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Harding, Lauren

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## Post-Home: Dwelling on Loss, Belonging and Movement

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Lauren Harding

‘This isn’t Canada, it’s Home’: Re-claiming Colonized Space  
through the Host-Guest Relationship

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### Abstract

The settler-colonial Canadian nation-state envisions national parks as places for citizens to recreate ideals of wilderness and the colonial frontier. In Canada, an idealized wild nature has become a central motif in settler-Canadian visions of home with outdoor recreation a hallowed pastime that has become a cornerstone to national identity. Yet as indigenous peoples increasingly assert their claims to territory, the state’s spatial designations and Canadian nationalist landscape narratives are challenged and complicated. In 1992, Peter and Monique Knighton made the decision to leave the main reserve where the Ditidaht people had been consolidated by the state in the 1960s, and return to Qua-ba-diwa, their ancestral home. However, Qua-ba-diwa, which the state calls Indian Reserve Number 6, lies within the boundaries of the West Coast Trail Unit in Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. Since their move to Qua-ba-diwa, the Knighton family have built cabins, sold food, and provided shelter to tens of thousands of hikers, often to the consternation of parks officials. In a state where First Nations people have been continuously removed from their homes, taking on the role of territorial host through the provision of hospitality becomes a political act. I discuss the Knightons’ strategies of resistance to state efforts to confine their home to tourist-oriented visions of a wild Canadian nature, as well as the wider implications of their experiences for understanding the dissonance between indigenous and settler-Canadian conceptions of the same territory.

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## 'This isn't Canada, it's Home': Re-claiming Colonized Space through the Host-Guest Relationship

Lauren Harding

In this article, I describe two competing attachments to territory, both of which appear as a form of post-home, as both are directly based on experiences of displacement and relocation. First Nations and settler-Canadian peoples both claim as their own the territory known in English as Vancouver Island, the former due to their occupation of these lands 'since time immemorial', the latter through a convoluted reasoning based on British colonialism and legal and imagined claims of Canadian nationhood. Domestic settler-Canadian tourists tend to have a possessive and affectionate preoccupation with landscapes they deem to be 'wilderness'. National parks are largely viewed as pockets of primeval wilderness, and visiting these is not an act of tourism, but rather a connection to settler-Canadian patrimony. This is contrasted with the perspective of First Nations peoples, whose perspective on home is rooted in experiences of territory as 'lived in', both in a contemporary sense and through ancestors. The legal, historical and ideological permutations of Canadian claims to indigenous territory, particularly in the context of the province of British Columbia where historic treaties are absent, are far too complex to address in this article. Instead, I look at the issue of settler-indigenous relationships to territory and 'home' through a different lens: domestic tourism, or more specifically, the host-guest relationship. The question of who a host or a guest is finds its complexity under the conditions of settler colonialism. Settler-Canadian domestic tourists view the places they are visiting as part of 'their' heritage, while, at the same time, these places may be unceded indigenous territory which the domestic tourists have never lived in, or even traveled through before. At the same time, due to the forced removal from their territory through Canadian colonial actions (for example through the reserve system, or the residential schools), many First Nations people have experienced an alienation from their ancestral homes. I explore the interactions and relationships between settler-tourists and indigenous peoples in a very specific place, at a very specific time. I hope that, through a discussion of the unique hospitality at the place called Qua-ba-diwa, I can provide new avenues for the exploration of the settler and indigenous relationships to the concept of 'home' as it transpires in the Canadian context.

The West Coast Trail (WCT) is a 75-kilometre long wilderness route on the southwest coast of the Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Located along the Graveyard of the Pacific, the trail was originally constructed as a lifesaving trail for shipwreck victims and was transformed into a recreation trail in the 1970s as part of a national parks expansion program that took place under the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau. The trail attracts approximately eight thousand hikers each season and is considered the 'holy grail' of Canadian backpacking trails.<sup>1</sup> The trail is located within the boundaries of the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, an appellation indicating that the space is a First Nations territory. It lies within the traditional territories of the Huu-ay-aht, Ditidaht, and Pacheedaht First Nations and has, since the 1990s, been co-managed with these nations.<sup>2</sup>

In 2013 and 2014, I conducted anthropological fieldwork both on the trail and in the adjacent villages of Bamfield and Anacla at the northern trailhead. I hiked the trail multiple times, interacting with hikers, campers, the Parks Canada staff, the indigenous Trail Guardians, the Canadian Coast Guard lighthouse keepers and other 'hosts and guests'. When I began my fieldwork, I expected to focus on both the Canadian and the international hikers. What I discovered, to my surprise, was that a large majority of hikers were Canadian, mostly from British Columbia and Alberta. When I asked them why they hiked the West Coast Trail, many cited its place on their 'bucket list' of places to visit in Canada. The refrain 'We're so lucky to be Canadian' was one I heard frequently exclaimed upon a particularly picturesque view. The most common subject of small talk on the West Coast Trail were the trail conditions and the camping gear, but narratives of nationhood, citizenship, and belonging were also a frequent part of wider discussions on the landscape aesthetics.

