

UC San Diego

UC San Diego Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Indigeneities at the Millennium: Caste Articulations in Indian, Brazilian, and Global Imaginaries

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6rn2v3zw>

Author

Rajbanshi, Reema

Publication Date

2017

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Indigeneities at the Millenium: Caste Articulations in Indian, Brazilian, and Global Imaginaries

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature

by

Reema Rajbanshi

Committee in charge:

Professor Page DuBois, Co-Chair

Professor Kalindi Vora, Co-Chair

Professor Jody Blanco

Professor Nancy Postero

Professor Rosaura Sánchez

Professor Daniel Vitkus

2017

©

Reema Rajbanshi, 2017

All rights reserved.

The Dissertation of Reema Rajbanshi is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Co-Chair

Co-Chair

University of California, San Diego

2017

DEDICATION

In recognition of their example, this work is dedicated to my parents, Bimal and Bhanti Rajbanshi; in recognition of their hopes, this writing is dedicated to my grandparents, Nilaram Das, Sandhya Das, Umesh Das, and Janani Das; and in recognition of their endurance, this study is dedicated to tribal and low-caste peoples everywhere.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page	iii
Dedication	iv
Table of Contents	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Vita	vii
Abstract of the Dissertation	viii
Introduction: Chapter I: Millenial Inheritances	1
Chapter II: Re-Imag(in)ing Fourth World Authenticities	46
Chapter III: Fourth World Feminist Clocks	110
Chapter IV: Abolitionist Imaginaries: Precarity, Unfreedom, and the “Prior” in 19 th c. Brazil and 20 th -21 st c. India	180
Chapter V: Hungry Commensalities: Raciality-Casta-Caste	255

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my co-chairs, Professor Page DuBois and Professor Kalindi Vora, without whom this project would not have reached completion. The courage of their scholarship, the generosity of their mentorship, and the faith with which they pushed me have been valuable lessons.

I would like to acknowledge my committee members, who crucially formed my theoretical inquiries and who supported this project at difficult turning points: Professor Jody Blanco, Professor Nancy Postero, Professor Rosaura Sánchez, and Professor Vitkus. For modeling knowledge production towards a better world, this project remains indebted.

I would like to acknowledge the grants and organizations that nurtured my research: Brazil Cultural (Salvador, BR), the Literature Department (La Jolla, CA), the Institute of Arts and Humanities (La Jolla, CA), the UC libraries (CA), Biblioteca Nacional (Rio de Janeiro, BR), Museo Histórico da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil (Sao Paulo, BR), VV Giri National Labour Institute (Noida, India), National Archives of India (Delhi, India), Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change (Guwahati, India), Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes (Guwahati, India), and the Indian Council of Historical Research—Northeast Regional Centre (Guwahati, India).

Finally, I would like to acknowledge all those who helpfully crossed ways with this project. Translated or not, your imprint is here.

VITA

- 2003 Bachelor of Arts, Harvard University
- 2007 Master of Arts, University of California, Davis
- 2017 Doctor of Philosophy, University of California, San Diego

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Literature

Slavery Studies

Prof. DuBois, Prof. Vora, Prof. Vitkus, Prof. Sánchez

Native American Indigenous Studies

Prof. Postero, Prof. Sánchez

Critical Race/Caste Studies & Subaltern Studies

Prof. Vora, Prof. Blanco

Fourth World & New Materialist Feminisms

Prof. DuBois, Prof. Vora, Prof. Postero, Prof. Sánchez

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Indigeneities at the Millenium: Caste Articulations in Indian, Brazilian, and Global Imaginaries

by

Reema Rajbanshi

Doctor of Philosophy

University of California, San Diego, 2017

Professor DuBois, Co-Chair

Professor Vora, Co-Chair

This dissertation reads articulations of caste across cultural texts, focusing on 20th -21st c. South Asia and Brazil. As a Native American Indigenous Studies inquiry, this project considers how caste nuances notions of indigeneity and de/coloniality, and as a relational inquiry, this project traces caste across period and place towards complicating hegemonic U.S. formulations of race and inequity. Reading methodologies vary per chapter (organized by films, feminist texts, abolitionist writings, and mixed-genre race/caste literatures) but generally draw upon frames in Native American Indigenous Studies, Subaltern Studies, New Materialisms, and women of color feminisms. The dissertation hypothesizes caste as culture of im/material stigma as well as ontoepistemology for understanding contemporary global inequity. And it argues that the

natureculture re/production of caste relies on material-discursive notions of “blood” effectively partitioning Non/Life hunger vs. commensalities along biopolitical lines of difference.

INTRODUCTION: CHAPTER 1

MILLENIAL INHERITANCES

Whose Indigeneity

In its broadest sense, indigeneity as contested notion of belonging has emerged today as a charged political category, underscoring present tensions around resource and rights distribution, most especially in sustaining (the good) life. This project has read indigeneity beyond gene fetishism, nativist nationalism, and colonial authenticity demands. Instead, it focuses on indigenous and tribal communities (self-identified *as well as* communally recognized as such) made vulnerable by historical exclusion and elimination from political, economic, and national polities (Byrd, 2011; Dunbar Ortiz, 2014; Ed. Miller, 2011; Guzmán, 2013; Baruah, 2010; Ed. Karlsson and Subha, 2006; Goeman, 2013; Smith, 2015; Ramos, 1998; Postero, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2015). This specific focus is meant to both critique the reactionary nativist formulation of indigeneity that has strengthened in the rightward turn globally and to center those tribal peoples whose historically determined precarities have worsened in current crises of (neo)colonialism, chameleon bondage, and slow genocide. To some extent, the precarity of tribal peoples is enacted by an erasure of their precarity, and the nativist appropriation of indigeneity rhetoric facilitates this process, a tactic I call *cannibalization of indigeneity*. This term not only repeats what many scholars have called the strategic appropriation of indigeneity as a colonial tradition that affirms national belonging for the non-tribal subject (Vizenor, 2010; Byrd, 2011; Deloria, 2007; Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Guzmán, 2013; Ed. Ivison, Patton, and Sanders, 2000) but suggests the ways in which this is tied to mechanisms of neoliberal multiculturalism, coloniality/modernity, and caste reification, across Right, Center, and Left political affiliations. Thus, not only does my re-framing of *whose indigeneity* emphasize the need to decolonize both conservative and Marxist thought, or their collusion in maintaining other systems of power such as white supremacy, upper-caste/Brahmanical hegemony, and heteropatriarchal neo/colonial

structures, but elaborates via its exercise on how thinking indigeneity, caste, and labor *together* offers a more nuanced epistemological apparatus through which to visibilize the materializing world order and its formative steganographies, particularly caste.

The onward march of (neoliberal and finance) capitalism is fundamental to formulating the current resource and rights conflicts (Harvey, 2013; Negri & Hardt, 2001; Melamed, 2011; Shiva, 2016), *just as* it is crucial to tracking how prior caste orders are being re-touched into a new global caste system also predicated on notions and tactics of purity/pollution, un/touchability, endogamy, commensality, and ritual violence (Kara, 2014; Ambedkar, 2016; Telles, 2014; Alexander, 2016). That is, in the new and emergent global caste order, hierarchy is not entirely or accurately defined by only race or only class. In the new global caste order, the 1% at the top of a pyramid of inequity, while an emblem of multicultural fantasies, remains unevenly racinated. And the bottom tier or new Untouchables, comprised largely of “prior” outcastes of local hierarchies now corralled into the new global order, are unevenly geospatially situated in the multiple Global Souths borne out of various imperialisms, racially marked by old and new colonialisms, and targeted by neoliberal global capitalism. Thus, it is inaccurate to call this top 1% the new white (Melamed, 2011) as this disavows the continuing operational power of whiteness as racial capital in constituting the new caste order. Nor is it accurate to see these hierarchical tiers only in terms of originary class, as class mobility varies depending on vulnerability and access to multiple networks of power (Occidentalism, white supremacy, differential citizenship, patriarchy, heteronormativity, hegemonic religious affiliation, etc.) (Kuan-Hsing, 2010). And it is neither expansive enough nor just to recognize only Blackness as part of the new bottom tier, given distinct and deep caste/casta/tribal histories in “post”-colonial nations like Australia, Mexico, and South Asia (Haebich, 2000; Lewis, 2006; Martinez, 2008;

Dirks, 2011; Visweswaran, 2010), just three among *numerous* non-U.S. sites crucial to consider if we are to disrupt hegemonic U.S. and imperial knowledge production. In India in particular, race remains a dubiously transposed colonial category, anti-blackness is arguably tied to resurgent Hindutva and salient anti-Dalitness, and most Indians cannot approximate the wealth or privileges of a neoliberal global elite also consisting of Black capitalists. As an entire chapter of this project argues, some of the most vulnerable of the historically low-caste are in South Asia, where we encounter not only half the world's modern slaves but those whose synecdochal bondage have been sustained through ancient regimes, Mughal rule, British Empire, and neoliberal capitalism. Thus this project offers caste as a relational mediation between the often oppositional frameworks of race and class in reading global inequity and literatures across South Asia, Brazil, and other Global South sites.

Caste, then, is treated in a two-fold sense here. First, my project thinks through caste in its variations as complex historical and transnational phenomenon, as recorded in these mixed-genre literatures. Second, it experiments with considering *caste* as a reconfigured ontoepistemological frame for understanding the emerging global order. That is, how might excavating “prior” aspects of caste regimes—such as hereditary labor, culture of im/material stigma, tenuous consanguinity within the body politic, and disciplinary violence vs. impunity—clarify the contemporary moment of growing inequity, marked as it is by neoliberal and finance capitalism de/valuing difference, a rightward turn accentuating nativist (often white supremacist and upper-caste) nationalism, the environmental crises alongside decolonial indigenous resistance, and the scourge of modern bondage primarily affecting the Global South, particularly its women and children? This is another way of saying that race and class alone are insufficient frames for present dilemmas—part and parcel of the discursive blind spots and baggages I call

millennial inheritances—that have failed to account for their rootedness in the “prior” of various caste/casta/racial orders and that have left severe lacunae in something so fundamental as acknowledging the “other” planetary histories that continue to shape power/lessness. The dismal dominance of Euro-U.S. frames—particularly U.S. race thinking and class universalisms imposed on *all other* epochs and places—has long seemed a version of Euro-U.S. exceptionalism and cultural imperialism (Mignolo, 2012; Chakraborty, 2008; Cheah, 2016; Kuan-Hsing, 2010). Tellingly, the immensely intricate footwork with which Americans sidestep their own complicity in biased knowledge production affirms U.S. hegemony in particular. This project cannot appropriate more attention from understudied sites and questions to the self-serving fortresses of Global North knowledge production inspiring so much rancor, and erasing urgent synecdochal material realities, among writers, scholars, and activists *worldwide*. Rather, it asserts again and again that thinking caste, without centering the U.S., is one humble attempt at disrupting Euro-U.S. paradigms of race, class, and inequity that, at the turn of the millennium, no longer serve our disturbing millennial reality. How can we better account for the complex relations of indigenous and tribal peoples in myriad ancestral lands, within and without North America, to which they remain connected or to which they have (had to) come? How can we move beyond facile dismissals of “other” notions of *raca* or *jati* in enormous and diverse democracies like Brazil and India, in ways that might beneficially sully the holy grail of Euro-U.S. knowledge production? How can complicating orthodox Marxist paradigms, mired in the 19th c. white male working-class subject, avoid reproducing hierarchies reliant on in fact camouflaging difference, and how might acknowledging difference as steganography to class, particularly for racialized and casted women and children subsisting and over-producing in the Global South, move us

towards another and better turn to the millenium? In other words, caste also matters, as does the rest of the non-U.S. planet, in thinking un/belonging, in/equity, and *whose* indigeneity.

