



Beyond Constraint

Middle/Passages of
Blackness and Indigeneity
in the Radical Tradition

SHONA N. JACKSON

Beyond
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*Middle/Passages of Blackness and
Indigeneity in the Radical Tradition*

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Note on Terminology and Access

Throughout this book, the terms *native* and *Indigenous Peoples* designate first peoples of Africa or the Americas (as indicated). For readers unfamiliar with the Caribbean, *Indians* refers to South Asians in the modern era, rather than to Indigenous Peoples, as it does in pre-nineteenth century writing on the region. The latter are instead contemporaneously referred to as *Amerindians*. I retain the word sparingly to avoid confusion. The term *Creoles* refers to all non-Indigenous Caribbean peoples. The concept of Creole Indigeneity, developed in my first book, describes processes of becoming native enacted by the descendants of formerly enslaved and indentured peoples in the Caribbean that rest on the displacement of first peoples in the Americas. Beginning in the introduction, I use the term *involuntary settlers*, rather than migrants or arrivants, to refer to the “non-indigenous, ‘settler’ populations of largely blacks and South Asians in the Caribbean, designated by native peoples in Guyana, for instance, as ‘coastlanders.’”¹ In *Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean* (2012), I posited *involuntary settlerhood* as a way of recognizing when Creoles articulate settler logics and have the capacity to deploy settler colonialism’s constitutional mechanisms. I acknowledge the specific differences of this settlerhood, in which the alienated labour of those denied human rights and the rights of personhood has to be converted into political right. As applied to the discussion of black labour in the Americas,

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the specific focus of this book, *involuntary settlerhood* captures the burden of two labours borne by the descendants of Africans brought to the Caribbean and the Americas: their physical labour on the land for the white, settler-master's well-being, and a more profound labour for their own being and belonging. This second labour manipulates and rejects the work black bodies do for white humanity. While this latter labour functions as a locus for their new world indigeneities, those that were bound to their flesh rather than their stars and the land, it is overdetermined by a political economy, regional grammar, and postcolonial legal system that valorizes the first labour, the work for the white settler-master. *Involuntary settlerhood* therefore signals key differences from normative, settler contexts and modes of continuity with white, settler colonial power. I, therefore, distinguish Creole indigeneity and processes of involuntary settlerhood from *Black Indigeneity*, which is theorized throughout as a process of both cleavage and relation.

Throughout, I have avoided using "New World" as much as possible and instead use *Americas* to refer both to Caribbean and Latin American countries, collectively, and, at times, to the hemisphere's countries more broadly. I use the term *error* to refer to the Columbian encounter with the Americas and the Caribbean. In the book, the non-American spelling of *labour* signals the cultural and intellectual tradition that is the point of engagement for this discussion of black diaspora histories of coerced work. Although the book's argument rests on a distinction between labour and work, only in chapter 1 do I begin to unpack and adhere firmly to this distinction. Since the terms *labour* and *work* are technically interchangeable, I italicize them in the later chapters when I need the reader to engage with or read for the distinction. I capitalize *Conversion* and *Elimination* throughout to signal them as definitive processes. I also capitalize *Sovereignty* and *Independence*. The term *middle/passage*, written with an interruption, indicates a strategic difference from normative understandings and articulations of the Middle Passage and Atlantic history.

Finally, as someone living with a disability, I daily navigate around constraints placed on my academic work. In particular, I am limited to material that has no other markings than regular typesetting and that can either be scanned and accessed through OCR or which exists in a format that screen readers recognize. At times, I could not use the original source of a term or consider what would typically be a core or essential work. The most glaring way in which this impacted the book is the lack of a reading of Gerald

Vizenor's *Manifest Manners* and Sylvia Wynter's *Black Metamorphosis*. This limitation was exacerbated by the pandemic. Therefore, I heavily reference digital works such as Kindle editions of books or free online digitized texts. I simply could not consider many works because of this limitation, though they would have made the arguments stronger.

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Preface

This project is the second of a three-part exploration of how the legacies of coerced labour in the Caribbean shape the social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions of the antagonism between Creoles and Indigenous Peoples.² It emerged from questions raised by my first book, *Creole Indigeneity*, where I outlined a central problem in Caribbean history: how the plantation-based labour of primarily enslaved black and indentured South Asian workers under colonialism became the foundation for Creoles' material and political rights to the postcolonial state. I traced narratives in which Caribbean lands were articulated as the patrimony of modern work on the slave and post-slave plantation. Creoles linked labour—their *raison d'être* for being in the region—to rights by invoking plantation labour as their own prior time in the Americas to supplant Indigenous rights-claims tied to first occupation and belonging.³ Colonial labour, therefore, became the basis for *involuntary*, settler modes of (Creole) indigeneity.

What repeatedly surfaced in *Creole Indigeneity* was the excision of Indigenous Peoples from the region's most prominent and well-cited labour histories, particularly those in the black radical tradition. This excision, I suggested, was a key structural element of Creole claims to the independent nation state as an outcome of Creoles' own labour struggle. Since labour is both the reason for the subordination of enslaved and indentured peoples and the pathway to rights in the postcolonial state, the historical and cultural depictions of Indigenous Peoples as non-labourers reinforced their

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political disenfranchisement. Rather than surplus labour, they are instead *beyond* labour, figuring frequently as objects of international, local, and national governments' development discourses that iterate development as uplift and inclusion.⁴ Moreover, the constant imperiling of Indigenous lives on their lands by industry incursion necessary for the national good allows the postcolonial government to reinforce Indigenous lack.

Creoles bear continuing responsibility in Indigenous Peoples' dispossession because they inherited imperial and colonial space clearing, treaty making, geographic circumscription of Indigenous space, and the disavowal of Indigenous kinship's sovereign dimensions as a political structure.⁵ In addition to the formal mechanisms constraining Indigenous rights, like Guyana's 2006 Amerindian Act or untitled lands, a key feature of involuntary settlerhood is the deployment of a language of extermination, assimilation, and the superseding of Indigenous Peoples' time. That language retroactively recasts Indigenous extermination and supersession not as moments of imperial conquest but as *the post-contact, post-slavery fulfillment of a historically necessary moment of overcoming pre-contact indigeneity, within which indigeneity must be understood as a failure of labour*.

While for Creoles the nation is an outcome of their ancestors' work (in the colonial period) and their own organized labour struggle (in the early twentieth century), they represent Indigenous labour, in contrast, as having neither such *durée* nor terminus. Such labour has only a mere immediacy or a now that registers as a kind of failure, which manages the threat their status poses as both citizens and external sovereigns of the postcolonial. Indigenous Peoples have always worked (in Guyana, for example). Although, not only do they increasingly occupy civil service positions traditionally held by blacks and South Asians, but they work in mining, logging, farming, tourism, etc.), their underrepresentation in our labour histories means that theirs is not a labour for the nation. As *citizens* (domestic subjects of the postcolonial nation-state), Indigenous Peoples' comparative lack of productivity confirms the inability of the telos of modern capital to capture their labours. As extra or *external sovereigns* (occupying spaces whose abridged sovereignty differs from and exceeds that of the nation-state), their presumed failure limits their freedoms by signaling the underdevelopment of their own titled lands.

What is striking about all of this is that in the twenty-first-century Caribbean, we don't have a comprehensive way of talking about Indigenous Peoples' actual work (past and present) *together with* the collective labour of Creoles. We don't have a way of thinking about Indigenous labour outside

the need to manage it and its threat to the postcolonial state's originary falacy, which is generated out of coloniality and resistance rather than what is prior and parallel to both. Any effort to simply (re)write a labour history cannot utilize an additive model to address Indigenous Peoples' own histories of work. Such a move would reduce indigeneity to similitude, making Indigenous bodily labours accessible only by translation through Creole ones. In short, Indigenous Peoples' legibility as workers would depend on their ability to be read through the same lens as all other workers, and *their purchase* on the modern state would still place them in a position of lack. Moreover, the postcolonial state would become the horizon of their extant, *ante-colonial* sovereignties.

The goal of *Beyond Constraint* is to find a more nuanced way to approach Indigenous labour as a central, constitutive part of regional labour history that allows us to understand political economy more broadly and to formulate methods of study. It engages the interwoven histories and legacies of franchise and settler colonialism to offer a way beyond the impasses of black and Indigenous lives around the entrenched and overlapping dialectics of labour and land, and independence and sovereignty. Exploring critical links between blackness and indigeneity, it brings Caribbean, American, Indigenous, settler colonial, and postcolonial studies together with (black) Atlantic studies, the black radical tradition, and particular philosophical strands within black left studies more broadly.

This work engages Indigenous Studies from the explicitly marked, outside position of a nonnative scholar. I use *us* and *we* throughout to designate both my conjoined authorial subject position and my position as a shifting academic reader interested in black and native studies. I also use *we* at times to refer to the collective subordination of black and native peoples without presuming a native perspective, and primarily in order to diagnose features of the black radical tradition specifically and capitalist political economy generally.⁶ Since a critical impasse for black and native studies is our textual traditions—that is, where we would and would not read each other—the book offers deliberate and at times *laboured* readings of texts in black and native studies by Caribbean, North American, and other writers, showing just how they have been speaking and can continue to speak to each other. In these readings, I intensively trace my arguments to show divergences and profound alignments between black and native thought.

Like the groundbreaking *Crossing Waters*, *Crossing Worlds* and more recent works like *Otherwise Worlds*, in this book I am interested in how

blacks and Indigenous Peoples relate to each other, where *we* have been forced into antagonism, and where we can begin to create new epistemologies and methods for our scholarship and interactions, particularly around labour and anticapitalist critique. This book does the difficult work of facing both anti-indigeneity in black studies and anti-blackness in Indigenous Studies: the epistemological resuscitation of the very political and economic structures governing our mutual subordination. *Beyond Constraint* indeed moves us beyond the limits imposed by our mutual histories of violent oppression and the academic conventions requiring us to reencounter and redeploy that violence as the absolute breach of our relation.

Beyond Constraint is neither a recovery of postcolonialism, a defense of Afropessimism, an embrace of black optimism, nor an endorsement or rejection of anticapitalist, Marxist critique. It is meant simply as a tool for survival and the breath we were so violently denied under settler colonialism in both its normative and involuntary forms. As I have argued elsewhere, not only were captured and enslaved blacks stolen from the lands they were on; those lands now exist for their descendants only on our skin, and our violent disciplining is the constant forcing of us into and onto our skins. What is urgently needed for blacks is an unfolding into spaces and lands that can house the centuries of packed earth in our flesh: our new breath. However, this unfolding can happen neither on settler lands nor without deference to, respect for, and restoration of Indigenous Peoples' prior sovereignties, which exceed *all* forms of settler right. Our task, then, is as much about challenging global anti-blackness and rejecting settler power as it is about supporting Indigenous sovereignties on a wider scale.

The book is divided into three parts. Its principal intervention is staged in part I, "Labour, Work, and Middle/Passages," which turns to the religious concept of Conversion as an economic analytic to elaborate what I refer to in shorthand as the labour-work dialectic in the Caribbean. That analysis leads to *Beyond Constraint's* four key arguments, of which two are discussed in part I: First, Conversion was not strictly a religious phenomenon that supported the profit motives of the Catholic Church or the would-be empires of Spain and Portugal in the Americas. It is, instead, a structural element in the institution of a formal split between visible, productive work and invisible, unproductive labour, within which black and Indigenous Peoples, respectively, come to be located. Conversion is, in short, the first formative elaboration of the labour-work divide in the Americas, pitting black and native lives in opposition around labour and land, respectively. This delinking of unproductive labour and productive work is an originary

break serving as the wedge between blackness and indigeneity, on the one hand, and independence and sovereignty as the opposed political horizons of blacks and Indigenous Peoples, on the other. In identifying this strategic and historical delinking of *unproductive labour and productive work*, I produce a recuperative method for a regional political economy within which we can read Creole and Indigenous labour together. The second principal argument of part I is that we need to resist the (black) Atlantic and dominant readings of the Middle Passage that sustain this formative break between productive work and unproductive labour. We need to rethink the Middle Passage as a singular origin for enslaved (and indentured) labour, or as originating with black transit across the Atlantic. Instead, the Middle Passage not only begins with Indigenous Peoples; that beginning should be the interpretive lens for later black, chattel movements, and a *continuing* point of entanglement of black and native lives and labours.

Chapter 1, “Conversion,” rejects the dominant claim that Indigenous Peoples disappeared from plantation labour—and hence from the history of work in the region—because they were replaced by enslaved and indentured labour. Instead, it argues that Indigenous, post-contact labour vanishes from labour history because it is delinked from the category of just, unfree (or justly bound) labour and sutured permanently with Conversion, the religious-ontological function of the Columbian-era discoveries. As a religious imperative, Conversion fulfills an extractive or devaluing economic function, making Indigenous lands valuable *over* Indigenous bodies, while Indigenous actions are devalued as spiritual *labours*. In contrast, blacks are linked with the Middle Passage, a process that adds value, making their bodies worth more than the lands from which they were stolen. These twin poles of the Atlantic economy (Conversion and the Middle Passage) separate black and Indigenous labours in perpetuity. Moreover, *both* blacks and Indigenous Peoples are involved in processes of adding *and* subtracting value. Both are embedded in Conversion processes *and* middle/passages oriented around the ability to be converted from and to something else.

Conversion is the process that institutes a structural break between productive work and unproductive labour in the Americas, putting in place the labour-work dialectic necessary to proto-capital accumulation. I use Afropessimist and black optimist critical thought to read this distinction between labour and work in Hannah Arendt’s critique of Karl Marx. I argue that the labour-work dialectic is *prior* to the land-labour break that disarticulates native and black lives. Initiated at conquest, this dialectic aligns blacks with (regimes of) productive work and Indigenous Peoples

with unproductive labours. It is the structural opposition of anti-blackness to anti-indigeneity, which generates and sustains the antagonisms of land and labour and Sovereignty and Independence. It is also fundamental to the form that global capital will ultimately take, depending not just on black and native subordination, but crucially on the relation of anti-blackness to anti-indigeneity, and hence to the disarticulation of our struggles for freedom. Without the relation of these antagonisms, capitalism loses its accumulative structures and foundational gestures of separating what is productive (and hence can be/come sovereign *after* conquest) from what is not (which resists settler sovereignties tied to work/accumulation). In examining the labour-work dialectic, I use contemporary approaches to primitive accumulation, suggesting that we can rethink labour and land as the purportedly separate spheres of blackness and indigeneity. This allows for recognition of how both Indigenous Peoples and blacks are subjected to common processes of Conversion (the ability to be converted from and to value), and to Elimination as both endure forms of (land) dispossession and (labour) exploitation. Elimination and Death, then, are not the singularly distinct, respective spheres of indigeneity and blackness. Instead, they must be understood in terms of exchange and continuity between initiative and punitive forms of Death/death that sustain anti-indigeneity and anti-blackness as the elaboration of the labour-work divide. By tracking the dialectic as both a structural element of accumulation regimes and the limit of political-economic critique, the chapter sets the stage for confronting the constraints of political economy for representing black labour and recovering Indigenous labour in later chapters.

In contrast to dominant ways of thinking the Atlantic and the Middle Passage as part of its formal constitution (i.e., the relation between process and outcome), chapter 2, “Toward a Middle/Passage Methodology,” reads the Middle Passage in terms of its central function, Conversion, arguing that not only blacks undergo a Middle Passage, but so do Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, Indigenous enslavement is a recursively generative context for black enslavement in the Americas. Recognizing the *prior* occurrence of the “wake” and the “hold” for Indigenous Peoples shifts us away from dominant approaches that either omit Indigenous Peoples from Atlantic history or approach them only through the dialectic, including their actions through translation or Conversion. Instead, the chapter reads for the Conversion processes that shape the middle/passage crossings or entanglements of blacks and Indigenous peoples. Understanding Conversion’s complexity as the formative structure of the Middle Passage, I suggest, allows us to begin reading

Indigenous labour back into Caribbean history as the history not only of a forgotten Atlantic but of the *first* Atlantic *and* a parallel, contiguous, and continuous mode of work that strategically undoes the telos of the Atlantic proper.

This middle/passage methodology, or reading for *plural* crossings, circumvents the breaches of grammar and time that have disarticulated black, South Asian, and native labour history in the Caribbean, creating a condition of possibility for reading them together. Moreover, if, as critics have suggested, the Middle Passage is interminable for blacks, it is also interminable for Indigenous Peoples, constituting the perpetual Conversion and entanglement of both groups although the contemporaneous middle/passages they endure control blackness and indigeneity for different reasons: for the being of the human same, and to control the sovereign occurrence of non-settler (Indigenous) labours, respectively. The middle/passage, which I write with a pause to signal a distinction from dominant thinking, is what I suggest must literally become the method for our approaches to (labour) history. Passage (i.e., perpetual, epiphenomenal rather than unidirectional crossing) becomes a method through which to read the perpetual entanglement of blackness and indigeneity instead of what have normatively been understood as the breaks between them. Passage, as an alternative way of reading history, thus elaborates our labours and our freedoms in terms of their co-relation.

