UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title
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Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3g00r6x6

Journal
American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 43(2)

ISSN
0161-6463

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Publication Date
2019-03-01

DOI
10.17953/aicrj.43.2.gomez

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DOI 10.17953/aicrj.43.2.gomez

Silko's Vévé and the Web of Differing Versions

Reid Gómez

> Theories are living and breathing reconfigurations of the world.
>
> —Karen Barad, "Erasers and Erasures"

Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Almanac of the Dead* begins with the 500 Year Map. This stand-alone text can be read as a page of the almanac, or as an epistemic claim on the reader, before they enter.[1] The 500 Year map has four keys, instead of the single key that commonly serves as a map's legend. In the southeastern quadrant is The Indian Connection. This key references 60 million dead Native Americans (between 1500 and 1600), ongoing defiance and resistance, and informs the reader that "The Indian Wars have never ended in the Americas." This text box sits under Haiti (The First Black Indians) and Cuba (Bartolomeo) in the center of the Atlantic Ocean. The final line of The Indian Connection declares: "Native Americans acknowledge no borders; they seek nothing less than the return of all tribal lands." This article is rooted in this key and in these words: Indian, connection, First Black Indians, and the dead.

I read Silko's work as a world-building theoretical practice, not as an illustration of other theory or an ethnography. Anna Kornbluh describes this method of reading the novel as "a *mode of knowing* (knowing language, knowing possibility, knowing sociality), precisely in the tradition of critique."[2] Early in the novel the reader learns that "the old notebooks are all in broken Spanish or corrupt Latin that no one understands without months of research in old grammars. Lecha had already done translation work, and her notebooks contained narratives in English."[3] As readers enter Silko's almanac, they encounter many pages, some bound and some stored loose in an ammunition box. The reader also encounters several writers, translators, transcribers, and other readers. The novel has several centers: Tucson, the twins Lecha and Zeta, and the warriors Clinton and Angelita.

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I am interested in a line from Clinton's notebook: "No outsider knows where Africa ends or America begins" (421). What grammar must we understand in order to make sense of Clinton's radio broadcasts, which we access through his notebooks? I am interested in the idea that in order to know a grammar you must be part of the community that uses it.[4] Who is Clinton? He is introduced to the reader in a section titled, "First Black Indian," as "the black veteran with one foot" (404). He is a radio broadcaster who organizes the Army of the Homeless. You could say that this is his community, but his community is more. His community is the Indian connection: the gods and ancestors, the land and story.

The central question of *Almanac of the Dead* is "who had spiritual possession of the Americas?" (717). The reader finds this line late in the novel, just after Wilson Weasel Tail summons armies of ghosts via the Ghost Dance and the return of the buffalo, reminding the careful remembering reader of another key on the 500 Year Map: Prophecy. Silko's almanac has everything and everyone inside it. The question is how to read it: in parts, only as a whole, from left to right or in several directions, picking an arbitrary page as a beginning and working your way from there. My long-term project is reading the almanac. My way of reading allows that question and demands a pluriverse of answers. "The range of possible responses that are invited, the kinds of responses that are disinvited or ruled out as fitting responses, are constrained and conditioned by the questions asked, where questions are not simply innocent queries, but particular practices of engagement."[5] To answer Silko's question about the spiritual possession of the Americas we must consult the almanac. To consult the almanac, we must look at the relationship between the concepts we use to make narratives and the structures in which we narrate.

Silko asserts that Native Americans' cultural contribution to the English language is the perspective on narrative, that of an elaborate story structure. This perspective is the theory-making that animates my reading of the almanac. This elaborate story structure is made of three parts: the idea of story within story, the idea that one story is only the beginning of many stories, and the sense that stories never end.[6] This contribution to narrative is difficult for some readers—particularly those looking for a point. It also provides challenges for the rhetorical and affective biases brought to peer-review decision making. In some ways this article is a story about how to answer Silko's question about the spiritual possession of the Americas. This story involves the concepts (red, black, Africa, Americas, Gods, ancestors, living, dead, human, and land) we think with and the grammar we use to structure, organize, and communicate our thinking. This story is only the beginning of many stories (concepts and grammars). Silko defines language as story.[7] I will use her definition and write story and language as interchangeable terms; and I will only take up two stories in this elaborate story structure: the calculus of reflection and the quantum entanglement.

Let's return to reading the almanac and to Lecha's reading of the old grammars and the work of translation. I follow Marisol de la Cadena's work in *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds*; she is attentive to the concepts we think with and their effect on the translations we make. Some absences or gaps exist because of erasure and some exist because the concept the translator, or thinker, is using cannot think the concept needed. De la Cadena writes: "This mode of translation considers

that it matters what concepts we use to think other concepts. Translation as equivocation carries a talent to maintain divergences among perspectives proposed from worlds partially connected in communication."[8] As we read Silko, this elaborate story structure provides the context for this article on reading and writing methods, and moves toward my final destination—the web of differing versions.

Pause for a moment to draw attention to the transdisciplinary methods. For now, I am noting the method, as I resume discussing the importance of the concepts we use to think with, and the relationship those concepts have to the questions we ask, and the responses we are allowed to make. Silko's response to the question, who has spiritual possession of the Americas, is the *Almanac of the Dead*, written as a VéVé. What is a VéVé? And why is the story process, the VéVé, the method, so important? First, it allows other concepts. Second, it accepts/demands other grammars. Third, it assumes equivocation always exists, and that equivocation's role "is to communicate by differences, instead of silencing the Other by presuming a univocality—the essential similarity—between what the Other and We are saying."[9] Fourth, it shapes what can be said. Fifth, it also shapes who can say it. Silko becomes a horse the Gods rode to answer the question: who has spiritual possession of the land? The answer: the story (language), the Gods, and ancestors. The rules for speakers—who can be a speaker and what logics can they use, enforced by the grammar of colonialism—makes Silko's answer impossible (for some) to take seriously.

Pause for a moment, to return to the transdisciplinary methods of this article. How to answer the question is the central question. The answer to the question we are looking for is a communal, not an absolute, truth; we are looking for the truth that exists in the web of differing versions. What grammar allows a web of differing versions? The article and answer become a question of methods and a practice of reading. I will address two methods: reading practices, where I will keep my focus on Clinton; and ways of thinking, a method that will bring in Angelita.

Transdisciplinary work is not easy. There are no straightforward methods. According to Karen Barad, "Disciplines have their own vocabulary, methods, standards, ways of making and responding to arguments, evidence, and so on."[10] Silko's theory of language (story), and her writing about writing give me a theoretical framework; I use methods from physics (via feminist science studies). In Barad's response to accusations of "a loss of clarity," she articulates the need to be "respectful of different disciplinary approaches and the differences between them, and sufficiently rigorous to provide new insights recognizable by scholars in the various disciplines with which I engage."[11] She leads into her call for creative engagement across disciplinary divides (cutting together/apart) with the question: "Clarity for whom, by whose standards?"

I come to this project, and every project, as a writer and a scholar of Silko. My creative work makes my scholarship (for some) suspect. Consequently, a lot of the work I do could be thought of in terms of Native American rhetoric—except for the concepts I use to think with and my methods. I accept Silko's argument that language is story, and stories are healing; they have a social life and a spirit power. They tell without pulling the intertwined apart; they do this through the elaborate story structure. This understanding and practice of language (story) helps address the forms of erasers and erasures present in

(other) analytics: archival erasures of land and language; translation erasures that assume or enforce monolingualism, culture and belief; and human-centered erasures that do not consider Gods and ancestors as valid subjects capable of narration.

I situate myself with Lisa Brooks's work with the land as archive, her use of "historical fiction to explore multiple possible answers," and her practice of reading documents within a network of relations.[12] I am not trying to synthesize or solve paradoxes—even the historical and fictional are unsettled for me—I am working with these concepts and how they travel to other geopolitical, ethico-onto-epistemological, and spiritual contexts:[13] where Africa ends and America begins with a translating consciousness. Our scholarly conventions and citational practices constitute measurements of clarity, concision, subordination, and argument because we are colonized as linguistic subjects.