There are three main points of contact between visitors who hike the West Coast Trail and the indigenous peoples whose territory the trail crosses. The primary one is at the Nitinat narrows, which must be crossed by a ferry, one operated by the Edgar family, members of the Ditidaht First Nation. The second most common point of contact is at *Chez Monique's*, a hiker restaurant and refuge run by the Knighton family at Qua-ba-diwa (also known by its English name as Carmanah). The third most common point of contact is with the operators of the Trail Guardian program, typically at their cabins. In this article, I focus on the Knighton family of Qua-ba-diwa, but I also seek to emphasize the features shared by all of these points of contact. The ferry and crab shack at Nitinat Narrows, the *Chez Monique's* hamburger stand at Qua-ba-diwa, and the Trail Guardian cabins each create a space for socialization and hospitality with the traditional owners of the territory acting as hosts.

1 I allude here to Nelson's Graburn's (1989) idea of 'secular pilgrimage'.

2 Co-management was finally introduced after First Nations peoples protested that Parks management intruded on their traditional territorial rights and actively agitated for change.

The sharing of shelter, food and drink, as well as advice, stories, and refuge from the elements characterizes these spaces of indigenous hospitality. And, as I argue later, there are subtle politics of resistance at play in the act of taking on the host role in the context of tourism and in spaces where the indigenous territorial rights are still often overshadowed by colonial imaginations of pristine national wilderness.

British Columbia was the only Canadian province that was not subject to the established treaties defining the indigenous peoples' relationships to the Canadian governments. European contact with indigenous peoples along the western Canadian coast did not occur until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the settlement process did not gain momentum until the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The lack of treaties, the historically large indigenous population, as well as the relatively late colonization of and settlement in the region, have all factored into the significantly dynamic politics of colonialism and indigenous resilience in this space throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

The notion of 'settler-Canadian' requires some attention. As Malkii (1992) has made clear, the territorial rooting of identity to place is complex, problematic, and often more idealized in nationalist discourses than reflective of actual practice, due to ever-increasing human mobility. I use the term expansively, to refer to all Canadian citizens who are non-indigenous. This is a somewhat controversial take on the term, as the term 'settler' is usually used to refer to those who trace their ancestry to the original colonizing European nations (United Kingdom and France). My issue with this limited definition is that it restricts the process of colonialism to the past and, more importantly, to European imperialist actions. It is this restrictive definition that former Prime Minister Stephen Harper likely had in mind when he infamously stated in 2009 that 'Canada has no history of colonialism' (see Ljunggren 2009). In contrast, Patrick Wolfe (1999: 163) insists that 'invasion is a structure, not an event'. The Canadian state was not only founded through a process of European imperialism and colonialism but continues to be fundamentally structured upon the appropriation of land, extraction of resources, and the displacement of indigenous peoples. Veracini discerns the characteristics of settler-colonialism:

*The successful settler colonies 'tame' a variety of wildernesses, end up establishing independent nations, effectively repress, co-opt, and extinguish indigenous alterities, and productively manage ethnic diversity. By the end of this trajectory, they claim to be no longer settler colonial (they are putatively 'settled' and 'postcolonial' – except that unsettling anxieties remain, and references to a postcolonial condition appear hollow as soon as indigenous disadvantage is taken into account). Settler colonialism thus covers its tracks and operates towards its self-supersession. [...] In other words, whereas colonialism reinforces the*

*distinction between colony and metropole, settler colonialism erases it. [...] Colonialism reproduces itself, and the freedom and equality of the colonised is forever postponed; settler colonialism, by contrast, extinguishes itself. (2011: 3)*

In Canada and British Columbia, settler-colonialism is an ongoing process, foundational to the Canadian nation-state. Therefore, Canadian citizenship is predicated upon the participation in the continuing process of settlement. In light of this, I refer to all non-indigenous Canadian citizens as settlers, regardless of their 'ethnic' origin. This is a choice made to combat the erasure of settler-colonialism from the contemporary conceptions of Canadian identity. It is also, of course, a simplification of the complex subjectivities evoked by the label 'Canadian' for many people of color, for new immigrants, and those whose family experiences are markedly different from the dominant mythology of historical settlement. Many Canadian citizens are racialized and marked by their ethnic origins in ways that make the grouping with 'white' settler Canadians very problematic. Thus, I do not ignore the fact that the state has also oppressed (and continues to oppress) Canadians of color. However, I find here that the rites of citizenship, the rituals of domestic tourism, and the use of settlement as a means of creating a sense of 'belonging' to a place are more strongly linked to the identities of my various research participants as 'Canadian' than they are to some racial/ethnic origins. It would, likewise, be problematic to qualify the testimonies of certain participants by noting an estimated ethnic identity, different from the one they attested to (Canadian). Overall, my study is one of contemporary Canadian culture, and Canada as a settler-colonial state. I expand on why I take this with further evidence on how certain attitudes towards the Canadian territory and 'homeland' are cultivated as part of the process of 'becoming Canadian'. Throughout, I hope to show the complex, socially constructed, contested, and easily fragmented process of defining 'home' in a colonial and settler context.