The Matter of Caste

Caste allows for understanding the ways in which race and class have worked to hierarchize societies while also acknowledging *something else* which, in this project, I have called ***a culture of im/material stigma***. Thus the im/material of my thesis not only references class—though there is consistently an overlap between race/caste and class in both India and Brazil (Human Rights Watch, 2007; Roy, 2016; Pandey, 2013; Ed. Natarajan and Greenough, 2009)—but the various other mechanisms re/producing (stigmatized) status that can be located in the domain of the “immaterial.” These include religious enunciations of “stain” and “sin,” juridical and cultural scripts of un/belonging, disciplinary practices around the criminal/queer that are often bound up with “remedying” im/purity, and metrics of un/touchability shaped by valuations of color and smell, by the im/mobility of differentiated subalterns and capitals (Nascimento, 2008; Hordge-Freeman, 2015; Spivak, 1998) Cumulatively, these mechanisms re/producing (stigmatized) status determine local caste hierarchies that correlate to but are not equivalent to class. And, working in tandem with the global scaling of neoliberal capitalism, the feminization of labor, white and Brahmanical supremacy, and new articulations of old civilization/terror wars, these mechanisms are synecdochally reconstituting a new caste order entangled with contemporary global inequity. Of course, my point here is partially that the immaterial is bound up with the material. Color is not merely in/visibilized through the grid of culture but is ontological in terms of melanin variation and photoreceptors as biological reality; religious cartographies of salvation dictated, in both Jesuit and Catholic Brazil and Mughal and Hindutva South Asia, those who were

commensality-worthy, those who were enslaveable labor; and even the most malleable interpretations of the criminal/queer (including the terrorist, the witch, the “Indian,” LGBT subjects failing homonormativity) have too often tracked subjects towards dispossession and death.

But my point about im/materiality is also to underscore the various valences through which stigmatization occurs and its violences felt. Surely, rape and lynching and genocide effected by means other than extraction colonialism or capitalism remain deplorable forms of violence, and the cultural scripts that promulgate these violences, such as Dalit women’s violability, Black and Muslim men’s criminality, and tribal people’s foreordained disappearance, are deserving of consideration. And my wry note about culture is its materiality in biology, where the term typically applies to a cell line grown outside its usual environment. Thus, the culture of im/material stigma that I read for across the texts in this dissertation integrates, in a New Materialist sense, both a definition of culture as human practice and culture as cellular continuity. That is, caste as im/material culture of stigma travels and survives beyond its point of origin, proliferating in practices that re/produce hierarchy in novel forms without erasing its complex genealogy. Thus it is that a culture of im/material stigma moves and morphs across the contexts I’ve focused on in these chapters—mostly India and Brazil and occasionally the U.S., Australia, Bolivia, and Mexico—and I trace place-specific genealogies of casta/caste/race to parse through local (literary) iterations of im/material stigma while also relating them transnationally. In India, for example, the post-1947 literatures suggest a culture of im/material stigma that retains fairly recurrent features, such as ritual im/purity, strictures around endogamy and commensality, and hereditary labor. In Brazil, I locate casta as a precursor to the raciality I read as hierarchizing mechanism in 20th c. Brazilian literatures, historicizing Japanese and Black

articulations to illuminate how branqueamento and mesticagem ideologies overdetermined entry and im/mobility for racially differentiated subjects through Brazil. That means that Afro-Brazilian life/chances were stymied by anti-blackness and hereditary slave status, Japanese/descendants were stigmatized as (periodically) undesirables, foreign, and both unfree and economic threat. And between South Asia and Brazil as sites, I historicize *and* relate caste/casta/race as complex historical phenomenon intimately tied to power relations sedimented through multi-generational bondage, cultural ideologies of consanguinity and value that traversed borders, and the investment of *both* colonialism and capitalist modernity in re/producing genres of difference.

Let us work out a brief etymology of *pariah* to illustrate my relational point. A word that, in the U.S. context, signifies the outcaste figure and has variably been applied to queer subjects, Black citizens, and transgressive women, *pariah* has its roots in the slave castes of South India (Viswanath, 2014). The Tamil Dalit caste Paraiyar, only one of several low caste groups today termed Dalits, were part of an agrestic labor force that was described, in both native as well as British records, as slaves. Paraiyar would become Pariah through Anglicization, a shift documented by officials when referencing all Dalit castes by the 1890s, a period signaling the post-bellum era across not only the Americas but British Empire (3-4). The 1833 abolition legislation across Empire, however, omitted India until ten years later and formal abolition would arguably never be fully implemented (Major, 2014; Kara, 2014; Chatterjee, 2007). The growing case for this bizarre occlusion, among scholars of caste and bondage in South Asia (Major, 2014; Bales, 2005; Kara, 2014; Chatterjee, 2007; Brass; Viswanath, 2014; Ed. Alpers, Campbell, Salman, 2007), is that, in part, both the colonial state and upper-caste landowners, while in conflict with each other over taxation, relied heavily on Dalit and low-caste slaves for

“the entire system of production, the surpluses of which filled colonial coffers, and this control rested on the enforced landlessness and hereditary unfreedom of Pariah families.” (4) Thus it was *the profitable political economy of caste* that undergirded colonial discourse characterizing caste slavery as benign servitude in contrast to its Atlantic chattel counterpart, a reductive binary that remains entrenched in elisions around the magnitude of modern slavery and its locus among low-caste South Asians. Which is to say, finally, the word the West knows as *pariah* was long known in (Tamil) South Asia as a caste marker, particularly in referencing subjects of a historical system of bondage that endures. And it is to say that it is no coincidence *pariah* across hemispheres should have carried over connotations of un/touchability, disciplinary violence, and hungry commensalities, as these were crucial features of caste hierarchy as traced in this literary dissertation, which reads for the qualitative rather than quantitative aspects of caste and its genealogy up into the new millenium.

Let me illustrate my relational point again with a more familiar story. In a strange political moment, the first Black American presidency, also a neoliberal one, is followed by a white supremacist cadre in a globalizing world fueled by the unfree labor of the historically low-caste. It is no coincidence that anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, and anti-immigrant (also anti-miscegenation) rhetoric and policy has emerged during this rightward transition. The changing of the Presidential guard is partly an anxious assertion of middle and upper caste status in the United States, where settler colonial capitalism and heteropatriarchal white sovereignty cathected U.S. Empire—first with Native Americans at home, then abroad, via new figurations of the “Indian” in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, etc. (Byrd, 2011) and, second, with Black Americans for whom the devastating avatar of bondage, i.e. the prison industrial complex, has regenerated a Jim Crow-style racial caste system (Alexander, 2016). The waves of deliberate hate crimes and

policies that have succeeded the new Presidency materialize the election (caste) rhetoric scapegoating particular figures in the racialized caste wars (un/documented, non/white, Christian/barbarian, national/foreigner, etc.) that have historically shaped, alongside capitalism's inevitable class divisions, power and un/belonging within and without the U.S.. Notably, within the rightward turns in India and Brazil, those figures subjected to spectacular forms of disciplinary violence—relatively, Muslims, Dalits, working-class peoples, tribal peoples, and queer peoples—are also figures historically stigmatized by cultural scripts on im/purity, (fragile) consanguinity, and ritual violences embedded in local notions of un/belonging, hereditary labor, and normativity. Again, it is through the de/gradations enunciated by such caste wars that hierarchies entangled with but distinct from the proletariat/bourgeoisie class divide is legibilized and reproduced, so that the white/passing working class nevertheless registers as middle caste members as do upper-class people of color, one group enjoying the historical privileges of white supremacy, another the privileges of neoliberal multiculturalism. Of course, my proposal is exactly that at this stage. But what I want to suggest again is the resonant structuring role of culture in entangling the political and economic and in reproducing the prevailing socioeconomic order in the U.S.. And what is similarly legibilized via a relational reading of *casta/caste/race* through India, Brazil, and peripherally the U.S., Bolivia, and Oceania are enduring mechanisms of stigma that make a compelling case for the partial commensurability of Indian caste hierarchy to the U.S. (and other) context(s)—a translation this dissertation uses to better legibilize the emerging global order via **caste as ontoepistemology and culture of im/material stigma**.

The genealogy tracked in my caste chapter historicizes caste as born from the anti-Semitism and Islamophobia of medieval and early modern Europe (Loomba, 2013; Martinez, 2008), in which those of Moorish and Jewish descent were stigmatized as liable to polluting Christian

subjects and the European body politic. This differentiating anxiety, particularly for *conversos* who were phenotypically challenging to parse out from Old Christian subjects, necessitated a range of statutes around *limpieza de sangre* or *cleanliness of blood* that would travel, with some variations, across places and periods to Catholic countries like Portugal and colonial sites like Mexico (Rappaport, 2014; Martinez, 2008). In colonial Brazil, those who were framed as being at the other end of a caste war premised on essentialized religious difference—i.e. Jews, mulattos, Blacks, and certain Arab subjects of *infecta nacao*/infected nation—would be hyper-surveilled and, when failing to meet caste standards of *limpeza de sangue*/cleanliness of blood and *honra*/honor, were frequently dispossessed, jailed, and sent back to Europe (Novinsky, 2002; Tucci Carneiro, 1983). Multiple authors have argued that while such language was eventually outlawed by the late 18th c. (*Carta-Lei*, 1773), the semantics merely evolved into a camouflaged but persistent ontoepistemology of caste coded as racial/*cor* stigma (Tucci Carneiro, 1983; Hofbauer, 2006; Ziviani, 2012). My first argument here, regarding the camouflage of *casta* in Brazil, is that *casta* evolved, through 19th c. colonial formulations of race as biology and post-1888 abolition *branqueamento* ideology and legislation, into an ontoepistemology of *cor* that centrally marks raciality in Brazil. Moreover, *cor* continues to re/produce the culture of im/material stigma embedded in the colonial caste war, with a proximity to blackness carrying the stigma of slavery versus a proximity to whiteness materializing the idiomatic *melhorando da raca*/*bettering of the race*. While class im/mobility adjusts an individual subject's racial reading, recent social science data asserts that education actually darkens a subject's racial (self) identification (Telles, 2014) and, in line with this literary project's findings through a synecdochal frame, *cor*/race and class in terms of *group* continue to overwhelmingly overlap (Roth-Gordon, 2017; Telles, 2006; Telles, 2014; Hordge-Freeman, 2015; Hoffman French,

2009). Thus, the hierarchy that emerges as the legacy of racial chattel slavery, selective im/migration, and the regional development of industry and capital that dis/favors the Northeast versus the Southeast, is a caste hierarchy evolved from the genealogy of slavery, *cor*, and uneven capitalist development that I have articulated in this dissertation. And my final argument in tracing synecdoche in Indian and other literatures is that the multi-valenced task of re/producing caste would be performed across many historical periods and contexts, so that *caste as ontoepistemology and culture of im/material stigma* would take on chameleon forms: the one-drop rule reproducing unfree Black labor while conjuring up a national fantasy of white purity (United States), phenotypic and labor hierarchies troubling the myth of racial democracy (Brazil), half-caste legislation and assimilation decimating aboriginal kinship and culture (Australia), the unfree labor practices that worked in tandem with Jim Crow-style im/mobilization for Mexican, Filipino, and Chinese farm and railroad workers (United States), and, of course, the fluid jati structures of South Asia (across Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist communities) that nevertheless cordoned off a significant portions of its peoples as so polluted even their shadows and tongues (but not their labor or sex) were contaminating. In all these contexts and moments, caste was culturally pronounced via a place-specific ontoepistemology of stigma that included notions and tactics of purity/pollution, un/touchability, hereditary labor, strictures around commensality and endogamy, and ritual violence.

