman Empire. A combination of doctrinal- and poverty-based revolts led to the rise of new Protestant movements whose leaders included Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and others. At first, the new movements' goal was separation of religious and secular powers. However, in time their ideals softened, resulting in new church-state alliances. Meanwhile, more radical groups emerged with still greater determination to pursue the objective of church-state separation. One of those more radical groups became known as Anabaptists. Mennonites are counted among them along with Hutterites and Amish.

Anabaptists acquired the name because they choose to exercise the ritual of baptism in particular ways to reflect their beliefs about their relationship with their God. That relationship is direct and not to be mediated by the state. In this they differ from other Protestants and Catholics. Mennonites maintain the proper moment for baptism—when a person commits to being guided in life by their Christian God—is when he or she is old enough to fully understand this important step. Ordinarily, Catholics baptize infants soon after birth to deliver them into God's orbit as soon as possible, a practice most emerging Protestant sects adopted. But not Anabaptists.

To follow this dissenting belief about baptism through to its practical implications in the context of the post-Reformation period suggests that if baptism was a voluntary action governed by each religion, and if a significant proportion of a country's population did not elect to be formally baptized into state-sanctioned Christian religions, then the church-state nexus involving a long-established circle of allegiances underpinning Christian European states could be ruptured. Baptism into Catholicism bound the individual to the institution of Christianity. In turn, the church was bound to the state in its role as intermediary bringing God's word to secular leaders. By this arrangement secular leaders were accorded the "divine right of kings" to enact laws its subjects were obliged to obey. In this way, the state, legitimized by church sanction, could bring its power to bear on individuals in matters deemed of a moral nature. A primary obligation of male citizens at the time was to defend the state militarily. So, if individuals could refuse baptism into a state-sanctioned religion, and stand free from being delivered by a religious institution into state obligations, this could jeopardize a state's full military control over its territory. Typical thinking of the day was that this circle was logical and morally legitimate, and noncompliance was tantamount to sedition.

On the other hand, looked at from an Anabaptist position, their unmediated relationship with God was more than a principle handed down in a sacred

text: they meant to actualize it in everyday life. Their utopian figure is biblical, derived from interpreting Jesus's Sermon on the Mount as meaning to eschew coercion and practice nonresistance.¹⁷ For some, even involvement in politics and government was contrary to Jesus's teachings because political power was ultimately based on the threat of force.¹⁸ Therefore, their largely nonparticipation in the military or official government was a continuation of their Reformation activism against the church-state nexus. Because Anabaptism was not adopted anywhere as a state religion, Mennonites looked for places to live safe from persecution.

The Kanadier's ancestors had negotiated a *privilegium* in 1785 under the aegis of Catherine the Great of Russia.¹⁹ In essence they were granted land and certain privileges including exemption from military duty and from swearing an oath of allegiance to the head of state. They could also live in closed villages they administered themselves, causing no burden to the state. These privileges generated expectations, however: they were to be a stable presence on the land, making their living as farmers. This accorded with their self-image as "the quiet in the land" in the sense of managing their own affairs and not interfering in Russia's religious or secular matters. Their managed cluster of villages was referred to as the "Mennonite Commonwealth."²⁰

The Mennonites' nonscription privilege became divisive among Russians especially from the mid-1800s. Russia was challenged by the rise of Bismarck on its west, widespread struggles against autocratic governments that erupted in 1848 in Europe and spread eastward, and its defeat in the Crimean War.²¹ By the early 1870s the options for Russian Mennonites appeared to be: to migrate yet again in order to recreate a *privilegium* elsewhere; to stay in the region and try to reconstruct privileges there; or to revise how they understood their relationship to power and politics. Most believed it was still possible to renegotiate their privileges in Russia. Therefore, only about a third of the 50,000 Mennonites in southern Russia left.

The Canadian Government's Aspirations circa 1872

When the Kanadier first inquired about settling in Canada in 1872 the country's status within the British empire had changed from colony to self-governing dominion just five years earlier. Since the 1850s, Britain had considered ways to consolidate all its territories in North America. At the same time, Canada was keen to expand beyond the four provinces on the eastern side of

the country. Other British North American lands included: Rupert's Land mentioned above; the North-Western Territory stretching north and west of Rupert's Land to the Arctic Ocean as far as the Rocky Mountains and about equal in size to Rupert's Land; the Crown colony of British Columbia lying west of the Rockies; and Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland off the east coast. Associated issues included: how to hold this spread-out territory together given its persistent French/English language and Catholic/Protestant religious conflicts; how to incorporate the many Indigenous peoples living and working in Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory into the new country while also opening the land to European settlement; and how independent the country's tiny population realistically could be from either Britain or the United States despite what it might want. Debates about these issues generated homegrown economic and political elites who promoted various positions on how to expand the country and connect it politically and economically to other nations and external markets. Movements dubbed expansionist, imperialist, annexationist, and nationalist were formed, and political parties, newspapers and journals took up positions creating a vigorous debate on visions for the country.