### At Home in the Wilderness: Settler-Canadian Nature-Nationalism

Outdoor recreation in what is conceived as the 'national backyard' is often represented in state and popular discourses as integral to the Canadian experience (see Harrison 2010, Sandilands 2012). Meta-narratives of pristine wilderness play an important role in the formation of settler Canadian constructions of the western landscape (see Braun 2002, Loo 2006, Mackey 2000, Mawani 2007). However, ideals of wilderness as 'empty space' to be 'conquered' by hikers clearly relate to past and current processes of colonialism in western Canada. Will Cronon (1996), Jocelyn Thorpe (2012) and others have critiqued the notion of 'wilderness' and its conceptual foundation in Euro-American/Canadian colonial epistemologies. The construction of certain spaces as wilderness is inescapably rooted in practices, attitudes, and

patterns inherited from colonialism and perpetuated through leisure narratives of wilderness exploration.

This is further complicated in settler societies, which not only maintain a mythology of certain spaces as ‘wilderness’, but also encode the land with proprietary sentiments. In the settler-colonial states, national parks are envisioned as places for citizens to connect to a natural environment designated as being of national significance. Often, these are places perceived both as pristine and as representative of a particular ecological type significant within the national imaginary. I argue that, in Canada, wilderness is not so much a place as a symbol-laden abstract space. It is, to use Deleuze’s and Guattari’s (2014 [1988]) term, deterritorialized. It is not only conceived as people-less, but also place-less. It is understood as amorphous nature, where mountains, beaches, and forests may be ‘beautiful’, but remain indistinguishable from one another, as they are decontextualized from the territories and the histories, the routes and the roots that render them significant markers of place. In many ways, wilderness is the ‘anti-homeland’, and yet, in Canada, it is the symbolism of wilderness that has become a rallying point for nationalist sentiments. In a nation-state dominated by settler-Canadian culture, which elevates narratives of settlement of a wild landscape to a mythic status, to be in the wilderness is still considered to be in the ‘real’ Canada. The contemporary Canadian narrative of identity is largely a nature-based one. Forged during the same political era of official multi-culturalism, nature and the Canadian relationship to the environment have become the dominant unifying nationalist tropes. This makes sense in a country with a vast geography, a dual colonial heritage, a pluralistic vision of national ‘ethnicity,’ and precariously perched next to the cultural behemoth of the United States. Canadian cultural practices around ‘nature,’ whether in the form of outdoor recreation, adaptations to weather conditions, or the celebration of a seemingly vast and variable supply of natural resources (while still extracting them), have become the common ground necessary for the forging of the a Canadian ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 2006). Although Pacific Rim National Park Reserve attracts many international visitors each year, it is dominantly visited by Canadian citizens. While sitting around a campfire at the end of a seven-day trek down the WCT, one hiker made the unprompted remark to me, in a half joking but somewhat sincere way: ‘I feel so Canadian right now, is there anything more Canadian than this? Camping in a Canadian National Park?’ Citizens embark on treks through what is ‘their’ ‘national backyard’, creating an affective sense of belonging to landscape that intertwines with ideas of nationhood and what it means to be Canadian.

As Werry (2011: xiv) and other tourism scholars have shown, ‘the relationship between tourism and nationalism is a well-established one’ (see also Bruner 2005 Handler and Gable 1997, Harrison 2010). The two are intertwined, since the tourism’s production of and the domestic tourists’ con-



sumption of hegemonic representations of nationhood form what Werry has called 'public pedagogy' (ibid.).

Iconic tourist landscapes – the White Mountains of New England or the British Lake District – participate in the invention of tradition, becoming the coin of international recognition or the loci for experiences of national belonging. Where national hegemony is forged across deep (racial or ethnic) disparities in power or entitlement, however, its touristic representation manifests as a form of symbolic violence (Werry 2011: xiv). At the same time, Werry argues, tourism, like the state itself is both material and ideational, and one cannot simply critique representations of nation without also looking at the way nationhood is performed (Werry 2011: xiv) (through bodily practices, the making of collective representations, the mobilization of material resources, and ritualized actions). Canada is not only represented as, to borrow Loo's (2006) use of the phrase, a 'State of Nature', but also mobilizes its citizens to perform rituals of nature worship/outdoor recreation as participatory acts of nation-building.

What is particularly interesting in the case of Canadian national parks is the emphasis on active participation in the environment, rather than merely its scenic significance. National parks are advertised through their scenic potential, and it is the visual representation of mountains, waterfalls, and beaches that draw domestic tourists to these places. In her analysis of tourism and the state in New Zealand, Werry (2011) argues that tourism acts as a form of governmentality, 'a political technology that works in classically liberal fashion at arm's length, organizing populations, assigning value, and producing values, not through the top-down application of power, but through the promulgation of desire, habit, and commitment on the part of its subjects' (ibid.: xxv). Canadians are not only asked to worship national nature, but to also 'commune' with it. They are 'trained' to adopt bodily practices that engage the senses in ways that emphasize a visceral relationship with the homeland. One of my interlocutors, a young man, described his desire to hike the WCT as directly related to his upbringing and identity. He understood outdoor recreation as a way to 'test his mettle' (i.e. prove his status as a 'hardy' Canadian):