Arguably, the current U.S. state proposal of Muslim registry, which re-animates histories that resulted in Japanese-American internment during WW II and Race Laws in Hitler's Germany, must draw upon material markers that are stigmatized in popular debates on race, religion and national belonging. *Stigma as sign*: the hijab, the racialized face, the star of David. But these stigmas are more than representations. The matter in them matters (Bennett, 2010; Chen, 2012).

Racial passing as historical phenomenon suggests the importance of materiality in determining caste status. So does the collective effort to salvage “stigma signs” through cultural preservation, bodily affirmation, and reproduced practice. Thus the ontological turn of this project is a political turn. Deconstructionist and social constructionist theories have too often disavowed the specific violences enacted on and embodied by marked subjects, asserting notions of the performative to evade the ways in which systems of race-casta-caste are necessarily materially mapped. For example, casta as a visual genre arose in response to the miscegenation of the early colonial period in Latin America; thus it dually recorded and influenced, rather than simplistically “created”, the material variations that continued to emerge in mestizo subjects of Hispanophone and Lusophone colonial societies (Martinez, 2008; Katzew, 2004; Rappaport, 2014). And as Ali Johnson and Hordge-Freeman have argued specifically for the slave-dependent societies of the U.S., the West Indies, and Brazil, color variation became one important metric for not only grading workers and their degrees of un/freedom but for sustaining divisions among the enslaved and their descendants. Perhaps this is why discussions of racial and cultural appropriation are so heated in a way that slips into essentialist stances (Rachel Dolezal and her performative blackness, “radical” commodities a la Urban Outfitters, etc., and body modifications such as tattoo art and bleaching/tanning). For those who have historically inhabited the lower rungs of caste orders, upward mobility is not only difficult but punishable; whereas mobility, including the sort that entails performing otherness, has typically been a marker of upper caste privilege, even in its purportedly radical costume. Performing identity, through some sort of costume, entails a distinct set of privileges, costs, and labor than forcibly living (and negotiating) identity as a result of ontological difference(s) that cannot easily be erased.

In biology parlance, “afterlife” can mean the life that emerges out of decay, part of a cycle naturalized as everyday biology: composition-decomposition-recomposition. For example, the corpse that disintegrates into soil is transformed into the various vegetal and animal matter that then sustains new human life. This material cycle is an analogy for the biopolitics of difference that mark my readings of caste. Not only is Life dependent on Non-Life but these spheres, in their negotiation of the Human realm (which continues to be a realm practicing if not naming its quasi-exclusions) (Povinelli, 2006; Povinelli, 2007; Hong, 2006; Hong, 2016; Braidotti, 2013), must exercise a biopolitics of difference, along the lines of race, gender, sexuality, and caste, in order to sustain and position the players in this naturalized human version of Non/Life re/generation. Thus it is in this sense that I speak of the afterlives of caste, not only as a gesture to important Black Studies theorizations on the legacies of chattel slavery (Hartman, 1997) or as caste’s analogous persistence through prior and current regimes of power but in the definitive way that low-caste subjects’ relegation to those spaces and labors associated with Non-Life is crucial to marking and preserving as Life those spaces and labors belonging to the historically upper-caste. While I do not identify myself or either side of my family as the historically upper-caste, I recognize that my ability to articulate this sentiment here is a marker of caste and class mobility and that, relative to their lives and the lives of most historically low-caste peoples in the Global South, especially indigenous and tribal peoples, I have accessed an inordinate amount of upper-caste privilege, not in the least because I inhabit the Global North. This project might thus be an attempt to think through this question of im/mobility. Where are indigenous and tribal peoples situated, at the turn of the millennium, in relation to caste im/mobility and why?

I invoke NAIS method here in narrating my genealogy: Harvard-educated, middle-class raised, U.S.-born South Asian whose parents immigrated as part of the post-1965 professional

migration from India. Thus, in terms of U.S.-specific registers of settler colonialism, race, and class, I have moved into local hierarchies that no longer fix my biological family in the U.S. in socioeconomic trenches. And the privileges we have accrued in the United States are predicated upon continued structures of settler/colonialism, capitalism, and anti-Blackness that undergird life across *all* the Americas, structures that cannot World the indigenous, the tribal but demand place-specific accountability. But I also invoke NAIS worldings in nuancing my genealogy beyond registers fenced in by the U.S., especially given the Worlding of political momentum manipulating indigeneity rhetoric and of mass migration for work and asylum. Like many Assamese, I am of mixed non/tribal descent that is variously read depending upon context/culture but remains entangled with place-specific articulations of the indigenous, the tribal. And beyond sur/naming as identity marker, this synecdochal sign captures a history rooted in a “periphery” distinguished by military and biopolitical governance, in one of the most tribal-dense and insurgency-marked regions of the nation, and in kinship lines whose aggregate limits emerge in the number of relatives who flew, with my parents, through a propitious wormhole: zero. Such diasporic stories are not unusual; what might be is the increasingly collective articulation of caste, alongside class, as a motor for *who* experiences im/mobility and *how* across (South Asian) diaspora and beyond the so-called waiting room of so-called History (1) (Chakraborty, 2008).

Indigenous Difference, Decolonial Cosmologies

Let me return to a core aspect of the project: ontological turn as political turn. This turn asks how ontologies of difference (“a war not of words but of worlds,” as Viveiros de Castro has noted) work in the multiverse that is fetishized as World. In terms of discourse, this question is a

variation of New Materialist thought exploring how matter matters (Bennett, 2010; Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2013; Chen, 2012; Ed. Alaimo and Hekman, 2009). More broadly, this falls into a tradition of anti-Humanist thought, most notably asserted by black feminisms and women of color feminisms, that remembers the various ways in which those of us who were/are not male, white, or straight and/or bear histories from countries with deeply marked colonial histories were never considered fully human within the legacies of Enlightenment and Cartesian thought (Braidotti, 2013). Remembering that women, tribal peoples, colonized peoples of color, and the enslaved were located further from *mind* and closer to *body*, the ontological turn to matter is one way of examining how all that fell within the category of inert matter was not, in fact, the passive object of mind but was always active and agential (Bennett, 2010; Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2013; Chen, 2012; Ed. Alaimo and Hekman, 2009; Ed. McKittrick, 2015; Mohanty, 2006). This ontological turn doesn't reject the importance of linguistic representationalism— culture necessarily shapes the way we understand matter and this project has asserted the salience of culture in shaping hierarchy—but it is to reiterate that power works in multiple, culturally specific, and surprising ways that include the agency of matter. To re-center all that falls within the category of matter is an especially urgent task in the Anthropocene in which environmental degradation is happening at an unprecedented rate, impacting the lives of the poorest, most vulnerable subjects (human and non-human) across the planet—and it is to repeat that while addressing the ravages of neoliberal capitalism for workers is indispensable it cannot single-handedly perform the task of cauterizing the Hydra that is millennial inheritances.

Which is to say, this ontological turn is also a typical trait for a project committed to NAIS struggles. As a field and across contexts, NAIS has long questioned the givenness of Western epistemologies and the ways in which these have not only split ontology and

epistemology (Lightfoot, 2016; Stewart-Harawira, 2013; Ed. Simpson and Smith, 2014) but privileged Enlightenment and Cartesian thought. Central to most indigenous notions of belonging and sovereignty today is the matter of *indigenous difference*—not as identity fetish within the liberal nation-state or neoliberal markets but as *another kind of shared blood that exceeds DNA and figures into an emergent indigenous praxis and politics* (Tallbear, 2013; Ed. de la Cadena and Stam, 2007; Ed. Simpson and Smith, 2014)—an *indigenous difference* enabling survivance via praxis and politics under neo/colonial and neoliberal conditions of devaluation, assimilation, and erasure. Thus within that historical arena bloodied by the caste war and the colonial difference, culture becomes, as legible marker of indigenous difference, an incredibly vital node of contestation for indigenous and tribal peoples. It is in the contested terrain of culture that we may place the assimilative, genocidal impulses of U.S. settler colonial politics such as the boarding schools, of Australia’s Half-Caste legislation that fractured aboriginal kinship networks, of the numerous missionary voyages into tribal-dense and “heathen” enclaves of Northeast India and Brazil’s Amazon asserting the civilizational projects of coloniality/modernity. Which is to say, the question of difference was not invented by indigenous peoples for whom difference has historically overdetermined their precarity to discriminatory practices, labor exploitation, and thus foreshortened life/chances. Rather, radical alterity was gridded in the colonial era, through scientific racism and other “objective” post-Enlightenment, humanist discourses, upon tribal peoples, to their detriment. The degrees of tribal peoples’ assimilative departure from this “starting” point of primitivity would distinguish between them, the non-tribal but indigenous, and fully “civilized” modern man. It would also script the degrees of im/purity, tenuous consanguinity, and susceptibility to ritual violence that would rank these subject positions along caste hierarchy.

Thus, the tendency on both the far Right and far Left to accuse indigenous and tribal peoples of deploying difference as a neo/liberal tactic towards capital accumulation is so historically amnesic to ongoing colonial legacies and structures, so morally impoverished in the face of indigenous struggle against elimination, and so solipsistically focused on one type of violence alone that it is hard for those of us still entangled in indigenous histories and tribal struggles to take with seriousness or without disgust. For example, Northeast India, a region still largely under military governance (Armed Forces Special Powers Act), where there continue to be numerous insurgent movements against the Indian government, and where there exist a sizable community of tea garden workers initially brought under Company and British rule and persisting under arguably slave/like conditions—these material realities for Northeast Indian peoples trouble the smug dismissals, on both the far Right and far Left, that the post/colonial question is moot. NAIS, while not equivalent to Post-colonial Studies, advances post/colonial questions, at the very least by not presuming the “post,” and certainly by making the discomfiting point that the far Left is often complicit in indigenous and tribal suffering and death, including at the level of militarized violence often perpetrated by working-class subjects, even as it also performatively cannibalizes indigeneity to accrue other kinds of capital.