Pressure to control settlement on Rupert's Land became urgent. The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), formed as a fur-trading enterprise on Rupert's Land in 1670, had run the region out of London ever since. Its success depended very heavily on thousands of resident Indigenous peoples working in the field who supplied furs and provided ancillary services to the company. Until about 1860 most Europeans thought this land was agriculturally unsuitable to support substantial settlement. By default, its best uses were assumed to be hunting and trapping, a view reinforced by periodic HBC reports to governments such as the one issued from London in 1857 recommending "the Company be granted permission to retain for a further indefinite period its privilege of exclusive trade in Rupert's Land."²² But Canada and England were ready to look at other options for the land. Between 1857 and 1860, each launched scientific studies exploring the geology, geography, soil quality, and climate of the more southerly part of the area, and mapping potential road and railway routes. The results showed a continuous belt of land from western Ontario to the Rocky Mountains could be cultivated and accommodate roads and railroads. Once these results became public, interest in settling the western interior shot up immediately.²³ Both Britain and Canada saw the potential benefits of selling the land but land-use controls

were needed fast to curb the already widespread squatting and speculation in the southeastern portion.

Border controls were also needed. Militia and police services were utterly incapable of securing borders against Americans or anyone else. The United States had had an eye on British territory since the American War of Independence. There had been raids, skirmishes, and a short, bloody war. Anglo-American relations became tense again over slavery during the 1861–65 American Civil War. Quick on its heels in 1867 the United States tried to squeeze the British out of western North America by acquiring Alaska from Russia, which left the isolated colony of British Columbia at greater risk of American incursion.²⁴

The eventual decision regarding British lands in North America was to fold them into the new four-province Canada and create a country from the Atlantic to the Pacific.²⁵ This suited the Ontario expansionists very well.²⁶ Good agricultural land in southern Ontario had become scarce so the opportunity was ripe to bring the HBC land to market. Canada acquired governance of the HBC lands in 1869, set about carving the new province of Manitoba out of it, and prepared to survey it to create a systematic pattern of private land parcels.

The Circumstances of First Nations and Métis Peoples

Transfer of the HBC lands to Canada was conducted without any consultation whatsoever with First Nations and Métis even though they constituted the great majority of the region's population. The HBC, Britain, and Canada treated the entire reassignment of over 3 million square miles of territory that were both home and place of work for Indigenous peoples "as if it were a straightforward real-estate deal involving vacant territory."²⁷ Métis protest erupted when the federal government launched the Dominion Land Survey (DLS) in 1869 in the southeastern part of the territory. They blocked the surveyors and organized a provisional government to pressure the Canadian government to negotiate land ownership and cultural guarantees with them as terms of entry of the proposed new province of Manitoba into Confederation. The Métis knew once the land was surveyed into rectilinear plots and sold to settlers, their culture would be overwhelmed and speculation would put land for themselves and their children out of reach financially. Ultimately, the 1870 Act admitting Manitoba to Confederation contained an obligation

to set aside 1.4 million acres (560,000 hectares) for an estimated 7,000 Métis children.²⁸ The idea was to give them a head start at property ownership in the province before an influx of settlers arrived. Although the land was set aside, overall the children received less benefit than they should have because of a pattern of errors and delays made by the government over more than a decade. A collective claim against this wrong was eventually heard by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2013, concluding the “federal Crown failed to act with diligence in implementing the land grant . . . in accordance with the honour of the Crown.”²⁹

The prime minister of the day said in the House of Commons “the 1.4 million acres were ‘a reservation for the purpose of extinguishing the Indian title,’” thereby acknowledging “that Aboriginal title existed” regarding these lands. If such title applied to Métis, “did it not follow logically that Canada would have to negotiate its way into the West with First Nations, too?”³⁰ The government proceeded immediately to negotiate the so-called numbered treaties beginning in the east and moving west.

In 1871 Treaty 1 for south-central Manitoba, also known as the Stone Fort Treaty, was signed, securing land title from mainly Anishinabe and Swampy Cree peoples. The southern Treaty 1 area is where the Kanadier would be given land two years later. The area stretched from north of Winnipeg south to the border with the United States, with wide swaths down both the east and west sides of the Red River.³¹ Without any preliminary discussions, First Nations’ representatives were called to assemble on a given day for treaty discussions. Over a thousand men with families arrived. The entire process was beset by misunderstanding of key concepts such as “title,” “surrender,” and “treaty”; failure to clarify differences between the promises to be written into the treaty and those only given orally; disorganization and unpreparedness. The confusion was so great that a subsequent addendum was created in 1875 to clarify a few details but it left intact the original, profound disconnect between what the First Nations thought they were getting and what they ended up with.

Much hangs on the interpretations of land and consequently the ways it may be treated. For the government, Treaty 1 was to be another real estate transaction like Rupert’s Land. The purpose was to convert the land to agriculture, its “natural use.” According to the then-lieutenant governor of the province, Sir Adams Archibald, who spoke at the start of the Treaty 1 process: “God, he said, intends this land to raise great crops for all his children,

and the time has come when it is to be used for that purpose.”³² Accordingly, First Nations peoples were asked to “cede, release, surrender, and yield up to Her Majesty the Queen, and her successors for ever, all the lands” they had used for generations in return for a 160-acre land parcel for each family, modest emoluments, and perhaps a bit of agricultural equipment to get them started.³³ Christian missionaries were used to encourage Indigenous peoples to sign treaties because they supported the idea of them becoming “sedentary agriculturalists as a marker of ‘civilization.’” Abraham Cowley, associated with the Anglican Church Missionary Society, witnessed the signing of Treaty 1.³⁴

Aimée Craft provides her Anishinabe understanding of land, ownership, and sharing, saying: “There was an obligation to share in the bounty of the land with those in need, but there was also a corresponding obligation to acknowledge the primary attachment of those who had been placed on the land. The Anishinabe do not own the land. ‘We belong to the land.’ Others say ‘we are made of the land.’” To share the land would involve entering into a sharing relationship. Such a relationship could not be accommodated in a treaty calling for them to cede all their land to the queen forever. Sharing would need to be arranged in accordance with principles of kinship, equality, and reciprocity.³⁵

Those were some of the circumstances in which the Kanadier land negotiations took place: Mennonites fleeing expected persecution; Canadians using an inherited, informal imperialist-colonialist model to expand their country; Indigenous peoples left entirely outside meaningful discussions.