*My family is pretty outdoorsy, we've done lots of hiking and stuff. I was on a canoe trip on the Churchill River, not this summer but the summer before that. And some of the people who were on the trip with us they suggested hiking the West Coast Trail. And they were pretty experienced and me and my buddy decided it would be a pretty good idea to do it. And it sounded pretty intense, like the knee-deep in mud and everything. And it's one of the most renowned trails in Canada and in North America. We thought it'd be pretty sweet. We really wanted to do something that would, I don't know, test us a bit.*



Not only is the WCT a ritual pilgrimage in the sense that it venerates nature/nation, but it also acts as ritual test of one's ability to corporeally participate in the wilderness-based rituals of citizenship. As Minca (2007: 439) noted:

*The direct, tactile experience of sites of national 'heritage' [...] thus becomes, from the nineteenth century onwards [as the nation-state became the primary political entity], an essential support for new rhetorics of antiquity and inheritance that emplace belonging within landscape.*

The ability to 'rough it', to 'cope with the weather', to 'grin and bear it' was a common part of the hikers' discourse during my fieldwork. The ability to 'hack it' was a matter of pride, and often directly linked to one's 'Canadian-ness'. Around the campfire, one could hear which trails they had hiked, how many times, what wildlife they had seen, what weather they had encountered, and so on. These narrations were filled with a sense of attainment of a genuine, tangible relationship with Canadian nature (and therefore with the nation). Back in Vancouver, after my fieldwork, I joined a hiking meet-up group that explored trails in the Lower Mainland. I found that most of the hikers were newcomers to Canada, and that they had started hiking both to explore their new home and to become part of the community. In western Canada, particularly in British Columbia, outdoor recreation is not only a past-time, but also a 'rite and right of citizenship' (Werry 2011: xxi).

Furthermore, in British Columbia, enculturating new immigrants on how to properly appreciate Canadian nature is part of the process of 'settling' the newcomers. The quotation marks used here imply a double-meaning: the new immigrants are both settled in terms of the help they receive to find housing and employment but are also encouraged to embrace the settler-Canadian cultural norms. As the governmental Parks Canada Agency (2015) suggests on its website:

*One of the best ways to discover some of Canada's most beautiful natural heritage areas is by spending the night in one of Parks Canada's many campgrounds across the country. Starry nights, breathtaking views, tons of activities and a chance to bond with your family around an open campfire... Let these experiences inspire you at Parks Canada-operated campgrounds.*

Starting in 2014, Parks Canada offers equipped campsites on select national park grounds, which are designed to cater to those who are new to camping and lack the necessary equipment. Parks Canada also offers 'learn-to-camp' programs that teach people how to pitch a tent and build a fire. In 2015, Parks Canada also designed a free downloadable app with guidelines on how to camp, including everything from wildlife safety to campfire recipes. The 'learn to camp' part of their website is available in traditional and simplified

Chinese characters, Punjabi, Tagalog and Spanish, as well as the two official languages, English and French. Photos on the website depict more 'ethnic' diversity than usually found in the outdoor recreation promotional materials (Braun 2003).

Graburn defines tourism as 'those structurally-necessary ritualized breaks in routine that define and relieve the ordinary' (1989: 23). He draws on the classic Durkheimian contrast between the sacred and the profane to describe how such ritualized breaks from the everyday serve to reinvigorate the social self for action within cultural structures and strictures. Importantly, the pilgrimage motif addresses not only the symbolism of the tourist's journey, but also the bodily affects. The consumption of signs is, of course, a significant part of the tourist journey (the photographs and the maps were the most common products of the consumptive hikers' practices that I studied). However, a pilgrimage is also a journey defined by physical movement, and therefore has embodied effects and affects. At the end of each day of hiking, sitting around the campfire, hikers jovially compared bruises and scrapes. They discussed moments when they experienced physical obstacles but 'kept going' so that they could 'finish this thing' and 'say they did it'. The visceral engagement with the landscape, the accompanying frustrations, triumphs, bodily aches and pains, as well as the sheer affectivity intrinsic to a physical removal from a familiar landscape, are also very much part of a pilgrimage. I found that the experiences and practices that make up the cultural ritual of wilderness escapism, not just their representations (in promotional tourism literature and outdoor recreation narratives), must also be addressed, for it is through the consumption of these experiences that hikers gained the feeling of a legitimate and socially sanctioned connection to the landscape. Through the participation in a ritual travel across the territory marked as 'sacred' (via its status as a national park), they felt personally connected to the Canadian nation-building project.

Settler-Canadian domestic tourists viewed national parks as part of the Canadian homeland and therefore took on the role of host, as well as that of guests/tourists. International visitors typically positioned themselves as guests, as tourist. Although Canadian tourists recognized, to differing extents, their own status as visitors to this particular territory, they also viewed the trekking of the trail as a means to explore and 'get to know' their home. Minca (2007: 438) argues that '[l]andscape becomes the poetic veneer that the nation-state adopts to colour its calculated translation of places into (national) space'. For domestic tourists, the trail is a part of 'their' domain (the possessive pronoun was used frequently by the hikers I met). Many British Columbians, and Canadians generally, bristle at the use of the term 'tourist' to describe their travels within 'their own country'. However, if we are to recognize First Nations as nations, and indigenous traditional territory as such,

then the label 'tourist' becomes more significant. It is then a recognition that the settlers and the newcomers are ultimately guests, not hosts.

