FICTIONS OF LAND AND FLESH

Mark Rifkin

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BLACKNESS, INDIGENEITY, SPECULATION

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Cover art: Mark Bradford, *Pickett's Charge (Man with the Flag)*
(detail), 2017. Mixed media on canvas. 353.1 × 1523.9 cm. Photo: Cathy
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INTRODUCTION

In a statement of support for the protestors seeking to stop the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline on land near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation, members of the Black Lives Matter network describe it as "a movement for all of us" by those "Indigenous peoples who are putting their bodies and lives on the line to protect our right to clean water."[1] The statement goes on to insist, "[T]his is not a fight that is specific only to Native peoples—this is a fight for all of us and we must stand with our family at Standing Rock," later adding, "We are in an ongoing struggle for our lives and this struggle is shaped by the shared history between Indigenous peoples and Black people in America, connecting that stolen land and stolen labor from Black and brown people built this country." Black and Indigenous struggles appear here to coincide as they emerge out of a "shared history" of white supremacist violence, exploitation, and expropriation.[2] From this perspective, Native actions and intentions in fighting the Dakota Access Pipeline (opposition to which coalesced and circulated under the hashtag #NoDAPL) take part in a united movement whose subjects form a "we" that exceeds the specificity of Native peoplehood, since the trajectory of such opposition is shaped by, in the statement's terms, "a critical fight against big oil for our collective human right to access water." Since Black people also are subject to environmental racism, which "is not limited to pipelines on Indigenous land," they, too, are represented within the efforts

at Standing Rock; thus, Black Lives Matter's solidarity with Native activists emerges from a sense of mutual subjection as people of color to environmental degradation and abjection by the racist policies of the U.S. state.

However, to what extent does this framing reflect Indigenous understandings? As described by Nick Estes, an Indigenous studies scholar and citizen of the Lower Brule Sioux, the current conflict arises out of "the longer histories of Oceti Sakowin (The Great Sioux Nation) resistance against the trespass of settlers, dams, and pipelines" across the Missouri River, itself understood as unceded Oceti Sakowin territory—recognized as such under the treaty of 1851 with the U.S. government. Moreover, in the introduction to a series of articles on #NoDAPL, Estes and Jaskiran Dhillon present the pipeline as "a continuation of the nineteenth-century Indian wars of extermination" while also posing the question, "How do we situate Standing Rock within a social, political, cultural, and historical context of Indigenous anticolonial resistance against occupation and various forms of state violence inherent to settler colonialism?"[3] These articulations conceptualize the struggle at Standing Rock as an expression of Oceti Sakowin sovereignty and self-determination as Indigenous peoples, rightfully exercising jurisdiction and stewardship over their homelands while being assaulted in ways consistent with an ongoing history of settler colonial theft and refusal to acknowledge the political authority of Native nations. Although the Black Lives Matter statement notes that "there is no Black liberation without Indigenous sovereignty," such sovereignty does not feature as a meaningful part of the analysis offered, either in terms of what is at stake in Indigenous opposition or what might be at play in imagining and negotiating an "our" in which non-natives might participate. While the statement suggests a convergence around the kinds of materials used for the pipeline and the failed water pipes in "Black communities like Flint," as well as the fact that many of the same companies funding the pipeline also sponsor "factories that emit carcinogenic chemicals into Black communities," the political imaginary at play in Indigenous opposition gets translated and refigured within an alternative set of conceptual, political, and historical coordinates. That process allows the rhetorical emergence of a "we" who have a "shared" set of rights/claims to the space of "this country" in ways fairly disconnected from the question and practice of Indigenous sovereignties. If the actions at Standing Rock and in Flint might be brought into relation around access to water, does such a conjunction provide a basis on which to connect them? Or, perhaps more usefully, what kinds of relation does it engender, and what dangers lie in presuming that this apparently shared object or set of concerns bespeaks an underlying unity in the movements' frames and aims? As Dipesh Chakrabarty

cautions in *Provincializing Europe*, "The Hindi *pani* may be translated into the English 'water' without having to go through the superior positivity of H_2O," and this movement across languages "appeal[s] to models of cross-cultural and cross-categorical translations that do not take a universal middle term for granted."[4] Similarly, while water may provide a basis for mutual engagement and solidarity, the significance of water—the political geographies, collective histories, and constellations of meaning in which it and sustainable access to it are enmeshed—cannot be presumed to be the same. How might water, as an example, provide a site for translation among disparate political imaginaries and trajectories in ways that do not seek to efface their difference in the process?