Rhetorical biases and affective responses make it difficult to encounter style and grammar that appear bad or to meander. Our profession requires us to arrive to the point via a notion of expediency and directness: they call this logic. These are concepts we think with, and in the language of Karen Barad, they are cuts we make. We make them during composition and peer review and revision. I am "not trading one type of analysis for another (however singular, universalizing or multifaceted each is) but [offering] a problematizing of methodological approaches":[14] most explicitly the desire to conceive of things-thoughts as separate.

This prelude is my attempt to establish reading guidelines for Silko's almanac and for this article. The writing and the reading processes I employ are "about the material intra-implication of putting 'oneself' at risk, troubling 'oneself,' one's own ideas, one's dreams, all the different ways of touching and being touched, and sensing the differences and entanglements from within."[15]

This article is a history of touch. Barad invites us to think of the history of physics as "an inquiry into the nature of touch."[16] This article takes that inquiry to Silko's almanac. I think with Barad's diffraction methods ("a rigorous analytical tool, taking philosophical issues seriously, not by presenting the physics as a settled issue") along with Silko's web of differing versions.[17] I see these experiments (classical and quantum) as stories: we did this, and this is what happened. Barad's work clarifies what Silko's work knows: our analytical starting point must begin with the cutting together/apart that produces differences (concepts)—and/or distinctions. There can be no assumption of equivalence with or of given terms.[18] I address classical and quantum ontology as methods from this location, remembering this as "an inquiry into the nature of touch" and the possibility space open to Silko's question about the land.

Silko's Vévé

> Untimely collaborations: things that have been in conversation with one another before we met.
>
> —Karen Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity"

There are many ways to tell the story of a novel. Leslie Marmon Silko has given many interviews about her work and her theories of story and storytelling. When I cannot

write, I read interviews or essays about the writing process—I've spent years with Silko's interviews. From the reading work of writing (interviews given and interviews read), I have some idea about the circumstances that surround the work and its process of becoming or asserting itself into existence. I believe that there are two types of writers: one who writes what they want to write and another who follows the story being told by a force greater than themselves. I am the second type of writer.

Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* can be thought of as an experiment, one "clever enough to . . . detect the entanglement."[19] I will tell several stories about this novel; I could tell others. I am making choices—cutting together/apart material to create this article. The first will be a story of the novel, *Almanac of the Dead*. The second will be a story of *Almanac of the Dead* as a vévé. What is a vévé?

> Veves are most often created on the open ground in cornmeal, flour, rice powder, red brick dust, coffee, gunpowder, or other materials. Each Lwa has his or her own unique veve, which is danced on by the barefoot practitioners. This is done in order to draw down the divine energy into their bodies. The veve serves as a spiritual conduit for both the Vodoun practitioner and the Lwa. The presence of the veve insures the safe journey of all who dance these astral paths.[20]

Who are they? Orisha/Lwa/Gods. The ancestors. The spirit power of the story. Sometimes one, sometimes all; if we follow Abenaki literary scholar Lisa Brooks we know that, "we all have pieces of the puzzle, and it is only by coming together that we can hope to reconstruct the full picture."[21] The idea of a full picture is important to this work, but a full picture must be understood within a web of differing versions that do not require contradiction or simultaneity. A full picture, like "the most complete history," the one with the most power, will be explained through two paths.

My model for this article is David Kazanjian's "Freedom's Surprise: Two Paths through Slavery's Archives."[22] At the center of my argument, as Kazanjian suggests, are the stories we hear and the languages available to tell them. There are many paths. Before we journey down two of them, I want to identify the co-presence of the ancestors in Silko's writing process.[23] The ancestors are everywhere and at the front of Silko's work. She makes this explicit in the essays in *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*. The ancestors open her memoir, *The Turquoise Ledge*. Silko works with story and ancestors in the same way Santeros, and vodouisant, ask Baba Ellegua and Papa Legba to open the door in ceremony. Silko tells it this way:

> Aunt Susie once told me how it had been when she was a child and her grandmother agreed to tell the children stories. The old woman would always ask the youngest child in the room to go open the door. "Go open the door so our esteemed ancestors may bring us the precious gift of their stories." Two points seem clear: the spirits could be present, and the stories were valuable because they taught us how we were the people we believed we were.[24]

I tell these stories about writing and experiments, not to argue that science (physics) and writing are analogous, but to echo Barad's practice as a scientist as central to

her work on theoretical physics. I am a writer. We both use diffraction. Language is my apparatus.

A story of a novel: Silko began writing *Almanac of the Dead* with one idea—no politics. "I didn't mean for it to be this length at all—just kind of a cops-'n'-robbers dope smuggling novel set in Tucson, really, really simple."[25] Alt-X Online Network asks, "A political thriller?" Silko replies: "Not even a political thriller. Part of me said, you will be okay to sell out, make something commercial, something they will eat up."[26] Silko has proclaimed her writing agenda clearly: "I decided the only way to seek justice was through the power of stories."[27] But the life of a writer is sometimes, often-times, challenging because of demands made by the business of writing, the politics of representation, and the relationship each writer has with their practice. The story I am telling of this novel cannot begin without mentioning Silko's desire to produce a simple commercial object that might allow her to support herself financially.

Almanac of the Dead is a Tucson novel. Silko describes moving to Tucson in several places. Once in the Tucson Mountains she began to take photographs using a "rinky-dinky" autofocus, setting down for the moment the big box field camera that required an extended set-up, light meter, and selection of aperture/depth perception. No thinking. Point and shoot. Take the film to the drugstore. Process. Wait for the results. She writes, "I didn't expect too much. But when I began looking at the prints, I was amazed to see that the photographs did indeed tell a story. . . . The advent of *Almanac of the Dead* can be traced to this roll of film; a recurring image in Almanac is the shallow grave that I took from this early photo-narrative, titled 'The Shallow Grave.'"[28] I write about rocks in part because Silko writes about rocks. Rocks and silver will surface, or be brought to the surface later. I point them out now, in relationship to photography and photographic paper and this roll of film to further develop my point about who is involved in the writing process.

Silko will tell the story of *Almanac of the Dead* as a vévé herself:

> When I was writing this, I sometimes felt I was being controlled by a spirit, not by spirits, but by a spiritual storyteller and narrator.[29] [B]ut also I was thinking of the 'vévé. , , , Tucson seems to be a crossroad, and as the Native American-African American beliefs of Voodoo religion tell us, a crossroads is a place of intense conflict between all the spirits, and all the forces.[30] I began to lose control of the novel and to feel that all of the old stories came in, and I felt the presence of spirits. . . . It was taken over. . . . And I began to remember reading about Zora Neale Hurston, who has a wonderful book, *Tell My Horse*, and this title is reference to voodoo religion, a religion that was born in the Americas. . . . Zora Neale Hurston's book talks about when the spirits come they ride you, you become their horse. . . . They use you. . . . A burden that had come down to me over hundreds of years, I believe. . . . I was the one that had to serve these spirits.[31] I look now and I see thats and whiches that shouldn't be there in *Almanac*, but it was like those little spirits who rode me, they said: your vanity? No, it's our book. . . . Some people have said, oh *Almanac of the Dead*, you could break it into four or five of that kind of fiction that's so popular, the quick read or the page turner. . . . But that's not it at

> all. . . . I was not allowed to. . . . I completely was taken over, and everything about it was meant to be. . . . The spirits wanted it out there. . . .[32]
>
> As for interviews in general, I think novelists should write more and talk less.[33]

I include the last line quoted from Silko for several reasons. During the writing of *Almanac of the Dead* and its subsequent publication many people attacked Silko for the text she produced, saying she was crazy, drug-addicted, or consumed by hate for white people. Silko dismissed these attacks in the spirit of the Pueblo; she "didn't bother to correct the error because it made no difference to [her] reckoning of the world."[34] One 1985/1988 Cotelli interview was different; she wanted to correct her answers, but could not. There were no real errors to identify, correct, or contextualize. According to Silko, the entire interview was a mess. The reason for the mess is what is relevant for this article: "I realize now I could not edit or salvage this interview because the character called Angelita had already taken possession of all my notions and ideas about particle physics, space-time, and European thought."[35]

Silko recommends you only read this interview for insight into the character/individual of Angelita, or as an example of the relationship between the practice of writing, and writers and their characters. I point to this interview here—at the end of my story about the novel as a vévé, which is made up of quotes from her interviews—to highlight the centrality of particle physics and space-time to the writing of the almanac and of this article. These lines, repeated phrases, and stories make up the phenomena.