However, the geographically closer the visitor's place of residence to the West Coast Trail, the more contentious the identification of the hiker as tourist becomes. Hikers from Victoria, Nanaimo, and even the closer and smaller settlements of Sooke, Cowichan Lake, and Port Alberni, who also hike the WCT as means of exploration, often term this space as 'their backyard'. Entangled in the label 'domestic tourist' are the layered forms of belonging to and interacting with territory, the conceptualization of citizenship and identity through borders and geographic distance, as well as the complexity of what 'home' itself signifies. Many Canadian hikers, particularly those from British Columbia, saw themselves more as hosts (particularly when interacting with international tourists) than guests. Furthermore, because they 'knew how to camp' or 'had been camping for years' they felt competent in performing a ritual veneration of territory and would give non-Canadians advice on how to 'handle' camping in a Canadian environment. Where to buy the best gear/clothing/fuel/camping food and how to use it a frequent theme of advice doled out to 'foreigners' who often were poked fun at for over or under preparing for the conditions of the trail.<sup>3</sup>

For domestic tourists, national park visitation is intertwined with nation-building, and an embodied competence in participating in the ritual of camping marked them as 'real' Canadians who belonged in this territory. I witnessed many domestic visitors to the West Coast Trail enthusiastically embrace the role of host and guide, doling out travel advice and recommendations 'as locals'. Nearly all of those who performed this role had never set foot in these specific places, or on Ditidaht territory, before. Rather, they saw the entirety of Western Canada as 'home' and 'theirs' to host in.

### 'This isn't Canada, it's Home'

The title of this article is a reference to something my key interlocutor and dear friend, Monique Knighton, said on one sunny summer day in the August of 2013. A visitor sitting at her hamburger stand had asked if he could smoke a cigarette. In Canada, smoking is highly regulated and legally prohibited inside or in close proximity to indoor public spaces, as well as within some outdoor ones (such as parks and beaches). Monique told him that he could smoke. When he asked if it was legal, she responded: 'This isn't Canada, it's home'. Her statement encapsulates an attitude of stubborn opposition to the colonization of her family's ancestral territory and reveals her strategic self-positioning. For, what better way to display one's claim to territory, to home,

3 For example, cotton clothing is difficult to dry in a temperate rainforest environment and a synthetic material was preferred by experienced hikers. I witnessed a domestic hiker dressing-down an international visitor for wearing cotton and for supposedly putting himself in danger of hypothermia.

than to claim the role of the host?<sup>4</sup> Through the assertion of their role as hosts, the Knighton family subverted the deterritorializing settler visions of their home. In a state where First Nations people have been systematically removed from their territory, the offering of hospitality becomes an assertion of ownership. With more than a little intentional irony, selling burgers at Qua-ba-diwa has, for this Ditidaht family, become a political act.

According to the oral history of the Knighton family, Qua-ba-diwa was settled by people from Neah Bay, in what is now Washington State, approximately 300 years ago. This rough calculation may point to the disastrous earthquake and tsunami of 1700 (which occurred before the contact with European peoples). The village of Qua-ba-diwa was an important waypoint for Nuu-chah-nuulth peoples traveling by canoe on what is a notably treacherous section of the coast. The village numbered in the hundreds prior to a major smallpox epidemic in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which decimated the local population, causing colonial authorities to call the Ditidaht peoples 'nearly extinct' (Walbran 1971 [1906]: 82). My friend Peter Knighton's great-grandfather was one of only three survivors of the epidemic. Although the Knightons continued to maintain a residence at Qua-ba-diwa, the Canadian government encouraged them to relocate their main residence to the settlement of Clo-oose, a few kilometers down the coast, in the early twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> At this time, Clo-oose had a school, a mission-run church, and was a regular stop on a coastal ferry route, as it had a small settler community. However, by the 1960s, most of the settler population had left, the school had closed, and the coastal ferry had been canceled. The government then imposed a relocation of the remaining Ditidaht peoples on the coast, including the Knighton family, to an inland reserve at Nitinaht. Improved access to jobs, educational opportunities, and transportation infrastructure was promised. However, the result was an alienation from traditional territory, language loss through residential schooling, and the continuing isolation from employment and other opportunities due to the remote location of the inland reserve. The Knighton family, along with other outer-coast Ditidaht families, argue that it is no accident that their relocation coincided with the formation of a national park on their former homes.

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4 Another powerful way of claiming territory is through the assertion of jurisdiction. The Knightons regularly defied National Park regulations and Canadian laws about pets (their dogs ran freely up and down the beach), garbage (they burnt some of it rather than packing it all out), or the sale and consumption of regulated substances (they sold alcohol and cigarettes and let people consume both on their beach).

5 For a detailed history of the relocation of First Nations people by the British Columbian and Canadian governments onto small reserves, as well as the resulting alienation from their traditional territory and resources, see Harris (2011).