In part 2, “Natively Rethinking the Caribbean Radical Tradition,” I elaborate the book’s third major argument: the radical tradition does not deliberately exclude Indigenous Peoples’ labour. Rather, their excision results from the affirmation—in works by authors from C. L. R. James to Walter Rodney—of this break between productive work and unproductive labour as a structural element of labour analysis in the region. Until we see how the dialectic operates in the tradition and reject its strategic delinking of our bodily labours, it will remain an impasse for black-native relations in postcolonial and settler states. This part identifies and works through the lingering tensions in the radical tradition between resistant black labours and those labours that were necessary for the colonizer’s (white) humanity. These tensions mean that the tradition retains an epistemological account of labour that depends on, and therefore must reproduce, the labour-work break as coextensive with the labour category itself. Ultimately, I demonstrate how the tradition remains open to black and American Indigenous labour despite extant limitations.

Chapter 3, “Left Limits and Black Possibilities,” is the first of three chapters to effect a new reading of the radical tradition. It identifies sites of

rupture and opening, allowing us to move beyond both the anti-blackness of the labour category and the anti-indigeneity of black left critique. The chapter focuses on close readings of the tensions in Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism* because he explicitly articulates the tradition in and for itself without reinscribing the labour-work dialectic at key moments, while accounting for (black) indigeneity rather than focusing singularly on black oppression or enslavement as the origin for the radical tradition. These moments or openings are Elimination, Time and Marronage. Robinson's work is critical in demonstrating that to the extent that we see Indigenous Elimination and black Death as the separate spheres of Settler and Franchise colonialism, respectively, we reinforce the break between Exploitation (accumulative work) and Dispossession (unproductive land) undergirding the labour-work divide, which produces anti-blackness and anti-indigeneity as structurally necessary for capital accumulation and to each other. My first intervention in Robinson demonstrates that Elimination is a form of perpetual death that moves across both settler and extractive colonialisms, preventing the re-installation of either bodily or land-based sovereignties. Robinson offers, I also argue, a critical recovery of black labour *before* black work in the resistance of proletarianization as the conscription of blackness for political representation.

Through Robinson's work, I argue that the radical tradition comprises two strands: one affirming black radical critique of capital and the ontological break between the black and the human on which accumulation is based, and another opening toward indigeneity and parallel forms of labour that are not *only* routed through this critique. I also call for resituating enslaved labours in terms of Indigenous Peoples' sovereign labour rather than those of the settler desire that still lingers in the black left's political economic critique. By identifying possibilities for alternative accounts of labour to emerge, the chapter reads *for* the middle/passages within *Black Marxism* that link black and native labour both before and after their conversion(s). The goal is to suggest how the forms of freedom imagined by the black left can resist its sometimes implicit rejection of Indigenous Peoples' non-accumulative labours as the *occurrence* of their sovereignties.

Chapter 4, "Against the Grain," uses this middle/passage strategy of reading for openings in the radical tradition to approach select works by the Caribbean labour historians C. L. R. James and Walter Rodney. This alternative reading of their texts allows us to work through and beyond the limiting pre-positional structure of Caribbean historical materialism; to recover more complex, expansive concepts of the *worker*; and to confront

work as a unit of analysis in its overrepresentation as time, (productive) land, and social-economic structure. I argue that despite its closures, Rodney's work radically helps to recover the figure of the worker for liberation from both black *Death* and Indigenous *death* because it rescues the category for blacks and Indigenous Peoples from its point of overdetermination by anti-blackness and anti-indigeneity. Reading these texts against the grain allows us to recover a broader view of labour, which shows how the region's black radical tradition not only can speak *to* and *with* the history of Indigenous labour, but also remains critical to current conceptualizations of possibilities for anticapitalist black freedoms and anti-settler Indigenous sovereignties.

Chapter 5, "Marxian and Not Marxian': Centering Sylvia Wynter in the Radical Tradition," argues that the greatest possibility for thinking Indigenous labour in the radical tradition lies in the weaver, dancer, and philosopher Sylvia Wynter's work.⁷ Despite Wynter's fundamental goal to elaborate the conditions of possibility for (and sustaining) *economic* man, and although Marxism serves as an incredibly generative source in her work, Caribbean Studies scholarship has often refused to see her as part of the radical tradition. This chapter suggests that she should be included. It traces Wynter's critique of capitalist political economy to three elements of this project: scarcity, land-labour and primitive accumulation, and black resistance and Death. Mindful of Wynter's work at the edge of the radical tradition, the chapter argues for a cautionary inclusion that recognizes the material critique throughout Wynter's work while recognizing where her critique exceeds and hence partially refuses the black radical tradition, which thus cannot serve as a singular space of interpreting her work.

Finally, the chapter considers openings to indigeneity in Robinson, James, Rodney, and Wynter in light of current discussions of abstract versus concrete labour, black Marxism's future, and the rise of the Capitalocene as an analytic. Thus, while recognizing possibility, the chapter proceeds cautiously, elaborating how this recuperation of the radical tradition *for* indigeneity may risk incorporation into the Anthropocene-Capitalocene debate, that epochal shift (of the last twenty years) in thinking about capital and labour. While this debate reiterates Arendt's planetary concerns, it produces new closures of capital formation by capital's autopoiesis, threatening to reinscribe the big time of capital for all dissident, radical, and still emergent strains of political economy. In addition, the debate risks misreading this recovery of Indigenous labour as though the reading itself were a logical outcome or evolutionary stage of the critique of capital *for*

its own sake, rather than for sovereignty. In other words, the debate potentially repositions critique as a new inscription of capital's grammars. The chapter thus looks at these epochal ways of imagining capital's terminus (or "cenes"), opposing them to the refusal of (Fanonian) "skins," or racial capital discussions, together with the Indigenous praxis of "grounded relationality" as a new way of locating and extending this alternative, imaginatively open reading of the black radical tradition. It offers a partial critique of where the appropriation of black strategies of ontological refusal for Indigenous sovereignty risk reinscribing anti-blackness as a critical element.

Beyond Constraint's final argument, in part III, "Rights and Representations," attends to metaphor and metonymy as structures of simulation. It explores when Indigenous labour is doubled or repeated in the land as an expression of Indigenous Peoples' own sovereignty, and when it is doubled and deferred, or read out of the land, in a structural antagonism supporting postcolonial state sovereignties. Attention to the symbolic in this section returns us to previous chapters' discussions of Conversion, the labour-work dialectic, and the settler-master, illuminating the libidinal composition of the division between blacks and Indigenous Peoples. I argue that revisiting the labour-work dialectic as a libidinal structure is critical for understanding how and why settler desire is sustained across time within the global class system, postcolonial political economy, and the radical tradition even when we seek formally to work against it.

Chapter 6, "Work as Metaphor, Labour as Metonymy," formally shifts the discussion to representation by addressing the reproduction or doubling of indigeneity and Indigenous labour. By doubling, I refer to understandings of Indigenous labour not in its immediate context, but in terms of its extraction and re-presentation in other symbolic fields meant to constrain Indigenous sovereignty. This is the logical outcome of the labour-work divide within which Indigenous labour was only visible (read: productive) when it was represented in terms that could be understood in early Atlantic economies.

After establishing how legal and constitutional structures use simulation to constrain Indigenous sovereignty as state-granted rights, the chapter explores how Indigenous Peoples represent or double their *own* sovereign labours by examining one contemporary form of labour by Indigenous Peoples in Guyana: digital mapping of their lands. It centers mapping as one critical way in which Indigenous labour (and land) is doubled, repeated, or represented on its own terms outside the forms of similitude or (metaphoric) doubling required by the labour-work dialectic and its extractive or appropriative logics. The chapter centers one of the 2015 Equator Prize

winners, the South Central People's Development Association, a federation of Wapichan Peoples communities in Guyana. It demonstrates that the prize works as an autopoietic moment of capital's attempt to reinscribe the sovereign labours involved in digital mapping within the logic of outcomes driving capital accumulation and re-presentation/re-production. In this case, environmentalism and its savior narratives newly constrain Indigenous sovereignty. However, I suggest that like other Indigenous digital mapping projects, the Wapichan project reflects a strategic *doubling* of their own pre-contact sovereign labours, so their mapping repeats sovereignty's *occurrence* rather than performs a singularly object-oriented act. It is difficult to approach or read this work on its own terms precisely because it is always subject to Conversion, and hence made available or visible through the representative strategies supporting capital accumulation. Thus, to recover this labour as that which can be represented within the radical tradition but *not* converted to it, we must confront both its point of tense incorporation into the labour-work dialectic *and* its absolute difference from the bodily actions that can be represented by the dialectic.

Overall, the chapter focuses on the dialectic's work as a symbolic order or semiotic practice to bring forward conquistador-settler desire from the colonial to the postcolonial period, to continuously reinscribe all bodily actions as manageable, no matter how resistant or contrary. I rely on post-structuralist discussions of psychoanalysis as a semiotic practice to demonstrate how the dialectic works as a symbolic order supporting settler grammars' pre-positional structure (see the introduction) through processes of similarity or metaphor like the law, and processes of contiguity or metonymy like the Equator and similar prizes. I posit that although metaphor is the terrain of work and metonymy that of labour, we can recover Indigenous actions for sovereignty in metonymy only up to a point because it manages, and makes acceptable, the prohibited desire for anti-human domination structures as necessary for the human. The chapter underscores the labour-work dialectic as a relation of incorporation based on metaphor and metonymy, with the latter as the always incomplete point of integration of indigeneity's sovereign occurrences of labour. Therefore, the conquistadorial habit or desire *for* the human forces us to repeat and reinstitute the labour-work dialectic as a structure of anti-blackness and anti-indigeneity in the service of Creole Independence as a form of freedom against Indigenous Sovereignty.

The Coda, "The *Ark* of Black and Indigenous Labour," looks toward extant, imagined possibilities for black labour that do not require such

contingency and deferral, placing this labour in relation to that of Indigenous Peoples. I read together the artistic production of three artists: the indigenous, Macushi former teacher George Tancredo, Caribbean American Jean-Michel Basquiat, and the African American Thornton Dial. I argue that the diasporic, black aesthetic tradition offers ways of reading black labour in terms of its openings to indigeneity. The impetuses for this coda are two: an exhibit of Tancredo's balata sculptures in Guyana, which I visited in 2018, and my visit to the coincidental, 2006 exhibition of both Basquiat and Dial's works at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas. Basquiat is famous for his postmodern, neoexpressionist drawings and paintings, and has been described as a postcolonial, Afrofuturistic artist. By contrast, Dial, a former farmworker, carpenter, bricklayer, welder, and steelworker, is known for mixed-media creations that have at times been dubbed "folk," "spiritual," and postmodern. The productive disjuncture between Dial's heavy materialism, reflecting both field and factory work, and Basquiat's semiotic wilderness reveals ways of imagining black enslaved and post-slavery labour outside their teleological capture by the nation-state and the limits of late capital. Both artists offer decidedly more than anti-capitalist approaches to blackness, slavery, and what, after Basquiat, I refer to as the *Ark* of black labour. They offer new ways of understanding the non-accumulative ends of black labour and new languages for its representation. More importantly, they open up alternatives to labour relations presented as closed off to indigeneity and the possibility of a universal sovereignty. This opening created by Dial and Basquiat allows us to both resist the conscription of Tancredo's labour in the dialectic and place the recurrence of sovereign black labour in dialogue with sovereign Indigenous labour against the grain of their conversion. Together, Tancredo, Dial, and Basquiat show us what black and Indigenous sovereign labour practice can look like.

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Some of the ideas in the book have been presented as papers on various panels: “Natively Rethinking the Black Radical Tradition in the Caribbean” on the panel “Of Blackness, Indigeneity, and Relations of Study” at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association meeting (Los Angeles, 2018); “Conversion” on the panel “Archipelagic Assemblages, Colonial Entanglements: Rethinking American Studies” at the American Studies Association meeting (Chicago, 2017); “Postcolonial Biopolitics and the Hieroglyphs of Democracy” on the panel “Colonial Agnosia and Biopolitics” at the American Studies Association meeting (Denver, 2016); and “Basquiat after Dial: Bridging the Gap between Black Labor and Critique” on the panel “Afrofuturism” at the American Studies Association meeting (Baltimore 2011). Portions of the book have also been presented at the following

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invited talks and plenaries: “Work and Water Thinking Indigenous Labour With/In the Radical Tradition” for the Society of Fellows in the Humanities at the Heyman Center at Columbia University (April 2021); “Two Lies and a Truth” at the Harvard University American Studies Workshop (December 2020); “Grammar and Sovereignty” at the Futures of American Studies Institute at Dartmouth University (June 2019); “Middle Passages” for the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta (October 2018); “Postcolonial Theory” for the Modern Critical Theory Lecture Series of the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (October 2018); and “‘Torpid Creatures’ and ‘Docile’ Bodies: Understanding Indigeneity and Settler Colonialism in the Caribbean” for the Indigenous Geographies and Caribbean Feminisms: Common Struggles against Global Capitalism conference held at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad (March–April 2017). Ideas from the manuscript have been presented at the following discussions or roundtables: at the roundtable on Black Studies and humanism at the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (September 2021); at the Blackness and Indigeneity panel discussion for the Black Studies Project at University of California, San Diego (May 2021); “Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and the Political Economy of Becoming” as part of the Critical Conversations in Chicano and Latino Studies Speaker Series at the University of Minnesota (February 2017); at the Sawyer Seminar: Interrogating the Plantationocene, at the Center for the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (March 2019); and at the roundtable “Other Intimacies: Black Studies Notes on Native/Indigenous Studies” at the American Studies Association in Honolulu, Hawai‘i (November 2019). Ideas from the book have been or will be published as the following: “Killing *Us* Softly: Conversion and the Arc of Black Death in the Americas” in *Atzlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* (Fall 2021); “The ‘Inadequacies of Marxism’ or Black Labor’s Pessimism” in “Introduction” to special issue 96 of *International Labor and Working-Class History* on Blackness and Labor in the Afterlives of Racial Slavery (Fall 2019); “Colonialism” in *Keywords for African American Studies* (2018); “Postcolonial Biopolitics and the Hieroglyphs of Democracy” in *Biopolitics-Geopolitics-Life: Settler States and Indigenous Presence* (2023); and “Indigeneity and African Belonging in the New World” in *UNESCO General History of the African Diaspora* (forthcoming).

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I have been working on *Beyond Constraint* steadily since 2014, though some of the coda was drafted and presented in 2011. The road to its completion, however, has been long and difficult, with a series of debilitating bouts of illness compounded by how the realities of race (and gender) shaped my (in)ability to secure care. As I lay ill, unable to get back to a nearly fully drafted manuscript for months, returning to it only after the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and in the midst of the outsized share

of death meted out to black, Latinx, and Indigenous Peoples in the COVID-19 pandemic, aspects of the project changed as well as its meaning and urgency. My return to this manuscript was literally in the wake of the quotidian realities of the violence of anti-blackness and the structural violence of the lack of care for aberrant minorities. As I recovered some of my health in the spring and fall of 2020, two texts sustained me and gave me the courage to keep working: Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's *As We Have Always Done* and Frank Wilderson's *Afropessimism*. Without these works and both their forms of truth telling and refusal (and something not like space clearing but a provision of language for the famished), I would not have had the courage to finish. This book, however, would not be in the world without the dedicated and selfless work of my father, Peter Jackson, and my dearest friend, Yael Ben-zvi, who helped me during the last stages of preparing the manuscript for submission. Yael Ben-zvi, Yael Ronen, Faedra Carpenter, Rumya Putcha, Kimberly N. Brown, my brother Shevon Jackson and his wife Yulissa, and Karina Cespedes have all in the course of the loss of self and wholeness that I face shown me extraordinary black girl love. I thank Vismita, Ranjeet, Doug, Jill, Shruti, Prashant, and Sejal for their support. I thank my mom, Jennifer Jackson, for spending months taking care of me as well as my spouse, Robert F. Carley. They both gave of themselves more than they had.

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Introduction

Relation

Beyond Constraint: Middle/Passages of Blackness and Indigeneity in the Radical Tradition addresses the excision of Indigenous labour from the Anglophone Caribbean's radical tradition. It examines its root causes in the historical anti-blackness *and* anti-indigeneity of the labour category in political-economic critique that haunts black radical genealogies of Marxism. As a theoretical project, the book seeks to recover Indigenous labour in the tradition from the very point of its foreclosure. *Beyond Constraint* argues that recasting our collective histories and political horizons requires not only developing new approaches to our critiques of capitalist political economy, but also interrogating the flaws and limitations of our base assumptions and categories of analysis. By examining what the labour category *excludes* and hence what labour history can *include*, this project rethinks the black radical tradition, whose origins and reflective articulation emerged in Caribbean discourse as a formative site where Indigenous labour has been eclipsed.