The Calculus of Reflection

> The point is that the past was never simply there to begin with and the future is not simply what will enfold.
>
> —Karen Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity"

Math can be thought of as the study of patterns and structure and calculus as the study of continuous change, starting with the counting of "small pebbles" such as individuals or individual structures: Black, Indian, slavery, and colonization. I've chosen the word *calculus* for its relationship to rocks, and because it is a way of looking at relationships (often one or two continuities or discontinuities, even though it retains the tools required to address more) often used to navigate the challenges of narrating slavery. For example, Saidiya V. Hartman describes the afterlife of slavery as "a racial calculus and political arithmetic that were experienced centuries ago."[36] Feminist and science and technology scholar Denise Ferreira da Silva argues that mathematical reasoning grounds modern knowledge. She works through "the equation of value" to provide another way for blackness to confront life and examines the analytical paths we take to expose "how determinacy, which along with *separability* and *sequentiality* constitutes the triad sustaining modern thought."[37] Many begin thinking of the concepts Black and Indian as fixed states with fixed relationships to slavery and colonization.

Calculus describes the path opened by Tiya Miles, Sharon Holland, Jack Forbes, and James L. Brooks: work I characterize, following Barad, as path work based in

reflection.[38] I call this work the calculus of reflection. Their work is eloquent and rigorous, and clears one path, not a lesser or wrong path, but one path distinguishable from another path: diffraction. On this reflection path we can talk about Black (people, culture) who combine (+) with Indian (people, culture) to form (=) the Black Indian (individuals, cultures).

Once we have these combined (=) peoples, cultures, we are then able to think in terms of loss, retention, and continuity (see Stephan Palmié's eloquent treatment of these ideas in *The Cooking of History: How Not to Study Afro-Cuban Religion*).[39] Calculus is apt because it signals the desire and the means to calculate the infinitesimal, how one thing (such as Black or Indian) can come close to, but never touch another (such as Black or Indian)—or how one thing can change or cause to change or define a relationship in terms (limited and unlimited) that imply a direction (from Red to Black, or from slavery to colonization, for example). This is a form, a part of, classical ontology, where the world is composed of discrete beings (the Black, the Red, the living and the dead). These discrete concept beings interact in a causal manner on or in a container referred to as space. They touch each other in specific locations in linear time. When an event (a cause) produces another event (the effect), we have change.[40]

This calculus limits our ability to consider land. The environment is just a container, and the land becomes a landscape where [white] people take a superior relationship to every other being. The language *The African Diaspora in Indian Country* (the subtitle of Miles and Holland's *Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds*) leads to the conclusions such reflection-based frameworks tend toward. Most of the work on this path relies on the study of the individual Black Indian's direct lineal descendant. This path sometimes leads to a grammar of claims (being made on people and/or landscapes) where the question of "who claims what" is answered by the question of "who is claimed back." The language of claims (on lands and people) is problematic, particularly because claiming names the impossibility (one cannot respond in any way to it) instead of speaking response/ably.

A full treatment, the type one expects of a certain scholarly citational practice, is something I will not take on—it will divert. Instead I follow this path through the work of Sharon P. Holland, "'If You Know I have a History, You Will Respect Me': A Perspective on Afro-Native Literature"[41] and "Telling the Story of Genocide in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*."[42] These essays (the second a re-visioning of the first) are important for many reasons that require fuller readings. I have selected specific points relevant to my argument. This work is difficult; these essays address that difficulty and locate some of it in the author's relationship to the work and the life entangled in that work. This work is arduous. Robert Warrior describes it carefully in his "Afterword" to Miles and Holland's *Crossing Waters, Crossing World*: "The emotions of this topic spilled over into everything that happened . . . the deep feelings of many participants dangled at or above the surface and came to be at least as important as the scholarship that was presented."[43] Work done on lineal descendancy is saturated with fear, pain, shame, hate, and violence.

I am not discouraging working on this path. For me, the danger lies in framing this work in terms of us (Black or Indian) and them (Black or Indian) and in the

production of the Black Indian. In this framework the relationship between intimate, historical, and structural violence is located in fixed communities, biographies, and so-called biologies. This work writes a single narrative in which we are all supposed to find a fixed place and time to be contained. Holland writes, "I still struggle with a crossblood identity with the full realization that I might very well understand my bloodlines, but I can neither access nor lay claim to them as my own."[44] The inability to claim is determined by these frameworks—the frames establish the impossibility of reckoning with entanglements because they create and enforce fixed boundaries and periods (pre, post, and even the simultaneous). Recall Ferreira da Silva's identification of analytical paths sustained by determinacy, separability, and sequentiality. These analytics shape the politics of the day, where we struggle to find ways to "work together" that assume we are already apart. Some consider us (who are we?) at an impasse: solidarity has become *the* method to address our so-called differences; but solidarity (when framed as Black + Indian against/versus/anti-racism, capitalism, or colonization) can maintain the center of whiteness, capital, and coloniality through a type of mathematical reasoning and through "the equation of value." This path accepts these colonial impositions (Black and Indian) as given.

I am on another path, in an elsewhere, where different ethics and different causal frameworks rely on moving from questions of representation (categorical integrity, validity, or resemblance) to diffraction methods that do not seek a more refined tool (such as DNA tests, phenotypes, claims, or status), or rely on a set of competing discourses (such as the discourses of emancipation or sovereignty suggested by Holland).

Clinton, radio broadcaster, leader of the Army of the Homeless, devotee of Ogun, Vietnam veteran, notebook writer, and first Black Indian in Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*, places the spirits at the center of knowledge production.

> Clinton knew racism had made people afraid to talk about their Native American ancestors. But the black Indians would know in their hearts who they were when they heard Clinton talk about the spirits. The people had to be reminded that the spirits were all around, and the tribal people torn from Mother Africa had not been deserted by the spirits. (766)

Holland writes in the language of biology and lineage, "a connection steeped in blood struggle."[45] She conceptualizes the ability to "access or lay claim" that leads to a genealogy of the knowable that takes us directly to the problem of the archive, the problem of the known, and the question of epistemic limits. Barad describes the "ontology|epistemology binary" in a chart that lays out reflection and diffraction side by side. This binary sets up the following conditions for truth claims: "knowledge is true beliefs concerning reflections from a distance, [in a] knower|known binary [where] seeing/observing/knowing [are seen] from afar [at a distance, such as time or generation]."[46] Holland extends the idea of blood struggle and claims (made or refused) in terms of those "who have the *knowledge* of some … ancestry, and [those who] *identify* as such."[47] Having knowledge of ancestry is the named and produced function (f): of slavery: to create the socially dead, the natal isolate.

Scholars like myself, working with and through this understanding of slavery as the severing of relations, are well aware of the epistemic and narrative limits that slavery—thought this way—places on us. My work begins in these moments and with those individuals disappearing into time or the archive. There is no possibility of knowledge and no way to understand—trace—our community K'é.[48] I situate my work among elders, including Saidiya V. Hartman, who views narrative as a, or the only, possible redress for slavery.