Finally, part of the decolonial critique that emerges in indigenous literatures is a critique of Hegelian temporalities and Christian worldviews in favor of reconsidering tribally-specific cosmologies and their cyclic/spiral notions of time (Byrd, 2011; Deloria Jr., 2007; DeLoughrey, 1999). Thus the rendering of tribal worldviews within Fourth World literatures becomes a politicized aesthetic move, one that decolonizes narrative traditions reproducing Western imperial form: linearity, purity, Cartesian dualism, and History 1. Instead, the plurality with which tribal worldviews render mind/body, temporalities, histories, and registers of speech

generate those aesthetic traits I've conjectured as part of a trans-tribal sensibility. That is, a sensibility more attuned to vital matter and the untranslatable, less seduced by neatly segregated (male) mind and (female) body, and that is strangely akin to quantum physics in its imaginative assessment of time's strange behavior. Laguna author Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac* and *Ceremony* are clear examples of tribally-specific cosmological moves as decolonial narrative moves. Both her early novel and magnum opus foreground alternative temporalities ensconced in tribal worldviews and both offer these not only to plot characters' journey into decolonial healing, as in *Ceremony*, but to remap History towards, in *Almanac* at least, the return of all tribal lands. This is a premise complicating hasty Left declarations on the coloniality of gentrification, on the ahistorical ideal of the commons, both of which erase enduring Native presence and elide whether "utopia" would not reproduce hierarchy; and this is a praxis of what Boaventura de Sousa Santos has advocated as a deep listening to Global South knowledges against Western epistemicide:

Colonial domination involves the deliberate destruction of other cultures. The destruction of knowledge (besides the genocide of indigenous people) is what I call *epistemicide*: the destruction of the knowledge and cultures of these populations, of their memories and ancestral links and their manner of relating to others and to nature . . . Colonialism also creates a problem for us in relation to postcolonialism; that is to say, there may be some naivete in thinking that postcolonialism refers to a postcolonial period when, in fact, postcolonialism claims that colonialism did not end with the end of historical colonialism. There are other ways through which occupation continues, not necessarily through foreign occupation, tutelage and the prohibition of a state formation. In Europe, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia are among the modalities in which we can see colonialism at work. (Santos, 2010, p18)

Bloody Reproduction in Religion/Caste/Race

At the heart of my project's genealogical sleuthing of religion/caste/race is "blood." I draw up this tongue-in-cheek pun to highlight a term that appears so frequently, in texts on indigeneity, on casta/race, on gendered and untouchable im/purity, that to avoid it seems like another type of ostrich consciousness. Blood as that product of natureculture that designates

inclusion/exclusion; blood as discursive-material thing that alters consanguinity with our shifting understanding of both; blood as sign as well as material re/producing differences of religion/caste/race even in the contemporary global order. In early modern formulations of caste in Europe, religious difference was essentialized within “blood” in metrics of *limpieza del sangre*, which stigmatized Jews and Moors as permanently stained despite conversion (Novinsky, 2002; Loomba, 2013; Hofbauer, 2006). In colonial Brazil, the Portuguese Inquisition would extend religious persecution into Brazil, formally in the 16th – 18th c. and camouflaged in the 18th -19th c., and in post-abolition Brazil, eugenics as a new formulation of discursive-material blood rose alongside branqueamento legislation to enact a gradual racial cleansing articulated as such (Diwan, 2015; Novinsky, 2002; Hofbauer, 2006). In colonial India, however, caste was articulated less in terms of blood than in terms of body, but the stingy sanctity of un/cleanliness and proscribed consanguinity here too permeated the discursive-material body. If caste was the tissue of this body (of mythic Manu, of socioeconomic hierarchy, of the Indian body politic), and if synecdoche as rhetorical trope appears in caste literatures, then perhaps the tacit presence of “blood” lies in the reproduction of the discursive-material caste body. In settler colonial nations such as the United States and Australia, where blood quantum policies were designed to eventually erase indigenous peoples and lifeworlds, caste as ontoepistemology embeds deep racial resonances, necropolitical tribal ghosts. It is no accident that, across these particular terrains, endogamy should have preoccupied the elite, economic and/or political, as this was a crucial mechanism for maintaining caste distinctions. And it is revelatory that caste contestations were exploited to maintain a holistic coherence of hierarchy, ironically most upheld by middle and lower caste subjects (indio vs. mestico/mameluco, Adivasi vs. Shudra/Dalit), as both social status and economic power for the rest relied on the continued subservience of

out/castes tiered by both at the very bottom (Martinez, 2008; de Andrade, 2010; Langfur, 2014; Dumont, 1980; Viswanath, 2014; Ambedkar, 2014).

But what seems most pressing, and maybe forbidding, for legibilizing caste (old as well as new) as culture of im/material stigma is the relationship between gender, “blood,” and reproductive labor. Certainly, in the Indian context, caste as hierarchy historically rested on modes of reproduction as well as production (Chakravarty, 2006). For example, it was the violable low-caste woman’s body that reproduced an unfree labor force not only through heteronormative marriage but through exogamous rape, regardless of strictures around un/touchability—a material history unearthed in recent findings on assymetrical (gene) distribution across caste lines (Cameron, 2017; Rao, 2016). (For example, upper-caste patrilineal genes can be found among low-caste peoples though the reverse is not true, and tribal and low-caste peoples embody the most “mixed” genetic pool also given more malleable rules around endogamy.) Assuming the feminist Marxist argument that reproductive rather than productive labor is primary to (surplus value) accumulation (Mies, 2014), caste de/gradation arguably functions as a patriarchal mode of exploitation as well, in which Dalit women’s unpaid labor generates surplus value and workers for upper-caste landowners. How possible then is an analogy between these genetic findings for Indian caste, beneath which lies a political economy of generational Dalit bondage and gendered violence, and U.S. chattel slavery and those means of reproduction, i.e. often sexual violence, that ensured its perpetuity as Black commodification, white wealth, and a “pure” racial divide policed by endogamy? I have no answers yet, but I trace possible resonances and cite genetic and other empirical data to think through gender, “blood,” and reproductive labor as a critical nexus for re/producing caste as ontoepistemology and culture of im/material stigma. Certainly, in the contemporary moment of late capitalism, care and

domestic work is overwhelmingly allotted to working-class women of color (Nakano Glenn, 2009; Federici, 2012; Mies, 2014; Vora, 2015), modern bondage rests to a great extent on patriarchal exploitation of women as a class (about 50% women generally and 70% women for sex trafficking specifically) (EPRS Report; Bales, 2005; Kara, 2014), and low-caste status/poverty is the inextricable basis for half the world's modern slaves, i.e. as much as 90-95% of bonded labor in some Indian regions (Kara, 2014; etc). How might caste as ontoepistemology clarify not only the entanglement of gender, "blood," and reproductive labor in motoring major economies in late capitalism, but also the re/production of caste as culture of im/material stigma in order to maintain biopolitical governance and accumulate surplus value under neoliberal racial capitalism for those in the top tiers of the new global caste order?

Finally, how do new "blood" formulations, altered by advances in genetic tracking, shift baseline notions of race, caste, and their relationality? That is, the heightened fetishization of DNA as genealogical truth has rattled the boxes of identity essentialisms, though sometimes towards ends reinforcing the flawed ideologies of biological racism and genetic determinism (Roberts, 2011). NAIS and Critical Race Studies scholars have critiqued this fetishizing turn, as delegitimizing indigenous ways of formulating "blood" and thus kinship and sidelining Critical Race and women of color interventions into the biopolitical effects of naturalized hierarchies of difference (Tallbear, 2013; Hinton, Mehrabi, and Barla, 2017). But for any project engaged in New Materialist thinking—and in productively troubling what has been called its middle-class whiteness and unwitting universalisms (Papadopoulos and Sharma, 2017; Hinton, Mehrabi, and Barla, 2017)—it seems less useful to delink questions of biology and race/caste than to admit and trace *how and why* ontoepistemologies of "blood" and race/caste have frequently overlapped. Let us begin with Brazil, where genetic studies have found little correlation between color and

dominant ancestral genotype, even as *cor/color* is the primary phenotypic marker used in racialization in Brazil; notwithstanding immense phenotypic variation, most sequencing in Brazil shows a significant uniform degree of Amerindian ancestry and a high admixture of European and African ancestry that reveals greater genomic ancestry values and more overlap than in distinct European and African samples [CITE]. Despite this biological iteration of the country's cultural discourse on a harmonious *mesticagem*, a closer look at the biological evidence suggests "Brazilianness" to lie somewhere in between this discursive tri-racial "blood" and a bloody steganography undercutting the myth of racial democracy. That is, asymmetrical DNA lines also attest to gendered colonial mixing (and rape), regional variations recording labor im/mobilities, and the strong impact of *branqueamento* in "whitening" the genetic pool, especially for white/passing Brazilians. This bloody steganography—which reveals the histories of settler/colonialism, slavery, and eugenics in Brazil—is arguably akin in migratory multiplicity and assortative mating to what recent DNA studies in India have suggested about caste and genomic diversity. A country as incredibly heterogenous as Brazil, India evinces more than 4,500 distinct genetic groups that in one study were rooted in four to five ancestral groups (ANI, ASI, AAA, ATB) and in another were rooted in two foundational migrations (from Africa and Eurasia) (Cameron, 2017; Rao, 2016; Sharma, 2017). What is fascinating is the caste/d temporality that emerges in the genetic archive: sequencing in India shows profuse mixture for thousands of years up until a sudden halt around 500 A.D., when haplotypes become far more fixed and segregated along recognizable caste lines. Recent interpretations have periodized this dramatic shift in the rigidification of caste, particularly its strictures around endogamy, in the Gupta Era (Porterfield, 2017; Rao, 2016); if read using a New Materialist lens, caste is arguably re/produced in the natureculture of "blood" that, in a prior historical moment, de/graded bodies

according to im/purity, un/touchability, and endogamy and that, in our current historical moment, is legibilized in the genetic distinctions that correlate to known *jati* groups. Without reifying race and caste as biological facts, while also taking seriously *the fact of matter*, these genetic archives and their hierarchical indices at the very least suggest that *raca*/race and *jati*/caste continue to be entangled with discursive-material shifts in “blood” that were not politically neutral but deeply bound up with re/producing stigma vs. power.

The qualitative terrain of literature gifts, to this discussion of caste/casta/race, another trans-temporal eye that illuminates the im/material. These im/material traces show up via affect, socialities, and Spirit/ed cosmologies that Enlightenment liberalism holds at arm’s length but upon which subaltern worlds have survived. Animate matter, gods and ghosts, taxonomied moths helplessly drawn to the hope and rage metaphorized in fire. This indelible ink within subaltern literatures resurrects the invisible, excavates the ungrievable, and unmask under the cruelly optimistic genres of neoliberal capitalism what low-caste subalterns have known in their bones (Roth-Gordon, 2017; Riedner, 2015; Ed. Rodriguez, 2001; Ed. Guha and Spivak, 1998). That difference *matters* in the way matter matters (Barad, 2007; Bennett, 2010; Bradotti, 2013); that hierarchy continues to materialize along a scale of purity vs. contempt (Ambedkar, 2014; Chen, 2012; Ramos, 1998); that Ekalavya’s castrated thumb would, through the synecdochal limbs and wombs of low-caste workers newly im/mobilized by neo/liberal capitalism, regenerate as commodity, critique, and protest. For the stakes of reading caste as ontoepistemology are not only old, they are everywhere—what came to a heated head at the Durban Conference (2001) and again in Goa at the First Conference for African Diaspora in Asian territories (2006) where, relatively, a case was made for casteism to be recognized as racism and a case was made for considering anti-blackness in relation to caste in South Asia (Ed. Natrajan and Greenough, 2009;

Hofbauer, 2017). In Kamala Visweswaran's rich work on the relational histories of race/caste across the U.S. and India, she explores the *multiple* historical schools of thought that have previously engaged scholars and activists transnationally in relating race and caste, particular for Black and Dalit subjects; and in Andreas Hofbauer's exciting work thinking through *cor*/caste for the Indian and Brazilian contexts, there is a historical *longue duree* between *cor*, morality, and status up until the 19th c. shift to the language of race. The worlds of World Literature that are thus legibilized in this dissertation, through caste as ontoepistemology and culture of im/material stigma, offer a textured, vibrant rendering of the lived experience and histories of peoples dis/placed by hierarchical workings. The qualitative consideration of these experiences is not only important from a Subaltern Studies standpoint, which has defined the subaltern as an absented agent of history and silenced subject of national discourse, but from anti-capitalist, decolonial, and feminist perspectives. The lives weighed here are not fungible as disposable abstractions; they are not passive witnesses to the vampiric manipulation of their families and futures; and they have actually *always been speaking* though in registers not easily commensurable.