Kanadier/Government Negotiations and Outcomes

Canada had to compete hard against the United States to attract the highly desirable Mennonites. The new federal government designed its courting strategy accordingly: (a) offering blocks of land reserved exclusively for Mennonites; (b) emphasizing Canada’s connection to British monarchist traditions to imply dealing with Canada would be similar to their successful Russian negotiation with Empress Catherine the Great and her successors (Queen Victoria was on the British throne in the 1870s, her late husband was German, and most of their nine children had married into European royal families); (c) touting the near-absence of political revolution in Canada to suggest the group’s military exemption would be secure; and (d) strategizing with

Mennonite leaders in Ontario whose ancestors had moved to Canada from the United States when, in the aftermath of the 1776 American Revolution, it became harder to practice pacifism. A written set of assurances directly relevant to biblical pacifism included complete freedom of religion, saying “the same privilege extends to the education of their children in schools.” However, phrasing about education privileges was not in the final document signed by the government.³⁶ This discrepancy later became a source of tension and distrust.³⁷ Negotiations resulted in setting aside twenty-five townships, each thirty-six square miles, for use by the Kanadier who arrived between 1874 and the end of the decade.³⁸

Enacting a Living Utopia and Its Discontinuity

Belief in pacifism is just a first step toward enacting it in real time and space. As they had done in Russia, the Kanadier aspired to live their belief by being simultaneously “in the world, but not of the world.”³⁹

A bird’s-eye view of the landscape of southeastern Manitoba around 1878 would have shown about sixty nucleated villages housing the recently arrived Kanadier families. The villages lay in close proximity to one another on the east and west sides of the Red River, south of Winnipeg, continuing almost to the Canada-US border. The strategy of isolating themselves from non-Mennonites in many clustered villages replicated the so-called Mennonite Commonwealth approach in Russia. It was said to resemble “a state within a state” because the critical mass made it possible to deliver essential services within the group (see fig. 1).

A typical “street village” pattern would have about twenty dwellings lining a single street, sometimes on one side, sometimes on both. A religious meeting place and school might be placed about midway along the street, a communal pasture at one end, and beyond each village an array of woodlots and cultivated fields. A farmer cultivated the land next to his village lot as well as strips in other parts of the reserve belonging to the village (see fig. 2).⁴⁰

The land-use pattern does not resemble the usual checkerboard land division seen across North America’s central plains. Canada’s version was generated by the 1872 Dominion Lands Act (DLA) regulating homesteads. It, together with the already mentioned Dominion Land Survey system (DLS) inaugurated in 1869, created equal-sized rectilinear land parcels (each

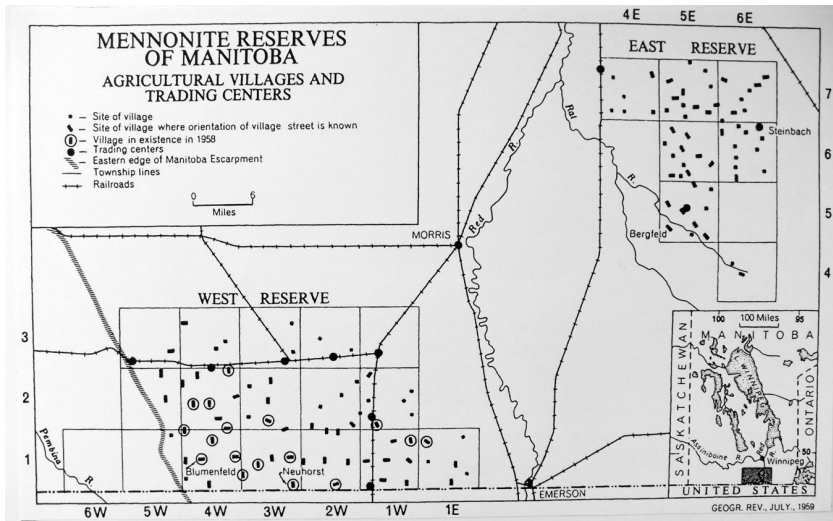


Figure 1. Location in Manitoba of the Mennonite East and West reserves on either side of the Red River. Note also village sites and their orientation, and rail lines and trading centers that emerged. Source: John Warkentin, "Mennonite Agricultural Settlements of Southern Manitoba," *Geographical Review* 49, no. 3 (1959): 346. Used with permission.

160 acres, called a quarter-section) and the ability to methodically allocate parcels to individual households whose obligation was to erect a dwelling and farm a portion of it.⁴¹ The DLS focused on creating equivalent land parcels for ease and speed given the huge quantity of land to survey. The approach had the advantage of treating all households equally in terms of space. However, equality of space did not translate into equality of opportunity for households. Soil quality, slope, drainage, tree cover, and so on determined farm viability. Under the DLS system it was a matter of chance whether a quarter-section had good, middling, or poor prospects for agriculture.

