UCLA
American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title
Settling the Boom: The Sites and Subjects of Bakken Oil

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1cb4b0qj

Journal
American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 49(1)

ISSN
0161-6463

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Publication Date
2026-04-02

DOI
10.17953/A3.53970

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Settling the Boom: The Sites and Subjects of Bakken Oil. Edited by Mary E. Thomas and Bruce Braun. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2023. 248 pages. $27.00 paperback; $108 hardcover; $27 e-book.

Settling the Boom examines how oil extraction becomes not merely an industry but a story people tell about time, land, and belonging. The authors ask how the Bakken boom came to feel inevitable—how media, policy, and other everyday discourse made it appear a natural extension of settler life rather than a violent restructuring of place. Drawing on scholarship in petrocultures and critical indigeneities, the chapters argue that the boom operated as an assemblage that reinforced settler futurity, heterosexual family ideals, and the belief that growth is always worth the cost. Their critiques of white supremacy, capitalism, and heterosexism are pointed and persuasive. Although gestures toward Fort Berthold dynamics are thinner than the rest of the analysis—especially for readers who watched the boom reshape their homelands, endanger their communities, and even blot out the stars—the volume offers a clear account of how oil booms both produce and are produced by structures of power.

The book contends that extraction must cultivate the temporal and affective conditions that make its presence seem justified and inevitable. The Bakken, they show, became a site where the "settlerist ordering of time and place" circulated narratives of progress, stability, and opportunity that framed the disruptions of extraction as temporary discomfort on the way to a brighter future. The authors' citation of Lauren Berlant's concept of cruel optimism effectively explains why communities cling to fantasies of upward mobility even as material conditions of life curdle. The chapters trace the aesthetic, political, and infrastructural labor required to sustain these narratives, offering a conceptual frame that reveals how extractive zones depend on fragile promises about the future and who is imagined to inhabit it.

Several chapters productively demonstrate this approach, but Kai Bosworth's analysis of the Dakota Access Pipeline struggle will particularly interest Indigenous studies scholars. Bosworth reframes DAPL as a conflict over who can successfully claim vulnerability and how that claim becomes a political resource within settler law and security regimes. By showing how police, pipeline officials, and local leaders cast Indigenous resistance as aggression, Bosworth reveals how the oil assemblage works to suppress Native refusal. Readers familiar with the militarized response at Standing Rock will recognize the aesthetic and rhetorical labor he describes.

Mary Thomas' chapter on settler heteropatriarchy examines how white domesticity functioned as a technology of settlement in the Bakken. Her insight that violence against Indigenous women garners less alarm because it does not endanger (and may even support) the reproduction of white, middle-class life is especially incisive. The dynamic she traces, in which the safety of Native women, children, and LGBTQ

people is treated as peripheral to the region's moral order, will be familiar to those readers who experienced the boom firsthand.

Jessica Lehman and Bruce Braun's chapter on "dark side" narratives documents how stories of disorder—sex work, man camps, bar fights—were deployed to expand policing and moral regulation. Their diagonal reading acknowledges real harms while showing how such narratives reify a settler sense of order that obscures structural violence, including the heightened exposure of Indigenous communities.

Together, these chapters offer robust theoretical and methodological resources to understand the Bakken. Limits emerge, however, when the text gestures towards Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation politics without sustained inquiry. The authors clearly explain their choice to focus on white supremacist and capitalist formations, but while the book excels at analyzing the Bakken as a metaphor for settler temporality, its analysis of the region as an Indigenous homeland remains for future scholarship.

Settling the Boom enters a thriving conversation on Indigenous critiques of extraction, and one of its most distinctive contributions lies in how it extends that conversations into the realms of time, affect, and aesthetics. With contributions from scholars such as Nick Estes, Kyle White, Audra Simpson, LeAnne Howe, and Winona LaDuke, the volume demonstrates how fossil fuel development intertwines with ongoing structures of dispossession and racialized vulnerability. The authors mobilize Mark Rifkin's theorization of settler time in their analyses of planning, media, and policing, and Elizabeth Povinelli's work on the violence of late liberal governance underpins their argument that infrastructures shape how people feel and imagine the future. Their intervention contributes to the growing scholarship skeptical of extractive inevitability by revealing the narrative and aesthetic labor required to make extraction appear not only inevitable but desirable.

At times, the book's analytic power is limited by its brief engagement in Indigenous governance and temporal projects. Tex Hall's claim to be "more sovereign by the barrel," for instance, is taken up as a passing example rather than as a position that requires as much determined and thoughtful critique as the settler heteropatriarchal narratives of other regional leaders. Likewise, while the authors provide incisive accounts of settler temporality, they do not fully contend with the voices or frameworks of Indigenous women and two-spirit or LGBTQ tribal members. These gaps point to fertile ground for future research centered on Indigenous governance, labor, and political life—work that will illuminate how Native nations imagine, contest, and enact their own futures.

This volume will be an excellent addition to courses on petrocultures, extractive capitalism, environmental humanities, and critical geography. Faculty instructors on DAPL, late liberal governance, or the cultural politics of extraction will find several chapters that can stand alone as compelling case studies. The book's conceptual clarity and interdisciplinary range make it a powerful tool to understand the broader structures that shape extractive regions, and its model for diagonal reading will be particularly useful for teaching students to work across policy documents, media, and public discourse.

Scholars working on comparative Indigenous extractive zones, petro-infrastructures, and the cultural politics of energy will find this book especially valuable. Its analytic

framework provides tools to trace settler structures and temporalities across other regions shaped by extraction, and it opens space for Indigenous-centered studies of boom governance, labor, and the lived economies of extraction.

Ultimately, *Settling the Boom* teaches that oil's inevitability is not a fact but an achievement—something built through stories, anxieties, and institutions that labor to stabilize settler futures. The book maps that machinery with clarity and invites further work that centers the political, cultural, and economic life of Indigenous communities navigating extractive regimes. Yet the question that connects all extractive homelands remains: how do we chart our futures when someone else's has been built to dim the very stars we use to navigate?

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