In the Caribbean, the radical tradition must work against its foundational association of Indigenous Peoples with unproductive land, which begins to be transformed only with the importation of productive, enslaved black labour, and the later introduction of indentured South Asian labour. This association sustains a dialectic of land and labour whose establishment

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instituted proto-capitalist labour coercion tied to regimes of accumulation that positioned indigeneity as labour's excess. It is this excess that must be recentered in a new rereading of our historical involvements. The book is not a history, but argues instead for the *possibility* of a new labour history that stretches the concept of labour within the radical tradition and beyond the limits of the postcolonial state. Such a reading necessarily also stretches the concept of land, positioning Indigenous Peoples *within* the very place they have been denied: the radical tradition.¹ Therefore, the book's approach to regional Caribbean labour history and political economy expands our configuration of both labour *and* what we observe as the objects, economies, and sociopolitical structures in which it is congealed.

As an interdisciplinary project situated at the nexus of black, Indigenous, settler, and postcolonial studies as well as literary and social science methodologies, *Beyond Constraint* reframes the black radical tradition in the Caribbean by asking two questions. First, where and how is Indigenous labour made unthinkable by black labour? Second, how are postcolonial Independence and Indigenous Sovereignty moved into antagonism by the legacies of settler and franchise (or extractive) colonialism?² The book's larger social and political aim is to upend labour's role in the material and political disenfranchisement of Indigenous Peoples and to shift the political calculus of Caribbean postcolonial states by recognizing that in addition to deriving rights from what is referred to as prior arrival, Indigenous Peoples also have a place in Caribbean history and Atlantic history more broadly as its *first* workers/labourers.³ Rejecting the Middle Passage and Kala Pani, respectively, in their overexpression as singularities of black and Indian death and rebirth in and through modern work, I argue that the Middle Passage can be rethought as the time-space of black-native engagement (as a *middle/passage* of relation) and as a method for reading our histories together.

Such a method would account for colonial and plantation-era work in the Caribbean and for Indigenous Peoples' labours and labour history, inclusive of their ante- *and* anti-plantation dimensions. I do not suggest that enslaved and indentured peoples' historical work does not matter, nor seek to reduce Indigenous presence in the Americas and the Caribbean to their modern labour on or off plantations, nor suggest that this expansive approach to labour is antithetical to Indigenous sovereignty based on traditional or customary rights. I hope to provide a way of approaching our histories that better represents those they marginalize. Across the region and with few exceptions, we have staked our political futures on a limited account of our

collective bodily actions within and across time: the time of the plantation and its aftermath. Recovering prior and concurrent disavowed actions allows the language of contemporary rights claims to be rendered more equitably and capaciously beyond the settler logics and legal mechanisms they often resuscitate or sustain.

This project contributes to growing efforts in American, Indigenous, and Black Diaspora studies to create sustained epistemological room for dialogue and action outside frameworks that reproduce the very marginalizations they were initially developed to address. It is positioned alongside writings by Jodi Byrd, Kyle T. Mays, Jodi Melamed, Glen Coulthard, Iyko Day, and others who work in and at the intersections of these fields, rethinking the links and ruptures among slavery and settler colonialism, “anti-black racialization,” colonization, (state’s) rights, and Indigenous sovereignties.⁴ In resisting the ways in which the legacies of slavery and genocide continuously set black and native experiences apart, Tiffany Lethabo King writes that “neither has edges. . . . Each form of violence has its own way of contaminating, haunting, touching, caressing, and whispering to the other.”⁵ This project is in dialogue with hers and other works such as Lisa Lowe’s on the imbricated historical structures of racialization and colonization.⁶ By reading the radical tradition in terms of not only its closures to but also its non-reductive openings to indigeneity, the project is further linked to critical moves in Indigenous Studies such as *Social Text*’s special issue, “Economies of Dispossession,” which aims “to differentiate those forms of inquiry attentive to the dynamics of co-constitution, interaction, and friction from those conventional methods of comparison—comparative literature, comparative politics, and so forth—that insist upon disconnection and equivalence as their point of analytic departure.”⁷ Not only do the authors not reduce, for instance, black racialization to its intelligibility *through* Indigenous Studies (in parallel with this project’s own goal not to have black studies be the interpretive ground for native experience). In keeping with this attempt to think settler and franchise colonialism together, they re-frame colonialism as “an ongoing relation of theft, displacement, foreclosure, and violence that cannot be reduced to one determinate relation to racialization.”⁸ This expansive, relational definition of colonialism is necessary to understand projects like this, which reject the seeming experiential and epistemological disarticulation of black slavery and native genocide.

This effort to move *through* the impasse of labour—configured in extant histories and methodologies as the fissure between (state) Independence and Indigenous Sovereignty—and postcoloniality and decolonization

augments current discourses on racial capital that continue to neglect Indigenous labour. While some projects, like King's, effectively reject the overrepresentation of black bodies as labouring bodies, we still need to fully understand the mechanisms that make labour the definitive break between black and native peoples and disappear native labour as a sovereign practice, as well as how to recover and represent *native* labour within the Caribbean radical tradition. Overall, *Beyond Constraint* offers an approach to Indigenous labours past and present so they can be read outside their artificial antagonism with black (and South Asian) labours. This intervention confronts continuing constraints on Indigenous self-determination and the increasingly thanatopolitical consequences of the region's modern labour history and coloniality for Indigenous and non-Indigenous subjects of the Caribbean state. It centers questions about native sovereignty as a politically, economically, socially, and ethically necessary goal of political-economic methodologies that develop out of our plantation-based histories. It demands an account of labour history that acknowledges Indigenous Peoples' labour and rights that derive from *both* prior and continuous sovereignty in the region. Its attempt to rethink labour's possibilities and shortcomings shifts us from the limits of emancipatory politics to the possibilities of sovereign ones.

This book finds that the limit point of indigeneity in the radical tradition expresses a historical relationship between anti-blackness to anti-indigeneity that emerges in the sixteenth century as structurally necessary to both (proto) capital accumulation *and* the language and terminology of capital's critiques. This relational anti-blackness and anti-indigeneity is the arrangement of black and native bodies to the logics of scarcity and abundance through Conversion as both a religious *and* economic phenomenon. To perpetually achieve accumulation and hence meet and manage the desires of both the explorer-conquistador (in their evolution into proto-master and proto-settler) and the sovereign, Conversion establishes a labour-work dialectic. The dialectic places blacks and Indigenous Peoples on opposite sides of work in the Americas. It sustains the evolutionary expression of conquistadorial desire in its material and unconscious expressions, its acceptable and unacceptable functions within social and economic structures in the global class system, and has historically delinked black identities from native ones. The dialectic literally splits the labour category, fixing black and native bodies into a mode of perpetual conversion and exchange. Since the dialectic is intrinsic to both the practice of accumulation and the labour category in political and economic critique, the

latter must also function as a scene of libidinal fulfillment for settler-master desire. Finally, the dialectic is central to the biopolitical break between “right” and “sovereignty” in the postcolonial state. That break consolidates the transformation of economic into political right that undergirds Creole sovereignty as a still partial expression of conquistadorial cum settler-master desire necessary for maintaining a mode of power requiring the subordination of Indigenous right.

Beyond Constraint illuminates this problem and offers the middle/passage as a method of reading against the grain of the historical and ongoing conversion of black and native labours and lives for capitalist political economy. It deploys a middle/passage reading to move beyond black Death and native Elimination as they are configured or engineered by the dialectic as the separate, unbridgeable dimensions of our subordination. Across the project, particularly in the first two parts, I suggest that the middle/passage is a space of relation for blacks and Indigenous Peoples and theorize black Death and native Elimination as co-constitutive, relational, and unbound by time. While maintaining Afropessimism’s ontological distinction between Death and Elimination, I slightly redefine both in keeping with my reformulation of land *as* labour in order to understand them as a point of middle/passage relation. In this formulation, Elimination is the clearing of the land *from Indigenous bodies*, and Death is the clearing of the land *from black bodies*. Both are what I call *initiative* deaths: the former produces the black enslaved person for work, and the latter makes the land available for settler accumulation. Both deaths are necessary for accumulation as both are managed by the labour-work dialectic that ceaselessly converts black and native labours into their accumulative forms.

I argue, however, that both deaths also have *punitive* forms. Therefore, Elimination operates in the franchise colony (or on any former chattel populations and their descendants, for example, the victims of the Tulsa massacre) to keep blacks from re-entrenching their labour as sovereignty in the land. Death, on the other hand, operates in the settler colony to remove the land from native bodies (e.g., Indian schools) so those bodies cannot impede settler accumulation when native peoples hold onto land that settlers want. These bodies are made available both in conjunction with forms of coerced labour *and* after. If we understand this ongoing structural relation of Death and Elimination, the book argues, then we also understand how black and native pasts and futures remain significantly intertwined. This introductory chapter configures the impasse between blackness and

indigeneity in radical, black anticapitalist critique delimiting its constitutive concepts of Independence and Sovereignty. It lays the groundwork for conceptually linking settler colonialism and black enslavement for franchise colonialism as a first step in moving beyond the ways in which capital's real and epistemological structures not only are obscured, but also overdetermine blacks as labour and natives as land and then force us to theorize land (native)/labour (black) outside their fundamental, continued relation.

Left and Limit

In rereading seminal works and authors in the radical tradition, this book engages the black left from the constraint of history, rather than turning to creative or cultural texts that may engage more expansively with indigeneity. I do this because the twentieth-century collective anticolonial and anticapitalist labour struggles that emerged across the Caribbean as a key feature of bids for Independence, the activist writing that captured these struggles, and the histories of enslavement and indenture all directly engaged and reimagined left accounts of exploitation and liberation. They also often embraced socialist principles of political and economic transformation for Caribbean countries. Thus, Marxism, broadly configured as a historical materialist account of capitalist accumulation, class formation, labour exploitation, and possibilities for worker-based, anticapitalist social transformation, has played a critical role in twentieth-century Caribbean political life, in the formation of parties, and in the development of left political philosophies in the region.⁹

However, I engage Marxism as a horizon of both possibility and limitation in our methods and politics, exploring how left ideologies based fundamentally in antislavery and anticolonial politics are positioned in regard to (Indigenous) sovereignty's negotiation, reinvention, and deferral. I look at the robust anticolonial and anticapitalist critique developed by the black left as a strategic pressure on Marxism, but from the *limit* terrain of Indigenous sovereignty, the point at which the tradition necessarily reinscribes both anti-blackness *and* anti-indigeneity. The limit, in short, is where the tradition relies on the entrenched division between labour as the social and political capture of black freedom, and land as the social and political capture of Indigenous dispossession and disenfranchisement. I begin by partially tracing the black left's strategic pressure on Marxism in seeking to account for blacks' bound and unwaged labour, and later their waged labour.

I then elaborate where that pressure fails to challenge settler logics embedded within both capitalist accumulation and left critiques that seek to represent black life and labour history in the face of anti-blackness that exceeds normative categories of political representation.

Bearing in mind the centrality of anticapitalist critique for addressing and upending black exploitation and subordination, *Beyond Constraint* affirms how Black radical thinkers not only developed more nuanced approaches to Marxism-Leninism, Trotskyism, and so on, but were also deeply committed to the Communist Party and socialist platforms. Thus, African American historian Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor writes that “no serious socialist current in the last hundred years has ever demanded that Black or Latin/o workers put their struggles on the back burner while some other class struggle is waged first.”¹⁰ However, as she also acknowledges, black activists did become disenchanted with the Communist Party and later attempts at “colorblind” socialism. This constraint on addressing racialization and colonialism as constitutive, ancillary factors in labour exploitation is well-known. For example, in the seminal anticolonial text *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950) by Martinican poet, playwright, and politician Aimé Césaire, we see two different approaches to labour struggle and liberation: enchantment and disenchantment. Throughout *Discourse*, Césaire identifies the creation of the proletariat and the colonized as European societies’ two world-historical failures. He squarely positions the destruction of capitalism as the path to end colonialism, writing that “the salvation of Europe is not a matter of a revolution in methods. It is a matter of the Revolution—the one which, until such time as there is a classless society, will substitute for the narrow tyranny of a dehumanized bourgeoisie the preponderance of the only class that still has a universal mission, because it suffers in its flesh from all the wrongs of history, from all the universal wrongs: the proletariat.”¹¹ It is not blacks or the colonized per se (although they are the main focus of *Discourse*) who will effect capitalism’s end, but the literal subsumption of their issues to proletarian efforts. Prior to his split from the Communist Party, he therefore resolved the two “problems” he identified (the colonial and the proletariat) in favor of the latter’s world-historical function.

Yet in his 1967 interview with Haitian poet, activist, and former communist René Depestre (included at the end of *Discourse*), Césaire changes his position. Following his split from the Communist Party and over ten years after *Discourse*, Césaire illuminates the issues that prompted black left thinkers to reframe the categories of labour analysis for black liberation

throughout the twentieth century and which, for some, necessitated a break with communism and with some avenues of Marxist criticism. For Césaire, proletarianization and coloniality are necessarily intertwined, but in the interview, he had to come to terms with the need to theorize anti-blackness beyond both. He is critical of the “assimilationist” tendencies of black communist writers, whom he says neglected “our Negro characteristics.”¹² “They acted like Communists,” he says, “which was all right, but they acted like abstract Communists. I maintained that the political question could not do away with our condition as Negroes. We are Negroes, with a great number of historical peculiarities.”¹³ When Depestre presses him on his attempt to “particularize Communism,” Césaire responds, “Even then Communists would reproach me for speaking of the Negro problem—they called it my racism. But I would answer: Marx is all right, but we need to complete Marx. I felt that the emancipation of the Negro consisted of more than just a political emancipation.”¹⁴ Here Césaire echoes the Afropessimist position on black difference, to which I turn in chapter 1, as that which is prerational and thus cannot be fully expressed within nor achieve redress in political-economic structures.¹⁵ While Césaire’s formal withdrawal from the Communist Party in 1956 responded directly to revelations about Joseph Stalin, here we see the key to black left critique: the refusal of abstraction and an insistence on the mutually reinforcing material and extra-material conditions of black oppression. It is an insistence on accounting for the very racialism that political theorist Cedric Robinson tracks in *Black Marxism*, discussed in chapter 3.

While Césaire broadly captures the problems black left thinkers faced with Communist Party politics and anticapitalist critique that was not attuned to black struggle, however, his former student, Martinican revolutionary, philosopher, and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon’s engagement with Marxism and its limits is most important for this study. To address labour exploitation, Fanon theorized not simply the slave and the master, but also the settler and the native. Fanon had to unpack blackness as a mode of irrational, sociogenic making that could not be explained in terms of ontology. Thus, he theorizes indigeneity as a social stratum of lack in colonial Algeria in terms of not *only* its material constitution but its own irrational, extra-material processes, theorizing these conditions in terms of ontology’s and metaphysics’ respective failures. Additionally, while Fanon—like Trinidad and Tobago’s prime minister and historian Eric Williams—addresses racism as capitalism’s *effect* or outcome necessary to maintain its accumulation structures, as Taylor notes, he also affirms the kind of anteriority

(read *cause* here) that Cedric Robinson will probe later.¹⁶ This anteriority, as I suggest in chapter 1, allows us to understand anti-blackness and anti-indigeneity as not only foundational, but intrinsically *relational* elements of capitalist accumulation and anticapitalist critique.

Writing primarily about 1950s colonial Algeria, Fanon saw what scholars critical of capitalism would achieve only later in the century: the colonial peculiarity of the relationship between race and class, wherein race functions as both “cause” and “effect” of the economic structure and its related social relations and institutions whose *sui generis* condition is the subordination of the racialized native to the white, European settler.¹⁷ For Fanon, while modern racial formation is fundamentally tied to capitalist development, its essentially feudal characteristics reproduce it as both a teleological and anachronistic feature of capitalist development.¹⁸ Fanon rejects capitalism’s singular evolutionary narrative in the West because the colonizer exists as both Europe’s (progressive) political subject *and* a settler whose power also derives from their extraterritorial (anachronistic) identity, or from the confrontation—rather than shift—of newer and older forms of power. Thus, the “Indigenous Population” (much like the “settler”) is produced as always *sui generis* rather than as evolutionary within capitalism.¹⁹ Moreover, Fanon introduces what we could call a wrinkle in how we explain race in the colonial period when we separate early slave societies from “late” colonies such as Algeria, which had both a native population and a black population constituted through enslavement. While Williams wrote that racism evolved as a *result* of slavery, Fanon suggests that Marxism as an analytic cannot be strictly applied to those colonies first created in the nineteenth century, when race was consolidated scientifically as a biological category of enlightenment humanism because racism is consequential in labour’s configuration, suppression, and exploitation at this stage. It thus cannot be explained solely through an account of capitalist development as a singularity of either cause or outcome.²⁰

The settler’s economic dominance is not a strictly material transformation. It depends on direct and indirect (psychological) violence—rather than ideology—as another form of alienation necessary for the colonial state to exist, and which attaches to or emanates from the settler’s whiteness. The latter is secured by its extraterritorial origin and becomes the external validating force for their dominance in the colonies—it comes from somewhere else like the divine right that governs both “serf” and “knight” for Fanon—similarly to God’s function as the external validating force of the feudal world.²¹ Thus, indigeneity too is not a strictly material

phenomenon nor status that can be theorized within narrow, political-economic terms.