To better fit the Kanadier's mutually collaborative practices, a land-use solution was worked out with the government. A "hamlet clause" was formalized in 1876 as an amendment to the DLA. It gave the Interior ministry discretion to waive or vary the requirement that each household reside on and farm its own acreage.⁴² Under the clause, twenty families, say, might divide their combined 3,200 acres to take into account the physical features, thereby increasing the likelihood each household had access to a more balanced

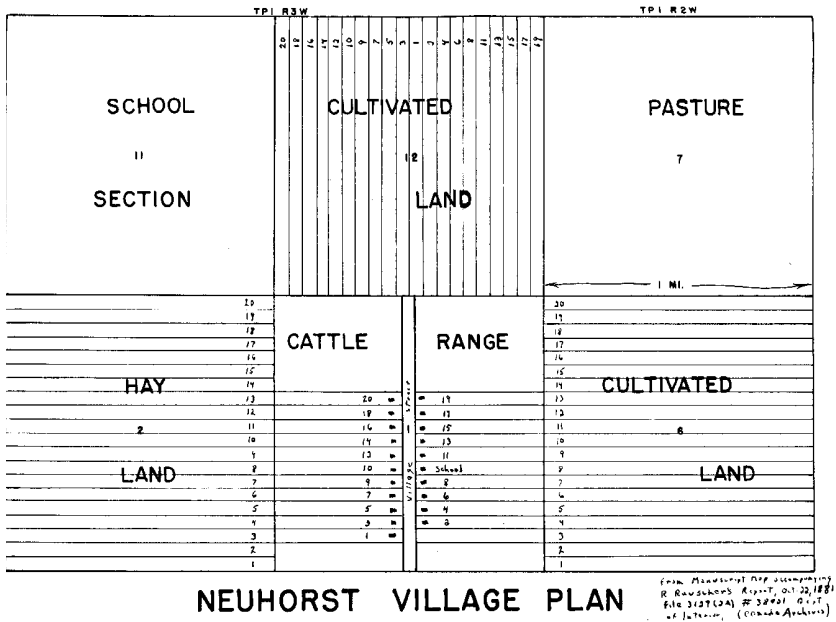


Figure 2: Neuhorst Village Plan sketched to show relative location of the village (*bottom center*) to other land uses, and cultivated areas divided into household strips. Neuhorst can be seen in figure 1 in the West Reserve close to the Canada-US border. Source: John Warkentin, *The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba* (2000), 74. Steinbach, MB. Hanover Steinbach Historical Society. A reprinting of 1960 doctoral thesis. Used with permission.

assortment of lands for its needs. This allowed a traditional nucleated village and open-field farm system to be developed, a land-use pattern facilitating a relatively closed social, economic, and governance system.

The effect of granting the hamlet waiver was to assign collective responsibility to the group to occupy and cultivate the land unsupervised by government officials. To execute it, villages created their own agreements covering matters such as siting the village; dividing and assigning collective land to users; the location of each household’s private land for a housebarn (a distinctive Mennonite architectural form), and kitchen garden; the labor and financial responsibilities of members; the process for withdrawing from or joining the village; and so on.⁴³

Loewen’s description of the village of Blumenort in the East Reserve shows how various elements—land pattern, village agreement, governance

structure including discipline and enforcement, and biblical asceticism—were braided together:

The governing body of the village, the “Schulzenbott,” was simply the assembly of all land-owning farmers, headed by the democratically elected “Schulz.” The central purpose of the “Schulzenbott” was clearly revealed in Blumenort’s 1878 village constitution. The first words of the document declared that “in accordance with our earlier custom we wish to constitute a village community.” The nine articles in the constitution set out the conditions by which the village was to operate, calling for farmers to participate in the pooling of land, maintenance of roads, fences, school house and breeding stock, and payment of a herdsman. Several of the articles were clearly adopted to discourage disintegrating forces in the village. Article One stated that all individually registered lands would be taken into common usage; Article Four maintained that a farmer could not circumvent his monetary responsibilities to the village by moving onto his own homestead quarter; Article Five stated that all farm and land sales must be approved by the “Schulzenbott”; and Article Six called for all farmers to “give punctual obedience to the ‘Schulz.’” Although this constitution did not have a legal base, it was enforceable through the “Bruderschaft” [the monthly church business meeting attended by all male members] which could, in extreme cases, excommunicate a non-conforming villager.⁴⁴

The church leadership closely watched over villagers’ lifestyles and “kept their thinking in check by strong appeals to a life of asceticism and separation.” Its “ministerial” controlled the school board, the village assembly, and overall community welfare through a number of mutual aid organizations, such as banking and loans services; fire and crop insurance; and care of orphans, the ill, and indigent.⁴⁵ In effect, these Anabaptists resolved their centuries-long insistence on keeping church and state separate by essentially giving the church sphere final deciding power over the correct execution of all activities.

The question Holstun asked of his Puritan utopias is aptly raised here: Had the Kanadier replaced what they repudiated as coercive state intrusion, whether in Russia or Canada, with their own governance structure, itself also

“permeated by a program of domination” (11) held in place by textual form, rhetoric, and everyday practices they themselves had designed? The Kanadier case concretely illustrates the paradox of utopia, of wanting to be in the world but not of the world.