Rather than seeking to diminish the gesture of solidarity by members of the Black Lives Matter movement, then, I want to underline the ways that, even in good faith efforts toward meaningful engagement, the assumption of a shared set of terms, analyses, or horizons of political imagination between Black and Indigenous struggles may be premature or may obfuscate significant distinctions.[5] The question of how to understand the specificity of political movements appears as a central issue in the articulation of the aims of the Black Lives Matter network. The Black Lives Matter movement began as a response to the state-sanctioned murder of Black people (particularly by the police), with the hashtag arising specifically in 2013 in response to the failure to hold George Zimmerman legally accountable for his killing of Trayvon Martin. Since then, it has grown into a broader mass movement focused on challenging various institutionalized systems of antiblack oppression.[6] As part of "A HerStory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement," the three creators of the hashtag—Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Cullors—observe, "Progressive movements in the United States have made some unfortunate errors when they push for unity at the expense of really understanding the concrete differences in context, experience, and oppression. In other words, some want unity without struggle." The aim here lies in challenging the appropriation of Black activist and intellectual work by others in ways that do not acknowledge the significance of antiblack oppression, how Black lives "are uniquely, systematically, and savagely targeted by the state." However, this emphasis on the particularity of the forms of domination to which Black people are subjected and their struggles against such domination—the push against, in the creators' terms, "the worn out and sloppy practice of drawing lazy parallels of unity between peoples with vastly different histories and experiences"—can also apply to the process of seeking to put Black and Indigenous movements into relation.[7] Garza, Tometi, and Cullors's cautions here apply not only to the imagination of an inherent "we" or

"us" that unites these struggles but to the ways "concrete differences in context, experience, and oppression" can be displaced when positing a given analytical framework as necessarily providing the encompassing conceptual structure in which to situate Black and Indigenous histories, political imaginaries, and efforts to realize justice. What difficulties arise in trying to resolve these differences by incorporating them into a unifying, singular model, and what other possibilities might there be for movement between and among such differences other than merger or triangulation within a putatively supervening structure that supposedly can envelop and explain them?

From this perspective, we might understand Black and Indigenous struggles less as incommensurable than as simply nonidentical, as having distinct kinds of orientation shaped by the effects of histories of enslavement and settler colonial occupation.[8] To describe movements and the political imaginaries to which they give rise and that animate them as *oriented* suggests that they are given form, trajectory, and momentum by the particular histories of domination to which they respond, as well as the visions of liberation that emerge to contest the dominant terms of subjugation and subjection. As Sara Ahmed suggests, "[W]e do not have to consciously exclude those things that are not 'on line.' The direction we take excludes things for us, before we even get there." She further observes, "[A] background is what explains the conditions of emergence or an arrival of something as the thing that it appears to be in the present," adding, "Histories shape 'what' surfaces: they are behind the arrival of 'the what' that surfaces."[9] Characterizing movements as having disparate backgrounds indicates that they have distinct "conditions of emergence" that shape the "what" of the movements themselves: the kinds of subjects and subjectivities that they represent, the particular institutional conjunctures that they contest, and the aims toward which they move.

In this vein, we might quite roughly schematize the distinction between Black and Indigenous political imaginaries as that of flesh and of land, a contrast between a focus on the violence of dehumanization through fungibility and occupation through domestication.[10] In "Fugitive Justice," Stephen Best and Saidiya Hartman argue, "A 'plan' for the redress of slavery is what is urgently needed, but any plan, any legal remedy, would inevitably be too narrow, and as such it would also prove necessarily inadequate," and they further suggest, "We understand the particular character of slavery's violence to be ongoing and constitutive of the unfinished project of freedom," adding that "the kinds of political claims that can be mobilized on behalf of the slave (the stateless, the socially dead, and the disposable) in the political present" illustrate "the incomplete nature of abolition."[11] The legacies of enslavement continue to shape