Thus, for Fanon, it is not singularly feudal transformation, mercantilism's rise and decline, or capitalism's establishment as a global market system that secures the settler's dominance, but the coextensive link of the settler's evolutionary whiteness with factors considered anomalous to twentieth-century capitalism, which tie the twentieth-century colony to the sixteenth-century imperial outpost cum colony. For this and other reasons, Fanon rejects Marxist orthodoxies, suggesting that Marxist analysis be "stretched" and adapted to the colonial situation. This stretching, however, does not account for slavery and race *alone* (which, as Taylor reminds us, Marx does do to a limited extent).²² It also allows Fanon to account for *indigeneity* in relation to racialization and settler colonialism. In other words, Marxism must confront race *and* indigeneity as co-constitutive internal and external forces rather than as singularly evolutionary structures of capital formation. While Fanon's engagement with Marxism is critical for this study, as in *Creole Indigeneity*, Fanon's so-called Manichean categories—colonizer/colonized, or putatively normative settler/native—are not the categories of analysis here.²³ For Fanon, the "violence which governed the ordering of the colonial world" is a dialectic that must necessarily culminate in the reversal of these groups' positions as the horizon of political possibility. It "will be vindicated and appropriated when, taking history into their own hands, the colonized swarm into the forbidden cities."²⁴

However, if we apply Fanon to the anticolonial Caribbean on the eve of independence, several questions emerge. What does the Creoles' acquisition of "the forbidden cities" mean for the non-African- and non-South-Asian-descended native in the colonies? What does the role reversal of the European colonizer for the descendants of the formerly enslaved and indentured mean for Indigenous peoples marginalized by the analysis of racial capitalism, having been poorly accounted for in the unfreedoms of the colonial state and in anticolonial resistance to it, and who do not accept the nation-state as the political horizon of liberation, making their resistance not just anticolonial but also anti-state? How can we fundamentally account for political-economic transformation not in terms of subsistence, but in terms of indigeneity (either Native American or Wynterian black remaking)? While Fanon restores the critical consideration of settler colonialism and indigeneity to the stretching of Marx by black left thinkers, his writing also reveals where black left thinking remains problematically tied to anticapitalist struggle as a historical change agent for (black)

Creole workers *over* Indigenous Peoples as either workers or subjects whose sovereignty lies outside the (post)colonial state.

Indigenous Peoples in the Caribbean are often seen as not having been eligible to even undergo the transformation from enslaved to free to proletarian to enfranchised, political subject. This is ironic because Marx identifies *both* black and Indigenous American enslaved labour as necessary for the types of capital accumulation characterizing bourgeois dominance in North America and Europe.²⁵ The nation-state's political economy necessarily checks Indigenous Peoples' right to exist as disalienated subjects. The *limit* of Marxism's radical, black *left* remains the inability to account for indigeneity and more specifically for anti-indigeneity as that which is as necessary as anti-blackness to capital accumulation structures.

However, Fanon points us to an opening allowing that inability to be surpassed from the point of closure of inheritance. In foregrounding violence in the role reversal of colonizer and colonized, Fanon is not talking of simple proletarianization or class transformation. This revolutionary violence stems from more than just class consciousness and therefore exceeds political-economic causality. Therefore, by holding the tradition to account when it comes to indigeneity and Indigenous land-based sovereignties, we can preserve the political and economic excess of Fanonian violence within radical critique as an even more radical mode of stretching yet to be accomplished, rather than stopping short at social transformation. Specifically, the tradition must confront how Indigenous movements resist capitalist economies' fundamentally integrative mechanisms, particularly its countermovements, which they force us to read as part of its modes of conscription.

For example, Yellowknives Dene political scientist Glen Coulthard argues that since capitalism is a fundamentally anti-Indigenous mode of production, native peoples must work to develop political-economic practices on their lands that do not rely on or reinvigorate it.²⁶ Coulthard rejects proletarianization because it is as much an anti-Indigenous structure as capitalism itself, and is not based on Indigenous Peoples' forms of nonaccumulative, "reciprocal" relationships to land as nature.²⁷ Yet despite the implications of non-worker-based Indigenous critiques of capitalism and normative strands of opposition not centered on Indigenous sovereignty, becoming proletarian remains critical to and implicit within the thinking of black economic and political theorists in the twentieth-century Caribbean. In his groundbreaking and controversial work *Capitalism and Slavery*, for instance, Williams deliberately linked the rise of capitalist

markets in Europe to black primitive accumulation in the colonies to express Marx's position not only that colonial slavery in the Americas was key to "bourgeois industry" but that "it is the colonies that have created world trade."²⁸ Williams identifies black proletarian identity's precondition and emergence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which was reinforced by the early twentieth-century emergence of the multiracial labour struggle in Trinidad and throughout the Caribbean. Blacks and Indians are thus seen as having resisted colonialism in the Caribbean as definitive proletarians, a status that is at times projected even further back to describe the unwaged enslaved person.

The link between labour, anticolonial struggle, and the independent postcolonial state appears as both causal and teleological in the Caribbean, yet it is precisely this deliberate yoking of class identity and class consciousness to freedom that Coulthard challenges. Coulthard argues that "while it is appropriate to view primitive accumulation as the condition of possibility for the development and ongoing reproduction of capitalism, it is not so to posit it as a *necessary* condition for developing the forms of critical consciousness and associated modes of life that ought to inform the construction of its alternatives."²⁹ This need is also a root of the disarticulation of black and native futures, he suggests, because primitive accumulation and its teleology continue to "foreclose the possibility of forging radical solidarities in the present" by "[calling] on Indigenous peoples to forcefully align their interests and identities in ways that contribute to our own dispossession and erasure."³⁰ Writing earlier, the controversial Lakota activist Russell Means put it even more plainly, arguing: "The only manner in which American Indian people could participate in a Marxist revolution would be to join the industrial system, to become factory workers, or 'proletarians.'"³¹ Not only did Means reject proletarianization as a mode of anti-indigeneity, but he also argued that socialism "offers only to 'redistribute' the results—the money, maybe—of this industrialization to a wider section of the population." To do this, he suggests, "Marxism must maintain the industrial system."³²

Means thus offers a double critique of socialism. First, while socialism is about distribution rather than teleologically oriented production and consumption, it emerges from capitalism as a necessary stage of development that must be overcome. It undoes neither capitalism nor the settler state's teleological need for accumulation. Therefore, it is essentially the capture of anti-indigeneity *for* the progressive ends of labour struggle. Moreover, the articulation of telos as need is how capitalist logic produces and re-

produces the mode of being human that became dominant as a result of the explorations that commenced in the fifteenth century, if one follows the arguments of Cuban-born Jamaican philosopher and “weaver” Sylvia Wynter, who is herself reading Fanon.³³ Fanon’s attention to race, economic structures, and ideology, then, recognizes, as Wynter notes, that within capitalism, “the non-whites, the natives—have to be both perceived . . . and socio-institutionally *produced*” as the limit of white western humanity, materially and ideologically, a point to which I return in chapters 5 and 6.³⁴ When Wynter writes that the collective nonwhite underclass must be engineered to be “homeless,” “jobless,” and “relatively low-skilled,” she iterates the link between the relations and forces of production in Fanon’s “substructure.” Reading Fanon, she also iterates the particular way in which these relations and forces are organized and unified by racialization as a tool of the bourgeois class, which had to find a way to externally secure its social order, so it turned to race to replace religion as the externally validating element (*sui generis* for Fanon) of the capitalist social order.³⁵

Means’s second critique can be read as a caution about interpretation. Numerous anticapitalist movements are active throughout South and Central America, including the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas Indígenas y Negras (Ecuador), the MST: Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (Brazil), and the trade union Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB), which primarily represents the Quechuas, Aymaras, and Tupí Guaraníes. While many of these groups utilize socialist platforms in their fight for land, water, food sovereignty, and worker rights, it would be incorrect to interpret them as primarily class-based. Even where they do not exclusively represent Indigenous Peoples or Black peoples, not only are the peasant communities largely native, but their anticapitalist fight for sovereign labour expression resists anti-indigeneity and anti-blackness (MST). Indigenous sovereignty is not only the historically constitutive force of a worker-based, anticapitalist agenda; it is also not subject to the material and ontological transit that Means rejects (CSUTCB).

Fanon, Wynter, Means, and to some extent Coulthard all emphasize capital’s *ontological* function rather than strictly its material or structural functions. This emphasis on ontology and ontological negation is not a rejection of material critique. It is a recognition of the settler-master’s evolutionary function as a disciplinary figure essential to the production and maintenance of captive, coerced, and exploited labour. This is more than just a realization that a strict critique of capital, while necessary, is in fact

its own limit. It forces a confrontation between the role that a continued critique of capital must play in black liberation, and how the stretching that Fanon envisioned and so many black left thinkers articulated butts up against the need to conceptualize Indigenous labour both in relation to and apart from this particular genealogy of racialized capital.

I work from the point of the uncomfortable position of Fanonian violence and Césairean disenchantment to suggest that, although black liberation can be posited within the tradition that emerged out of Marx's critique of capital, its fundamental and intractable limits are where we can begin to think black and Indigenous labour together in the Americas. I do *not* suggest that we are at the end of Marxism's usefulness for conceptualizing black labour struggle and resistance to capitalism, nor that indigeneity is at the end of Marxist representation. Instead, *Beyond Constraint* reframes some elements of Caribbean Marxist labour history's robust canon in terms of questions about Indigenous sovereignty. It works through the efforts in black genealogies of Marxism to make Marxism legible for black struggle and to make black life and labour legible within the tradition. It reads with and against the grain of the colonial archive, the black radical tradition, and the histories with which they intersect. It also reads with and against efforts to appropriate black anticolonial thought and Atlantic epistemologies for Indigenous Peoples, such as Coulthard's *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014) and Jace Weaver's *The Red Atlantic* (2014), respectively.

In positioning the radical tradition in terms of Indigeneity's limit point, I must clarify that the problems stem not from the tradition itself but from the overall limits of Marxism's emancipatory project that, as Wynter reminds us, is concerned first with the human, rather than with the conditions of those who function as the human's boundary markers (i.e., the human's condition of possibility).³⁶ For Wynter, Marxism's foundational limit is how its central change agent—class struggle—actually functions as a necessary mode of domination for the production of the (western) human same over and against its human others, and its material conditions of existence. Wynter reformulates Marx's hypothesis that “in all human societies, from their origins, the . . . magma of role allocations” had been “generated by each . . . society's . . . mode of economic production,” asking, “how would it have been possible for us not to consider that this hypothesis was perhaps the humanly emancipatory answer to all our issues?” She explains that “this *pari passu* with the class struggle, as waged primarily over the ownership of each such mode's *means of production* . . . was nevertheless itself held out to be the principle of causality whose imperative transfor-

mation would be the very condition of our progressive human emancipation! *That is, the focus is on the expropriation of that ownership, rather than of what that ownership subserves!*"³⁷ Following Wynter, Marxism's flaw is not only that its critique of capital marginalizes blacks and Indigenous Peoples (in keeping with their subordination within capital). Instead, Marxism must first normalize and generalize the western feature of ownership—and hence the role of blacks and Indigenous Peoples as those who can labour but not accumulate—before it posits struggles against it as emancipatory. Wynter's criticism parallels that of, for instance, political scientist Folke Lindahl, who argues that "claims to universal truth . . . (over) determine the entire Marxist edifice."³⁸ Marxism's limit for black liberation, then, is precisely its claims to universality.³⁹

Moreover, because Marx affirms the teleological development of human economies and societies, he also has to logically accept "the teleologically determined hegemony of the *bios* (i.e., the material) aspect of our being human" within which nonwhite, western others bear the markers of universal failure and subordination, and within which their redemption can only logically extend the dominant social order that always already requires their failure (i.e., poverty, death).⁴⁰ Afropessimist thinker Frank D. Wilderson III makes similar claims in his critique of Gramscian politics, writing that "marxism suffers from a kind of conceptual anxiety: a desire for socialism on the other side of crisis" and the "desire to democratise work and thus help keep in place, ensure the coherence of, the Reformation and Enlightenment 'foundational' values of productivity and progress" for which anti-blackness is foundational.⁴¹

Marxism thus extends the universality of ownership itself and its intrinsic function to support a western, global order of humans and inhuman. It affirms capitalist accumulation as central in the very production of the human and the categories that attach to humanity—bourgeois subject, capitalist, proletarian—rather than the categories against which these political economic positions are defined—enslaved person, native, colonized subject, and so on. Since Marx couldn't "see" this, when, for example, he famously argued for the necessity for Asian countries to pass through a capitalist mode of production before achieving socialism, he incorporated ownership's central function into the emancipatory function of evolutionary class struggle as the very site of the inscription of capitalism's global, racialized human order.

This study thus operates from critical awareness of Marxism's limits as realized by Césaire and Fanon, but it also works from another set of

limits: how black left studies of racial capital continue to buy into Marxism's restricted human emancipatory potential, which, as Wynter argues, is precisely where the tradition supports rather than challenges the global human order. Therefore, this intervention must be staged *through* and *against* black left Marxist genealogies, which is precisely where the land-labour interface that positions blacks and Indigenous Peoples is continuously reinscribed when Marxism is used to articulate black resistance and entertain possibilities for freedom. Here we encounter the very limit of Fanon's stretching, from which new methods must emerge so that black left analysis, in its inability to even broach the issue of Indigenous labour, stops its own curtailment of Indigenous sovereignty in its enactment of the Marxian limit of freedom for nonwhite non-westerners. Where the radical tradition positions Indigenous Peoples outside labour and posits modern work as the central mode of social evolution, freedom, and earned rights (or enfranchisement) for the formerly enslaved and their descendants, it necessarily rejects concepts of Indigenous sovereignty (and modes of being human) not based in class struggle (recall Coulthard).

This is where, to reiterate Wynter, the radical tradition repeats or extends Marx's mistake. Moreover, when anticolonial nationalisms base themselves on class struggle, as they did in the Caribbean throughout the twentieth century, this flaw in black left discourse takes on structural dimensions in the political economy of the postcolonial state, wherein Creole Independence and Indigenous self-determination remain in conflict. With this conflict in mind, the following section turns to postcolonial Independence as the potential limit of *both* black freedom and Indigenous Sovereignty.

Pre-positions: Grammar, Independence, and Sovereignty

This rethinking of labour as the terrain of rights and freedom in the Caribbean that I propose requires a collective look at (postcolonial) independence and (Indigenous) sovereignty as political modes that capture both anterior and constrained forms of sovereign expression moved into conflict by the legacies of settler and franchise colonialism. Thus, I configure Indigenous Sovereignty and Creole Independence together as a real and conceptual problem space, rather than in terms of a strict opposition. By linking discussions about the constraints placed on Indigenous self-determination in North America, Latin America, and Australia to those in the Caribbean, this section pulls the Caribbean into larger debates about settler and In-

digenous sovereignties, exploring the relationship between postcoloniality and settler strategies of control. It situates the Caribbean within wider conversations on sovereignty within Indigenous Studies and rethinks independence from outside its normative logics of postcoloniality and decolonization through its entanglement with sovereignty.

I foreground how Independence and Sovereignty express both the continuity of peoples' sovereign bodily actions as well as ruptured, relational modes of power. I argue that the specific reliance of postcolonial Independence on a conversion of right that valorizes the settler function of the master-settler dyad requires not only the continuous deployment of settler-native relations in the postcolonial state, but also the exercise of settler strategies as a limit for *both* black (Creole) freedom and Indigenous sovereignty. I therefore call for the exercise of postcolonial Independence *with* and *through*—not against—Indigenous sovereignties, as a way to more fully recover the promise of freedom reflected by Independence. I lay out the problematic of Independence through attention to etymology and grammar. Then, I take a comparative look at Indigenous sovereignty, and finally, through Guyana, I highlight how Creole Independence and Indigenous Sovereignty operate as conflicting political modes because of the legacies of settler rather than just franchise colonialism. Throughout, I approach independence and sovereignty not as pure forms of power, but in terms of where they are constrained or overdetermined by the legacies of settler colonial power.

(INVOLUNTARY) SETTLER GRAMMARS OF INDEPENDENCE

Much of the Anglophone Caribbean gained its independence from the 1960s onward. By *independence*, I refer to the legal transfers of power from empire to the local control of Caribbean nation-states.⁴² Roughly a dozen countries, however, remain under the administration of former colonizers or later empires, through political arrangements that reflect varying degrees of domination reimagined as political incorporation, such as the territories of the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Independence transfers of power are of course neither benign nor bloodless, resulting from decades-long struggles and organizing against colonial and imperial, political, and economic manipulation and often brutal repressions. Caribbean examples include the 1930s riots and labour unrest in several countries, a fact often downplayed in narratives by the former colonizers.⁴³ Together with its political and legal dimensions, Independence represents a culturally elaborated psychic rupture.