Discontinuity began early, although gradually. Government had relatively little to do with it despite the 1885 decision to disallow any new villages in the West Reserve—by then some villages were beginning to dissolve anyway—or its 1889 decision to cease holding any unclaimed land in the reserves for the Kanadier’s exclusive use. Warkentin identified nearly a dozen different reasons for gradual collapse of the village system, and why the East and West reserves experienced discontinuity differently.⁴⁶ By the turn of the century the majority of villages had been abandoned; by the early 1920s none functioned as closed villages in the East Reserve although a few continued in the West Reserve. The village form associated with Sermon on the Mount utopianism that survived nearly a century in Russia was intact for only a generation or so in Manitoba.

Blumenort in the East Reserve, discussed earlier, disbanded in 1910 after a thirty-five-year run. Loewen identified four factors prompting its dissolution:

Farm mechanization had made the medieval field pattern increasingly obsolete. A progressively active municipality had assumed many of the responsibilities of the “Schulzenbott.” A rising standard of living had made the villagers less and less dependent on one another. And, most important, there was a growing consensus among the villagers that an Old World spatial arrangement was no longer necessary for the perpetuation of the sectarian culture.⁴⁷

Other villages reacted differently. After Manitoba’s education laws were municipalized in 1890, 8,000 of the most traditionalist among the original Kanadier and their Canadian-born descendants remigrated in village groups to less established democracies such as Mexico and Paraguay. Many of them and their descendants returned to Canada within about a generation mostly for economic and social security reasons.⁴⁸ Others went further west and north within Canada where schooling regulations eventually caught up with them.

Others adapted. Regarding education, although children had to learn the provincial curriculum, this did not preclude them also learning their parents’ language, culture, and history provided it did not impinge on their

Canadian schooling. Freedom of religion was enshrined in law, and its interpretation evolves to this day. Negotiated solutions with government bureaucracies regarding alternatives to taking up arms had been worked out, not for groups or religious organizations, but for any individual who could justify conscientious objector status. Politically, the Kanadier had already influenced government such as in the case of the DLA hamlet amendment. Critical examination of their own practices led some to acknowledge they had been engaged in politics and power all along, certainly long before their arrival in Manitoba.⁴⁹

The “Mennonite Commonwealth” had been welcomed in the 1870s because it served the country’s development ambitions as seen by both state and church. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the isolationist arrangement had nearly run its course. Modern democracies pay attention to groups both because they contribute to their members’ well-being and because they may coerce them. Francis showed the Kanadier sought “freedom of the group as a whole for the exercise of strict social controls over each individual member,” rather than the moral autonomy of individuals “from social controls” in line with democratic philosophy.⁵⁰ Over time, the tight braiding of utopia’s triune elements—textual inspiration, rhetoric, and practices—became one of the seeds of discontinuity in the villages.

Present-ness and Built Utopia

This case challenges the assumption that an oppositional relationship necessarily lies at the heart of creating built utopias—or in Holstun’s words “that the fundamentally oppositional nature of utopia must be stated before we can discuss its particular relation to those social forms contemporary with it” (12). Analysis here shows the dominance of complementary and antagonistic relationships. The Kanadier’s utopian interests and the largely nonutopian interests of the Canadian government were sufficiently complementary that a *privilegium*-style agreement was easily reached. The Kanadier were not in an oppositional relationship to Canada. Nor were they in opposition to Catholicism or Protestantism: they had brought their co-religionists with them, and they were not proselytizers.

However, this complementarity of interests hinged on the government speaking legitimately on behalf of all Canada’s peoples, including Indigenous,

on matters concerning land. Conjunctural analysis in this case shows legitimacy was undermined because church and state ignored values that were as valid in the 1870s as in the 2020s. First Nations and Métis were excluded from discussions about changes in land occupation, ownership, and use that directly threatened their livelihood and survival, and were dealt with dishonorably in formal state promises resulting in loss of land promised to them. Three examples above provide evidence—transfer of the HBC lands, the Métis children’s lands, and the First Nations Treaty 1 process. Cut out of discussion, let alone decision-making, regarding land they considered theirs, Indigenous peoples were not part of the complementary relationship with the Kanadier. Nor can their relationship be presumed to be oppositional: their views on land, settlement, and building the country had not been consulted so their position was officially unknown. Indeed, the Treaty 1 proceedings suggest that had the process been conducted respectfully there might have been potential for some form of Indigenous–settler sharing of land. Instead, the silencing of Indigenous peoples led to an antagonistic relationship.

Conjunctural analysis of this case shows that to create and maintain a built utopia (1) an oppositional relationship is not a given; (2) there may be more than one type of relationship: complementary and antagonistic relationships were discussed here but further analysis could show several more types; and (3) conjunctural analysis is essential to track how changes in circumstances outside utopian settlements affect circumstances within. Just one of many examples of the latter was the change in Manitoba’s schooling law. It resulted in whole villages packing up and leaving. Explaining the existence, location, and eventually the meaning of these built utopian settlements rests heavily on what can be derived from conjunctural analysis.