the possibilities for Black life in the present, an inheritance and contemporary force that exceeds the potential for formal legal redress through enactments of equality due to the ways that Black people continue to be made "socially dead" and "disposable" within structures of state racism—particularly in terms of criminalization and mass incarceration. Similarly, in "The Case of Blackness," Fred Moten argues that "[t]he cultural and political discourse on black pathology has been so pervasive that it could be said to constitute the background against which all representations of blacks, blackness, or (the color) black take place."[12] This widespread understanding of blackness in terms of aberrance and anomaly gives rise to "fugitive movement in and out of the frame, bar, or whatever externally imposed social logic—a movement of escape, the stealth of the stolen," a "fugitive movement [that] is stolen life" and that is the "special ontic-ontological fugitivity" of "the slave."[13] The continued remaking of bodies via blackness as malleable and disposable flesh extends the dynamics of chattel slavery, engendering a ubiquitous pathologization for which flight from the enclosures of the law—stolen modes of individual and collective subjectivity—provides the principal recourse.

By contrast, Native political imaginaries tend to turn on questions of collective territoriality and governance. Even while speaking in the critical idiom of flesh and of the violence done to Native women's bodies, Audra Simpson highlights in "The State Is a Man" how "[a]n Indian woman's body in settler regimes such as the US . . . is loaded with meaning—signifying other political orders, land itself, of the dangerous possibility of reproducing Indian life and most dangerously, other political orders."[14] As Jodi Byrd notes of efforts to cast Native self-determination as a project of contesting racist exclusion, "American Indian national assertions of sovereignty disappear into U.S. territoriality as indigenous identity becomes a racial identity and citizens of colonized indigenous nations become internal ethnic minorities within the colonizing nation-state."[15] Emphasizing the existence of Native peoples as landed polities who exercise their own modes of sovereignty functions as a central animating principle of Indigenous movements, in ways at odds with the foregrounding of statelessness, social death, and fugitivity in Black political and intellectual framings.

Approaching Black and Indigenous political struggles and imaginaries as oriented in different ways—as following their own lines of development and contestation that are not equivalent to each other—does not mean understanding them as utterly dissimilar or as having no points of intersection or mutual imbrication. Rather, foregrounding such orientations and how they militate against a priori incorporation into a singular account enables a more

searching consideration of the processes by which they might be brought into meaningful and productive relation so as to avoid forcing them into alignment and, thereby, generating an illusory and misleading sense of "unity without struggle." In discussing her relation as a non-Indigenous person with Quechua intellectuals, Marisol de la Cadena observes, "Our ways of knowing, practicing, and making our distinct worlds—our worldings, or ways of making worlds— had been 'circuited' together and shared practices for centuries; however, they had not become one." Describing the movement between those "worlds" as a process of *equivocation*, she further argues, "Controlling the equivocation means probing the translation process itself to make its onto-epistemic terms explicit, inquiring into how the requirements of these terms may leave behind that which the terms cannot contain, that which does not meet those requirements or exceeds them."[16] This approach highlights the potential for Black and Indigenous political imaginaries to be "circuited together" yet still distinct while aiming to trace processes of translation among them in ways that address the transformations of meaning that occur in such transits.[17]

Before describing the arc of the project in its turn to the speculative as a basis for approaching Black-Indigenous relations and translations, though, I should note my own positioning within these scholarly and political conversations. I enter into these processes of translation as a non-native, white scholar who has sought over many years to develop sustained, respectful, and accountable relations with Indigenous scholars and to generate intellectual work through ongoing dialogue with and critique by them. I approach the questions and concerns of this project, then, as a white ally whose own primary intellectual coordinates are those of Indigenous studies and who seeks to engage work in Black studies and Black social and political movements from this position, while also having long-term commitments to challenging forms of antiblackness (as well as white privilege) as a scholar, teacher, and activist. I neither seek to position myself as speaking for Indigenous people(s) nor as offering a neutral location from which to assess Black-Indigenous discussions, debates, tensions, and negotiations. To do either would involve evading the significance of my whiteness by implicitly using it to present myself as transcending what would by contrast appear as the located particularities of blackness and indigeneity.[18] Rather, my aim, as a scholar of Indigenous studies, is to engage the prominent and pressing issues of how Black and Indigenous movements might engage each other by questioning the value of triangulation as the vehicle for doing so, including the ways that the attempt to bring Indigenous and Black movements into alignment as part of a single struggle tends to center whiteness as the mediating principle. While foregrounding whiteness as a shared object of critique and a

shared source of various modes of structural violence can create a basis for coalition, whiteness then remains the medium for relation among people of color instead of attending to how their experiences of collectivity, analyses of past and present domination, and visions for a more just future may be meaningfully discrepant from each other. I therefore am not so much aiming to specify the precise forms that Black-Indigenous dialogue and relation should take as pointing to certain impasses that arise in seeking to think and enact such relation and suggesting the value of holding on to a sense of the differences between these movements (instead of seeking to resolve them into a single structural formula).