In 1992, Peter and Monique Knighton made the decision to leave the main reserve at Nitinaht and return to Qua-ba-diwa, their ancestral home. However, Qua-ba-diwa, which the state calls Indian Reserve Number 6, now lies within the boundaries of the West Coast Trail Unit in Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. The name of their home has been anglicized to Carmanah, and the main sign of human habitation on the landscape visible to non-local eyes is the Canadian Coast Guard lighthouse with its brightly painted red and white walls over the cliff area that was formerly the Qua-ba-diwa burial site. The lighthouse itself symbolizes both the remoteness of the territory and the imperial control over it. When the Knightons returned home, it was a place fetishized as wilderness and managed as such by the Canadian federal government. A place to visit, not a place to live in.

Yet, the Knightons returned home to live there. They built a cabin for themselves and shelters for their extended family who often visit. Monique grew a magnificent garden, transforming the supposedly rough wild beach into a cultivated space (which in itself is a fascinating inversion of colonial tropes of settlement). The hamburger stand came later. Monique tells the story of several bewildered and bedraggled hikers knocking on her door after seeing smoke from their wood stove. Other hikers asked if they had any food that they could buy. What the Knightons offered freely at first (and still do to those without funds) soon became a growing enterprise, as the sheer number of hikers, several thousand each summer, made it impossible to host without some sort of compensation. *Chez Monique's*, the West Coast Trail hamburger stand was founded and Qua-ba-diwa became known amongst hikers as a particularly hospitable place to visit. The Knightons like to say that they attract 'strays'. Several hikers over the years who have stumbled upon *Chez Monique's* have ended up staying for weeks or even months, helping the elderly couple by chopping wood and laboring in the garden in return for food and shelter. Notably, the cafe doesn't follow the 'rules' of hospitality industry in the capitalist settler-Canadian world. Anyone, whether they purchase something or not, is welcome to stop and have a chat, share her shelter, and even stay for a night or two with the family's permission. Whether one has money or not, no one at Qua-ba-diwa is allowed to go hungry or left out in the rain. This is despite the material difficulties faced by the Knightons upon returning home and creating a place for hospitality at Qua-ba-diwa. There is no electricity and running water, although some hikers who were engineers have helped the family by rigging up a system of hoses running to the kitchen from a nearby creek. Water is untreated and garbage must be either made into compost or burnt. All food is stored in coolers with ice that is boated in by Peter from the closest town, over an hour-long voyage away. The only way to access the Qua-ba-diwa is an approximately forty-kilometer hike on foot. It can also be accessed by boat, but such travel is actually only for those who have the local knowledge of navigating the narrow passage, through



the rock shelves created by Peter's ancestors. In order to keep the operation flowing during the busy season, Peter must travel by boat down the rugged coast to Port Renfrew for supplies every few days. His trip is not always easy or safe. He also transports injured or sick hikers off the trail, a duty that Parks Canada reserves for itself, but is often unable to carry out. In some ways, Qua-ba-diwa operated outside of, and even against, the regulations of the Canadian state. The café has no license to sell cigarettes or alcohol, nor does it pay taxes. Parks Canada officials have tried over years to obstruct the Knightons' occupation of their land and the operation of their café by fining the Knightons for breaches of federal park regulations. In the past, wardens have attempted to penalize them for everything from burying their compost to having their dogs running around without leashes. Most of the fines and charges have been dismissed when brought to court. The government's opposition to the Knightons' return home reveals the political nature of their seemingly innocuous enterprise of selling burgers on a beach to tourists. It is important to stress that the Knightons engage tactically with the settler and capitalist structuring of hospitality, in a way that also asserts indigenous conceptions of territorial ownership and the host role.

When I first approached the Knighton family at the Qua-ba-diwa to discuss my project, their reaction was both skeptical and mildly hostile. With one eyebrow raised, Monique addressed me in what I would later come to know as her habitual 'confrontational' style: 'So you're writing about us, huh? You know the problem with writing things down? It becomes truth. And then, *your* truth becomes *the* truth. Each of us has various truths'. She gestured around to the other hikers sitting in her restaurant (which also served as both a shelter from the rain for wet hikers and, sometimes to the hikers' discomfort, Monique's personal soapbox). 'But, when you write it down, it becomes the truth. And, what if you get it wrong? Lots of people have gotten it wrong.' She went on to describe, with humor, an encounter with an ethno-historian who she claimed had 'got their family history wrong', during which she became angered and chased him out of the Royal BC Archives in Victoria all the way to his car, whence he made a hasty escape. After a long discussion during a rainstorm, as I tried to defend my project as 'not like that', Peter, her soft-spoken husband, quietly interjected: 'You should call it [the research project] "Why are we still in the way?"'. Both her exclamations about the nature of *truth* and his quiet intervention encapsulate the feeling of the people of Qua-ba-diwa and other First Nations people caught in the works of the tourism production, the feeling that they are understood as either artefacts or obstacles. Their culture is objectified, made into something to be cataloged, examined and consumed, but they are also seen as recalcitrant anachronisms, threatening the illusion of wilderness cherished by the tourist imagination. When indigenous peoples follow their own paths on trajectories that diverge from those of the settler state, when they do not fall into line,