When emancipation is only/always a Black thing and sovereignty is only/always an Indigenous thing, and "we are seeking the history and lives of a people whose experience crossed both the barriers of enslaved bodies and land,"[49] we end up looking for instances of blackness and/or indigeneity. We think slavery and colonization separately and we subordinate one to the other, and vice-versa. Instead of looking at and measuring our objects or subjects, we make them. This is what Barad describes as phenomena and intra-action:

> We are not merely differently situated in the world; "each of us" is part of the intra-active ongoing articulation of the world in its differential mattering. . . . Diffraction marks the limits of determinacy and permanency of boundaries. One of the crucial lessons we have learned is that agential cuts cut things together and apart.[50]

When we refuse the above, we find and describe "black slaves and indian servants" as if these terms are settled and fixed across time and geography.[51] Differences between these terms, between subjects and objects, are made. The cutting of one apart from the others forever connects (entangles) one to the other. I am arguing for a practice that allows us to mark these limits of determinacy in time, language, and narrative practice or story process. I am attempting to keep track and read the land as archive.

Silko's analytic requires diffraction. I return to rocks, silver, and a story of *Los Moteros y La Negrita*.

> You can visit the Museo Mino La Prieta in Parral, Chihuahua—one of the 5 best things to do, via recommendations on Trip Advisor. Economies continue to be built on slavery—tourist economies where Africa ends and America begins. No one knows. Andrés Reséndez tells us "Parral became a hub of exploitation, its spokes extending far and wide throughout the region and even around the world."[52]
>
> Let's start again, at another beginning. In the summer of 1631 Juan Rangel de Biesma dug up a portion of rocks on a *cerro* he dubbed "La Negrita." The search for silver had been long, and complicated by war (Indians), scrubs oak (land), lack of servants (slaves), and bad luck (gods and ancestors)—but Rangal de Biesma finally hit the motherlode. News like this spread quickly and other prospectors descended—they looked like ants on a hill.
>
> Enumeration is an ideological project: because of the sudden flood of prospectors, in 1635 Parral's population hit 5,000; in 1640 it was 8,500. "And nowhere else in what is now northern Mexico, the United States, or Canada were there more Indians or a larger concentration of African slaves living in a single place."[53] There was no ocean to cross (again); there were miles to dig beneath the surface: 250-feet

> shafts, and a 420-foot principal shaft. Slaves and other miners dug from sunup to sundown by hand, pick, wedge, moil/metal point, and crowbar. While some of the diggers were lost in the "dust laced with sharp silica" others fell or were crushed. But this is a story about *los morteros*, the convicts whose labor had been purchased by the mine. Slaves (Black and Indian) strapped 225- to 350-pound bags full of rocks to their heads and climbed to the surface, crawling through passages and climbing "chicken ladders." Most of this ore was processed in one of the twenty-two estates established by 1633. You can learn more about these *haciendas de beneficio* from other stories. Morteros processed the ore *por la pie, estillo patio* (by their feet, in the patio style) to produce a higher silver yield. Patio process: the fine powder of crushed ore was spread across the patio, mercury was sprinkled on top, the ore and mercury mixture was watered, metals sank to the bottom of the sludge according to their weight, and shackled slave convicts (*morteros*) *caminaron el lodo para mezclar completamente todas las sustancias* (walked on top, in order to completely grind the substances together, to produce a mixture). Everything was heated to transform the mercury and water to vapor, with the silver left behind—all that was not brought to air was absorbed in the mucous membranes of the *morteros* whose limbs would shake, and who would later die from mercury poisoning in as little as two to three years of servitude.[54]

Holland asserts that her essay is about "a section of" Silko's almanac (338). I find that wording curious, and I may be making too much of it, but my starting point for this article is the difficulty of identifying an entanglement. When you look for Black and Indian things you take measurements—seek not blurred, but fixed states. Silko clearly names the central question of the almanac, "Who had spiritual possession of the Americas?" (717). Here the two paths—the calculus of reflection and the quantum entanglement|quantum dis/continuity—come together, in Clinton the man, and in Holland's cataclysmic clarity on social death: "it is the dead, present as ancestors, who make the complete social death of the slave . . . unstable at best."[55] I mention the cutting together/apart here to move past the question of natal isolation and social death that animates large bodies of work, including my own. Any movement only takes place on the precipice of lost relations and wake work.[56] All slaves and descendants of slave communities are cut through with the loss of relations. The cuts are made by each one—the writer, the storyteller, and individual themselves. These cuts show as absence and silence. They follow Barad's idea of "agential cuts" that cut things together/apart, and Hartman's warning about the violence of abstraction and pornotroping in response to slavery and its afterlife. My method is to point to another story, and remind the reader that each story is just one story within another.

Holland repeats the need for a suspension of disbelief. Not much of the *Callaloo* essay remains in the re-visioned chapter of *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity*, but this line repeats: "Reading *Almanac* requires a considerable suspension of disbelief"[57] as the "pages of *Almanac* are filled with spirits, and any reading requires a considerable suspension of disbelief on the part of the reader."[58] Holland recognizes that "the stories in Almanac are created as links in a revolutionary

chain." She refers to one section of the text as an "Afro-Native narrative in a section of the novel entitled, 'Africa,'" commenting "This text appears not as a departure from the other voices in the novel so much as a disruption of categories of 'blackness and indianness," a move that Holland calls "shattering."[59] I read these section titles and mappings in line with Silko's claim about Africa and America. Africa, New Jersey; Africa, Arizona; and Africa, El Paso are a few of the locations that exist in Silko's almanac. In the sixth section, "One World, Many Tribes," Clinton, Silko, and Angelita identify a different color (green) as the color line that matters.

Holland writes, "On the border of illusion/truth is a space of uncertainty, paranoia and brilliance—it is out of this discourse that the narrative of Afro-native subjectivity is born."[60] I am moving away from subjectivity through the work of diffraction. Barad helps me further think Silko's statement The Indian Connection, written as a southern key on the 500 Year Map: "The Indian Wars have never ended in the Americas. Native Americans acknowledge no borders; they seek nothing less than the return of all tribal lands." This requires a new poetics and a transdisciplinary project—a quantum analytic: Rise Up!

The section Rise Up! begins on page 740 near the end of the almanac. Clinton "had preached patience, the patience of the old tribal people who had been humble enough not to expect change in one human lifetime, or even five lifetimes" (741). Silko writes, "those who did survive would indeed become a power to be reckoned with. All around them, all their lives they had witnessed their people's suffering and genocide; it only took a few, the merest handful of such people, to lay the groundwork for the change" (742). The groundwork would be laid on radio waves and in stories. These lines are followed by a five-page list of slave revolts and resistance (742–46). Careful readers of the almanac will read this list in relationship to the four-page list of slave revolts that are a part of Angelita's trial of Bartolomeo for "Crimes Against History" (527–30).

Silko leads the reader into Angelita's list this way: "Indigenous American uprisings had been far more extensive than any Europeans wanted to admit, not even the Marxists, who were jealous of African and Native American slave workers who had risen up successfully against colonial masters without the leadership of a white man" (527). She closes the list this way: "of course the white man had never wanted Native Americans to contemplate confederacies between the tribes of the Americas; that would mean the end of European domination" (530). Clinton's list ends with the assertion: "they would never prevail if they did not work together as a common force" (747). Clinton, Angelita, and their lists (stories) are a common force, a relationship among slavery, capital, and colonization. Clinton's army is an army of the homeless. In the chapter Rise Up! he reminds us: "Africans in the Americas had always been 'home' because 'home' is where the ancestor spirits are" (742). I am able to read Silko's almanac this way and write this way because of a diffractive, thinking together practice of theoretical physics and the spirit power of the story.

I am a writer; I talk to the dead all the time.[61] Like Silko, I listen to my characters. Writing and reading the almanac is the work of the vévé. This does not require me to suspend any disbelief at all. Writing, for Silko and me, takes place through Clinton's *Electric Santería* and the spirit power of the story. Holland writes,

> In fact, if hyperbole were my forte, I might want to suggest that the dead and their relations are perhaps the most lawless, unruly, and potentially revolutionary inhabitants of any imagined territory, national or otherwise. Moreover, I would add that the disenfranchised and oppressed often join the dead in this quixotic space, becoming, in common parlance, menace(s) to society.[62]

I write without hyperbole: the dead and their relations are the most revolutionary inhabitants of any territory, imagined or otherwise. Only in saying such things does the observation that the slave is not socially dead—because of the presence of the ancestors—have any meaning at all.