However, it also means that former colonies, through alliances such as the British Commonwealth of Nations, are compelled into forms of statehood that are both a break from and a contractual agreement with the (former) colonizer/empire that often retains real and/or symbolic structures of political subordination.⁴⁴ The late literary critic Michael Dash wrote of Caribbean postcoloniality, “These new nation states were flawed . . . but there was no way of imagining alternatives.”⁴⁵ More than flawed, the Guyanese historian and activist Walter Rodney claimed they represented the extension of colonial power and the continued subordination of Creole populations.⁴⁶ Enshrining the geopolitical freedom of formerly colonized peoples yet also supporting global white supremacy and the First World’s economic dominance, the postcolonial state necessarily inherits colonial legal and political structures and is compelled into fundamentally unequal, dependent market relationships with the global North.⁴⁷ Numerous works address the postcolonial state’s limits and its neocolonial, politico-economic status with the First World, often framing neocolonialism as nothing less than a reenvisioned kleptocratic phase of imperialism engineering Third World countries’ economic drain.⁴⁸

My interest, however, is not in the status of Caribbean nation-states vis-à-vis the economically and politically dominant global North. I am concerned with a particular feature of postcolonial Independence that inherently restricts it: the reductive maintenance of Indigenous Peoples within postcolonial states as an underclass, or an internal South. Independence is limited in specific ways as postcolonial states require Indigenous Peoples’ subordination to a sovereignty that cannot be superseded by any form of Indigenous self-determination. For the postcolonial state, Independence is a stage of the land’s evolutionary history, from imperial outpost to colony to home to nation. It is thus part of a teleology in which, for those countries where anticolonial labour struggle was central, labour itself is captured as the universal, forward historical motion that defines and, after Wynter, compromises Marx’s critique of capital. The centrality of this inhuman element of emancipatory politics persists in the postcolonial nation, so we must consider not just the limits of labour struggle but also the settler-master logics tied to positions of dominance within the postcolonial state.

To elaborate how the legal, political, and social mechanisms of the colony cum postcolonial state emerge as the very limit of the independent nation, a brief, etymological approach is warranted. Part of the original meaning of the term “colonialism” is “to cultivate.” Colonialism shares its roots with the Latin terms *colōnia* and *colonus*. In the *Oxford Latin Diction-*

ary, *colônia* is a colony or settlement of conquered or annexed lands by Roman citizens, and *colonus* refers to someone who settles, cultivates, or farms land. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the definition of *colony* encapsulates both early Latin terms and meanings, denoting either a “settlement in a new country” or “a body of people who settle in a new locality.” Collectively, *colony* articulates land as settlement together and apart from people who presumably do the settling. The term thus effects a suturing and a delinking of the (settled) land as a *political* phenomenon and the settler who performs an *economic* action on the land, while simultaneously extending, and hence relying on, empire’s now a priori political right. The plantation itself achieved colonialism’s main action or objective: cultivation. This work would be articulated in Caribbean labour history as essential to the rise of capital and to anticolonial struggle, particularly the ways in which colonized peoples resisted colonialism as a proletariat in the twentieth century. As I’ve traced in *Creole Indigeneity*, cultivation or plantation work itself thus becomes formative for labour history and the postcolonial nation-state’s eventual emergence in the region.

With plantation work in the Caribbean, however, the tense break between the land and actions performed on the land and managed through the settler’s body becomes aporetic because the person who possessed the land was not the person who cultivated or settled it. When the settler splits his labour (in the functions of master and slave), he effectively not only causes a precarious condition where the enslaved person actually works on the settler’s freedom via the settler’s right. He also effects the movement between the political and economic, whose eventual integration will of course characterize the biopolitical under capitalism. Slavery turns the settler—the body that manages the split between the land and actions performed on it in the colonies—into a master. The settler’s master function produces risk by converting the settler’s limited political right into the master’s economic right.⁴⁹ In essence, in slavery, the settler-master doubles and defers the labours of his own body in the enslaved person, who functions as the master’s “surrogate.”⁵⁰

The settler retains political right to the land, while the enslaved person performs the cultivation necessary to secure economic right to the land. This economic right (e.g., the Boston Tea Party) becomes the basis for rejecting the political extension of the right of empire into new lands as these figures literally transition to and effect the general shift from *homo politicus* to *homo economicus* as a globally dominant mode of being human.⁵¹ Annexed lands belong to the nation/empire that annexed them, but the

settler who works the land can claim that portion of it for himself, and his labour is essential to hold onto it apart from the empire/nation. The settler-master is thus a problematic figure and more so in the Caribbean where Europhilic whites did not settle in large numbers. Caribbean chattel slavery (and later indenture) thus puts the land in political jeopardy if the rights of the people performing the labour on the land cannot be neutralized. Hence, slavery and indenture must function as mechanisms not only to extract and control the labour necessary for cultivation but also to restrict right to the settler-master alone, since all were physically capable of cultivation.

Both slavery- and indenture-based extractive colonies and settler colonies share this emphasis on cultivation and the delinking of the settler-master's body from the cultivated land at different points in their histories. However, it is these Caribbean colonies of exploitation, extraction, and accumulation that we *oppose* to classic settler colonies cum "postcolonial" states such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. Moreover, settler colonial studies overemphasize the settler rather than the bodies that settler societies move into antagonistic relation. The universally necessary break between ownership and labour in modern colonies founded on Indigenous dispossession and black enslavement was achieved not only between the master and the land but also between two bodies: the person who cultivated (the enslaved person) and the Indigenous body in its overidentification with and *as* land that has no economic action performed on it (i.e., uncultivated land). The land (as colony, home, nation) becomes that which has been cleared not of the settler's body *per se* (which happens at least figuratively with Independence) but of those bodies that don't allow it to be cultivated. This results from the pre-position/al relationship colonialism establishes between blacks and Indigenous Peoples as an effect of settler-master right.

Caribbean history is replete with instances where Indigenous Peoples are identified as the past of the postcolonial nation, and the extinction thesis is routinely deployed within the explanatory apparatus for Creole habitation.⁵² Across that literature, a pre-positional relationship, or a grammar, is made possible by and sustained through the standard narrative of Indigenous disappearance: that during the imperial and early colonial periods, Indigenous Peoples perished in the Caribbean and therefore could not participate with great significance in plantation work, thus requiring the importation of first enslaved and then indentured peoples.⁵³ This supposed fact of either Indigenous disappearance or Indigenous lack of usefulness first establishes a critical difference and distance between Indigenous

Peoples and blacks within colonial space (of the plantation) and time (of the settler-master). Later, it brings forward to the post-Independence period the clearing of Indigenous bodies from the land during the colonial period. Ridding the land of Indigenous bodies, by restricting land titles, for instance, which constrain Indigenous use of and access to homelands, becomes existentially mandated for the postcolonial state.

This pre-position that now governs Creole and native lives operates in two senses: (1) the temporal *pre-position* of Indigenous Peoples to blacks (because of their deaths or after they perished) and (2) in terms of a grammar in which as a unified part of speech, the *prepositional* phrase must express something about the noun and, in this instance, complete its meaning. So the noun/subject—blacks and black labour, for instance—cannot elaborate by or for itself, but must seek consolidation in a causality that always reflexively signals its historical success. In short, the failure of Indigenous labour to be rooted in the plantation is also the register in which the success of black and indentured labour on the plantation occurs. Caribbean historicity depends on this relationship, this grammar. The pre-position (and its function to establish relationships between nouns and reinforce the performative or agential space of the subject noun) is the grammatical unit necessary for (involuntary) settler sovereignties. Within it, the labours of blacks, Indians, and First Peoples cannot exist *at* or *in* the same time, and are now articulated through the substitution or imposition of Being/nonbeing (now based on life/death, productive/unproductive bodily labours) for the pre-contact modes of belonging that served as the immediate and historical contexts for all lives.⁵⁴ Moreover, wherever Creoles in the postcolonial state retain colonially mandated relationships to Indigenous Peoples, the prepositional relationship continues to organize Creole and Indigenous relationships to land.

When blacks are said to have worked colonial lands, this is the inscription of colonial time as the effective break between the land (now prior to labour) and the functions performed on it, and therefore between black and Indigenous bodies.⁵⁵ The settler possesses the land by establishing a political relationship to it that enacts a new mode of priorness (again via labour), abrogating Indigenous prior occupation and right. The settler essentially conscripts black bodies to undertake or operationalize the function of clearing inherent in possession.⁵⁶ When the pre-position is elaborated in anticolonial discourse as a feature of postcolonial nationalisms by black and Indo-Creoles, its continuous deployment brings forward the clearing of land from the imperial to the colonial period as a function of Creole political

right. This legally exercised grammar clears the land again, further legitimizing the work that the hands and bodies of the enslaved, the indentured, and their descendants have performed within colonized space and time. It also makes this clearing that was first necessary for settler-master ownership and dominance an essential feature of postcolonial Independence and Creole dominance over Indigenous Peoples. The grammar supports and institutes labour's (colonial) time, which during the anticolonial period becomes the economic right to land that *replaced* the settler-master's political right.

In short, the enactment of the pre-position supports the transformation of the land and right, and it is the peculiar elaboration of the land-labour dialectic as it operates in the Caribbean wherein Indigenous Peoples and blacks, respectively, are fixed on opposite sides of the dialectic. The grammar is thus a real effect of imperial and colonial power formations. Post-Independence Caribbean histories and the territorial nationalisms they supported mobilized this grammatical structure to *reactivate* the definitional breach between the land and the settler-master body, between the economic and the political.⁵⁷ Thus, the black (and Indo) Creole citizen-subject, through the conversion of economic into political right, emerges in the postcolonial state as a figure of suture, or the only figure capable of yoking economic and political right, just as the settler had been the only figure previously capable of suture.

Critically, however, the grammar becomes essential for (black) Creoles in another, more urgent sense that even Independence cannot resolve. If we follow the Afropessimist assertion that the dialectic between native and settler differs from that between the enslaved person and human (or master and slave) because the latter serves as the condition of possibility for all other modes of being, we hit upon a key problem that blacks in the postcolonial state face, although Independence in the Caribbean is arguably a more enfranchised position than civil rights in the United States, for example. Wilderson, whose work I return to in chapter 1, writes that "Slavery [like colonialism] is a relational dynamic—not an event and certainly not a place in space like the South," and it "can continue to exist once the settler has left or ceded government power."⁵⁸ Moreover, he argues that subalternity is a redemptive position for postcolonial subjects but not for blacks because blackness and being enslaved are always irrevocably linked and because "blacks do not function as political subjects."⁵⁹ Wilderson articulates the limit that made Césaire reject class struggle as the single arbiter of black freedom: the absolute, ontological difference of blackness.⁶⁰

Moreover, to the extent that South Asian indenture in the Caribbean is seen as a *kind* of slavery, South Asians experience the same ontological limit without its long *durée*. Thus, in the postcolonial state, even though blacks achieve Independence, the locally expressed and globally articulated antiblackness that produced slavery is still operative for Creoles in general.

Therefore, I suggest that Blacks in the postcolonial state don't simply need to convert right. They must inhabit (this can only ever be partial) the settler's position (and power)—not the master's position, which is fundamentally foreclosed—in order to manage the break between the human (as that which is necessary for civic life and political subjecthood) and the black (enslaved persons). In other words, because both dialectics (master-slave and settler-native) constrain blackness, blacks must enter into and deploy the settler-native relation in order to affirm the political right (based on the ability to be a political subject) that is won from the economic arrangement of the human-slave relation (based on the inability to be a political subject).⁶¹ If the slave/black is the limit of political economy, then the conversion of economic right into political right enables the slave/black to have some form of political right that hinges on the maintenance of settler forms of power. Since postcoloniality allows for the deployment of settler-native relations rather than human-slave relations, it is a position of at least partial overcoming vis-à-vis the enslaved person. However, since postcoloniality structurally emerges out of settler and franchise coloniality, it brings forward the functions of the black enslaved person and the native as the bodies that were originally moved into antagonistic relation that allowed the settler-master to assert his political right.

Here we encounter the conditional nature of independence as a political mode where settler colonialism remains operative because postcolonial freedom for racialized subjects remains contingent on settler colonial legal mechanisms and grammars. These settler features of independence mean that in presenting themselves as the nation-state's true labourers and inheritors, blacks (and South Asians) *must* clear the land again of Indigenous bodies as the only way to approach the position of the human and the political categories to which the human has access. This is the enactment of the causality of the pre-positional grammar. The clearing, however, is still *in-voluntary* because (1) blacks inherited the franchise colony, and (2) blacks cannot be normative political subjects because their political subjecthood is achieved through the conversion of economic right *into* political right, rather than through the conversion of (the empire's) political right into economic right.

The limits of political subjecthood for the enslaved are clearly spelled out by African American cultural and literary professor Saidiya V. Hartman, on whom Wilderson also relies. Hartman writes, “If the public sphere is reserved for the white bourgeois subject”—in this case the settler-master who functions as the figure of accumulation in the colonies—“and the public/private divide replicates that between the political and the nonpolitical, then the agency of the enslaved, whose relation to the state is mediated by way of another’s rights, is invariably relegated to the nonpolitical side of this divide.”⁶² The conversion of economic into political right that I chart stems from precisely this denial and foreclosure of subjectivity for the enslaved because of chattel slavery’s function to encapsulate fungible, object status rather than afford the forms of subjectivity and difference necessary for representation. Thus, not only does Caribbean independence reveal this beholding to the settler-master’s inadequate categories of political representation, but our efforts to decolonize remain limited by our political and juridical need to, on some level, take up or inhabit the settler’s place from a position of chronic lack in the active conversion of lack into a state of right. It is limited because (our desire aside) we are compelled to enter the already established “forbidden cities” (Fanon) that define political subjectivity.

The historical articulation of this inhabiting as an anti- and decolonial process must therefore be challenged because it relies on limited historical positions and takes on a settler-colonial dimension. It also requires a reevaluation of postcolonial independence as perhaps the *antithesis* of Indigenous sovereignty and even black freedom. Moreover, the grammar reveals that independence and sovereignty, for those in postcolonial states in the global South, are not only pitted against each other, they are the structural outcomes of the land-labour dialectic. Therefore, I locate this project not under the umbrella of Caribbean independence, or attempts to culturally decolonize, but within the ongoing entanglement of postcolonial Independence with native sovereignty. Fully realized Indigenous sovereignty will always be the limit of Independence. Additionally, Independence, and the legal transformation or conversion of settler-master right, will always be the upper limit of black (and South Asian) freedom in the postcolonial state.⁶³ It is a threshold we can only partially approach through the decolonial process because it requires a radical rupture.

I approach Indigenous sovereignty as that rupture to make visible the continued unfolding of settler and franchise colonial power in the postco-

lonial state. Rather than offer a strict definition of sovereignty, I discuss it in terms of its epistemological and conceptual constraints in order to force a discussion of settler coloniality within franchise or extractive colonialism. I track Indigenous Sovereignty as both the reflection of precolonial relationships to land based on Indigenous *labour* (especially in chapter 1), and sovereignty's reinvention as a form of right (i.e., customary or traditional right in the Amerindian Act). I therefore approach sovereignty through a tension between Indigenous Peoples as citizens of the postcolonial state with sovereignties that might be negotiated through but exceed that of the state. I admittedly engage Indigenous sovereignty from the legacies of settler and franchise colonialism's violence, seeking to foreground its complexities as an interpretive context for reading postcolonial and settler power in Guyana's dealings with its Indigenous populations. I foreground how settler rather than strictly franchise colonialism in the Caribbean is also the social and political condition under which a variety of actors vie for territory and seek to convert differing conditions of emigration (volitional and coerced) into belonging and right.⁶⁴

CONFIGURING SOVEREIGNTY

The North American context offers several examples of Indigenous sovereignty's complexities—its “confused and confusing” nature, as Lenape American Indian Studies scholar Joanne Barker puts it—concerning the various legal positions of Indigenous Peoples with regard to state and federal governments.⁶⁵ For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, as infections and deaths rose in the Navajo Nation in April 2020, the myriad ways of referring to the nation included references to the Navajo “community” and tribe.⁶⁶ Newscasts constantly compared the Navajo nation to states, reporting that *if it were* a state, at one point it would have been the state with the second highest rates of infection/death after New York.⁶⁷ Then, Navajo infection rates became the highest in the country, higher, as news broadcasts reported, than individual, true states.⁶⁸ Indigenous nations became referential states when safely identified through metaphors that signaled their *difference* from true states.⁶⁹ This broadly social way of referring to Indigenous nations on reservation homelands as real, auxiliary, and speculative state structures belies several problems with sovereignty.⁷⁰ It reproduces legal precedent (and hence brings forward) the same legalized slippages that denote the subordinate status of Indigenous nations.⁷¹ In particular, it draws attention to the often fundamental incompatibility

of Indigenous and liberal governance structures and, as Mohawk political anthropologist Audra Simpson notes, to the seeming “incommensurable” nature of “Indigenous” and “nation” under settler coloniality.⁷²

The limits on Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty within the United States have been cohesively spelled out by many scholars who demonstrate how Indigenous Peoples’ prior and extant sovereign claims and relationships to lands are restricted by the politics of recognition, and how federal and state laws enact US sovereignty as a direct impingement of Indigenous right.⁷³ Moreover, these constraints are articulated within the wider context of international law such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which also depends on recognition by individual state actors.⁷⁴ It is based on external recognition or validation rather than internal Indigenous recognition.⁷⁵ While the Declaration affirms Indigenous right to “self-determination,” the term “sovereign” appears only once, in relation not to Indigenous Peoples but to “sovereign states.”⁷⁶

Article 46 of UNDRIP states that its “provisions . . . shall be interpreted in accordance with the principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, equality, non-discrimination, good governance and good faith,” specifying that support of Indigenous rights should not negatively impact “the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States.” In other words, concepts of right and democracy supersede indigeneity and the particularity of its expression across formally recognized nations *and* unrecognized peoples. Moreover, although the Declaration supports the restoration of land-based sovereignties, such redress can never restrict extant state sovereignties. In short, settler states’ territorial integrity must be maintained, although the settler state is formed through the very territorial “dismemberment” that the Declaration prohibits. Thus, the irony of applying the term “state” to Indigenous nations on a provisional and figurative basis socially and epistemically reproduces this distinction, allowing settler states to function through the very breach of native sovereignties.

