

Extracting Inuit: The *of the North* Controversy and the White Possessive
[ABSTRACT]

Bruno Cornellier

This article critically explores the heated controversy surrounding screenings of Québécois filmmaker Dominic Gagnon's found-footage documentary *of the North* (2015), into which he inserted "found" clips of northern Inuit life he had extracted from YouTube as aesthetic capital for southern cinephile jouissance. In conversation with Aileen Moreton-Robinson's theorization of the white possessive, I propose that the vocabulary employed by many of the settler cultural institutions and critics defending the film—e.g., the democratic imperative to protect artistic freedom and allow reasoned dialogue about "difficult" texts to flourish in public spaces—is inextricable from the type of entitlements sustaining settler colonial claims to indigenous lands, and to indigeneity itself, as part of a free and boundless Lockean common. I argue that such default recourse to the democratic imperative of restorative dialogue actually fails to do what it pretends it is meant to do: via mutual understanding and recognition, to solve or resolve the systemic colonial inequalities that Inuit opponents of the film wish to make visible. This common recourse to the "bestowing" of a deliberative public space in the name of a *necessary* intercultural dialogue reflects the very structure of feeling of liberal colonial settlement and thus reveals a certain cinephilia's subjective and material investment in the white possessive.

To purchase the full article:

<http://uclajournals.org/doi/abs/10.17953/aicrj.40.4.cornellier>