they are made to feel as being in the state's way. And yet, abundant evidence, particularly in the middle of the trail, reveals people going 'off-program' and asserting their role as territorial hosts. The Knightons built their own access trail between Qua-ba-diwa and an inland logging road, a move deemed illegal by Parks Canada. Together with their dogs (again, against Park regulations), the Knightons roam 'their' beach, and bathe and wash clothes in 'their' river. Peter drives his boat in and out of the harbor, and fishes for salmon and ling cod, in an area where private watercrafts are heavily restricted. All visitations to the WCT Park Reserve are highly regulated, with hikers having to register and cautioned to not wander from the main route lest they be fined for invading ecologically or culturally sensitive areas that the Parks administration wants undisturbed. But one does not follow a linear route in one's home; one rather moves according to their needs or wishes. In some ways, it is the indigenous peoples' movements 'off-trail' (and off-program) that most clearly mark the West Coast Trail as their home-space, and their role as territorial hosts.

### Home as a Refuge in the Wilderness

September 2013 was a lovely month for hiking. At the beginning of the month, I hiked the entire trail from Port Renfrew to Bamfield, taking a leisurely ten days to do it. Then, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September, I began what was to be the final trip of the season, heading into to Qua-ba-diwa from the Bamfield end, spending a few days there, then heading out via the same northern trailhead. The weather was gorgeous and sunny, even hot at times, and all seemed to be going well. However, on the third day of the trip, the wind picked up, blowing vigorously, despite the sunshine. As I crossed paths with the Ditidaht Trail Guardians near the Nitinat Narrows, they warned me that a storm was coming. Having encountered what I thought to be 'stormy' weather on the trail before, I thought that I could handle a bit of rain, so I continued onwards. I set up a camp with some other hikers at Dare Beach, about ten feet past the previous night's high tide line, made a cozy fire, and watched the sunset, then the full moon rising. It was 'postcard perfect'.

At four in the morning, I woke up to strange clicking/buzzing that sounded like an odd sort of rain. However, the sound originated from something hitting against the bottom section of my fly, not from above. It was tiny little sand flies, jumping about. Usually, these creatures stay near the tide line, so I wondered why they were suddenly descending on my tent. As I lay there wondering, I heard a shout from a fellow camper. 'Hey, our tent is wet!' I peeked out. They had camped about a meter closer to the ocean than I had, and the water had crept up, far past the previous high tide lines, until it was lapping at their tent. A panicked move, and then head-scratching ensued. We had camped far above the previous night's high tide at 10.5 feet, and that night,

it was supposed to be 11 feet. Why was the tide so high? Looking out at the ocean, even in the dark, I discerned the reason. The waves were at least twice the size of what I had ever seen before on this section of beach. The wind had also picked up, and the rain was starting to pour down. In my sleepy state, I did not fully realize the size and the power of the storm that was descending on us. I decided to just huddle up in my sleeping bag, wait and hope that it would get better later in the morning.

It did not get better, and by ten in the morning, the rising tide again became a cause for worry. The others had already left, as they were on a stricter schedule than me and had to finish the trail by a certain date. So, when I emerged from my tent, I was alone and wet. I felt like I was in a completely different environment, even though I had hiked this section of the trail on dozens of occasions. It had rained so much in the past few hours that creeks, which were barely dripping the day before, were now raging torrents, and the tide threatened to sweep over logs and dunes that the ocean probably had not touched since the hiking season began. I knew these types of storms could happen, but the difference between the knowledge of what it could be like and my actual experience of a west coast storm caused confusion and disbelief.

Wetter than I had ever been in my life, my goal was to reach *Chez Monique's*. Unfortunately, as I had made a late start from camp, I had to battle a high tide, which, strengthened by the storm surge, kept lapping at my ankles. What I did to get to Monique's was certainly dangerous. Descending from the ladder from the lighthouse, I found that the tide had already swamped the beach, and that the waves were bashing up against the piles of driftwood logs under the headland. I could see *Monique's*, but the only way to get there was to crawl on hands and feet along precarious piles of driftwood logs, which were being battered by the waves, rolling and crashing into each other. I crawled over the logs, moving during the intervals between the waves and slipping and sliding on my hands and knees.

When I arrived, my fellow campers shouted a greeting, and Monique bellowed some sort of combination of a welcome and admonishment of my stupidity. She and her helpful WOOFers<sup>6</sup> cooked up a big pot of soup for me and the other bedraggled hikers to sip on while we dried out our wet items by her wood stove. The waves came so high that they began to threaten her shelter, and a fast, little creek of rainwater began to flow into the dip between her kitchen and the ocean. As the storm grew worse, Monique and Peter encouraged everyone who made it to their home to take shelter there for the

6 The acronym 'WOOFers' stands for Willing Workers on Organic Farms, a global organization of volunteer farmworkers, usually international tourists, who labor on the agricultural endeavors of their hosts in return for food and lodging. The WOOFers the Knightons hosted were usually young people from a variety of European countries who stayed with them from periods of three weeks to three months.

night. She shrugged off our repeated thanks for her hospitality by saying ‘It’s a storm! What would the ancestors say if I didn’t help people during a storm like this!’ Humble in the face of the storm, I endured her tongue-lashing and gratefully drank hot tea and listened to Knighton family stories of other storms, and the different moments when the newcomers to their territory had made use of their hospitality after the unexpected ‘wildness’ of the ‘Canadian wilderness’ had taken them by surprise.