Writing about Australia, Goenpul feminist and Indigenous studies scholar and activist Aileen Moreton-Robinson sees Indigenous sovereignty as fundamentally opposed to the strategies, structures, and forms of knowledge linked with possession or what she terms “white patriarchal” sovereignty.⁷⁷ Moreton-Robinson also asserts that Indigenous modes of ownership or possession are based on ontological relationships to place that are incompatible with those of migrants and settlers.⁷⁸ More importantly, she suggests,

a substantial amount of political and legal material on Indigenous sovereignty is filtered through a problematic discourse of rights. She argues that since the concept of rights of personhood and property is based on a shift from forms of sovereign to state power enacting race, specifically whiteness, as a biopolitical mechanism for rights' acquisition and distribution, Indigenous forms of sovereignty are more than just antithetical to biologized forms of sovereignty. The latter are based on possessive logics that structurally position Indigenous sovereignty as a threat to the settler state, and this opposition functions as a kind of internal war against Indigenous Peoples, through which state's rights are consolidated.⁷⁹ Her work suggests that because Indigenous sovereignty is not based on biopower, the biopolitical discourse of rights and property through which states recognize or affirm their sovereignty first translate and then abrogate Indigenous sovereignty, even where it is granted.

Some consider sovereignty to be such a compromised term for describing Indigenous self-determination under empire and settler colonialism, that it is considered insufficient for designating Indigenous self-governance. Steve Newcomb, a Shawnee-Lenape writer, film producer, and cofounder and codirector of the Indigenous Law Institute, echoes Moreton-Robinson, suggesting that to describe current Indigenous relationships to land as "Indigenous sovereignty" belies the fundamental difference of Indigenous sovereignty within (settler) coloniality wherein Indigenous self-governance is "subordinated" to US sovereignty or dominance.⁸⁰ Audra Simpson marks these distinctions and discrepancies, describing Indigenous sovereignty as "nested," noting that "sovereignty may exist within sovereignty."⁸¹ Simpson establishes that "Like Indigenous bodies, Indigenous sovereignties and Indigenous political orders prevail within and apart from settler governance. This form of 'nested sovereignty' has implications for the sturdiness of nation-states over all, but especially for formulations of political membership as articulated and fought over."⁸² Rather than seeing the settler state as entrenched, through the politics of "refusal," Simpson sees indigeneity and sovereignty as being in "persistent relation."⁸³

Newcomb and Simpson represent two perspectives on Indigenous sovereignty borne out, respectively, in the works of Barker and Mohawk political theorist Taiaiake Alfred. In her introduction to *Sovereignty Matters*, Barker traces the European monarchic and religious origins of the concept that, for instance, lawyer and Lumbee legal scholar Robert A. Williams Jr. identifies as embedded in the concepts of nation and sovereign states as they evolved in pre- and post-conquest European legal efforts to determine

just, and hence defensible, versus unjust forms of territorial acquisition.⁸⁴ Barker writes that the non-Indigenous concept of sovereignty has been historically used to justify Indigenous dispossession and then to restore right based on dependency on the settler state, so it requires a “translation” to articulate forms of Indigenous self-determination. Against this imperial and colonial concept of sovereignty, Barker offers a definition, based on the work of other Indigenous scholars, as a “contingent” and “embedded” “inherent right that emanates from historically and politically resonant notions of cultural identity and community affiliation.”⁸⁵

While Barker redefines sovereignty, Alfred (whose position Newcomb reinforces) rejects the term entirely. Alfred focuses on the application of the terms sovereign/ty to Indigenous Peoples as a means to justify their ongoing “internal colonization.”⁸⁶ Not only is the concept European in origin, but it poses a “conceptual and definitional problem centered on accommodation of indigenous people within a ‘legitimate’ framework of settler state governance.”⁸⁷ Sovereignty is doubly anathema to Indigenous Peoples’ self-determination because, he argues, it has been used to justify their legal dispossession, while simultaneously defining and reinforcing the settler state’s sovereignty.⁸⁸ Because the concept developed and is legally and ideologically exercised through Indigenous dispossession and subordination, Alfred suggests that it needs to be replaced.⁸⁹

Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson describes, in contrast to sovereignty, a practice-based, ontologically rooted concept of Indigenous freedom within which various forms of sovereignty are a component. In *As We Have Always Done*, Simpson echoes those who see Indigenous concepts of *nation* as incommensurable with their liberal western counterpart. Instead, they are based on place, practice, and relationality. Referring specifically to Nishnaabeg concepts, Simpson writes, “Kina Gchi Nishnaabeg-ogamig is connectivity based on the sanctity of the land, the love we have for our families, our language, our way of life. It is relationships based on deep reciprocity, respect, noninterference, self-determination, and freedom. . . . Our nationhood is based on a series of radiating responsibilities.”⁹⁰ More significantly, she describes Nishnaabeg governance as forms of practice, as a “how” of practice: “It became clear to me that *how* we live, *how* we organize, *how* we engage the world—the process—not only frame the outcome, it is the transformation. *How* molds and then gives birth to the present. The how changes us. . . . Engaging in deep and reciprocal indigeneity is a transformative act because it fundamentally changes modes of production of our lives. It changes the

relationships that house our bodies and our thinking. It changes how we conceptualize nationhood.”⁹¹ For Betasamosake Simpson, who draws on Audra Simpson to articulate a concept of native bodies as “political orders,” the body emerges as a site of sovereignty and “self-determination.” This self-sovereignty, she argues, is “the very foundation of Nishnaabeg governance.”⁹²

In other words, the concept of sovereignty she deploys for understanding Indigenous governing structures is fundamentally antithetical to forms of sovereignty deployed by western states that are based on rights—rather than relation—within which sovereignty adheres only in particular figures invested with state or other forms of power. It is based on concepts of individual and collective responsibility and actions that support mutually reinforcing material, cultural, and ontological practices. Betasamosake Simpson offers a concept of nation(hood) for Indigenous Peoples that is fundamentally opposed to settler colonial forms of nation and which is not exclusive to humanity.⁹³ Also moving beyond singularly human concepts of sovereignty, enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Robin Wall Kimmerer, a plant ecologist and director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, describes sovereignty as that which attaches to plants as well. In an interview, she says of heirloom corn farmed for centuries by Indigenous Peoples that it is “sovereign”: “free,” “independent,” and not “colonized.” Kimmerer says of the corn: “It is itself. It is an untrammelled person.”⁹⁴ Sovereignty emerges in these works as fraught and multifaceted, including existing and relating reciprocally with humans and nonhumans as the exercise of native political, cultural, and legal mechanisms that do not align with those of the settler state.

Such discussions of Indigenous sovereignty and its relation to the settler state are still largely absent in the Caribbean. Most texts on Caribbean history and society directly address neither settler colonialism nor Indigenous sovereignty. Instead, they divide the region into bounded historical epochs that prioritize colonial labour: conquest, colonization, the establishment of franchise colonialism and enslavement, emancipation, indenture, the rise of class consciousness and anticolonial struggle, Independence, and postcoloniality.⁹⁵ This lack of broad, formal consideration of settler colonialism in the Caribbean hampers our discussion of how Creoles constrain Indigenous sovereignty. When these discussions do occur, as with the Iwokrama below, they primarily engage the postcolonial nation-state’s constraint of Indigenous right without exploring how settler colonialism,

rather than just franchise colonialism, informs this. Thorny issues, such as whether the former franchise colony becomes a quasi-settler state at independence, and what this might mean for Indigenous sovereignties, remain deferred. Below, I explicitly frame the sovereignty issues of Indigenous Peoples in Guyana in terms of settler colonial power and the limits of postcolonial independence. I ultimately suggest that Indigenous sovereignty needs to be enacted differently.

INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY AND SETTLER COLONIAL POWER IN GUYANA

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there are similarities and critical differences in how Indigenous bodies exercise Indigenous sovereignties within their homelands. As with North America, these sovereignties encompass territorial right and control, self-determination, cultural retention and expression, and resource management. They are negotiated within overlapping international and state advocacy groups, conventions, treaties, declarations, acts, degrees of recognition, and different processes for establishing right within (postcolonial) nation-state's legal apparatuses, and through numerous local, national, regional, and international organizations. In short, in Latin America and the Caribbean, even more direct stakeholders are involved in the negotiation, granting, and exercise of Indigenous sovereignty.⁹⁶

NGOs such as COPINH—a nearly thirty-year-old broad association of Lenca groups advocating for “Indigenous autonomy,” land titles, resource control, access to health and education, and women’s rights—exemplify the multilayered systems of advocacy and governmentality structuring Indigenous rights and self-determination in Latin America.⁹⁷ In 2015 in Belize, the Maya Leaders Alliance won a landmark case that granted government recognition of Q’eqchi and Mopan Maya’s customary right to land.⁹⁸ Yet the Maya still struggle with land encroachments, wider social oppression, and violent repression of their social movements. The struggle of the Maya underscores how land rights and control of resources emerge as the most critical element of Indigenous sovereignty, as the basis for exercising bodily and cultural sovereignties, and as, to borrow language from Betasamosake Simpson, the reciprocal basis for Maya sovereignty.

In Guyana as elsewhere, Indigenous communities struggle with the same central issue of control of land rights as a key element of Indigenous self-determination. They advocate for their rights through Indigenous-led NGOs such as the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) and the Guyanese

Organization of Indigenous Peoples (GOIP). Like similar NGOs in Latin American states, they work alongside Indigenous nations' governing structures such as (in Guyana) village chiefs, village councils, and the National Toshias Council, an alliance of Indigenous chiefs mandated, and hence partly constrained, by the Amerindian Act.⁹⁹ As a mandated body of chiefs that needs to conduct business in the capital, the Council reveals how Indigenous sovereignty is achieved not apart from, but in coordination with national government.¹⁰⁰ Indigenous communities also negotiate governmental agencies: those that grant land titles (e.g., Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs) and those that must directly balance state resource needs against those of Indigenous Peoples (e.g., Guyana Geology and Mines Commission).

In 2013, founder of the Amerindian Research Unit at the University of Guyana and professor of forestry Janette Bulkan noted that "although the Amerindian population has doubled since 1969, their land claims have reduced by 20%." Moreover, she notes that the Forestry Commission and the Geology and Mines Commission "issue overlapping logging and mining concessions over Amerindian traditional lands in spite of explicit protection."¹⁰¹ In a report on Indigenous land tenure in Guyana, Tom Griffiths of the Forest Peoples Programme and the Arawakan head of the APA, Jean LaRose, present a consistent claim by Indigenous peoples that land titling does not recognize true Indigenous occupation and land use and is often based on a lack of initial consent by Indigenous Peoples. In one of many such examples, they cite a resident in the Sawari Wa'o Village in Region 9 in the country's southwest who asserts: "The Government of Guyana has an obligation to address our land claims since the time of Independence. This is what our elders and leaders have been saying for years. . . . Many of us live and occupy land outside the small existing village titles that were drawn up without full consultation of our people. . . . We need all of our lands to maintain our way of life, our culture, and our traditional practices."¹⁰² In this claim, land emerges as the intractable basis for Indigenous Peoples' sovereign being. The complex situation of having to apply for title or extensions to title and having rights to land subordinated to state economic needs means that the exercise of land-based Indigenous sovereignty in Guyana is achieved and expressed in part through its very constraint.

Guyana reveals a further way in which Indigenous sovereignty in Latin America and the Caribbean is differently negotiated than in the North American context. Neoliberal governmentality in the underresourced post-colonial state means that the state exercises its own sovereignty through a

diffuse network of nonstate actors with which Indigenous Peoples must also negotiate. Gillian Gregory and Ismael Vaccaro write that in Guyana and Latin America, Indigenous Peoples' territorial control is negotiated both with the state and with environmental actors through the very creation of environmentally protected areas.¹⁰³ Referring to these areas and to Indigenous-controlled lands as "islands of governmentality," they write that "these islands take the form of indigenous territories targeted for environmental conservation [see chapter 6], that overlap and articulate with—and within—the space of the national territory, and demonstrate that territorial rule is often shaped by slippages or contradictions in the constitution of power."¹⁰⁴ They also crucially observe that the history of granting titles to Indigenous Peoples remains part of long-enduring efforts to dominate the country's interior.¹⁰⁵ Consequently, these "islands" "do not represent changing governmental priorities . . . so much as new strategies for the expansion and reiteration of state power—specifically, the re-defining of space and identities through the granting of shared authority over different forms of land-use."¹⁰⁶ This impingement of Indigenous rights through modern conservation works against Indigenous sovereignty both at the level of matter—the land itself—and at that of bodily sovereignty through the forms of contamination, from mining and other industries, that literally leach into Indigenous bodies.¹⁰⁷

To demonstrate how conservation emerges as a form of "neoliberal governmentality" that constrains Indigenous right through the very granting of titles to Indigenous land, Gregory and Vaccaro give the example of the Iwokrama Centre for Rainforest Conservation: 371,000 hectares of rainforest reserve, located almost in Guyana's center (in the southeastern portion of Region 8) are dedicated to sustainable tourism, forestry, and conservation.¹⁰⁸ Gregory and Vaccaro write that, despite its employment of Indigenous Peoples and although its conservationist practices are ideologically aligned with Indigenous land rights and resource control, Iwokrama actually compromises Indigenous sovereignty by allowing the state to exercise governmentality in at least two key ways. First, the Centre is administered through headquarters in the capital, Georgetown (by international actors and funding structures) rather than in Region 8. The Centre describes itself as "an international not-for-profit organisation, governed by an International Board of Trustees and managed by a professional team of around seventy permanent staff in Georgetown and at the Iwokrama River Lodge and Research Centre at Kurupukari. The IIC's Patron is HRH The Prince of Wales."¹⁰⁹ This description reveals the layered structure of administration

and, more importantly, the conversion and redeployment of imperial domination and coloniality as redemptive benevolence through the funding structures of international or global conservation.¹¹⁰ Thus, conservationist benevolence is a redeployment of domination mechanisms.

Gregory and Vacarro's second key point is that the Indigenous Macushi, whose territories border the Centre, not only depend on it for employment, but "are portrayed as intrinsic components of the Iwokrama environment."¹¹¹ Thus, within their own homelands, their affiliation with the Centre means that the exercise of Macushi sovereignty fundamentally occurs within the "semi-permanent territorialization of market-oriented conservation and sustainable development."¹¹² Guyana's government receives international funds for maintaining forested conservation areas that offset "global carbon emissions through forest protections."¹¹³ They therefore argue that the government is actually incentivized to cede portions of its territory to both Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous groups in order to secure "the assisted expansion of state sovereign power."¹¹⁴ Conservation, therefore, allows *right*, the very right that was subordinated to (nation) state integrity in the UN Declaration, to function as the subversion of Indigenous sovereignty.

I spend a good deal of time on Gregory and Vaccaro's findings because they clearly illustrate the limits of Indigenous sovereignty's exercise in the postcolonial state. They demonstrate that Caribbean mechanisms of settler colonialism constrain Indigenous right through its negotiation against nation-state sovereignty, the reorganization of imperial power in international finance networks, and the levels of advocacy of local, nongovernmental, governmental, and international actors. They reveal how settler colonial power is exercised in postcolonial Guyana in a fundamentally different way from other contexts because state governmentality must first be ceded to international actors to be enacted. Moreover, the complex nature of land title in Guyana shows the deep imbrications of imperialism, coloniality, and postcoloniality. The issuance of title to Indigenous lands was a condition of the country's independence in 1966, and the postcolonial government undertook it in earnest in 1976.¹¹⁵ The British (and Dutch) who had initially restricted Indigenous right to lands became, at independence, the contractual arbiters of the return of Indigenous land in the postcolonial period. Moreover, since the postcolonial state must grant rights, it affirms British (and Dutch) usurpation of Indigenous right as part of the necessary condition of first the colonial and later the postcolonial state's existence. The state itself may perceive land title as an existential threat and so always

acts legally to constrain it. As Bulkan notes, the Guyanese state does not grant “Amerindian autonomy outside its sphere of control.”¹¹⁶

While there are other ways to discuss sovereignty beyond reducing it to land rights, this critical element of its enactment demonstrates how control of land, and hence the achievement of full sovereignty, is directly linked to the institution of a land-labour divide as a feature of settler coloniality’s governing mechanisms. The constraint on Indigenous sovereignty through the exclusion of “river and creek banks” and rights to “minerals and ground water” from the land titles granted to Indigenous Peoples in Guyana (as Griffiths and LaRose point out) must be read as a reenactment of coloniality’s space clearing through the reinstitution of the land-labour divide. Title granting occurs under a legal distinction (by the Amerindian Act in this case) between the land and productive labour upon it (e.g., state-organized labour to extract minerals). By reserving mineral and water rights (and limiting Indigenous right to water as a state resource), Guyana’s government distinguishes the land from its *products* extracted by capital and modern labour power. This distinction between land and labour, between the unproductive and the productive, enacts settler power through the division of the land as a political phenomenon (the settler function) from labour as an economic action on the land (the master function).