Fictions of Land and Flesh turns to futurist fiction as a means of exploring some of the central conceptual framings employed within Black and Indigenous political imaginaries in order to illustrate the often unrecognized forms of translation through which they encounter and engage each other. How might we understand the movement between Black and Indigenous political formations as something of a speculative leap in which the terms and dynamics of the one are disoriented in the encounter with the other? How can recognizing such translations between and among historical and political framings, orientations, and imaginaries help generate critical modes that can address those processes (rather than efface them through attempts at unification)? In this vein, futurist fiction provides a compelling site for exploring such potential disjunctions while refusing to resolve them into a singular, systemic account. If both Black and Indigenous political imaginaries make powerful claims on how to narrate and navigate the actual, turning to speculative writing enables those forms of narration and conceptual/perceptual approaches to be made more visible as such, highlighting how these ways of accounting for reality are shaped by particular modes of analysis and visions for liberation/decolonization/abolition. Not only does futurist fiction generate "what if" scenarios that enable forms of conceptual and representational experimentation; its constitutive break from concrete events and experiences, in the sense of a setting that is neither in ostensibly known historical reality or the contested dynamics of the present, allows its imaginative spaces and relations to be understood as something other than a referential account of reality. Instead, futurist narratives allow us to see divergent ways of conceiving and perceiving, variable frames of reference through which to understand how things work in the world. Seeing them as framings—as *possible* ways of describing what was, is, and could be—allows for the potential for there to be multiple modes of understanding that all may be true while also being nonidentical. Engagement with Afrofuturist and Indigenous futurist fiction provides a means of tracking disparate orientations and

the kinds of mutual (mis)translations that they engender. Thus, the speculative is less a specific genre for me than a mode of relation (which I also refer to as the subjunctive, in ways discussed in chapter 1). It opens the potential for acknowledging a plurality of legitimate, nonidentical truth claims, none of which should be taken as the singular and foundational way that the real is structured. The speculative as a mode opens intellectual, political, and ethical possibilities for thinking and valuing the differences among Black and Indigenous political imaginaries, which is what motivates my turn to futurist fiction as the principal site of study.

Each of the main chapters (after the first, largely introductory one) takes up a widely employed set of tropes for mapping and contesting antiblackness—fungibility, carcerality/fugitivity, and marronage—in order to explore the ways they shape figurations of domination and freedom, moving from least to most engaged with questions of place and collective inhabitation. My choice to foreground Afrofuturist texts speaks to their greater prominence popularly and critically, bringing questions of indigeneity and settlement into a well-established conversation and aiming to speak to those scholars who are part of that conversation. My aim also, as an Indigenous studies scholar, is to engage in sustained ways with these texts, these conversations, and the framings they raise—tracing the contours and trajectories of Black sociopolitical imaginaries while exploring the ways indigeneity enters into their modes of worlding. In other words, I seek to understand and appreciate the texts' ways of analyzing and critiquing antiblackness and their ways of envisioning possibilities for freedom, and doing so enables an exploration of, in de la Cadena's words, "how the requirements of these terms may leave behind that which the terms cannot contain"—an exploration that is neither dismissive nor condemnatory. In studying the kinds of analytical and oppositional possibilities these tropes offer, I engage with the ways they affect how important elements of Indigenous peoplehood and self-determination (such as collective placemaking, enduring connections to particular lands and waters, and exertion of sovereignty as autonomous polities) emerge within Black imaginaries. For this reason, Indigenous futurist texts appear largely as a counterpoint to help highlight the impasses that can arise when trying to engage indigeneity through the main texts' governing tropes.