Thus in my closing chapter relating Indian and Brazilian subaltern texts, I read for the qualitative aspects of race/color in Brazil and caste in India as a way to think through the im/material resonances and dissonances between these complex historical phenomena, and draw upon in their relationship to neo/colonial capitalism and in the spirit of women of color theorizations engaging difference. I believe that this thinking of difference is especially critical in a site like Brazil, where vast inequity is also visibly "racialized" in the way that raciality operates in Brazil, which is in tandem with persistent legacies of chattel slavery, anti-blackness, settler and extractive colonialisms, and branqueamento impulses undergirding mesticagem. Thus I

foreground difference in my readings on Brazil, with an especial focus on Afro-Brazilians and Japanese Brazilians, to trouble the myth of Brazilian racial democracy hinging upon the figure of the canonical *mestico*. That *mestico* has never been completely equitable in the eugenically-charged history of Brazil, and has typically idealized the sexual romance embodied by the *mulatta* (black and white ancestry), the Euro-descendant immigrant that would *melhorar a raca/improve the race*, and of course the tri-racial *mestico* child of the future (Vasconcelos, 1966), with an emphasis on harmonious assimilation into the ever-progressing, Christian, Lusophone nation. Those excluded, subtly or overtly, from this national imaginary of the race encompassed “undesirables” (Lesser, 1995) such as the ex-slave Afro-descendant and further African immigration, the (dying and backwards) *indio*, the unassimilable and generalizable Orientalist threat, whether that be the Jew, the Arab/Turco, or the Japanese. This eugenicist imaginary of un/acceptable difference has historically underpinned the development of a Brazilian people, manifesting in racial(ized) quotas that privileged *branqueamento/whitening*, vastly limited Japanese (and Asian) migration, and explicitly barred further African diasporic movement—even as a vast number of those solicited as migrants were working class and/or indentured. European migration for work that was called *mao de obra/manual labor* was subsidized by the government, a distinction that suggests the inauguration of “whiteness” in Brazil (and other parts of Latin America) towards functioning as racial capital if not whiteness as property (Harris, 1993; Hofbauer, 2006); Japanese entered into contract relations as coffee plantation labor in the early 20th c. that strongly resembled indentureship (Lesser, 2003). And the entrance of both groups post-abolition worked to in/formally exclude the recently freed Black population from integrating into market relations and political power (Lesser, 2003; Hofbauer, 2006). The legally and culturally distinct treatments of these categories of subjects signals the

necessity of considering the question of race alongside class, particularly in the formulation of national identity, un/belonging, and various kinds of im/mobilities. This project is hardly unusual in this sense—as U.S. and Brazilian scholarship engaging with questions of difference and inequity, particularly as it relates to raciality and blackness, have multiplied.

Conversely, my case here is not only that semi-feudal and capitalist exploitation has relied on race/caste hierarchy, as variously depicted in these transnational literatures, but that there is a way in which the History 1 of capital does subsume without completely erasing the History 2 of subaltern lifeworlds. For example, in the Indian caste novel with which I open that section of readings, Pillai plots a Dalit family's trans-generational bildungsroman from oppressed out/caste subject to resistant working-class subject within the feudalism-to-capitalism paradigm. And, in the final Brazilian race/region novel with which I close that section of readings, Ramos depicts the struggle of a sertanejo family, typically known as mestizos of Black-indigenous origin and the inheritors of racial chattel slavery, oligarchal relations structuring *sertanejo* hierarchy, and biopolitical military governance, to endure the notorious poverty of the Northeast interior. While Mistry and Roy, for the Indian caste novels, and Ramos, Hashida, and the series *3%*, for the Brazilian race/class texts, do not give primary precedence to class and instead depict what I have called the steganography of race/caste within capitalist modernity, they nevertheless portray crucial moments of capitalism's development that entrenched national as well as transnational inequity, thus further severing consanguinity at multiple levels. As this introduction has stated from the outset, this project attempts to hold both difference and labor together, arguing with the intensifying chorus of scholars across Critical Race Studies, Caste Studies, Native American Indigenous Studies, Women of Color feminisms, Feminist Marxism, and Slavery Studies that the erasure of this entanglement re/produces those neo/liberal and

neo/colonial tactics sustaining historical inequity in its multiple forms and violences, including generational poverty and foreshortened life/chances for low-caste peoples.

I summarize the endeavors of these chapters here, which begin with a chapter set on indigeneities and close with a chapter set on difference and inequity. Chapter II focuses on the representation of indigenous subjects on a global scale in relation to an alternative lexicon of subaltern speech in contemporary Fourth World film (“Re-Imag(in)ing Fourth World Authenticities”). Chapter III reads, through frames privileging New Materialism, gender, and de/colonial renderings of time the articulations of specifically tribal and tribally specific women in three non-U.S. contexts (“Fourth World Feminist Clocks”). Chapter IV, which makes a relational leap not only between place but period, reads across abolitionist literatures of 19th c. Brazil and 20th-21st c. India to parse out place and period-specific definitions and practices of slaveries, freedom, and their relationship to race/caste (“Abolitionist Imaginaries: Precarity, Unfreedom, and the “Prior” in 19th c. Brazil and 20th-21st c. India”). And Chapter V relates post-1947 caste literatures of India with 20th c. *cor*/regional literatures of Brazil, in order to argue that not only have genres of difference critically constituted the in/equity that is steganography to nation/alism but that caste as ontoepistemology emerges, on a transnational and transtemporal scale, as that historically evolving culture of im/material stigma that relegates some subjects to castratable Non-Life in service to Life commensalities for other subjects. But against this *historia pesada*, I want to counterpoint the leavening lessons of my dissertation research. Subaltern worlds have endured, not only through the figures I trace—of synecdoche, ambivalent camouflage, queer consanguinity, alternative cosmologies and temporalities—but also through practices, even when they have been hidden gambles, of surprise solidarities, radical hope, and resistant joy.

The In/commensurable Pluriverse in World Literature

“This ban on passing from one language to another may be read not just as an example of the philosopheme’s obstacle course but as an idea that has particular resonance today in efforts to rethink theological and secular criticisms. It suggests a bound of sacrosanction: a theology of translation; a “saving difference” (an expression used by Harold Bloom that I am detourning), which is a difference believed in because it saves or preserves the Untranslatable.” (Apter, 2013, p4856)

As a final commentary on questions of difference and literature, I turn to debates in the field of World Literature, in which I situate this dissertation. If world literature is variously a study of literatures beyond narrow national and linguistic boundaries, if it was meant to redress the Eurocentricism of traditional comparative literature departments, if it is concomitant with the prevalence of globalization, and if it calls upon a diffractive method and ethos re-imagining planetary cohabitation (Apter, 2013; Cheah, 2016; Walkowitz, 2015; Hoyos, 2017; Ed. Felski and Friedman, 2013), then the following four chapters engage with the field. While the popular use of “tribal” is to counter-pose it against “global,” suggesting any study of indigenous and tribal concerns as not conducive to “universal” application, the multiverse that emerges from these indigenous articulations of plural ontologies and cosmologies insist upon worlds within World that re-define it. I turn to Mignolo and Zapatista thought here to foreground their salience for my work on difference and pluriversality, especially in re/imagining a liberation not yet served by the Anglo/European Right or Left. Mignolo, like Quijano, Blaser, and a few others of the Latin American Subaltern Studies and Indigenous Studies groups, amplifies indigenous/Indian thought in Latin America to advocate for a decolonial cosmopolitanism and pluriversality as the “one path with many avenues” to liberation (Mignolo, 2013). Which is a more sophisticated way of saying what I have been asserting here and in other chapters: that

indigenous difference (as it has been understood in this dissertation) matters, especially to avoid reproducing the hegemony of the (Western) universal and to acknowledge “peripheral” ontoepistemologies; that liberation cannot hinge upon an abstracted anti-capitalist ethos alone, underwritten as class formation is by ongoing coloniality/modernity, race/caste hierarchies, and the feminization of labor. Thus too my repeated turn to gender is meant not only to critique the abstracted universal of Enlightenment humanist thought, particularly in the way it absents gender from considerations of late capitalist exploitation, but to swap this out for what seems more resonant across contexts: patriarchy and its cast(e)ing of re/productive labor.

My Global South, India-Brazil chapters hopefully move beyond Anglophone-centric and strictly “literary” ways of reading distinct literary traditions, by including texts from the world’s most sizable Lusophone country and foregrounding tribal orality and politics. Hopefully too, these chapters link world literature and globalization from a slightly different angle than the ones celebrating neoliberal capitalism and bromides on global citizenry. Which is to say, these chapters have sought to excavate the inextricable part labor, particularly enslaved labor, has played in the evolution of global capitalism, while insisting on the integral part “difference,” namely race and caste, continue to play in enduring hierarchies of labor, belonging, and grievability. The lie of universalism, given ever-shrinking access to full national much less global belonging, camouflages such difference. *Difference is both bedrock and crop of “prior” and “post” hierarchies.* I focus on hierarchies I call race and caste and argue that they are deeply entangled with enslavement, in its distinct configurations across period and place, generating synecdochal figures of the out/caste that increasingly constitute the bottom tier of the new global caste order. For if we take, with the haunting force of the poetic, the “prior” seriously, then hierarchies camouflaged within late capitalism’s new configurations of labor/capital,

debtee/debtor, consumer/producer must also be taken seriously, especially to even begin seeing the steganography of race/caste, coloniality/modernity, and gender/heteronormativity that critically contribute to neoliberal capitalism's violences (Hong, 2006; Hong, 2016; Atanasoski and Vora, 2015). Just as all workers are not the same, the propensity to im/mobilities of various kinds are also not homogenous or untethered to the "prior" of people and place, and an effective anti-capitalist critique must work in tandem with a critique of the biopolitics of difference. I have called this strange need to airbrush difference out of an understanding of hierarchy and im/mobility a kind of ostrich consciousness that, "post" my relational readings of these South-South literatures, appears to perniciously work to sustain hierarchies of labor, belonging, and grievability. Perhaps millenials' legacy, in lieu of millennial inheritances, will be to take a "difference" tack in actually resolving inequity.

The central ideas explored in these chapters approach how the literatures articulate caste. Thus, the rhetorical figures of synecdoche (the part that stands in for the whole of which it is essentially a part) versus metonymy (the part signifying another part or whole of which it is not essentially a part) are compared. My initial impulse to think synecdoche in relation to indigenous materialities was inspired by a case-specific quote in Povinelli's philosophically-rich ethnography on (Australian) aboriginal endurance:

Forty years his senior, his aunt vehemently disagreed not only with his account of the location of his risk but also with the underlying logic of his social imaginary. To his statement that his body was his alone, she replied, 'No, that is not your body; that is my body. When you die, my body will suffer and die.' When she referred to her physical risk, this woman was not simply referring to a generalizable empathetic form of grief. She was not saying, 'I will mourn you as an individual.' Her brother was this young man's father. Thus, she and he share 'one body': They are both *murrumurru* (long yam), an ancestral being from which they both substantively descend as surely as an average non-Indigenous Australian believes that he or she shares the genetic substance of his or her mother and father. In other words, the woman was attempting to mobilize a discourse of socially cosubstantial corporeality against her nephew's social imaginary of individuated bodies engaged in private wagers. His language of privatized loss, and its incumbent discourse of individual risk, was not met by the risk of another private loss but by an appeal to a cosubstantial distribution of life, health, and social being—a position much closer to Le Guin's than to the young man's. (Povinelli, 1994, p155)

Povinelli thus foregrounds the distinct ways in which particular aboriginal communities understand corporeality, personhood, and the deep entanglement between individual-community-land in contrast to the liberal colonial state's privileging of possessive individualism and private property and against whose legal rhetoric and neo/liberal ethos indigenous history, ontoepistemology, and life/chances register as incommensurable and non-valuable. This, of course, is part of Povinelli and many anthropologists' larger and implicit argument about the importance of considering culture, if decolonial and anti-capitalist possibilities are to be fully realized. But it is also, in the specific articulation of one aboriginal worldview, a synecdochal move, rather than an ironic, metaphoric, or metonymic one. What the aunt says is in no way pointing out a lesson through humorous disjuncture; she does not juxtapose unlike objects in order to generate a poetic semblance; nor does she simply say that her nephew's body is linked to hers through "touch", genetic or otherwise. *She and he co-constitute a trans-temporal body*, a synecdochal move affectively registering dismay, grief, and reciprocal care as well as politically asserting a communal indigenous ethos counter to late liberal practices of abandonment and neoliberal logics of market supremacy. Again, this synecdochal move hopefully elucidates the stakes of an ontological turn, as the treatment of difference is of obvious historical, philosophical, and cultural importance to Native American Indigenous Studies questions and communities. For the aunt at least, her rhetorical use of synecdoche has life-and-death stakes and resists the necropolitics of non-tribal, neoliberal state-capital practices.