My reading of Clinton departs from Holland's. I take Clinton on his own terms and defer to my knowledge about characters, their lives, and their independence from and interrelationship with certain authors. I am interested in Clinton as Black man, First Black Indian. Clinton is both and neither, much in the way an atom can be both particle and wave and much in the way Karen Barad describes the quantum erasure experiments, and the fixing process of measurement entangling matter and meaning. In Clinton's analysis, the only color that matters is green. Yet he remains steadfastly Black, the First Black Indian. How do we conceptualize the color (green) in the American racial paradigm of sacred colors (Red, Black, White, and Yellow) and mixture; if we think of mixture in terms of classical physics, we can think that "separable terms *can* properly be described as mixtures. Recall that a mixture is a combination of individual states with separately determinate values of the property in question. Unlike the situation of an entangled state, a mixture can be expressed as the product of separate individual states."[63] But we are not dealing with a mixture of separate terms, we are dealing with entanglements: Black/Indian and slavery/colonization.

Holland characterizes Clinton's theory of war and capitalism in terms of solidarity: "Clinton achieves agency and a move toward sovereignty because he can see himself in solidarity with other oppressed people."[64] Holland ties these to Clinton's bio-bio (ology, ography), instead of to the quantum entanglement and quantum dis/continuity that gives the almanac its theoretical capacity. As I read, I am constantly aware that ideas about language, for Silko, are shaped by the definition that language is story: "I got the notion that if I could tell the story clearly enough then all that was taken, including the land, might be returned."[65] For Silko, language is the story. Story is where the spirit power resides; story is where the ancestors and the people meet; story is what will return stolen people and stolen lands. Clinton's notebooks and radio broadcasts are a gathering of story and spirit power. Silko's almanac tells this story twice: "One day a story will arrive at your town" (135) and "One day a story will arrive in your town" (578). The arrival of this story will cause "you and others" to rise up against the slave masters. Story radicalizes Clinton; he wars through notebooks and radio transmissions. "Power resides within certain stories; this power ensures the story to be retold, and with each retelling a slight but permanent shift took place. [A shift that] changed forever the odds against all captives" (581). *Almanac of the Dead* is one of those stories, a storyteller's escape; it arrives and causes the slaves to organize, and in the end it is the most powerful power completing the work of the vévé.

> Understand the history of physics as the history of an inquiry into the nature of touch.
>
> —Karen Barad, *Intra-actions*

The Other Slavery begins with this introduction: "Whenever the conversation turns to slavery, people typically imagine Black slaves. Hardly ever does anyone think of Indians. It is as if each group fits into a neat historical package: Africans were enslaved, and Indians either died off or were dispossessed and confined to reservations."[66] Reséndez's word choice *other*, when talking about slavery, is inappropriate for my argument, but his summary of the narrative is useful. The inability to conceive of Indians as (any kind of) laborers lurks throughout this article, axiomatic to the calculus of representation, and the myth of Las Casas's recommendation and historical accomplishment of replacing Indian slaves with African ones.[67]

I've written the story "Flow of Slaves," based on the work of elders.[68]

> The official policy for Apaches in New Spain was deportation of all prisoners of war; between 1770–1816 roughly 3–5 thousand were bound and led to central and southern Mexico. Those who survived the journey were sold. The most dangerous were put on ships and sold in Cuba. Barbados made legal restrictions on New England slaves taken and sold during King Philip's War (1675–76), yet a community of their descendants remains in Barbados today. Slaving trips from Española in 1510–1540 went to Lucayas (Bahamas), Lesser Antilles, Boinair, Isla de Margarita; from Puerto Rico to Lucayas, Lesser Antilles, and Florida; and from Jamaica to Aruba and the tip of South America. From Cape Verde slaves were sent to Española and Cuba.
>
> In 1792 Eustingé, Padatssi, and Quienastgnan returned from Mexico City having recovered none of their relations (the eleven Apache captives, men, women and children they had been sent to recover); they did bring back three women who had also been "deported." Reséndez writes, the Carolinas were the primary slaving ground for the British—those captured and sold to the Caribbean during the "rebellions" of New England are not always accounted for. The French forced many into the interior; Detroit is not just the motor city.
>
> The Spanish enslaved the entire hemisphere and reached across the water to the Philippines. The Portuguese stopped their trade in 1640—that same year Nueva España had the largest population of free black and African slaves in the hemisphere. Chinese slaves were the name given to all so-called Asian slaves in Parral—where convict slaves processed ore with their feet. Carvajal, the trafficker, arrived to a changing tide—local sellers were no longer furnishing slaves to the Caribbean; the silver mines of the interior (central and northern Mexico) needed labor. The silver trade of the sixteenth century produced a slave current that transformed navigation, by land and water.

> Kenneth Turner, muckraking American, characterized the twentieth-century slave population in Yucatán with these numbers: 8,000 Yaqui from Sonora, 3,000 Korean from Inchon port, and between 100,000 and 125,000 Maya. This makes the "Flow of Slaves" an interesting story to read with the story *The Trafficker and His Networks*. Reséndez's third chapter bears this title, and tells the story of Luis de Carvajal y de la Cueva. I cannot hear that story and not think of Trigg, and his plasma donors at Bio-Materials, Inc. California Indians were enslaved in Missions on their own homelands. It is difficult to distinguish single drops of substance in the flow of slavery, impossible to fight the current. You must swim along shore and come up miles in time, at later distances.[69]

With this story I am not attempting to add data to the existing narrative—calculating numbers of bodies sold, costs per body, gender differences, and regional preferences (for Africans or Indians), particularly those comparative (+, −, ×, ÷, ±) perspectives reliant on these frameworks: less than (<), greater than (>), less than or equal (≤), greater than or equal (≥), equal (=), not equal (≠), and even the roughly equivalent (≈). This is one way to parse out an "other slavery." I am attempting to address interference: "Diffraction does not produce 'the same' displaced, as reflection and refraction do. Diffraction is a mapping of interference, not of replication, reflection, or reproduction. A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the effects of difference appear."[70] I am not merely taking this path to describe slavery in other terms. I am seeking "a different material-discursive apparatus of bodily production [that] materializes a different configuration of the world, not merely a different description of a fixed and independent reality."[71] The return of land—and uprising of slaves, who die fighting, no longer slaves—is at stake on these paths. "Flow of Slaves" is impossible to tell in the classical ontology, the calculus of reflection. The story would need to be cut apart and sorted into discrete disciplines and traditions in a classical ontology, calculus of reflection, for the point to be made, achieve the ends required, and be taken seriously. The point, then, would no longer exist—it would be cut and sorted away for the sake of analytical clarity, called rigor. Without (this gathering of) story there is no power, no survival, and no storyteller's escape.

Clinton's first radio broadcast is dedicated to the "escaped African slaves who married Carib Indian survivors . . . the first African-Native Americans" in the section titled "Spirit Power" (410). That dedication defines/determines an in-between that "is taken as given, rather than an effect of particular boundary-drawing practices."[72] These first people, African-Native American, are not given. Slow down. There are people who come before and after the people who are both before and after—rendering such ideas as before and after strange, or entangled. Pause for a moment to consider these ideas at the level of the electron: "When an electron makes a 'quantum leap' it does so in a *discontinuous* fashion [it moves from one level to another] *without having been anywhere in between. A quantum leap is a discontinuous movement.*"[73] Now, pause again and consider these ideas in relationship to Clinton's audience, those "First African-Native Americans" to whom he dedicates his broadcasts.