Although the West Coast trail continues to be shaped by colonialism, the representations of space promoted by the tourism industry, and the grand national narratives of wilderness, these historical processes are in constant dialogue with the affective, immanent experiences of place. Anthropologists of tourism (for example, Bruner 2005, Edensor 2001) who have engaged in participant observation research note that, although social institutions and representations play an important role in tourist narratives, these are always negotiated through the vector of personal experience. Picard (2018) follows Bruner in noting that

*collective institutions like sign-worlds, conventionalized gazes, or the liturgical order of tourism rituals certainly supply tourists with a meta-narrative frame leading to and through the journey and providing means to articulate and communicate the journey’s experiences. Yet, he [Bruner] argues (and I follow him on this point), they are not equivalent, not even in a metaphorical way, to the emotions, transformations and deceptions that define the actual experience of the journey, whatever its particular format (ibid.: 46).*

Although I focus on critiques of grand narratives of what I call ‘nature-nationalism’, as well as the settler-colonialism, and the notion of ‘wilderness’ as the guiding factors in hikers’ interpretations of their journeys along the trail, I also recognize that moments of affect, of uncertainty, of bodily awareness, and of an environment that does not necessarily align with the whims or desires of humans, also shape the journey. Furthermore, there are constant imaginative negotiations that must be made when tourists encounter people, places, things, environments and experiences that do not fit neatly into pre-conceived expectations. The cognitive dissonance created by such ‘matter out of place’ is not, I argue, one that can be easily resolved; the resulting space of uncertainty may also create the potential for change.

Although the national discourse of settler-Canadians as people ‘at home’ in nature encourages millions of Canadians each year to participate in ritualized outdoor recreation practices, the actual experience of moving through space opens up the possibility of uprooting the static depictions of ‘home’.

The destabilization of self that arises in the difficulty of meeting basic needs opens up a space for communication and communion with oth-

ers, across social boundaries and hierarchies, but also across 'home-making' practice in the ontological sense. What I am suggesting then is that the experience of dealing, intimately, with an unknown and unstable environment where physical discomfort can be acute, may actually intensify the formation of connections to other people encountered, and that such encounters are more likely to create moments of *communitas*. As Werry notes:

*Tourism accentuates a paradox [...] familiar from theories of nationalism and globalization: those political formations that appear most stable, hermetic and enduring – nation, ethnic collectives, and the state – are constituted through circulation. The constant passage of people, ideas, images, and capital, both within their borders and abroad, makes these constructs imaginable, but their continual translation and their becoming through motion is an unsettling condition, always threatening to unseat the certainties of permanence and power to which they pretend. (2011: xvii)*

When the settler-Canadian is forced to switch from the status of host to that of guest due to a lack of intimate knowledge with territory, and through the need for the help and hospitality of others, there opens up the potential for a re-evaluation of, to quote one hiker-guest, 'whose land this really is'. Furthermore, through the acts of hospitality, the Knighton family and other indigenous peoples I have encountered on the trail assert their role as hosts, and therefore as the legitimate owners of their territory.

Tourism is British Columbia's third largest industry. While the relationship between indigenous peoples and the tourist industry has often been characterized by the exploitation, appropriation, and deterritorialization of First Nations cultures, there are generative possibilities within the hospitality paradigm for the reterritorialization of First Nations places through the assertion of their role of hosts. Of course, the idea of 'host' nations is one which has been itself appropriated by the Canadian settler-state in some instances, for example through the (mostly token) references to indigenous host nations during the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. However, I argue that, when the role of host is taken on by First Nations, not just symbolically but in an active and territorializing manner, the possibilities to challenge the dominant spatial narratives also open up. The Knightons' engagement with tourism is more syncretic than assimilative, fusing indigenous ideas of territorial ownership and the role of host with tourist ideals of hospitality. By continuously acting as consummate hosts – feeding, sheltering, entertaining, and educating visitors to their home – the Knighton family have reterritorialized the Pacific Rim wilderness as Qua-ba-diwa, as a thriving, lived-in, and peopled space. Furthermore, their adamantness that Qua-ba-diwa is not Canada, but rather *home* reinforces the deterritorializing force of the state. This is a particularly

important point since the national parks in Canada continue to be used as markers of the settlement visions of 'home-making' in the wilderness, drawing upon the colonial ideals of *terra nullius*. The Knightons thus challenge the settler conceptions of Canadian wilderness by fashioning a place that belongs to them, the burger-flipping hosts of Qua-ba-diwa.

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Lauren Harding is a PhD Candidate at the University of British Columbia, Department of Anthropology. She is also an instructor in anthropology at Simon Fraser University and Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Her areas of research interest include settler-colonial studies, the anthropology of tourism and environmental anthropology. Her research was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. She currently lives and works on the unceded Coast Salish territory known as Vancouver.