The case also lends support to Holstun’s thesis that utopia is a triune concept comprised of textual form, political rhetoric, and practice. The textual element in the Kanadier case was biblical in the first instance. However, imagination and experimentation by group members were necessary to find workable ways to implement those broad ideals, thereby initiating “a textual/practical dialectic,” in Holstun’s words (7). Over the course of a century in Russia, highly structured village management practices were developed and modified. In effect the practices were translated into texts in the form of ideal behavioral codes to be employed within Mennonite villages. Later, these codes helped guide Kanadier practices in Canada and were further modified. The Blumenort village agreement and the roles of

the Schulzenbott and Bruderschaft are evidence of practice-become-text-become practice. As a result, one cannot categorically declare these utopian settlements were exclusively textual or nontextual. Further, the settlements themselves could not be achieved and maintained without rhetoric reminding group members to act obediently in order to protect the group from internal disharmony and potential external threats. As a final point, articles in the village agreement make it understood that rhetoric was backed up by processes to address recalcitrance.

The Kanadier village practices are partly explained by the group's particular interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount but also by the agreement it had with the state, both formally via the *privilegium* and informally. John Rempel notes: "This new form of Mennonitism in secluded settlements," first seen in Russia, "set standards for moral behavior that still had one foot in the Sermon on the Mount but the other foot securely in the pragmatics of not angering the state."⁵¹ The Kanadier were not naïve about their obligations. Mennonite historian Frank Epp wrote, without mincing words, that the Kanadier realized early on they "were only a means to an end. The real purpose was to fill the prairies with a united Canadian society, which would prove the possibility of prosperous settlement there and, simultaneously, domesticate the lands in the face of Indian and Métis rebellion and discourage any American incursion, peaceful or otherwise."⁵² The group's instrumental rhetoric thus had two purposes: to ensure the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount remained central to the biblical utopian project's continuance, and to uphold the group's unwritten bargain with the state. Thus, Holstun's assertion of the centrality of rhetoric to utopia's nature and survival is illustrated in not just one sense, but two.

The same three features that together created the Kanadier villages—textual form, rhetoric, and practice—help explain discontinuity, the inevitable unraveling, and transformation. Discontinuity describes the fate of Kanadier villages better than "end" or "failure." Even after most of the villages had been abandoned, Mennonite families created the majority of the population in several small towns nearby; some moved to the provincial capital, Winnipeg. Based on his detailed sociological study, Francis attests that "by the end of the Second World War, the Mennonite group in Manitoba did not show any signs of serious or permanent disorganization. On the contrary, group coherence was still strong, and there was a newly gained pride in Mennonite traditions." Certainly, "the Mennonite social system showed

a greater diversification than twenty-five years earlier, and resembled more closely that of Anglo-Canadian society at large.”⁵³ It appears the fundamental beliefs of the Kanadier remained largely the same but the rhetoric about how those beliefs might be expressed in practice changed. Options to live in non-separated communities and participate in local affairs are obvious examples. For the Kanadier, what Holstun calls the “imperative to continuity” (298) was to honor God’s injunction not to harm others; it was not to live in a cluster of small villages separated from other human beings. Utopia’s formation, continuity, and discontinuity can be traced in the shifting role of rhetoric.

To conclude, a “new encounter,” or body of texts and subject matter, in the seventeenth century breathed fresh life into the European cultural concept of utopia. In Canada, a Christo-imperialist manifestation accompanied the country into the twentieth century, at which time its discontinuity proceeded apace in the face of growing secularism and national confidence following the two world wars. The case described above shows that looking at sovereignty/title and the meaning of land through a Christo-imperialist lens has ultimately failed Indigenous peoples materially, settlers morally, and everyone ecologically. Another encounter is replacing the one that spawned the Christo-imperialist utopian genre. Since the 1950s environmental and social justice actors have steadily gathered together a successor set of texts and subject matter into an ecological utopian vision. Resurgent indigeneity and a broadly based will toward transforming Indigenous-settler relationships press the country to work on sovereignty/title and a shared meaning of land, this time from a different stance.

I think the research for this case is relevant to that challenge. It presents just a glimpse into a very large body of understudied experience about how actualized utopia works in detail. Doubts around the doctrine of discovery thesis, stressors related to failing to uphold treaties, and the threat of climate change to all aspects of land, including its very meaning, are core issues to carry forward from the concrete experiences of the past era into the work of its ecologically inspired successor. It’s still all about land. Utopia doesn’t die; it disassembles and reassembles.

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Notes

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1. Timothy Miller, *The Encyclopedic Guide to American Intentional Communities* (Clinton, NY: Richard W. Couper Press, 2013). A few Canadian examples are: Andrew Scott, *Promise of Paradise: Utopian Communities in British Columbia* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2017); Anthony W. Rasporich, "Utopian Ideals and Community Settlements in Western Canada, 1880–1914," in *The Prairie West as Promised Land*, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Chris Kitzan (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007), 127–54; Ruth Compton Brouwer, "Prince Edward Island's Unique 'Brotherly Love' Community': Faith and Family, Communalism and Commerce in B. Compton Limited, 1909–1949," *Acadiensis* 45, no. 1 (2016): 3–23; Albert Schrauwers, *Awaiting the Millennium: The Children of Peace and the Village of Hope, 1812–1889* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Justine Brown, *All Possible Worlds: Utopian Experiments in British Columbia* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1995).

2. "Indigenous peoples" collectively refers to three major groups in Canada. Chelsea Vowel gives accessible descriptions in *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Issues in Canada* (Winnipeg: Highwater Press, 2016), chap. 1 and throughout. I generally use "Indigenous" when referring to two or three groups; otherwise I specify the group to which I refer. "Settler" is the collective term I use to refer to the "community that originates with Europeans who began coming here with colonization and found when they arrived that there were peoples already here living in political societies"; Michael Asch, "Confederation Treaties and Reconciliation: Stepping Back into the Future," in *Resurgence and Reconciliation: Indigenous-Settler Relations and Earth Teachings*, ed. Michael Asch, John Borrows, and James Tully (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 29. See also the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Looking Forward, Looking Back* (hereafter RCAP), 1996, vol. 1, iii–iv, <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx>.