In Guyana we see the deployment of the mechanisms of settler coloniality to maintain postcolonial viability for a state sovereignty that is always under threat from underdevelopment, external boundary challenges, and the ceding of internal lands.¹¹⁷ The strategies of governance impinging on Indigenous right and sovereignty in the face of these threats must be placed in the context of settler colonialism and how it “reentrenches its own power,” rather than viewed narrowly as the singular effects of franchise colonialism.¹¹⁸ Robinson, Simpson, Betasamosake Simpson, and Newcomb clarify that it is settler strategies, rather than just (postcolonial) nation-state actors, that continue to impinge on Indigenous freedom and forms of self-determination and relation to land.

Critically important is Betasamosake Simpson’s critique of settler colonialism as that which exists in direct contradiction to the forms of self-determination she describes and which must be eliminated in the process of exercising Indigenous freedoms, self-determination, and governance.¹¹⁹ She writes, “I understand settler colonialism’s present *structure* as one that is formed and maintained by a series of processes for the purpose of dispossessing, that create a scaffolding within which my relationship to the state is contained.”¹²⁰ If settler colonialism is expressed through a set of

structures, we must look at those structures where they exist in countries, not just at the populations of those countries. We must look more broadly beyond the body of the white settler-master and at all the ways and kinds of peoples who have in fact stayed and at *how* they have stayed. We must examine, as Iwokrama demonstrates, the adaptive nature of settler structures of governmentality. Decolonization efforts within the postcolonial state need to be rethought in light of Betasamosake Simpson's argument that any state that either relies on or inherits settler modes of governmentality contributes fundamentally to the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples. Not only are former franchise colonies not free from settler colonial habits, laws, or structures of governance, but the deployment of these mechanisms of rule inside the settler colonial state reflects an adaptation and redeployment of the settler-master position.

My decision to frame this discussion of blackness, indigeneity, and labour within questions about sovereignty and settler colonialism is thus threaded through a desire and a conflict. The desire is to imagine Indigenous sovereignty in terms of its *consequence* for postcolonial independence. The conflict is how to argue for such a mode of sovereignty or right, in support of its expansion, when it is so problematic a concept. According to Alfred, "the next phase of scholarship and activism . . . will need to transcend the mentality that supports the colonization of indigenous nations, beginning with the rejection of the term and notion of indigenous 'sovereignty.'"¹²¹ I have chosen, however, to retain the term despite its problems in order to indicate a specific kind of counter valence to independence and to suggest the consequential way in which I imagine Indigenous rights having real impacts *on* the postcolonial state and for its citizens. When I refer to sovereignty in this book as that which needs to be at the core of postcolonial politics, I do not indicate one form of Indigenous governance. Instead, the collective practices of self-determination of the Wai Wais, Macushis, Potomonas, Arawaks, Caribs, Wapichan, Arecunas, Akawaios, and Warraus in Guyana are what I suggest be writ large in that country. I argue that Indigenous self-determination must be consequential for non-Indigenous Peoples both when they are on what are circumscribed as Indigenous homelands and when they are in the territories of the wider postcolonial state, whether those lands have or have not been marked as non-Indigenous either prior to or after conquest.

The governing concept of sovereignty in this book originates from collective Indigenous Peoples' practices with political consequence for the involuntary settler state, which must constitutionally be subject to Indigenous

legal and political structures. In other words, Indigenous sovereignty should be exercised not only on Indigenous lands for native peoples, but together with different Indigenous nations for the postcolonial state. Only in this way postcoloniality can be practiced without constraining both Indigenous sovereignty and Creole freedom. This call for a widening of Indigenous sovereignty is not about newly or more legitimately indigenizing Creole populations. I do not ascribe a redemptive function to indigeneity nor legitimize fantasies of becoming native, which are keenly and structurally tied to Indigenous dispossession. Rather, this is an effort to address the global absurdity where settler and postcolonial states delimit Indigenous Peoples' self-determination without being able to accept that the latter should inform their own governance as well. In formerly colonized Caribbean countries, we have the greatest possibility of reinventing the postcolonial state, ridding it of its settler habits and valences, and affirming Indigenous sovereignties in their priorness to and exceeding of state's rights.

This shift in the exercise of postcolonial politics for which I am calling also means that we must confront narratives of arrival, which I discussed in *Creole Indigeneity*, that are now tied to forms of (post) colonial state power. Moreton-Robinson not only echoes criticisms of postcoloniality and diaspora for their affirmations of "migrancy" over and above Indigenous belonging. Speaking of Australia, she also argues that the term "postcolonial" cannot apply to the entire country because the spaces Indigenous Peoples inhabit are not postcolonial.¹²² She writes, "In postcolonizing settler societies, Indigenous people . . . position all non-Indigenous people as migrants and diasporic. . . . This ontological relation to land constitutes a subject position that we do not share, that cannot be shared, with the postcolonial subject."¹²³ While Moreton-Robinson argues here about the postcoloniality of a normative settler state, her claims remain applicable for thinking about nonwhite, postcolonial states.¹²⁴

Although in the Caribbean we are talking of populations of color, our postcoloniality is still dependent on the ways that empire and the coloniality out of which the nation-state emerged supported whiteness. Whiteness in this context is more than a racial or cultural designation or ideological position. It is achieved through strategies of governance, retained after independence, supporting and reinforcing the global dominance of whiteness as full political representation and ownership (recall Wynter's critique of Marx). Moreover, slavery and indenture have produced Creole populations that we perceive as native, a becoming that is "incommensurable" with

those of its First Peoples, especially where it is secured by non-Indigenous, anti-Indigenous modes of governance.

In Guyana, this is nowhere clearer than where the state must grant titles to Indigenous Peoples, determine who is racially Indigenous, and limit full access to the land and mineral rights of Indigenous Peoples. These “regulatory measures” are defined, Moreton-Robinson writes, by “the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty” in order to “quantify what is recognizable as indigeneity within modernity.”¹²⁵ States thus fundamentally restrict Indigenous sovereignty by repeatedly placing Indigenous peoples within systems of being and governance that “dispossess the Indigenous subject of an ontology that exists outside the logic of capital.”¹²⁶ Postcolonial states and their populations of migrants/arrivants still retain the logics of possession and therefore must still act to limit Indigenous sovereignty so that it does not threaten the state itself.¹²⁷ Moreover, they continue to deploy not just the legal and political mechanisms of Indigenous dispossession, but a settler-master grammar and structure of power that pulls Creoles into the position of the settler through an inhabiting that is historically and contemporaneously based on their own prior subordination and on that of Indigenous Peoples through the land-labour division essential to the rise of capital.

As theorist Fred Moten reminds us by elaborating the DuBoisian color line in *Stolen Life*, these grammars of difference in which time is both “an-original” and anachronistic are not ours.¹²⁸ The problem then becomes, how do we confront and reject the grammar? How do we read together two labours (native and nonnative) that cannot operate in nor at the same time because they are now expressed via a biopolitical relation rather than on their own terms? How can we achieve a new approach to labour outside the land-labour dialectic, through which the postcolonial state may act to allow for a fuller expression of Indigenous self-determination with consequential, quotidian impacts for all its citizens? How can Independence become the true practice of freedom rather than the sacrifice of bodily and land-based sovereignties for both blacks and Indigenous Peoples? These are the collective questions to which this book seeks answers.

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PREFACE

- 1 The quotation is from Bulkan, who refers to Creoles as “settlers” as well; “Struggle for Recognition,” 368. See also Trotz and Roopnaraine, “Angles of Vision.” Dei has challenged Lawrence and Dua’s work as well as Mamdani’s, to claim that North American blacks cannot be settlers. Not only does the structural nature of anti-blackness mean that blacks can only be implicated but not complicit with the settler project, but “only white bodies have ever succeeded in deploying Terra Nullius.” Dei, *Reframing Blackness*, 111. I agree with Dei on this point.
- 2 In *Creole Indigeneity*, I discuss the sociocultural use of the term *Creole*. Here, I use it to designate primarily, though not exclusively, the descendants of formerly enslaved blacks and indentured South Asians.
- 3 I use *raison d’être* here *as* and as *more than* a particular kind of ontological statement. It is *not* equivalent to the totality of what Creoles, particularly blacks, have become. It refers to both the material reality of black chattel bodies in the Americas and the idealistic efforts to have them serve as the “other” for the humanity of colonial, European man. These efforts focused on replacing Indigenous, black cosmogonic belonging with an ontological statement that tied and delimited it within Judeo-Christian subjectivity. The purpose of black being was then recast from being for itself within African cosmogonic systems to being for others or working for the well-being of Man/the human and of the colony, which aspires to be a state. In other words, black ontology, where it is not an oxymoron, becomes limited to work for Man’s selfhood. I take seriously Frantz Fanon’s statements that “every ontology is made unavailable in a colonized and civilized society” (*Wretched of the Earth*, 109). Moreover, whites’ inhabiting of humanity always

forecloses black ontology by instituting a particular concept of Man, a genre, as Sylvia Wynter would say, for which blacks are necessarily “liminal”; (white) Man and black (human) are always opposed and irreconcilable grammars. In colonies like Guyana, blacks negotiated their *raison d'être*, or ontological statement, via Indigenous Peoples. This negotiation, I argue, is a co-constitutive element of their legal relationship with the latter. (For more on Man and the genres of the human, see Wynter, “Columbus and the Poetics,” and McKittrick, *Sylvia Wynter*.)

- 4 Aileen Moreton-Robinson writes in *The White Possessive* of development as applied to Indigenous Peoples: “Development and aid are tied to achieving modernity and progress as well as white morals and values” (*White Possessive*, Loc 2840).
- 5 Guyana’s Amerindian Act, as I discussed in *Creole Indigeneity*, designates who can be said to be Indigenous, legally superseding how Indigenous Peoples determine and practice belonging based on their own kinship structures.
- 6 Many analytic categories we employ as academics reinforce the divisions I seek to bridge between blacks and Indigenous Peoples. They are simply not applicable to many black and native ways of existing and interpreting the world. One of the best examples of this absolute difference is Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*. More contemporary discussions from within native (American) studies include Watts, “Indigenous Place-Thought,” and Todd, “Indigenous Feminist’s Take.?”
- 7 See Introduction for explanation of term *weaver*.

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Although both enslaved black and indentured South Asian work has been linked with the evolution of the postcolonial nation-state and the radical and resistant anticolonial labour histories essential to its genesis, this book is primarily concerned with the relationship between Indigenous and black labour. I discuss South Asian indenture in *Creole Indigeneity*. Kamala Kempadoo argues against linking black chattel slavery to indenture, suggesting that the latter is more closely related to sex-trafficking and “modern slavery.” See Kempadoo, “Bound Coolies.”
- 2 Although more strict definitions of franchise colonialism exist, I refer to Caribbean colonies of resource extraction and exploitation that utilized black chattel slavery as franchise colonies. Throughout the manuscript, the term “franchise” marks a distinction from settler colonies/colonialism even as I seek to have us read them relationally.
- 3 For the prior arrival thesis, see *Creole Indigeneity*.
- 4 I quote Zakiyyah Iman Jackson to specify the particular kind of racialization to which blacks are subject as distinct from other forms of racialization (*Becoming Human*, 93). I also acknowledge the resonances between my work and Tiffany Lethabo King’s, as we are both concerned with the links and breaks among the black radical tradition, Afropessimism, and Indigenous studies, and we are both interested in the impasses of blackness and indigeneity around land, labour, and the human. Even where our analyses overlap in very differently oriented projects (King’s is focused on the body, “porosity,” and fungibility), it is purely coinci-

dental, and I do not read or critique these overlaps. In this project, my interest in labour, grammar, and being has evolved directly out of my first book, and I am deeply grateful that *Beyond Constraint* sits in such good company. I am even more grateful because the work of King and the other writers listed here makes the book less like a fish out of water than *Creole Indigeneity* was when it was first published.

- 5 King, *Black Shoals*, ix.
- 6 Lowe, *Intimacies of Four Continents*.
- 7 Byrd et al., “Predatory Value,” 5.
- 8 Byrd et al., “Predatory Value,” 6.
- 9 In *Creole Indigeneity* I discuss Cheddi Jagan’s Marxism. For other work on Marxism’s role in Caribbean politics and labour organizing, see Slack, “Charles W. Mills”; Maingot, *Race, Ideology, and the Decline*; Munroe, “Contemporary Marxist Movements” and *Marxist “Left” in Jamaica*.
- 10 Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, 215–16 (my emphasis).
- 11 Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 78.
- 12 Depestre, “Interview with Aimé Césaire,” 85.
- 13 Depestre, “Interview with Aimé Césaire,” 85.
- 14 Depestre, “Interview with Aimé Césaire,” 85–86.
- 15 See Wilderson, *Afropessimism*.
- 16 See Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, chapter 7.
- 17 In an oft-quoted passage, Fanon writes: “In the colonies the economic infrastructure is also a superstructure. The cause is effect: You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. This is why a Marxist analysis should always be slightly *stretched* when it comes to addressing the colonial issue. . . . In the colonies, the foreigner imposed himself using his cannons and machines [and he] . . . always remains a foreigner. . . . The ruling species is first and foremost the outsider from elsewhere, different from the indigenous population, ‘the others.’” *Wretched of the Earth*, loc. 658 (my emphasis).
- 18 Cedric Robinson will see this last point as also peculiar to the race-capital Matrix in *Black Marxism*, nearly twenty years after Fanon, writing: “capitalism was less a catastrophic revolution (negation) of feudalist social orders than the extension of these social relations into the larger tapestry of the modern world’s political and economic relations” (*Black Marxism*, 10). The distinctions that constitute the material base of society or “infrastructure” relations (forces of production) for Fanon, as distinct from but interconnected with its “superstructure” (noneconomic institutions), matter less in an account of social change in the colonies. For the operative elaboration of the distinction between base (infrastructure in Fanon) and superstructure, see Harman, “Base and Superstructure.” Importantly, base and superstructure are not discrete or disarticulated. Drawing on Marx’s recognition of this, Walter Rodney notes this at the outset of *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (6), and this fact in Marx’s work has allowed Sylvia Wynter to consistently argue that “the mode of economic production” determines how we are human. McKittrick, ed., *Sylvia Wynter*, loc. 5584–88.

- 19 Fanon uses the term “settler” in *Wretched of the Earth*.
- 20 See Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*; Silva, *Toward a Global Idea*.
- 21 For God’s function to “extrahumanly” mandate the social structure of Christian Europe, see Wynter, “Columbus and the Poetics” and McKittrick, ed., *Sylvia Wynter*. Fanon refers to this external, validating element of social and economic relations to which he correlates race. Wynter argues that race replaced God and thus functions in the same way.
- 22 See Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, chapter 7.
- 23 Homi Bhabha uses “Manichean” in his introduction to *The Wretched of the Earth* (2004). Constance Farrington’s translation (1963) puts the term in Fanon’s text itself.
- 24 Fanon (2004), loc. 664–70. In a separate work I talk briefly about the ontological versus the phenomenological Fanon in these books (Jackson, “Colonialism”). See also Fanon’s “Why We Use Violence.”
- 25 Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, 206.
- 26 Coulthard, “The Colonialism of the Present.” This phrasing in the piece’s title echoes Means’s claim that “for America to live Europe must die.”
- 27 Alfred uses the term “partnership.” “Sovereignty,” 45.
- 28 Marx quoted in Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, 206.
- 29 Coulthard and Simpson. “Grounded Normativity,” 251.
- 30 Coulthard and Simpson, “Grounded Normativity,” 252.
- 31 Means, “For America to Live, Europe Must Die!” The controversy concerns Means’s acting and style of activism. See Stripes, “Strategy.”
- 32 Means, “For America to Live, Europe Must Die!”
- 33 Wynter deliberately refers to herself as a “weaver” in rejection of a positioning as a humanist or philosopher.
- 34 Wynter, “Columbus and the Poetics,” 275 (my emphasis). See also her “No Humans Involved.” The question remains: Do possibilities for disalienation exist for groups that refuse either to move through and into capitalist world-historical positions or to see these positions as the horizon of their humanity? If so, what would those possibilities look like?
- 35 See Wynter, “Columbus and the Poetics.” In my conversation with Wynter on June 15, 2017, she referred to the Judeo-Christian cosmogony as spatial (with regard to the heavens) and the new bourgeois one as temporal (with regard to Darwinian evolution and the descent of man).
- 36 Wynter, “No Humans Involved.”
- 37 McKittrick, ed., *Sylvia Wynter*, loc. 1049–54 (my emphasis). In *Infrapolitical Passages*, Williams’s critique of Marx aligns with Wynter’s (see Williams, 39). See also Wynter, “The Ceremony Must Be Found,” for the human same and human other as “Sameness/Difference.”
- 38 Lindahl, “Caribbean Diversity and Ideological Conformism,” 58–59.
- 39 Lindahl elaborates Caribbean Marxism’s additional limits, positing that at the time of his writing, it is in fact on the “decline” precisely because of these limits, a position that sociologist Maingot also shared. Maingot, *Race, Ideology, and the*

Decline. See Henry, *Caliban's Reason*, for both a critique of Caribbean Marxism and criticisms of it such as Lindahl's.