But does treating synecdoche as trope in caste literatures reify Orientalist notions of caste in India? Caste Studies in South Asia have made numerous critiques of the Dumontian framing of caste as fundamentally holistic, the part that is integral to the whole, and built on the im/purity axiom (Khare, 2008). Various, such critiques have quibbled with the Othering tendencies

inherent to this imaginary of a religiously rigid India, the homogenous take on a phenomenon as variable as the subcontinent itself, and the evacuation of other considerations of power, political and/or economic. The turn taken by critics such as Dirks, Singh, and Cox take different approaches to complicate the Dumontian purity-principle scheme of caste—emphasizing instead political relations between kingship and religious figures, political economy and land ownership, and the role of the British colonial state and knowledge production in imagining caste. This project remains open to these other historicizations of caste; most definitions, after all, acknowledge caste’s complexity if not uniformity. But this project also remains committed to reading the insights of subaltern literatures which, regardless of *how* and *why* current notions and practices of caste began, *themselves trope synecdoche* in narrating a version of caste that is violent, camouflaged, and persistent. My proposal here is that the caste literature’s return to synecdoche as trope more fully narrates the patterns of discipline, consanguinity, and value intrinsic to the generational history of caste—i.e. synecdoche reveals the differentiating ways in which stigmatized Non-Life is rendered exploitable, cast(e)ratable, and re/producible in service to valued Life commensalities. Thus in terms of rhetorical figures most suited to the questions posed by this dissertation, it is synecdoche, rather than metonymy or irony or metaphor, that legibilizes the steganography of race/caste within an abstract capitalism that metonymy, in part through object biography, more helpfully maps (Freedgood, 2010; Ed. Appadurai, 1986).

However, it is also important to note the limitations of synecdoche as race/caste frame, for this and other projects critically resisting the nativist, white supremacist, and Brahmanical turn characterizing the global moment. Too often, racial and caste violences have been justified by invoking a synecdoche of flat “indigeneity” in its least nuanced mode, scapegoating an individual or group through economic, stigmatic, and/or conflationary logic of the sort that

marked, for example, Chinese Exclusion in 19th c. California, Asian immigration quotas throughout 20th c. U.S. and Brazil, and the tragic refusal of stateless Rohingya Muslims across much of South/east Asia (Lye, 2009; Lesser, 2003; Day, 2016). Relatedly, a hollowed-out use of synecdoche often accompanies limited representations of territorially-bound literatures. Hector Hoyos has noted tokenism as an especially troubling variant in representing entire continents such as Latin America, and extends to other continents the question of whether a handful of (Spanish and Portuguese-language) authors fortuitously successful in the Anglo-European market (Márquez, Bolaño, Lispector, etc.) can truly embody a continent's rich and complex terrain of work. And against the smooth part-to-whole ascription posited by synecdoche, Emily Apter argues for re-considering the value of un/translatability in World Literature, pointing out that translatability has tended to favor Eurocentric language traditions and chronotopes as standard-bearers and that untranslatability has often been assigned to "peripheries" marked by alterity within world economic and literary ecosystems. Taking Hoyos and Apter's critiques together, alongside those of numerous scholars advocating a transnationalizing planetarity against the monocultural globalizing moment (Chee Dimock, Spivak, Balibar) and remembering the stigmatizing discourse of unassimilability that legitimated erasing (particularly Asian and tribal) difference (Lye, 2009; Day, 2016; Ramos, 1998; Hemming, 2004; Veracini, 2007), we might come to this inductive logic: allowing for the un/translatability of difference rather than insisting on its assimilative (false) equivalence is an inalienable element of a literary planetarity. Within this mode of reading, synecdoche as airbrushed cosmetic figure (examples: "*all hands on deck*", "*meals on wheels*," "*9/11 and the war on terror*") appears less useful for a decolonial method and anti-capitalist ethos of planetarity than synecdoche as telescoping apparatus that legibilizes both difference and its dynamic relation to other parts of the world-systems whole

(examples: *tribal specificity among homogenized indigenous peoples, the generational impact of “prior” bondage in the present, “women of color” as key re/productive caste in neoliberal capitalism*). One use of synecdoche obscures structural workings and cavernous histories, placing its faith in abstract Man, charity without anti-capitalist critique, and the colonial matrix of power. Another use of synecdoche reads for subaltern histories (2) under History (1), against liberal individualism disinterested in cultural survivance, and towards that steganography of difference that generates “other” world cartographies of World.

Diffractive readings of some cartographies of difference do, however, World gendered and heteronormative violence. While gender and heteronormativity have not been the central focus of this dissertation, beyond Chapter III’s thinking through of Fourth World feminist articulations of de/coloniality, race/caste, and temporality, I hope to expand upon them in future research-writing. NAIS writings have returned again and again to the typically high rates of aggression and assault faced by indigenous and tribal women across contexts, connecting these to discursive-material structures of post/colonialisms that re/produce heteronormative patriarchal dominance within settler and other post/colonial societies (Smith, 2015; Deer, 2015; Devi, 1993). And scholars and abolitionists working on bondage in ancient and contemporary South Asia, have emphasized the highly gendered, somewhat queer nature of these place-specific slaveries—from temple *devdasis* to court eunuchs to generationally bonded cultivators to the unfree vital energy motoring current economies within and beyond a region that is one apt case study for the Global South (Chatterjee, 2007; DuBois, 2010; Vora, 2015)—i.e. a gendered labor hierarchy that is also casted. Thus, my exploration of caste throughout this dissertation has, in a sense, been shot through with gender as material backbone of hierarchies re/produced through coloniality/modernity and neo/liberal capitalism. More specifically, caste as culture of

im/material stigma requires the matrices of gender and heteronormativity to re/produce hierarchies—whether through material-discursive “blood,” the burden of un/clean and care work placed upon women of color, and/or the cannibalized indigeneity endemic to heteropatriarchal settler/colonialism and neo/liberal multiculturalism—i.e. those hierarchies of Non/Life cast(e)rability, commensality, and exploitability increasingly defining our contemporary global order. For this reason, I have experimented with caste as ontoepistemology, in order to legibilize the steganography of race/caste that has long abided, beyond myopic Euro-U.S. narratives, in the deepening socioeconomic inequity of “other” worlds. And for this reason, I have called this fraught turning point, at the parallax end of the millennium, *millennial inheritances* and the discomfiting questions of this project, necessary given the multi-headed Hydra menacing more than abstract universal Man, *caste articulations in global imaginaries*. My consistent hope has been and will always be an old-fashioned head-hunting—the kind that sprouts a historically sensitive planetarity that does not camouflage race/caste hierarchy, the kind that deploys “blood” to purge the nativist fervor cannibalizing a more imaginative indigenous ethos, and the kind that refuses to collapse the in/commensurable pluriverse into one thing or the other, without its diffractive radiance.

Works Cited

- Ed. Alaimo, Stacy and Hekman, Susan. *Material Feminisms*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2009.
- Alexander, Michelle. *New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York, NY: New Press, 2016.
- Ali Johnson, Tekla. "The Enduring Function of Caste: Colonial and Modern Haiti, Jamaica, and Brazil: *The economy of race, the social organization of caste, and the formulation of racial societies*." *Comparative American Studies*. 2(1): pp61-73, 2004.
- Ed. Alpers, Edward, Campbell, Gwyn, and Salman, Michael. *Resisting Bondage in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. "Annihilation of Caste." *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol. 1*. Ed. Moon, Vasant. New Delhi: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, 2014. pp25-96.
- Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. and Roy, Arundhati. *Annihilation of Caste: The Annotated Critical Edition*. London: Verso, 2016.
- Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. *The Untouchables*. U.P.: Bharatiya Baudhha Shiksha Parishad, 1969.
- Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. *Who Were the Shudras? How They Came to be the Fourth Varna in Indo-Aryan Society*. Bombay: Thackers, 1970.
- Ed. Appadurai, Arjun. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Apter, Emily. *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*. London and New York: Verso Books, 2013.
- Atanasoski, Neda and Vora, Kalindi. "Surrogate Humanity: Posthuman Networks and the (Racialized) Obsolescence of Labor." *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience*. 1(1): 2015.
- Bales, Kevin. *Understanding Global Slavery: A Reader*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Baruah, Sanjib. *India Against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Baruah, Sanjib. *Beyond Counter-Insurgency: Breaking the Impasse in Northeast India*. New

- Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Baruah, Sanjib. *Durable Disorder: Understanding the Politics of Northeast India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *The Posthuman*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013.
- Brass, Tom. *Towards a Comparative Political Economy of Unfree Labor: Case Studies and Debates*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Brass, Tom. *Labor Regime Change in the Twenty-First Century: Unfreedom, Capitalism, and Primitive Accumulation*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2013.
- Byrd, Jodi. *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Cameron, David. "Genetics Proves Indian Population Mixture." *Harvard Medical School*, 8 Aug. 2013, <https://hms.harvard.edu/news/genetics-proves-indian-population-mixture-8-8-13>. Accessed July 2017.
- Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ). *Hidden Apartheid: Caste Discrimination Against India's "Untouchables": Shadow Report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*. India: CHRGJ, 2007.
- Chakraborty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Chakravarty, Uma. *Gendering Caste: Through a Feminist Lens*. Kolkata: Stree, 2006.
- Chatterjee, Indrani. *Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Chatterjee, Indrani. *Slavery and South Asian History*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007.
- Cheah, Pheng. *What is a World?: On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016.
- Chen, Mel Y. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012.
- Cox, Oliver C. *Caste, Class and Race: A Study in Social Dynamics*. Miami, Florida: Monthly Review Press, 1948.