3. The extent of damage cannot be captured in a few references. Major overviews are found in RCAP, *Looking Forward, Looking Back*; and in *The Truth and Reconciliation*

Commission (TRC) of Canada's *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report*, 2015, <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.800288/publication.html>. Both provide extensively sourced historical accounts of colonialism's effects on Indigenous peoples and calls to action. The vision of reconciliation in the TRC report has been variously and contentiously interpreted. See Paulette Regan, "Reconciliation and Resurgence: Reflections on the TRC Final Report," in *Resurgence and Reconciliation*, ed. Asch, Borrows, and Tully, 209–27.

4. Georges E. Sioui, *Huron-Wendat: The Heritage of the Circle*, trans. Jane Brierley (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999); originally published as *Les Wendats* (Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1994). See xviii and throughout for comparisons between Wendat and Euro-Christian worldviews. Sioui believes his own Wendat heritage can be generalized out to other Northeastern Amerindians. See also RCAP, *Looking Forward, Looking Back*, 1:36–40, for a similar comparison of worldviews. Incommensurability of worldviews is explored in Stephen Pepper, *World Hypotheses* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942).

5. Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

6. RCAP, *Looking Forward, Looking Back*, 603. On how interdependence is realized in Anishinaabe constitutionalism, see Aaron Mills/Waabishki Ma'lingan, "What Is a Treaty? On Contract and Mutual Aid," in *The Right Relationship: Reimagining the Implementation of Historical Treaties*, ed. John Borrows and Michael Coyle (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), esp. 230–34.

7. For more on Indigenous peoples' and settlers' philosophical connections to land, respectively and collectively, traditionally and looking toward the future, see for example: Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), e.g., 30–38, 108–10; also his "Failure of Reconciliation," address at the colloquium, "Civic Freedom in an Age of Diversity: James Tully's Public Philosophy," Université du Québec à Montréal, April 24–26, 2014, <https://taiaiake.net/2014/05/14/the-failure-of-reconciliation/>; Gina Starblanket and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesik Stark, "Towards a Relational Paradigm—Four Points for Consideration: Knowledge, Gender, Land, and Modernity," in *Resurgence and Reconciliation*, ed. Asch, Borrows, and Tully, 175–207; Heidi Kiiwetinepinesik Stark, "Changing the Treaty Question: Remediating the Right(s) Relationship," in *Right Relationship*, ed. Borrows and Coyle, 248–76; John Borrows, "Living Law on a Living Earth: Religion, Law, and the Constitution," in Borrows, *Canada's Indigenous Constitution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 239–70; James Tully, "Reconciliation Here on Earth," in *Resurgence and Reconciliation*, ed. Asch, Borrows, and Tully, 83–129.

8. Lyman Tower Sargent, "Review of *The Encyclopedic Guide to American Intentional Communities* by Timothy Miller," *Utopian Studies* 24, no. 2 (2013): 365.

9. See, for example, John Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650–1900* (Montréal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2003), covering North America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa; Allan Greer, *Property and Dispossession: Natives, Empires and Land in Early Modern North America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Don W. Thomson, *Men and Meridians: The History of Surveying and Mapping in Canada* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966), 3 vols.

10. James Holstun, *A Rational Millennium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Subsequent page references appear in the text.

11. See Lyman Tower Sargent's much-referenced three-branch typology comprised of "the literary utopia, utopian practice, and utopian social theory"; *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 34. This typology slightly reworks his version in "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited," *Utopian Studies* 5, no. 1 (1994): 1–37. He fits built utopias into utopian practice, there called "intentional communities." Some scholars link utopian practice and utopian sociopolitical theory, for example, Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010); Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini, eds., *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

12. TRC, *Honouring the Truth*, 49.

13. For discussions of the doctrine of discovery see, for example, Patrick Macklem, *Indigenous Difference and the Constitution of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 113–31; Robert J. Miller, "The Doctrine of Discovery in Canada," in *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies*, ed. Robert J. Miller, Jacinta Ruru, Larissa Behrendt, and Tracey Lindberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 89–125. For a detailed history of the unsystematic usage of *terra nullius* and *res nullius*, see Lauren Benton and Benjamin Straumann, "Acquiring Empire by Law: From Roman Doctrine to Early Modern European Practice," *Law and History Review* 28, no. 1 (2010): 1–38.

14. TRC, *Honouring the Truth*, 46.

15. For example, see Kent McNeil, "Indigenous and Crown Sovereignty in Canada," in *Resurgence and Reconciliation*, ed. Asch, Borrows, and Tully, 293–314.

16. See Allan Greer and Kenneth Mills, "A Catholic Atlantic," in *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500–2000*, ed. Erik R. Seeman and Jorge Canizares-Esguerra (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2007), 8; see 3–19 for concrete examples of cultural transfer.

17. See the Bible, New Testament, Gospel of Matthew, especially chapter 5.

18. James Urry, *Mennonites, Politics, and Peoplehood: Europe–Russia–Canada, 1525–1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006), 3.