To clarify, though, rather than marking something like a failure to engage indigeneity or the need for a more expansive or integrated kind of sociopolitical imagination, I seek to illustrate how the framings or orientations at play in these fictions provide the context in which indigeneity gains meaning, or not. My aim is to explore the relational capacities and opacities of various framings,

not to declare certain framings suspect or verboten in light of the ways they may orient away from other issues (such as place-based peoplehood and Indigenous dispossession). I am not advocating a zero-sum logic whereby Indigenous futurist texts are envisioned as getting it *right* at the expense of Afrofuturist ones. Such an approach would create a *damned if they do, damned if they don't* dynamic with respect to indigeneity. Instead, I want to address how legitimate and powerful modes of Black analysis *also* are oriented in ways that can create difficulties for engaging with Indigenous projects of self-determination. Moreover, the possibilities of the speculative as a mode do not mean that any given (set of) text(s) of speculative fiction can resolve the tensions between those movements or necessarily offer a way through/beyond such tensions. For this reason, for each of the main texts, I seek to trace both its own political investments and imagination and to address how its orientations affect how it engages with or translates Indigenous framings. The larger goal is to consider the implications of such engagements and translations for relations among Black and Indigenous political movements and imaginaries in their ongoing differences from each other. The readings in the chapters, then, can be understood less as critique on my part (an effort to indicate where texts have failed to do or to be what they should) than as an effort to consider what certain conceptual and political framings enable and what they frustrate. How do differences in background principles, historical experiences, and directionalities of collective struggle affect the ways indigeneity enters into Black imaginaries, helping shape the dynamics of Black-Indigenous relation? How do disparate political analyses and envisioned horizons of liberation arise out of varied historical trajectories? What is at stake in refusing to see those frameworks as inherently needing to be brought into unifying alignment, and what problems, then, arise in the necessary and inevitable translation that occurs among nonidentical movements?

The first chapter, "On the Impasse," takes up these questions, laying out the project's theoretical and methodological itineraries. It explores the difficulties generated by seeking to bring blackness and indigeneity into an overarching structural account(ing), including the ways doing so can situate disparate movements within a set of background principles that are at odds with the movements themselves or can privilege one movement's animating terms at the expense of the other's (or others') in implicitly exceptionalizing ways. As against the effort to resolve apparent contradictions in articulations of Black and Indigenous struggle by illustrating how they are expressive of differentiated strands of an encompassing system or logic, I turn to Black feminist theorizations of difference that see it less as a distinction to be sublated within an

enveloping structural dialectic than as indicative of nonidentical formations. Such divergence is less a problem to be eliminated or superseded than a normative condition of nondominating relation between/among sociopolitical formations. Understanding these movements as oriented by nonequivalent kinds of collective identity, modes of oppression, and forms of political aspiration provides the condition for putting them into relation in ways that do not presume some version of false consciousness or invidious unknowing as the basis for the discrepancies in articulations and experiences of blackness and indigeneity. Through discussion of the largely incommensurate ways the concepts of *sovereignty* and *the settler* are understood within scholarly accounts of blackness and indigeneity, the chapter addresses how varied intellectual and political orientations contour what such concepts come to mean and do. Tracing the fields of significance at play in these scholarly accounts, I demonstrate how they frame questions of belonging, placemaking, governance, and futurity in ways that emerge out of particular histories, thereby also characterizing the contours and force of ongoing patterns of institutionalized violence differently. Rather than suggesting the need to adjudicate among these accounts, or to synthesize or triangulate them, I argue for the value of acknowledging them as having disparate frames of reference while also bringing them into accountable relation to each other. The speculative serves as a means of doing so by providing a way of suspending the exclusivity of claims to what is real. Addressing theorizations of the work of science fiction, I illustrate how the speculative can function as a mode of hesitation. It offers what might be termed an ethics of equivocation that enables something like an ontological humility—or ethos of ontological multiplicity—in the face of others' ways of explaining what was and is and envisioning what might be. In this way, the speculative as a mode or an ethics facilitates the project of imagining oneself into others' frames of reference without suspending the efficacy of the explanatory frameworks one has, allowing both to coexist while opening up room for the difficult and potentially fraught dynamics of equivocation that arise in moving among disparate worldings.