Scholars frequently write: "Their [the slaves'] fate is not known."[74] A way to think through these moments is, "now poof! they are gone." The narrative I am interested in, which is described by Clinton, Angelita, and Silko via the slave revolt and resistance lists, is saturated with quantum dis/continuities, including people who made quantum leaps from one spacetime to another without an in-between and some who became an in-between themselves, but most simply "disappeared from history." Any of "these people" appear, disappear, are, and are not, as they problematize absolute truth claims that rely on the very categories they/we call into question (Black, Indian, Black Indian). Quantum realities ask us to think appearance/disappearance another way, and to understand continuity, discontinuity, as dis/continuities aware that "because it is never anywhere in between . . . *it will have had to already wind up where it was going before it left* . . . thus, the paradoxical nature of quantum causality derives from the quantum discontinuity."[75] Barad's work on matter and meaning requires us to rethink the concept of causality if only because "we are a part of the nature we seek to understand."[76] We matter and mean together, not in opposition to (anti-) or in refusal of ourselves/themselves. This work troubles the very idea of cutting apart (together). If we question the nature of causality, aware that separate and separable entities, such as the Black and the Indian, do not exist outside of us, the writer and the storyteller, we can think causality again, now, responsibly.

Quantum dis/continuity answers the dilemma of libations and understands the vodouisant's (perhaps even Haitians') practice of slipping Africa under the earth. We can think people and land differently in part because quantum dis/continuity "is neither the opposite of the continuous, or continuous with it . . . not from here-now or there-then . . . it is the rupture itself that helps constitute the here's and now's, and not once and for all . . . [the] here-now, there-then have become unmoored: there's no given place or time for them to be."[77] Clinton describes this in terms of his devotion to Ogun, and the here-now of Haiti, Vietnam, and Tucson, where Africa is home, not as an ideal space of origin or return. His perspective is clear. He will not follow Garvey "back" to Africa in the same manner that deportation schemes and slavery have always followed each other for Apaches, for African Americans targeted by the American Colonization Society, for the so-called recaptured Africans, and for the march of *colleras* to Cuba where it is possible for them to cross paths with those sold during Metacom's war. If Clinton desires to go anywhere, it is to Haiti—perhaps problematically viewed as the place of entanglement itself.

The grammar of colonialism looks for analysis that performs a certain development, agreement of terms, and way of thinking (classified as logic), and a fixed language. Clinton violates this manner of producing knowledge in and between every sentence—yet his world together makes a diffraction pattern, several patterns, that curate his broadcasts and help him set up camp and strategize for war: "Homeless U.S. citizens would occupy vacant dwellings and government land" (410), and "it was important for the people to understand that all around them lay human slavery, although most recently it had been called by other names" (411). Read Clinton's thoughts about slavery, race, communism, and the United States through Barad's line, "Entanglements are not the interconnectedness of things or events separated in space and time. Entanglements are enfoldings of spacetimemattering."[78]

He works with the knowledge that "it was only a matter of time before all captive people on earth would rise up" (413); "At some point a man had to teach himself or learn something" (414). His favorite classes in school were Black studies classes, but even those got boring (414, 419). "A lot of the African-American studies had been bullshit honkie sociology or psychology" (420). He locates the connection to the land, in a feeling "in his blood" and in "how deeply African blood had watered the soil of the Americas" (415). He also wants people to know that "there had been an older and deeper connection between Africa and the Americas, in the realm of the spirits" (416). He describes his relationship to his shrine and his devotion to Ogoun, and talks about the changes made to spirits, gods, ancestors, and people (slaveholders and slave traffickers). Blood is not a metaphor in Silko's work, in Clinton's life, or in the work of Santería, Vodou, or other practices that work with blood (in ways similar and dissimilar to those practiced in Christian as well as African religions). A full treatment of blood is beyond the argument I am making.

The line "No outsider knows where Africa ends or America begins" comes directly from Clinton's notebook, and from the section on "Black Indians at Mardi Gras" (420). Clinton "only took notes on the subjects that excited him, such as the black Indians or the spirits and African people" (420). Clinton believes in education. He "had plans. He kept pages and pages of notes from the books he read at the public library"—books that said a lot of things, such as "African slaves only replaced the Native American slaves, who died by the thousands" (415). Clinton thinks this. He thinks many things—multiple thoughts are not in contradiction: they are part of the most powerful force (416). The idea of Black chattel slavery replacing Indigenous slavery—less than or equal ($\leq$), not equal ($\neq$), or even roughly equivalent ($\approx$)—echoes many of the claims made on the path of representation and linear progress, much in the Black radical tradition of Cedric Robinson and his important work in *Black Marxism* (Marx and Angelita among the co-presences in this essay), but don't call Clinton a communist: "Communism was dead. Communism was a failure, and that was not what Clinton was talking about" (412). Yet the only color that mattered was green, "[B]attle lines will be drawn according to color: green, the color of money, the only color that had ever mattered" (406). And Clinton explicitly thanks Herbert Aptheker with an exclamation on the very top pages of one of his notebooks; this exclamation is followed by a list of uprisings (742). Within the text are two long lists of slave revolts organized by Christian year—lists compiled by Clinton and Angelita (525; 527–530; 742–746). You pull one thing and another moves: Black Indians at Mardi Gras, the Army of Justice/Homeless, the spirits, and a belief that "History was the sacred text. [And t]he most complete history was the most powerful force" (316).

Writing as a vévé, organizing a war through the sacred text of history conceived as the most complete story, and keeping a shrine to Orisha: in Silko's almanac, take guidance from this line: "The dead remembered everything." The dead help us keep notes, like those that make up Clinton's notebooks and appear as (diffraction) patterns in his reading of the Black Indians at Mardi Gras/Creole Wild West Indians (420/419). They linger too in the front porch discourse of his own relations, the old aunties and grannies—"He and the rest of his family had been direct descendants of wealthy, slave owning Cherokee Indians"—who "knew black people and Indians had not always been

free to make appropriate 'gestures,'" such as inviting participation in the parade, or the discourse (415). On the path of claims and representation, the problems often manifest themselves in appearance, land, and class.

Almanac of the Dead does not benefit from a single or linear reading in time, or in numerical order. You can and should read the book from right to left, from left to right, and at times just open the page and consult the stories at a point in the life of the reader/writer. This produces bad scholarship, or creative writing, but it is what the almanac asks of us: direction, scale, flow, logic, and structure. Silko calls attention to her violations of formal limits throughout the novel, and we see alternative methods constantly employed by the almanac's several writers, translators, and readers. I indulge Silko's method and employ it in this article—reminding the reader I am that kind of writer. I am not like "the white man [who] would stop everything before it started; the white man would pretend to know all the answers ahead of time, but of course, really, the white man didn't have a clue" (413), yet he would always say, "None of that stuff is true. It can all be explained" (160).

The Web of Differing Versions

> Memories/re-membering-ings—are written into the flesh of the world. Our debt to those who are already dead and those who are not yet born cannot be disentangled from who we are.
>
> —Karen Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity"

In these elaborate story structures, we think with the gods; sometimes we are mounted by them. These spirit powers and snakes—of Damballah, Quetzalcoatl, and Giant Stone—"didn't care if people were believers or not; the work of the spirits and prophecies went on regardless" (762). In answer to "who has spiritual possession of the Americas," Silko writes, "Against the spirits, the White man was impotent" (581). Whether it is the work of the vévé or the quantum eraser, "*the trace of all measurements remains even when information is erased; it takes work to make the ghostly entanglements visible.*"[79] When we think with the gods, ancestors, and language (story), we do not submit to the grammar of colonialism that requires an idea of the speaking subject and the verb (visible, doing words that often require a human ability to recognize the doing) set in an unmoving place-time or meaning.

We can join Karen McCarthy Brown and think of slavery in terms of religious crises. Brown writes, "the vévé is a crossroads, and a map of the cosmos itself."[80] She continues, that vévé "can be thought of as private passage-ways between the spiritual African homeland under the earth and the everyday world in which people walk the earth" and as "individualized roads leading up from Ginen."[81] The Ginen is both Africa and the subterranean world where the ancestors live. Placed upon, and creating, a crossroads of sorts, a pathway between this world and the Ginen, the vévé also provides anchors of a sort, where home can be configured as a sort of center and the vévé provides a geometry, without which "no 'fixed points as bearings' [would exist and] the traffic of the world [would] dissolve into meaningless wandering."[82] It is with this in place that she develops the idea of "Africa being slipped under Haiti."[83]

Silko's stories about Africa, the Americas, Cuba, and Haiti in the almanac and on the 500 Year Map point to the same cosmological shift and share an understanding of land rooted in spirit and connection maintained by rituals of song and ceremony. Brown notes the significance of the earth in "its ability to connect human beings with their ancestors and with the Vodou spirits."[84] Brown emphasizes the need for soil—Haitian soil—to be present in ceremony and in what she identifies as the dilemma of libations. This need for actual earth is a cosmological metaphysical relationship to earth.