19. *Ibid.*, 85; that is, a personal agreement between a distinct people and the tsar.

20. David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia: A Sketch of Its Foundation and Endurance, 1789–1919," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 47 (1973): 259–308, and 48 (1974): 5–54.

21. William Janzen discusses the decreasing viability of Mennonite separatism in his *Limits on Liberty: The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite, and Doukhobor Communities in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 7.

22. John Warkentin, ed., *The Western Interior of Canada: A Record of Geographical Discovery 1612–1917* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), 145.

23. These commissioned expeditions are described in Thomson, *Men and Meridians*, 1:192–217; and Warkentin, ed., *Western Interior*, 153–231.

24. R. T. Naylor, *Canada in the European Age, 1453–1919* (Montréal: McGill Queens University Press, 2006), 363.

25. See a synopsis of the dispute over the Hudson's Bay lands in John S. Galbraith, "The Hudson's Bay Land Controversy, 1863–1869," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 36, no. 3 (1949): 457–78. See also Arthur S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870–71* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1939), esp. 839–52. Regarding Britain's interests in the land transfer, Naylor, *Canada in the European Age*, 322–23.
26. J. R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-making in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 123–28.
27. Arthur J. Ray, *An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 196.
28. *Ibid.*, 199–203. See also Paul L.A.H. Chartrand, "Aboriginal Rights: The Dispossession of the Métis," *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 29 (1991): 457–82. For location of these lands see Thomas Flanagan, *Métis Lands in Manitoba* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1991), 74, map 4.
29. Supreme Court of Canada, 2013. *Manitoba Métis Federation Inc. v. Canada*, 5 of 71. For case background from 1870 to 1991, see Chartrand, "Aboriginal Rights."
30. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, 145.
31. For a sketch map of the treaty area covering 43,253 square kilometers (16,700 square miles) see Aimée Craft, *Breathing Life into the Stone Fort Treaty: An Anishinabe Understanding of Treaty One* (Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing Limited, 2013), 8.
32. *Ibid.*, 56–57. All nine days of treaty negotiation were covered in detail by the local newspaper. See, in Craft, *The Manitoban* (1871), Winnipeg, Provincial Archives of Manitoba (as transcribed by the Manitoba Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Centre, 1970) at 6.
33. Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, including the Negotiations on which they were Based, and Other Information Relating thereto* (1880; Toronto: Belfords, Clarke and Co., Publishers, 1971), especially chap. 4. See also Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, 165; Asch, "Confederation Treaties and Reconciliation," 33–40.
34. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, 160.
35. Craft, *Breathing Life*, 60–65, 92–93, 96.
36. See William Schroeder, *The Berthel Colony* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1986), appendix B: "The Lowe Letter," 125–26, and appendix C: "The Order-in-Council," 126–28.
37. Janzen, *Limits on Liberty*, 88–115.
38. For land and settlement financing details, see E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba* (Altona, Man.: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1955), 53–60; for the multiple missteps made by the government in finalizing exact land allocations to Kanadier reserves, see Janzen, *Limits on Liberty*, 19–27.
39. Urry, *Mennonites, Politics, and Peoplehood*, 262–63, citing Frank H. Epp's public statement on his personal interest in entering politics, 1977.
40. John Warkentin, "Mennonite Agricultural Settlements of Southern Manitoba," *Geographical Review* 49, no. 3 (1959): 342–68; Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786–1920: The History of a Separate People* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), 212.

41. Thomson, *Men and Meridians*, vol. 2, chaps. 2 and 3. A similar but not identical system of land division and homesteading had been introduced in the United States nearly a century earlier.

42. Land ownership was still individualized, however. The law required each 160-acre parcel to be officially registered to an individual even if the person did not actually reside on it. The hamlet clause was also accorded to large groups of Icelanders and Doukhobors.

43. For example, a nine-article constitution of 1878 for the village of Blumenort is described in Royden Loewen, "Old Ways under New Skies: Blumenort, Manitoba, 1874–1910," *Manitoba History* 9 (1985): 8–9. A simple four-clause village agreement dated 1882 for Neuenburg is found in David de Garis De Lisle, "The Spatial Organization and Intensity of Agriculture in the Mennonite Villages of Southern Manitoba" (doctoral dissertation, McGill University, 1975), appendix A.2, 261. On housebarns, see Roland Sawatzky, "Ideology, Space, and Social Control: The Russian-Mennonite Family in Historic Manitoban Domestic Architecture," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 26, no. 1 (2008): 95–110.

44. Loewen, "Old Ways under New Skies," 8.

45. *Ibid.*, 6–8.

46. Warkentin, "Mennonite Agricultural Settlements," 361–66.

47. Loewen, "Old Ways," 13.

48. Royden Loewen, *Village among Nations: "Canadian" Mennonites in a Transnational World, 1916–2006* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), chap. 6.

49. Urry, *Mennonites, Politics, and Peoplehood*, esp. 255–63.

50. Francis, *In Search of Utopia*, 81–82.

51. John D. Rempel, "Utopian and Non-Conformist: A Tour through Mennonite History," address given at Pennswood Village, Newtown, PA (2013), 3. From the 1830s Southern Russian Mennonites questioned whether the rights granted in the privilegium implied corresponding duties and obligations to the Russian state, and if so what they were. Urry, *Mennonites, Politics, and Peoplehood*, 90–95.

52. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada*, 209.

53. Francis, *In Search of Utopia*, 243.