Chapter 2, "Fungible Becoming," engages with efforts to explore the stakes of racial embodiment, particularly the historical and ongoing pathologization of Black flesh—or constitution of blackness as a reduction to flesh. Blackness functions as a process of social inscription that converts human beings into fungible potentiality—not simply objects for ownership and sale as chattel but as the vehicle for manifesting economies, geographies, and modes of personhood for whom others will serve as the subject. However, what might it mean to turn toward a conception of embodiment as malleability, to forgo the claim to normative personhood in favor of embracing the possibilities of blackness as

a means of moving beyond propertied, and inherently racializing, modes of selfhood? In the *Xenogenesis* trilogy, Octavia Butler opens potentials for thinking about modes of embodiment and interdependence that displace existing, institutionalized ways of defining and calculating racial being. The novels do so in two ways: by insisting on the significance of shared humanness; and by staging human-alien encounter in ways that suggest the possibility for a less reifying way of understanding bodily identity, relation, and becoming. Butler does not so much envision human-alien miscegenation, the emergence of a new mixed species-being, as speculatively envision possibilities for more capacious and less insulating and hierarchical forms of sociality—a process that can be characterized as amalgamation. These forms of fluidity challenge existing institutionalized ways of defining privatized, biologized racial identity. In figuring these potentials, though, Butler also explores how such a sense of malleability emerges out of histories of equating blackness with fungibility, particularly through the trilogy's portrayal of reproduction and motherhood through its first protagonist—an African American woman named Lilith. Even as the novels' account of protean enfleshment implicitly reflects on the social production of blackness, the forms of alien sociality that seem to offer a way beyond racializing conceptions of property are themselves described in ways that draw on longstanding (stereotypical and ethnological) conceptions of indigeneity in the Americas. While repeatedly gesturing toward the politics of sovereignty and self-determination when addressing the ethics of human resistance to alien-managed transformation, the novels tend to present such Indigenously inflected concepts in ways that cast expressions of collective identity as a reactionary investment in forms of racial identity (a dynamic that I explore through brief engagements with Native futurist short stories by Drew Hayden Taylor and Mari Kurisato). Liberation from racialized modes of embodiment, and the notions of the human that they instantiate, gets linked to the absence of place-based peoplehood. Doing so defers the potential for a robust engagement with Indigenous sovereignties and implicitly translates indigeneity as a reactionary investment in the preservation of a naturalized group identity, itself understood as inherently racialized/racializing.

Turning to speculative imaginings of captivity and flight, chapter 3, "Carceral Space and Fugitive Motion," addresses the vast proliferation of apparatuses of imprisonment over the past forty years and the growing experience of emplacement in terms of racialized carcerality for Black subjects in the United States. This expansive matrix of mass incarceration also entails surveilling and regulating Black neighborhoods, particularly in urban areas. That sustained intervention, however, is not justified in race-explicit terms, instead being

legitimized as part of a broader need to maintain "law-and-order" in putatively high crime areas, and therefore it does not present itself as a mode of institutionalized racism. In *Futureland: Nine Stories of an Imminent World*, Walter Mosley offers a speculative theorization of the principles immanently at play in such modes of neoliberal apartheid while addressing the central function of processes of racialization in the kinds of datafication on which such social mappings increasingly rely. Mosley explores the proliferation of carceral mechanisms and technologies beyond the prison, including the reorganization of everyday geographies so as to facilitate state-sanctioned containment separate from punishment for criminal activity per se in ways that build on existing racial demarcations while also generating additional and compounding modes of racialization that arise out of the application of ostensibly race-neutral criteria. The text explores the racializing effects of intensifying population-making modes of calculation (massive data gathering, algorithmic formulas for sorting kinds of persons, construction of biometric categories) as they emerge within legally mandated modes of putative racial neutrality, and it investigates how such institutionalized and state-sanctioned determinations of risk and value shape everyday geographies. In response, Mosley offers a poetics of fugitivity that disowns an oppositional politics of collective inhabitance in favor of figuring freedom as flight, in which not being located anywhere in particular becomes the avenue to emancipation from omnipresent topographies and strategies of incarceration. By contrast, Daniel Wilson's *Robopocalypse* series figures situated relation to place and other beings as vital, offering what might be characterized as an ontology of emplacement. While not primarily focused on Indigenous peoples' struggles for self-determination as such (although featuring an account of Osage nationhood), Wilson's novels draw on what might be understood as Indigenous principles to highlight the existence and emergence of forms of collective territoriality that not only serve as the basis for human social organization and survival but appear as necessary for the continuance and flourishing of life itself. However, if Wilson's texts suggest the difficulty of engaging place-based collectivity from within the topos of fugitivity, they also themselves leave little room for thinking the dynamics of diaspora (both as a political formation and as an effect of dispossession). The chapter closes by turning to Mosley's later novel *The Wave* in order to explore the text's meditation on questions of Black placemaking in the United States and how that exploration of located belonging itself comes to be configured around flight. The novel imagines a kind of Black indigeneity in the Americas while also suggesting the problems of such a vision. In this way, the novel seeks to think the complexity of relations between blackness and indigeneity in the Americas,

and the difficulties of that speculative process are brought into relief by the novel's framing of its narrative in terms of tropes of mobility and escape.