- Day, Iyko. *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logic of Settler Colonial Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
- de Andrade, Maria. *O Estigma Da Periferia*. Porto Alegre: Dacasa Editora, 2010.
- Ed. de la Cadena, Marisol and Stam, Orin. *Indigenous Experience Today*. Oxford; New York: Berg, 2007.
- Deer, Sarah. *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.
- Deloria, Vine. *God is Red*. New York: Laurel, 1983.
- Deloria Jr., Philip. *Playing Indian*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.
- DeLoughrey, Elizabeth. "The Spiral Temporality of Patricia Grace's 'Potiki.'" *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*. 30(1): January 1999. pp59-83.
- Devi, Mahasweta. *Imaginary Maps*. Kolkata: Thema, 1993.
- Dirks, Nicholas. *Castes of Mind*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Diwan, Pietra. *Raça Pura: uma história da Eugenia no Brasil e no mundo*. São Paulo: Contexto, 2015.
- DuBois, Page. *Slavery: Antiquity and its Legacy*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2010.
- Dumont, Louis, [Sainsbury, R.M. and Gulati, Basia.] *Homo Hierarchicus: Caste System and its Implications*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Dunbar Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2014.
- Federici, Sylvia. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation*. Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2014.
- Federici, Sylvia. *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*. Oakland and Brooklyn: Turnaround Distributor, 2012.
- Ed. Felski, Rita and Friedman, Susan Stanford. *Comparison, Theories, Approaches, Uses*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013.
- Freedgood, Elaine. *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010.

- Goeman, Mishuana. *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Ed. Guha, Ranajit and Spivak, Gayatri C. *Selected Subaltern Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Guzmán, Tracy Devine. *Native and National in Brazil: Indigeneity after Independence*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013.
- Haebich, Anna. *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800-2000*. Fremantle, Western Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2000.
- Harris, Cheryl A. "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review*. 106(8): 1993. pp1707-1791.
- Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Harvey, David. *A Companion to Marx's Capital*. London: Verso, 2013.
- Harvey, David. *The New Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Hartman, Saidiya. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Hemming, John. *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians*. London: Pan Books, 2004.
- Hinton, Peta, Mehrabi, Tara, and Barla, Josef. "New materialisms/New colonialisms." *newmaterialism*, http://newmaterialism.eu/content/5-working-groups/2-working-group-2/position-papers/subgroup-position-paper--new-materialisms_new-colonialisms.pdf. Accessed July 2017.
- Hofbauer, Andreas. *Uma história de branqueamento ou o negro em questão*. São Paulo: UNESP, 2006.
- Hofbauer, Andreas. "Racismo na Índia? Cor, raça e casta em contexto." *Revista Brasileira de Ciência Política*, no.16, Jan/April 2015. http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0103-33522015000200153 Accessed July 2017.
- Hoffman French, Jan. *Legalizing Identities: Becoming Black or Indian in Brazil's Northeast*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- Hong, Grace. *The Ruptures of American Capital: Women of Color Feminism and the Culture of Immigrant Labor*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Ed. Hong, Grace and Ferguson, Roderick A. *Strange Affinities: the Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.

- Hong, Grace. *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016.
- Hordge-Freeman, Elizabeth. *The Color of Love: Racial Features, Stigma, and Socialization in Black Brazilian Families*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015.
- Hoyos, Hector. *Beyond Bolaño: The Global Latin American Novel*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017.
- Ed. Ivison, Duncan, Patton, Paul and Sanders, Will. *Political Theory and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press: 2000.
- Kara, Siddarth. *Bonded Labor: Tackling the System of Slavery in South Asia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
- Ed. Karlsson, Bengt T. and Subha, T.B. *Indigeneity in India*. London and New York: London University Press, 2006.
- Katzew, Ilona. *Inventing Race: Casta Painting and Eighteenth-Century Mexico*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2004.
- Khare, R.S. *Caste, Hierarchy, and Individualism: Indian Critiques of Louis Dumont's Contributions*. New Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Kuan-Hsing. *Asia as Method: Towards Deimperialization*. NC: Duke University Press Books, 2010.
- Langfur, Hal. *Native Brazil: Beyond the Convert and the Cannibal, 1500-1900*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014.
- Lesser, Jeffrey. *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Lesser, Jeffrey. *Searching for Home Abroad: Japanese-Brazilians and Transnationalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Lewis, Larua A. *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial Mexico*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Lightfoot, Sheryl R. *Global Indigenous Politics: A Subtle Revolution*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2016.
- Loomba, Ania. "Race and the Possibilities of Comparative Critique." *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses*. Ed. Felski & Friedman. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. 199-228.

- Lye, Colleen. *America's Asia Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Major, Andrea. *Slavery, Abolitionism, and Empire in India, 1772-1843*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014.
- Martinez, María Elena. *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008.
- Ed. McKittrick, Katherine. *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.
- Mies, Maria. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*. London: Zed Books, 2014.
- Mignolo, Walter. *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Mignolo, Walter. "On Pluriversality." *waltermignolo.com*, 20 Oct. 2013, <http://waltermignolo.com/on-pluriversality/>. Accessed Jan. 2017.
- Ed. Miller, Susan A; et al. *Native Historians Write Back: Decolonizing American Indian History*. Pubbock, Texas: Texas Tech University Press, 2011.
- Melamed, Jodi. *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Ed. Mitchell, Gladys L. and Hordge-Freeman, Elizabeth. *Race and the Politics of Knowledge Production: Diaspora and Black Transnational Scholarship in the United States and Brazil*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- Mohan Rao, Mohit. "Caste system has left imprints on genes: study." *thehindu.com*, 27 Jan. 2016, <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/Caste-system-has-left-imprints-on-genes-study/article14022623.ece>. Accessed July 2017.
- Mohanty, Chandra. *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Ed. Moon, Vasant. *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol. 1*. New Delhi: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, 2014.
- Ed. Moreton-Robinson, Aileen, Maryrose, Casey, and Nicoll, Fiona Jean. *Transnational Whiteness Matters*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008.

- Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.
- Nakano-Glenn, Evelyn. *Shades of Difference: Why Skin Color Matters*. Stanford, CA: Eurospan, 2009.
- Nascimento, Elisa L. *The Sorcery of Color: Identity, Race, and Gender in Brazil*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008.
- Ed. Natrajan, Balmurli and and Greenough, Paul R. *Against Stigma: Studies in Caste, Race, and Justice Since Durban*. Haiderabad: Orient Blackswan Press, 2009.
- Negri, Antonio and Hardt, Michael. *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Novinsky, Anita W. *Inquisição: Prisioneiros do Brasil, Seculos XVI a XIX*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Expressão e Cultura, 2002.
- Novinsky, Anita W, et. al. *Os Judeus Que Construíram O Brasil: Fontes Inéditas Para Uma Nova Visão da História*. São Paulo: Planeta, 2016.
- Pandey, Gyanendra. *A History of Prejudice: Race, Caste, and Difference in India and the United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Papadopoulos, Dimitris and Sharma, Sanjay. “Editorial: Race/Matter—materialism and the politics of racialization.” *Darkmatter: In the Ruins of Imperial Culture*. *darkmatter101.org*, 23 Feb. 2008, <http://www.darkmatter101.org/site/2008/02/23/racematter-materialism-and-the-politics-of-racialization/>. Accessed July 2017.
- Porterfield, Andrew. “Genetic analysis shows lasting effects of caste system on health of modern Indians.” *geneticliteracyproject*, 24 Mar. 2016, <https://geneticliteracyproject.org/2016/03/24/genetic-analysis-shows-lasting-effects-caste-system-health-modern-indians/>. Accessed July 2017.
- Postero, Nancy. *Now We Are Citizens: Indigenous Politics in Postmulticultural Bolivia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth. *Labor’s Lot: The Power, History, and Culture of Aboriginal Action*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth. *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth. *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

- Ramos, Alcida Rita. *Indigenism: Ethnic Politics in Brazil*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.
- Rappaport, Joanne. *The Disappearing Mestizo: Configuring Difference in the Colonial New Kingdom of Granada*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Riedner, Rachel. *Writing Neoliberal Values: Rhetoric Connectivities and Globalised Capitalism*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Roberts, Dorothy. *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-Crete Race in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: New Press, 2011.
- Ryder, Andrew. "Maria Mies, Silvia Federici, and Biopower." *non.copyright.com*, 13 July 2017, <http://non.copyright.com/maria-mies-silvia-federici-and-biopower/>. Accessed Aug. 2017.
- Ed. Rodriguez, Ileana. *The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Roth-Gordon, Jennifer. *Race and the Brazilian Body: Blackness, Whiteness, and Everyday Language in Rio de Janeiro*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017.
- Sharma, Swarkar, et. al. "The Indian origin of paternal haplogroup R1a1* substantiates the autochthonous origin of Brahmins and the caste system." *Journal of Human Genetics*, 54, 2009, pp47-55. *nature.com*, <http://www.nature.com/jhg/journal/v54/n1/full/jhg20082a.html?foxtrotcallback=true>. Accessed July 2017.
- Singh, Hira. *Recasting Caste: From the Sacred to the Profane*. New Delhi: SAGR Publications, 2014.
- Stewart-Harawira, Makere. *The New Imperial Order: Indigenous Responses to Globalization*. London: Zed Books, 2013.
- Shiva, Vandana. *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace*. London: Zed Books, 2016.
- Ed. Simpson, Audra and Smith, Andrea. *Theorizing Native Studies*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.
- Sousa Santos, Boaventura. *Voices of the World*. London: Verso, 2010.
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. Nelson, Cary and Grossberg, Lawrence. London: Macmillan, 1988.

- Spivak, Gayatri. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Tallbear, Kimberly. *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Telles, Edward. *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Telles, Edward. *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014.
- Tucci Carneiro, Maria Luiza. *Preconceito Racial no Brazil-Colônia: Os Cristãos-Novos*. São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1983.
- Vasconcelos, Jose. *La Raza Cosmica*. Mexico: Espasa-Calpe Mexicana, 1966.
- Veracini, Lorenzo. "Settler Colonialism and Decolonisation." *Borderlands e-journal*. 6(2): 2007. pp1-12.
- Viswanath, Rupa. *The Pariah Problem: Caste, Religion, and the Social in Modern India*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
- Visweswaran, Kamala. *Un/Common Cultures: Racism and the Rearticulation of Cultural Difference*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. 4(3): 1988. pp 469-488.
- Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2010.
- Vora, Kalindi. *Life Support: Biocapital and the New History of Outsourced Labor*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.
- Voronova, Sofija and Radjenovic, Anja. *The Gender Dimension of Human Trafficking*. European Union: European Parliamentary Research Service, 2016.
- Walkowitz, Rebecca. *Born Translated*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.
- Ziviani, Denise. *A Cor das Palavras: A Alfabetização de Crianças Negras Entre o Estigma e a Transformação*. Belo Horizonte: Mazza Edições, 2012.

CHAPTER II
RE-IMAG(IN)ING FOURTH WORLD AUTHENTICITIES

Overview & Methodology

This chapter reads significant films by and on indigenous peoples from contexts as diverse as North America, Oceania, South Asia, and Latin America, in order to think indigeneity and subalternity together and transnationally (Byrd & Rothberg, 2011). More specifically, my readings draw upon frameworks and questions put forth in Native American Indigenous Studies, Subaltern Studies, New Materialist Feminisms, and Trauma Studies, such as the ways in which Fourth World films complicate inherited visual tropes of indigenous peoples and the repeated concerns (such as embodied trauma) the films present as one speech mode for subaltern histories. Thus, this chapter aligns its analysis alongside recent scholarship on Fourth World films and peoples (Columpar, 2010; Loureide Biddle, 2016; Wood, 2008; Gay Pearson & Knabe 2015; etc.) rather than with traditional film critiques, as decolonial reading practice that privileges indigenous and tribal onto epistemologies of the Global South. The following, brief exposition of my chapter's methodology demonstrates this alignment. The repeated return to these films' anxieties around authenticity, for example, draw upon conversations by Fatimah Tobing Rony, Audra Simpson, and Elizabeth Povinelli; and the search for what I call an alternative lexicon of subaltern speech is inspired by the theorizations of Walter D. Mignolo, Gayatri Spivak, and Michelle Raheja. As indebted as my reading practice in this regard remains to Spivak who, in her famous readings of sati and suicide in her essay *Can The Subaltern Speak?*, attended to the speech acts inherent in the self-immolated, doubly-violated bodies of those specific Indian women, my method additionally attends to specifically tribal and tribally specific speech modes that, I argue, are crucial for nuancing transnational notions of the indigenous, the tribal, and the subaltern.