- 40 McKittrick, ed., *Sylvia Wynter*, loc. 1043.
- 41 Wilderson, "Gramsci's Black Marx," 226. Wilderson writes that while "The worker calls into question the legitimacy of productive practices, the slave calls into question the legitimacy of productivity itself," 231. I discuss Wilderson in later chapters.
- 42 See, for example, the Guyana Independence Act of 1966. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1966/14/enacted>. See also <https://guyanachronicle.com/2016/05/14/our-first-Independence-day/>.
- 43 For another example, consider the first prime minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Patrice Lumumba, who spoke in 1960 of the brutal repression of black freedom, famously characterizing such transfers of power not as a stage in colonial development after the necessary tutelage of colonized people, as Belgium would, but as a struggle "filled with tears, fire and blood." Lumumba, "Speech at the Ceremony."
- 44 For instance, though independent since 1966, Barbados retained the British monarch as head of state until November 2021, when it finally became a Republic after decades of decolonization measures.
- 45 The Public Archive, "Detours and Distance: An Interview with J. Michael Dash." <https://thepublicarchive.com/?p=3134>. For Barbados: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/barbados-becomes-a-republic-after-bidding-farewell-to-british-monarchy>.
- 46 "There is the mistaken belief black people achieved power with independence," he argued, "but a black man ruling a dependent state within the imperialist system has no power. He is simply an agent of the whites in the metropolis, with an army and police force designed to maintain the imperialist way of things." Rodney, "Black Power," in *Groundings*, 11.
- 47 See, for example, the structural adjustment programs of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund implemented in the region in the late 1970s.
- 48 See Nkrumah's *Neo-Colonialism*. For a range of critiques of postcoloniality, see Appiah, "Is the Post"; Shohat, "Notes on the 'Post-Colonial'"; McClintock, "Angel of Progress" and *Imperial Leather*; Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*; Mishra and Hodge, "What Is Postcolonialism?"; Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory*; Dirlik, "Postcolonial Aura."
- 49 For a discussion of the settler as a rights-bearing subject, see Ben-zvi, *Native Land Talk*. My focus is on the function of the settler with regard to cultivation, so I do not focus on definitions that see the settler as a figure that evolves later in colonization projects, such as in the post-Independence United States.

50 Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 21.

51 Wynter charts this shift across her work.

52 In *Maya Cultural Heritage*, McAnany identifies the same depiction of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America, although the histories of forced work in Latin America have a different mode of representation for Indigenous Peoples as a peasantry.

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- 53 In *Red, White, and Black*, Wilderson is preoccupied with blacks' and Indigenous Peoples' "ontological" "grammar of suffering." My discussion neither derives from nor engages Wilderson's work within a specific genre (film), or that which is "submerged in speech" (31). I am interested in grammar that does not derive from discursive arrangements per se, but has a material ground that the discursive relationships evolve to secure. The grammar I discuss here is neither an after to a specific event nor a priorness. It is co-constitutive of the event itself, in this case, that of putting in place the regime of accumulation for transforming black and Indigenous bodies and as such the possibility for capital accumulation. The event is thus only a nodal point within a larger structure.
- 54 Wynter's discussion of cosmogonies is relevant here. In McKittrick, ed., *Sylvia Wynter*, she defines a cosmogony as "origin myth" (927) or "origin narrative" (957). Cosmogonies are governing systems of belief that generate social orders specific to the peoples who hold them. In this text and in, for instance, "Columbus and the Poetics," Wynter foregrounds two crucial points for this work. The first is the general way in which, through conquest, black people and natives would come to be governed by Eurocentric cosmogonies: how they knew themselves as human would be supplanted by another system in which they could not be recognized as fully human. The second is that European-based cosmogonies shifted from being theocentric to "biocentric" (1594). Although religion was the primary difference among peoples prior to the discoveries of the mid- to late fifteenth century, this categorical difference becomes supplanted by biology as the form of racial difference.
- 55 In the introduction to *Formations of United States Colonialism*, Goldstein remarks that the imposition of a new time is a mechanism of domination of Indigenous Peoples.
- 56 For white, "possessive logics," see Moreton-Robinson, *White Possessive*.
- 57 For one such history of Guyana, see my discussion of Vere T. Daly in *Creole Indigeneity*.
- 58 Wilderson, *Afropessimism*, 227.
- 59 Wilderson, *Afropessimism*, 14, 16, 217, 222.
- 60 Wilderson, *Afropessimism*, 241.
- 61 This argument reformulates the discussion of dialectics in *Creole Indigeneity*, where I outline how the master-slave dialectic moves Indigenous and black peoples into relation in order to produce the Creole citizen as a native subject who then deploys the colonially based settler-native relation (theorized in this book) in order to hold power over Indigenous Peoples.
- 62 Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 65. For the slave as the threshold of political representation (while man functions as the figure who can be represented within political structures), see, for example, Agamben, *Homo Sacer*; Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*; Aristotle, "Politics: Book 1." Moreover, the rights denied enslaved persons in the constitutions of slaver nations reflect this incapacity for political representation that is the enslaved person. What's critical here is Wilderson's argument that the imbrication of slaveness and blackness means that the black (today and in the past) is incapable of true political representation.

- 63 I am struck by the fact that the protests over George Floyd's death bear out black freedom's and Indigenous sovereignty's relational nature. His death and the Black Lives Matter protest sparked worldwide protest against oppression. But in the United States, in particular, they led to a new wave of native protest against settler coloniality, and these together effected, finally, the consideration of removing the Redskins name and logo from the Washington State football team. While this is far afield from the issues of postcolonial governmentality, it shows the interconnected nature of black and Indigenous oppression and freedom.
- 64 See work by Wolfe. Scholars working in Indigenous Studies have complicated this model to focusing on how this perspective, in its singularity, also deploys the settler colonial knowledge apparatus. See, for instance, work by O'Brien. Settler colonialism not just relies on real or cultural violence to Indigenous Peoples, but is a mode of colonialism born out of the crucible of empire as an anterior and future formation. It has consistently perpetrated the violent remaking of indigeneity and Indigenous sovereignty in international and national politics through a variety of contractual strategies such as treaty making, the redefining of sovereign politics through legal mechanisms external to them, and the production and deployment of anti-Indigenous, settler knowledge formations. See Goldstein, ed., *Formations of United States Colonialism*.
- 65 Barker, "For Whom Sovereignty Matters," 1.
- 66 See, for example, Morales, "Coronavirus Infections Continue to Rise on Navajo Nation," NPR.org, May 11, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/05/11/854157898/coronavirus-infections-continue-to-rise-on-navajo-nation>, and "As Coronavirus Cases Rise, Navajo Nation Tries to Get Ahead of Pandemic," NPR.org, April 4, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/04/04/826780041/as-coronavirus-cases-rise-navajo-nation-tries-to-get-ahead-of-pandemic>.
- 67 Felicia Fonseca, Carolyn Kaster, and Tim Sullivan, "Inside the Navajo Nation as It Endures the Coronavirus Outbreak," AP.org, May 22, 2020, <https://leads.ap.org/best-of-the-states/navajo-nation-in-lockdown>.
- 68 Hollie Silverman et al., "Navajo Nation Surpasses New York State for the Highest Covid-19 Infection Rate in the US," CNN.com, May 18, 2020, <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/18/us/navajo-nation-infection-rate-trnd/index.html>.
- 69 In chapter 6, I discuss metaphor as a legal strategy.
- 70 *Auxiliary* here refers to the categorization and function of words such as "would" and "shall."
- 71 Barker and Alfred write of how the use of tribe and nation to define Indigenous Peoples in US law has signaled their difference from and hence subordination to states. See Barker, "For Whom Sovereignty Matters," 10–11; Alfred, "Sovereignty," 35.
- 72 See O'Malley, "Indigenous Governance," and Simpson, *Mobawk Interruptus*, 7.
- 73 See work by Bruyneel, Simpson, and Coulthard, among others.
- 74 See the Declaration and its discussion in Moreton-Robinson, *White Possessive*. The Declaration should supersede the right of any state to inhibit Indigenous freedoms, but individual states still grant titles or recognize nations.

- 75 Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, loc. 2907, 2924
- 76 See Barker's discussion of the UN Declaration.
- 77 Moreton-Robinson, *White Possessive*, 385.
- 78 Moreton-Robinson, *White Possessive*, 623.
- 79 See her elaboration in chapter 9 around a reading of Foucault's *Society Must Be Defended*: loc. 2568–2577, 2586, 2647, 2664, 2682.
- 80 Steve Newcomb, "Indigenous Sovereignty and the Political Subordination of Our Nations," *Indian Country Today*, March 27, 2017. Newcomb writes, "Indigenous sovereignty means a form of sovereignty under a system of domination."
- 81 Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 10.
- 82 Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 11.
- 83 Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 23.
- 84 See Williams, *American Indian in Western Legal Thought*. I use pre- and post-conquest to refer to the end of the fifteenth century, but the canonical, legal discussions at that time responded to earlier conquests.
- 85 Barker, "For Whom Sovereignty Matters," 20, 21.
- 86 Alfred, "Sovereignty," 33.
- 87 Alfred, "Sovereignty," 34–35.
- 88 Moreover, the concept developed out of "values and objectives that put it in direct opposition to the values and objectives found in most traditional indigenous philosophies." Alfred, "Sovereignty," 43.
- 89 Alfred, "Sovereignty," 44–47.
- 90 Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, loc. 203.
- 91 Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, loc. 366.
- 92 Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, loc. 1798 and 1838.
- 93 See her discussion of Nanabush (loc. 934), and the section "I Am Not a Nation State" (loc. 180).
- 94 "To the Best of Our Knowledge," <https://www.ttbook.org/interview/wisdom-corn-mother>, May 31, 2020. For more on Kimmerer, see *Braiding Sweetgrass*.
- 95 See Hintzen, *Costs of Regime Survival*; Knight, *The Caribbean*; Rodney, *Groundings*, chapter 3.
- 96 Keeping in mind that Indigenous Peoples in the United States and Canada are subject to forms of state-sponsored and other kinds of anti-Indigenous violence, in Latin America, Indigenous Peoples (and non-Indigenous activists) face even more openly violent forms of repression for their rights activism. Over seven hundred activists, mostly Indigenous and black, have been killed in Columbia since 2016. The Garifuna (Garinagu) leader Antonio Bernárdez of the Punta Piedra community was murdered in 2020, and Lenca activist Berta Caceras, winner of the 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize and the founder of COPINH, the Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras, was murdered in 2016. For more on how the Garifuna claim Indigenous status and negotiate relations between indigeneity and blacks, see Anderson, *Black and Indigenous*. They exist in tense relation to more traditionally defined Indigenous groups such as the Maya.
- 97 <http://copinhenglish.blogspot.com/p/who-we-are.html>.

- 98 <https://today.caricom.org/2015/10/30/ccj-grants-historic-constitutional-relief-to-maya-people/>.
- 99 See Amerindian Act; Bulkan, "Struggle for Recognition," 373.
- 100 Guyana's Department of Public Information, "National Tshaos Council—Highest Representative Body for Indigenous Peoples in Guyana," last modified October 2, 2012, <https://dpi.gov.gy/national-tshaos-council-highest-representative-body-for-indigenous-peoples-in-guyana/>.
- 101 Bulkan, "Struggle for Recognition," 371.
- 102 Griffiths and La Rose, *Searching for Justice*, 18.
- 103 Gregory and Vaccaro include a list of sources reflecting how Guyana's compromised state governmentality is similar to that of Latin America. "Islands of Governmentality," 347.
- 104 Gregory and Vaccaro, "Islands of Governmentality," 348. Their deployment of the trope of islands speaks directly to the abrogation of Indigenous sovereignty regarding land rights. The archipelagic trope traps the Caribbean in a reductive, globally consumable language tied to the regimes of touristic, trade, and other forms of exploitation in the global economy. On the other hand, the renaming of "spaces of governmentality" as islands highlights the circumscription of Indigenous sovereignty. While it seems to make the case for the need to see the issues facing Indigenous Peoples in Guyana through the lens of Latin America and Indigenous peoples in other areas of Amazonia, it also suggests a distinctly Caribbean governing mechanism.
- 105 Gregory and Vaccaro, "Islands of Governmentality," 348. Trotz and Roopnaraine also note the need to dominate. See *Creole Indigeneity* on this issue.
- 106 Gregory and Vaccaro, "Islands of Governmentality," 349.
- 107 See Alexander Zaitchik, "How Conservation Became Colonialism: Indigenous people, Not Environmentalists, Are the Key to Protecting the World's Most Precious Ecosystems," *Foreign Policy*, July 16, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/16/how-conservation-became-colonialism-environment-indigenous-people-ecuador-mining/>.
- 108 Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development, "About Us," <https://iwokrama.org/about-us/>; "Our Work," <https://iwokrama.org/our-work/>. Iwokrama bears similarity to the protected areas of the Cofan discussed in Zaitchik, "How Conservation Became Colonialism."
- 109 Iwokrama International Centre, "About Us."
- 110 Both Barker and Alfred, for instance, respectively note how Indigenous Peoples are positioned as "welfare recipients" through a "patronizing faux altruism" designed to produce and reinforce forms of dependency and compel integration into the states within which Indigenous nations are located. Barker, "For Whom Sovereignty Matters," 16; Alfred, "Sovereignty," 44–45.
- 111 Gregory and Vaccaro, "Islands of Governmentality," 352.
- 112 Gregory and Vaccaro, "Islands of Governmentality," 352.
- 113 Gregory and Vaccaro, "Islands of Governmentality," 352.
- 114 Gregory and Vaccaro, "Islands of Governmentality," 353.

- 115 See Bulkan, "Struggle for Recognition."
- 116 Bulkan, "Struggle for Recognition," 377.
- 117 See my discussion of the Rupununi Rebellion in *Creole Indigeneity*.
- 118 Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, loc. 2849.
- 119 Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, loc. 744.
- 120 Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, loc. 751 (my emphasis).
- 121 Alfred, "Sovereignty," 41.
- 122 Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, loc. 456, 488. See also work by Jodi Byrd.
- 123 Moreton-Robinson, *Possessive Whiteness*, loc. 497–505. See also Vine Deloria Jr., *God Is Red*.
- 124 Moreton-Robinson, *Possessive Whiteness*, loc. 634.
- 125 Moreton-Robinson, *Possessive Whiteness*, 3728, 3739.
- 126 Moreton-Robinson, *Possessive Whiteness*, 3723.
- 127 I've made this point in earlier work, and it is supported by Moreton-Robinson, who argues, "States regulate and discipline Indigenous peoples on the basis of our different status and rights claims in ways that do not threaten their sovereignty" (*Possessive Whiteness*, loc. 3634).
- 128 Moten, *Stolen Life*, loc. 816–30.

1. CONVERSION

- 1 For a historical account of the growth of enslaved black populations and the political and economic conditions that supported the breeding of enslaved peoples, see Sublette and Sublette, *American Slave Coast*, and Smithers, *Slave Breeding*. For perspectives beyond that of the United States, see also Donoghue, *Black Breeding Machines*, and Morgan, *Laboring Women*. The reproduction or growth of the black population in the Americas occurs alongside the documented decline of the Indigenous population, as outlined, for instance, in Denevan, *Native Population*. The relationality of black growth and native decline must be theorized not as a retroactive, causal legitimization of slavery but as a direct result of the institution of native slavery, black slavery, as well as of the *encomienda* and the *repartimiento* as anti-black and anti-indigenous labour systems that legitimized non-chattel slavery. More importantly, despite black reproduction, no system valued black or Indigenous life, but all represent a specific devaluing of each that is tied to the manner in which blacks and native peoples needed to be productive for accumulative regimes.
- 2 In addition, see Marx's discussion of labour and nature in chapter 7 of *Capital*, volume 1.
- 3 I refer to forced removals, treaty making, creating reservations, and titling lands that may or may not have been the ancestral homes of specific native peoples in the Americas.
- 4 When Césaire writes in the long poem "Notebook of a Return to the Native Land" of enslaved blacks' embodied labour ("not an inch of this world devoid of my fin-