Chapter 4, "The Maroon Matrix," turns to ways of envisioning Black collective placemaking and explicit efforts to conceptualize such political formations in relation to Indigenous sovereignties and histories of settlement. More than perhaps any other trope within diasporic Black political discourses and movements, marronage has served over the past century as a principal way of signaling opposition to the violence of the slave system and the forms of antiblackness that have persisted and arisen in its wake—particularly in the Caribbean and Latin America. The previous chapter addresses tensions between flight and collective emplacement, but as a critical-political trope marronage contains them both within one figure—in what might be called *the maroon matrix*. Maroon communities arise out of literal fugitivity from enslavement and are maintained through an ongoing refusal to be subjected to the plantation system and its legacies of racial capitalism, private property, and criminalization/incarceration. That separateness, both metaphorical and literal, has been conceptualized by intellectuals as expressive of a process of *indigenization* and acknowledged under international law (and, by extension, as part of domestic law in parts of Latin America) through the terms developed to define and recognize Indigenous peoples. Marronage, then, provides a framework through which to think Black emplacement and self-determination in the Americas while, at the same time, the intimate role played by indigeneity in form(ul)ations of marronage also threatens to situate non-native people of African descent in a relation of substitution/replacement to Native peoples, rather than one of mutual engagement and negotiation within landscapes shaped by the dynamics of empire. Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber* and Andrea Hairston's *Mindscape* explore the possibilities for Black collective territoriality in the diaspora while situating it in relation to enduring Indigenous presence and Native peoples' pursuit of self-determination. These novels address, in different ways, how Black presence can participate in Indigenous dispossession while also suggesting that indigeneity can serve as a conceptual and political resource for challenging dominant equations of blackness with placelessness, or the absence of a proper space of collective inhabitance. Hopkinson's and Hairston's texts illustrate the difficulty of translating indigeneity into the terms of marronage without the former becoming something like setting—functioning as a background or vehicle for non-native modes of struggle for change. What, though, does it mean to acknowledge Indigenous specificity and (geopolitical) distinctness? Native futurist work, such as Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel's *Oracles* and Stephen Graham Jones's *The Bird Is Gone: A ~~Monograph~~ Manifesto*, investigates these

problematics of acknowledgment, addressing the double-edged character of state-recognized Indigenous territorial boundaries while also tracing how historically shifting Native social formations are congealed into notions of static Indian difference (potentially appropriable by non-natives for their own purposes). Together, these two sets of texts highlight the difficulty of conceptualizing how Black projects of placemaking and of Native self-determination might articulate with each other in ways neither superintended by the state nor predicated on an indigenizing politics of analogy. The chapter closes by considering the appearance of representations of treatying within Hairston's novel and the possibilities such an invocation of diplomacy might offer for envisioning and enacting relations of reciprocity—the potential for sustained modes of Black-Indigenous collective negotiation that do not mandate that these modes of placemaking (and the political imaginations from which they emerge) be defined through or in contrast to each other.

The coda, "Diplomacy in the Undercommons," seeks to think Black-Indigenous relation from two nonidentical trajectories in order further to suggest ways political imaginaries can open onto and engage each other without becoming a single framework. Addressing how the kinds of negotiation discussed at the end of chapter 4 might provide one way of conceptualizing productive translation across political difference, I approach this dynamic through Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's figuration in *The Undercommons* of "bad debt," considering the ways such debt might open onto a conception of diplomacy. In this vein, I take up the work of the hashtag #nobanonstolenlands. Created by Melanie Yazzie in response to the prominence of forms of American exceptionalism in the resistance to the Trump administration's anti-Muslim travel ban, the hashtag offers a way of envisioning generative Native connections to and embrace of non-native presence that is neither dispossessive nor routed through forms of state recognition and belonging. Conversely, I also return to the discussion of Black Lives Matter, considering the choice by movement leaders to reference the contemporary presence of Indigenous peoples. These examples do not create a unified political imaginary, but they do suggest speculative engagements across difference that can facilitate modes of mutual accountability through ongoing projects of translation.