Silko's vévé acts as a nonlinear quantum erasing history/prophecy. She describes the drawing of a vévé this way: "The signatures of the spirits are outlined in ashes and cornmeal on the ground" (429). Silko calls the reader to fulfill the vévé's function by identifying the vévé with writing— in the hand of the loa. She is not concerned with "who-did-what-where-when-and why."[85] She is concerned with power and force. If we take story seriously, not metaphorically or analogously, the vévé of this text is a ceremony.[86]

We learn more about this power in "Crimes Against History," crimes such as the separation of words from language, and stories from history. "Angelita La Escapía imagined Marx as a storyteller who worked feverishly to gather together a magical assembly of stories to cure the suffering and evils of the world by the retelling of stories" (316). Clinton reminds us: "If the people knew their history, they would realize they must rise up" (431). What completes the work of the vévé is understanding this point: "*the past was never simply there to begin with and the future is not simply what will unfold* . . . the 'past' and the 'future' are iteratively reworked and enfolded through the iterative practices of spacetimemattering . . . are all one phenomenon . . . *neither space nor time exists as a determinate given outside of phenomena*."[87] We are left with matter—bodies, land, and language—entanglements as "irreducible relations of responsibility" based on "quantum ontology" and "the existence of phenomena rather than of independently existing things."[88]

We can rethink the matter of Black/Indian where "differentiating and entangling (that's one move, not successive processes) . . . [cuts] radically rework relations of joining and disjoining," instead of the ideological project of enumeration where we weigh suffering in a calculus of death, and where wealth is harvested from bodies of earth (rock and water, marketed as clean energy) or flesh (plant and animal). The quantum path offers another ethics of ac/counting, to use Barad's term: a "taking into account of what materializes and of what is excluded from materializing."[89] This can lead to many paths, where we strategize living together based on an ethics of relations, where "[e]thics is about mattering, about taking account of the entangled materializations of which we are a part, including new configurations, new subjectivities, new possibilities—even the smallest cuts matter."[90] This ethics of relations requires a grammar that can handle Silko's text and the way her text benefits from several, and nonlinear readings. Once we shift our centers, through the 500 Year Map, through a diffractive reading practice, to an analytic of quantum entanglement and dis/continuity, we rethink causality and time so that resistance remains at the center. The centrality of resistance is the entire point—who retains possession of the Americas.

The collaborative work of Black and Indian peoples is among the histories erased and collected by Angelita and Clinton. If we believe that the truth resides in the web of differing versions, and that history is the most complete story, we must allow for

more than one telling—we must allow and seek several stories, temporalities, causal frameworks, and centers. Treating Black and Indian as an entanglement forces a shift in analytics. Without this shift we may miss, or mistake, the moments when people came together, as Indians, Africans, Afro-Mexicans, Maroons, slaves, and descendants of slaves. "Evidence of alliances between Africans and indigenous people was rarely recorded, and in fact, colonial documents tended to focus on instances of African-native hostility rather than coexistence and alliance building."[91] These erasers and erasures, discussed in a recent article in *Ethnohistory* about another book of the Americas, the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, reminds us that Black and Red have not always referred to identities or to presumed/prescribed relationships between these "set" identities. The politics of this place-time, the ongoing (settler) colonial relations, require one relationship to these impositions/identities. But we must make space for stories (empirical evidence in the language of physics and in the form of the quantum eraser experiments) that tell "*identity, its ontology, is never fixed but is always open to future and past reworkings*."[92] Or else, we are likely to erase Earth Beings, and folks who inhabit the world differently, such as Clinton and Haiti. Silko's work on the almanac brings these beings and practices together, while many are only making sense of them separately. We can do that work, but we must "*not only*" do that work.[93]

Clinton's primary desire is for people to know their history, history that can only be told in a web of differing versions.

> The stories of the people or their "history" had always been sacred, the source of their entire existence. If the people had not retold the stories, or if the stories had somehow been lost, then the people were lost; the ancestors' spirits were summoned by the stories. This man Marx had understood that the stories or "histories" are sacred; that within "history" resides relentless forces, powerful spirits, vengeful, relentlessly seeking justice. (316)

The Indian Connection, gods and ancestors, Black and Indian, Earth Beings and humans, and non-human human relations "seek nothing less than the return of all tribal lands." This is the prophecy: "the disappearance of all things European."[94] We can only tell these stories if we allow the gods and ancestors and the land to speak according to its own visible and invisible, familiar and unfamiliar, elaborate story structure—sometimes silent, and within the silence. We must be able to make and receive an account. Silko reminds us that the grammar of colonialism limits our narrative practice: "Europeans did not listen to the souls of their dead. That was the root of trouble for Europeans. They never seemed to hear the cries of their dead" (604).

Ac/counting—taking into account of what materializes and of what is excluded from materializing—cannot be based on the assumed existence of individual entities that can be added to, subtracted from, or equated with one another . . . accounting cannot be based on a mathematics of identity.[95]

We tell this story, and the story of texts like the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, in our account of the world only knowing that "the quantum dis/continuity [of people/place/language] offers a much-needed rethinking of ac/counting, taking account that

isn't derivative of some fixed notion of identity or even a fixed interval or origin."[96] This grammar accepts Clinton's methods where "entanglements are relations of obligation—being bound to the other—enfolded traces of othering." Gods and ancestors work with us in an "ethics of entanglement [that] entails possibilities and obligations for reworking the material effects of the past and the future." When we think together we make "connections and commitments."[97] We continue the work of the gods and ancestors. May they bless us: Aché.

Acknowledgments

Ahéhee' Circe Sturm for making this call for proposals, and helping me put ideas into place that I've struggled with, and not known how to name outside of a defensive posture. Circe's leadership has affirmed the beauty possible in the academy. I would also like to thank the contributors to this special issue for their participation in the American Studies Association 2019 panel "Black and Red Call and Response | Grounds We Build and Fight On." Espelencia Baptiste has helped me think through this work, and so much more.

Notes

1. For a more in-depth discussion of the 500 Year Map, and the Yaqui practice of walking konti, at the point of entry into Silko's novel see my article, "Yoeme's Escape: Word Stories and the Grammar of Colonialism in Leslie Marmon Silko's Almanac of the Dead," *Diálogo: An Interdisciplinary Studies Journal* 21, no. 2 (2018): 23–36, https://doi.org/10.1353/dlg.2018.0025.
2. Anna Kornbluh, "We Have Never Been Critical: Toward the Novel as Critique," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 50, no. 3 (2017): 399, https://doi.org/10.1215/00295132-4195016.
3. Leslie Marmon Silko, *Almanac of the Dead* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 174. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.
4. Kimberly Williams Brown and Kelsey Dayle John introduced me to this idea at the American Studies Association 2019 panel "Black and Red Call and Response | Grounds We Build and Fight On." See their essay in this special issue.
5. Karen Barad, "Intra-actions," interview with Adam Kleinman, *Mousse Magazine* 34 (Summer 2012): 81, http://moussemagazine.it/product/mousse-34/.
6. Leslie Marmon Silko, *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native Amerian Life Today* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 50.
7. Leslie Marmon Silko, *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*, 50.
8. Marisol de La Cadena, *Earth Beings: Ecologies of the Practice Across Andean Worlds*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 27. The idea of "equivocation" is from my larger project, *The Web of Differing Versions: Where Africa Ends and America Begins*; and part of the elaborate story structure I am telling here about reading the web of differing versions through the method of diffraction.
9. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Perspectival Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Equivocation," *Tipití: Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* 2, no. 1 (2004): 10, http://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/tipiti/vol2/iss1/1.
10. Karen Barad, "Erasers and Erasures: Pinch's Unfortunate 'Uncertainty Principle,'" *Social Studies of Science* (April 20, 2011): 4, https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312711406317.
11. Ibid.

12. Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 140.

13. This is Barad's term for the way "practices of knowing are not isolable; they are mutually implicated," found in *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 185.

14. Karen Barad, "Erasers and Erasures," 3.

15. Karen Barad, *Intra-actions*, 77.

16. Ibid.

17. Barad, "Erasers and Erasures," 3.

18. Karen Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity*" (The Authorized Version), Women, Gender & Research (Kvinder, Køn & Forskning), No. 1-2 (2012), 31. hRps://PdsskriT.dk/KKF/arPcle/view/28067

19. Barad, *Quantum Physics*, 379.

20. Lilith Dorsey, "Veve: The Sacred Symbol of Vodoun," *Parabola: The Search for Meaning* 24, no. 3 (1999): 44–45, http://parabola.org.

21. Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xxxiv.

22. David Kazanjian, "Freedom's Surprise: Two Paths Through Slavery's Archives," *History of the Present* 6, no. 2 (2016): 133–45, https://doi.org/10.5406/historypresent.6.2.0133.

23. Aisha M. Beliso-De Jesús defines co-presences as "active spiritual and religious subjectivities intimately tied to practitioner's forms of movement, travel and sensual bodily reisters." For a fuller explanation of this term see *Electric Santería: Racial and Sexual Assemblages of Transnational Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 7.

24. Silko, *Yellow Woman*, 45.

25. Ray Gonzalez, "The Past Is Right Here and Now: An Interview with Leslie Marmon Silko," in *Conversations with Leslie Marmon Silko*, ed. Ellen L. Arnold (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi), 104.

26. Thomas Irmer and Matthias Schmidt, "An Interview with Leslie Marmon Silko," in *Conversations*, ed. Ellen L. Arnold, 154.

27. Leslie Marmon Silko, "*Yellow Woman*," 20.

28. Ibid., 23.

29. Gonzalez, "The Past is Right Here," 104.

30. Laura Coltelli, "*Almanac of the Dead*: An Interview with Leslie Marmon Silko," in *Conversations with Leslie Marmon Silko*, ed. Ellen L. Arnold (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi), 119.

31. Irmer and Schmidt, "An Interview with Leslie Marmon Silko," 154.

32. Ellen L. Arnold, "Listening to the Spirits: An Interview with Leslie Marmon Silko," in *Conversations with Leslie Marmon Silko*, ed. Ellen L. Arnold (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi), 168–69.

33. Laura Cotelli, "Leslie Marmon Silko," in *Conversations with Leslie Marmon Silko*, 53.

34. Leslie Marmon Silko, *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir* (New York: Penquin, 2010), 21.

35. Cotelli, "Leslie Marmon Silko," 53.

36. Saidiya V. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 6.

37. Denise Ferreira da Silva, "1 (life) ÷ 0 (blackness) = ∞-∞ or ∞/∞: On Matter Beyond the Equation of Value,": 4, *e-flux* journal 79 (February 2017), https://www.e-flux.com/journal/79/94686/1-life-0-blackness-or-on-matter-beyond-the-equation-of-value/.

38. Zakiyyah Iman Jackson's work on reflection, and the politics of reflection, can be read alongside my essay. I am not attempting to respond to this important work here. I must thank Eva

Hayward for introducing me to Jackson's work, which I will take up in the longer project for which this article provides a foundation.

39. Stephan Palmié, *The Cooking of History: How Not to Study Afro-Cuban Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

40. Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity," 44.

41. Sharon P. Holland, "'If You Know I Have a History, You Will Respect Me': A Perspective on Afro-Native American Literature," *Callaloo* 17, no. 1 (1994): 334–50.

42. Sharon P. Holland, *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

43. Robert Warrior, "Afterword," in *Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds: The African Diaspora in Indian Country*, ed. Tiya Miles and Sharon P. Holland (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006): 322.

44. Holland, "'If You Know,'" 335.

45. Ibid.

46. Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 89.

47. Holland, "'If You Know,'" 335.

48. I develop this idea in "Our Stolen Grandmother: The Entanglement of Slavery and Colonization in Anna Lee Walter's *Ghost Singer*," *Wicazo Sa Review* 32, no. 2 (2017): 70–90, https://doi.org/10.5749/wicazosareview.32.2.0070.

49. Holland, "'If You Know,'" 337.

50. Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 381.

51. Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2016), 106.

52. Ibid., 105.

53. Ibid., 106–7.

54. Reid Gómez, unpublished 20 sentence story.

55. Holland, *Raising the Dead*, 14. This observation has resurfaced in the important essay by Ruha Benjamin, "Black Afterlives Matter: Cultivating Kinfulness as Reproductive Justice," in *Making Kin, Not Population*, ed. Adele Clarke and Donna Haraway (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2018), 41–66.

56. This is a reference to Christina Sharpe's *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

57. Holland, "'If You Know,'" 343.

58. Holland, *Raising the Dead*, 72.

59. Holland, "'If You Know,'" 343.

60. Ibid., 344.

61. LeRhonda S. Manigault-Bryant, *Talking to the Dead: Religion, Music, and Lived Memory among Gullah/Geechee Women* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), xiii.

62. Holland, *Raising the Dead*, 23.

63. Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 346; emphasis mine.

64. Holland, "'If You Know,'" 345.

65. Silko, *Turquoise Ledge*, 26.

66. Reséndez, *The Other Slavery*, 9.

67. For an excellent argument about Las Casas, see Rolena Adorno, *The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); also see Lisa Brook, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Phillip's War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), which discusses the ongoing resistance to replacement narratives.

68. Reséndez, *The Other Slavery*; Tiya Miles, *The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits* (New York: The New Press, 2017); Herman L. Bennett, *Africans in*

Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570–1640 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); and *Ethnohistory* 64, no. 1, special issue on Native American Slavery in the Seventeenth Century (January 2017), https://doi.org/10.1215/00141801-3688327.

69. Reid Gómez, unpublished 20-sentence story.

70. Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), 311.

71. Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 390.

72. Karen Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity," 33.

73. Ibid., 39.

74. Arne Bialuschewski, "Slaves of the Buccaneers: Mayas in Captivity in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century," *Ethnohistory* 64, no. 1 (January 2017): 53, https://doi.org/10.1215/00141801-3688359.

75. Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity," 40.

76. Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 26.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., 41.

79. Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity," 44; italics in original.

80. Karen McCarthy Brown, "Staying Grounded in a High-Rise Building: Ecological Dissonance and Ritual Accommodation in Haitian Vodou," in *Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape*, ed. Robert A. Orsi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 82.

81. Ibid., 81.

82. Ibid., 99.

83. Ibid., 84.

84. Ibid.

85. David Kazanjian, *The Brink of Freedom: Improvising Life in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 7.

86. The line, "you don't have anything, if you don't have the stories" comes in the opening pages of Silko's novel *Ceremony*. The arguments I am making in this article are part of Silko's concern with witchcraft, and the destroyers (those who try to convince us the stories do not matter). I situate both novels in the story structure of Silko's three primary stories: Storyteller, The Storyteller's Escape, and A Long Time Ago.

87. Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity," 44.

88. Ibid., 45.

89. Ibid., 46.

90. Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 384.

91. Elena FitzPatrick Sifford, "First Images of Africans in the Americas," *Ethnohistory* 66, no. 2 (2019): 231, https://doi.org/10.1215/00141801-7298747.

92. Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity," 43.

93. I borrow this phrase from Marisol de La Cadena's work in *Earth Beings*. She uses it to mark the limits of language and epistemological claims on "everything." She writes, "Mariano's phrase, '*not only*,' challenged these limits and revealed that, relative to his world, the world that sees itself as 'everything' was insufficient," 15.

94. The key of the southwest corner on Silko's 500 Year Map.

95. Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity," 46–47.

96. Ibid., 46.

97. Ibid., 47.