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Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. "Black Lives Matter Stands in Solidarity with Water Protectors at Standing Rock," accessed February 25, 2017, http://blacklivesmatter.com. Subsequent quotes are taken from this statement.

2. I capitalize "Native" and "Indigenous" because when these terms are used without capitalization they can be taken colloquially to refer to anyone or anything born in a given place rather than specifically indicating First Peoples. While there's more variation in whether people capitalize "Black" when referring to Afro-descended people(s), and less of a likelihood of confusing the meaning of the term, I've decided as a matter of respect to capitalize this term so that it visually signifies in parallel to "Indigenous" and "Native." I do not capitalize "indigeneity" and "blackness" because neither term requires it in order to make my meaning clear. I do not capitalize "antiblackness" for the same reason. I do not capitalize "white" or "non-native" because the meaning is clear without the capitalization.

3. Estes, "Fighting for Our Lives"; Estes and Dhillon, "Introduction."

4. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 83.

5. I should note that distinguishing between blackness and indigeneity can efface the existence of Indigenous peoples in sub-Saharan Africa. However, even while understanding antiblackness as a global phenomenon, I would suggest that the sociopolitical dynamics of blackness as sets of lived circumstances and forms of political imagination in the Americas qualitatively differ from those at play with respect to those peoples in Africa who might understand themselves as included within the category of "indigenous" within international law and transnational political movements. On African indigeneity, see Barume, "Responding to the Concerns of the African States"; Claassens and Cousins, *Land, Power, and Custom*; Hodgson, *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous*; Kipuri, "The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the African Context"; Lehmann, "Aboriginal Title, Indigenous Rights and the Right to Culture"; Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*. For futurist fiction that engages issues of Black indigeneity within Africa, see Nnedi Okorafor's work, particularly the *Binti* series.

6. On the main Black Lives Matter website, they describe themselves as "a chapter-based, member-led organization whose mission is to build local power and to intervene

in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes": Black Lives Matter, accessed November 30, 2017, https://blacklivesmatter.com/about. On the history of Black Lives Matter, see also Khan-Cullors and bandele, *When They Call You a Terrorist*; Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter*. Black Lives Matter further has given rise to the Movement for Black Lives, which has developed an extensive platform: see https://policy.m4bl.org/platform.

7. Garza et al., "A HerStory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement."

8. On the nonidentical, see Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*.

9. Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 15, 38, 44.

10. On blackness as enfleshment, see Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe"; Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*. I discuss this framing at length in chapter 2.

11. Best and Hartman, "Fugitive Justice," 1, 4–5.

12. Moten, "The Case of Blackness," 177.

13. Moten, "The Case of Blackness," 179, 187.

14. Simpson, "The State Is a Man."

15. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*, xxiv.

16. de la Cadena, *Earth Beings*, 4, 116.

17. For discussion of such "circuiting" and modes of historical differentiation, see Asaka, *Tropical Freedom*; Ben-zvi, *Native Land Talk*; Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*; Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans*; Jackson, *Creole Indigeneity*; Madden, *African Nova Scotian–Mi'kmaw Relations*; Mandell, *Tribe, Race, History*; Miles and Holland, *Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds*; Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian*; Singh, *Race and America's Long War*.

18. On the dynamics of such white transcendence, see Harris, "Whiteness as Property"; Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*; Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness*.

1. ON THE IMPASSE

1. On Native enslavement, see Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*; Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*; Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*; Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence*. On Black dispossession on lands claimed by the United States, see Asaka, *Tropical Freedom*; Goldstein, "Finance and Foreclosure in the Colonial Present"; King, "In the Clearing"; Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*; McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*.

2. Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 117, 119.

3. de la Cadena, *Earth Beings*, 4.

4. de la Cadena, *Earth Beings*, xxv.

5. de la Cadena, *Earth Beings*, 63.

6. On translation, see also Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*; Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism*; Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*.

7. Hong, *Death beyond Disavowal*, 4. See also Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*; Ellis, *Territories of the Soul*; Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*; Quashie, *The Sovereignty of Quiet*; Wright, *Physics of Blackness*.

8. See Anaya, *Indigenous Peoples in International Law*; Brysk, *From Tribal Village to Global Village*; Charters and Stavenhagen, *Making the Declaration Work*; Engle, *The Elusive Promise of Indigenous Development*.