Framing Authenticity

The documentary, as genre, was ethnographic from inception, deriving its value from an investment in the “authentic” which, in the first recognized documentary, was significantly an Inuit man, Allakariallak. Robert Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* (1922) films the life of the Inuit peoples of Port Harrison with an especial focus on the man he conveniently renamed Nanook, a film followed not only by a series of similar salvage ethnographies by Flaherty in other global sites (Ireland, Samoa, etc.) but that congealed a genre more readily associated than most with traits scripting the indigenous, the tribal into legibility: temporal “authenticity,” a penchant for exotic savagery in theme, and ethnographic techniques attuned to “discovering” the marks if not the translatability of subaltern speech. As such, the documentary genre is what merits reductive characterizations as “anthropological” rather than critical readings of an aesthetic form that has worked to ontoepistemologically frame indigenous and tribal realities in nationally entrenched narratives on the exotic, backwards, and vanishing prior, especially as the form has been more recently taken up by members of indigenous and tribal communities long excluded from circuits of self-representation. To dismiss as anthropology (without also reflecting on the discipline’s self-reflexive turn that has posited anthropology as one of the few disciplines advocating decolonial protests such as the BDS movement) the work of searching for traces of counter discursive subaltern speech in earlier and current documentaries is to neglect the documentary’s formative role in distinguishing the modern subject from the pre-modern object within the national imaginary, to leave un-interrogated the camera’s role as apparatus in formulating this unfortunately enduring binary, and thus also to miss the material differences (and resistances) produced in relation to the majority of tribal and non-tribal lives, from longevity to spatiality to class/caste inequities, historically modulated by the cultural as well as the juridical and

economic. Thus, rather than registering close readings of frame sets as merely descriptive/anthropological (a confusion that also risks reifying indigenous cultural production as anthropological object), outsider readings might instead participate in listening for the subaltern modes of speech and knowledges made available via the filmic lexicons, I argue, offered in select frame sets, alternative lexicons which constitute an important intervention of Fourth World Cinema.

Such a lexical intervention is articulated within situated histories but, if read relationally, unearths a long-storied trans-tribal imaginary made particularly potent in the contemporary moment by digital technologies as well as late capitalist projects of dispossession. It is no accident that tribal communities in India, Brazil, Australia, and North America, my sites of focus for this chapter, return to narratives of settler and extractive colonialisms as well as to an ontoepistemology of the pre/modern that exceeds neatly contained local and national spacetimes—implicating visibility as an important mode of knowledge production not only at the minute level of the filmic frame or at the national scale of collective consciousness but at the macro level of evolving global circuits in which such laden images have long circulated as part of an evolving trans-tribal imaginary. Two key Latin American films, such as *Tambien La Lluvia* and *Birdwatchers* for example, explicitly reframe linear temporal thinking to highlight coloniality/modernity for its non-mestizo tribal subjects who continue to face socioeconomic subjection at the hands of national and transnational corporate, mestizo, and white elites, of both “do-gooder” and exploiter stripe; and both films contrast “authentic” Indianness performed for the foreign gaze with the actual materialities of modern tribal struggles. Two key South Asian films, *Dil Se* and *Bandit Queen*, narrate those dimensions of indigeneity in the subcontinent that not only complicate US-centered definitions via situated depictions of the tribal and Dalit in

relation to caste and region but also resonate, in their depiction of indigenous and outcaste insurgencies, with other place-specific tribal depictions of the aporia between “native and national” (Guzmán, 2013). Much of that aporia resides in the visual binaries set up between upper caste and lower caste subjects, whether in the registers of un/desirability, il/legibility, or savagery.

Visuality is thus crucial to my argument asserting tribal il/legibility as distinct from other subaltern forms of il/legibility, a distinction marking tribal precarities deeply imbricated with place-specific coloniality/modernity; and while tribal precarities may overlap and flow into other precarities, such as propensity to bondage past and present, foregrounding tribal identity as prior cause not only reframes the necropolitical characterization of the usual use of the indigenous “prior” but also the Marxist positing of capitalism as cause for racism and the foregrounding of race as the catch-all category for socially constructed difference or of either category as the primary grounds for labor precarity. In the documentary *We Want To Live*, for example, on the Rabha witch hunting phenomenon in Lower Assam and Meghalaya, it is not raciality but a combination of patriarchal structures at the village level, tribal cosmology in tension with modern medical practice, and larger ethnonationalist dynamics entangled with shifts in modes of exchange that, I argue, propel the expulsion of Rabha women of various ages from village kinship networks into conditions of material and emotional precarity (Butler, 2004). Visuality in this and other films is thus examined both for its potential and for its limits in narrating tribal precarity—as in cases where the tribal figure may in fact be framed but is nevertheless appropriated for the onto epistemological agenda of the differentially precarious, non-tribal collective such as national identity formation (*The Sapphires*) or the foregrounding of middle and upper class dilemmas (*Dil Se*). Such appropriations mirror settler and extractive colonial

practices, so that another hieroglyphic (Freedgood, 2006) must be sought undergirding the primary visual, a code that, like the secret or untranslatable or forgotten names of key indigenous figures, flashes up a subterranean history of tribally specific and specifically tribal labor and survivance against the cyclic clockwork of coloniality/modernity.

I name here the New Materialist thinking with which I align my claims in this section, both for the New Materialist feminist questions of entangled body poetics and body knowledge I think through in my Fourth World feminisms chapter and for the persuasive ways in which New Materialist thought, as one framework for a more aleatory Marxism (DuBois, 2016, seminar), has resonated with indigenous onto epistemologies that understand The Thing (a category to which tribal peoples and their cultural productions have so often been assigned) as animate and enmeshed with human labor in ways complicating Marx's important critique of commodity fetishism. For example, I use a New Materialist framework to show how, in one scene in the Australian film, *Samson and Delilah*, Delilah experiences her deceased grandmother's dot painting on a gallery wall as both commodity and animate indigenous matter. Additionally, New Materialist thought registers the filmic frame as not only performing epistemological work but as ontological matter in and of itself, indivisible from the camera and the hand guiding it, embodying the indigenous and tribal figures as well as "narratively" unspooling in indigenous and tribal bodies, and the very matter from which the il/legibility of the tribal subaltern in the national imaginary is conjured and contained. In other words, I argue that the filmic frame is the material grounds from which the indigenous, the tribal has historically been constructed as Thing-like specter, overdetermined by the Cartesian self-pronouncements of the "modern" national gaze subtling indigenous and tribal grounds; most importantly, contemporary Fourth World cinema, beyond performing a symbolic claim of visual sovereignty (Raheja, 2011),

produces new matter that embodies the indigenous, the tribal in terms of an alternative index of speech, ongoing strategies of survivance, and a fraught declaration of millennial global belonging. New Materialist thought thus renders legible the ways in which visual mediums, especially film and documentary, continue to perform work in de/colonizing notions of the tribal subject as pre-modern Thing destined for consumption, dispossession, and erasure.

Two Nanooks, One Allakariallak

“I’m not trying to shoot a film on what the whites made of these people, in rags wearing these horrible, miserable hats . . . I’m not interested in the decay of these people. On the contrary, I want to show their primitive majesty and their originality as long as it is still possible before the whites destroy not only their character but also these people themselves who are already disappearing” (Robert Flaherty, *Nanook of the North*)

“It was a film for white people; Inuit customs alone were to be shown . . . Flaherty wanted only Inuit objects.” (Narrator, *Nanook Revisited*)

I begin at the “beginning” in pairing the first recognized documentary *Nanook of the North* (1922) with *Nanook Revisited* (1990), a film that critiques the earlier *Nanook* as an ostensibly veracious account of the life of Allakariallak and his community. Embedded in the filmic revision is, via the critique of this first-ever documentary, a critique of the sub-genre of salvage ethnography as an unproblematically authentic representation of (the trope of) the vanishing Indian; but further embedded is a complex grappling with authenticity as ontoepistemological demand—one overburdening indigenous and tribal subjects into performing a recognizable Indianness for the liberal colonial gaze—and one effecting the Indian as simulation (Vizenor, 2008) in place of the tribal real in all its material and temporal complexities. Which is to say, *Nanook of the North* moves at times ambivalently, at times

assuredly in relation to the authenticity problem, surrendering at its close to the power authenticity demands wield in eliciting the Indian as simulation even as the film cannily deconstructs all the clichéd tropes Flaherty's documentary asks its Inuit subjects to enact and even as it juxtaposes these simulations against the devastating materialities of Inuit life that left Allakariallak, two years after Flaherty had returned from a global tour and renown accumulated from such salvage ethnographies, starved to death from a failed hunt (Tobing Rony, 104).

The conversant frame sets I select, either paired already in the second documentary or paired here, focus on a critique of Flaherty's deliberate construction of the vanishing primitive, the Indian as simulation, but also cast up the ways the films think through the contrapuntal work of the indigenous sonic and gaze back, de/kinning as one material trace of the coloniality/modernity matrix embedded in the first documentary's production, and food practices as productive of the savage/civilized binary that I trace as part of a cross-contextual figuration of caste hierarchy. For example, an early frame in *Nanook Revisited* juxtaposes, as part of its critique of Flaherty's construction of the Indian as simulation, cross-temporal shots of now-comical sequences of Inuits performing Indianness—canoeing, hunting seal, chanting—against Inuits not only engaged in the mundane everyday of modern life—shopping, motorbiking, engaging in a literal market economy—but also in gazing back at Flaherty's photographic and filmic images. Privileging the indigenous gaze thus, the second documentary simultaneously visibilizes the camera as colonial apparatus in salvage ethnography like *Nanook* as well as attempts to decolonize that visual archive by centering indigenous commentary.

The Inuits' laughter, upon watching the film (in the second documentary) and upon gazing at a gallery of photos taken during Flaherty's visits privilege a playful speech of critical insight unavailable during the first silent film; one woman's laughter, upon describing one of

Flaherty's photos as herself, prompts others to laugh (perhaps) at her puncturing of the temporally fixed, "authentic," and thus objectified Inuit subject. The documentary revision purposefully pairs this frame with another—journal notation by Flaherty—in which he wrote of the Inuits watching a screening of the first scene in "silence. The Eskimos did not understand." Flaherty goes on to describe Allakariallak's laughter, at seeing himself on screen, as "awkward." Beyond the overt critique made in this frame set—i.e. Flaherty's re/production of colonial and ultimately racist readings of the Inuits' intelligence, affective lives, and complexity of expression—the set's privileging of the gaze-and-sonic script of the indigenous subjects over Flaherty's textual one speaks to the second documentary's scrambling of modernity's signifier/signified hierarchy (modern-straight-white-male-literate/tribal-temporally queer-female-to be represented). Such a scrambling is most memorably embodied by one Inuit subject in the second documentary when he laughs at the first documentary's image of Nanook biting a record. Silence-and-laughter, as sonic landscape that is also onto epistemological counterpoint to established notions of the indigenous, the tribal, not only flips which subject must be accused of the failures of mimicry (Flaherty's abandoned progeny as the embodied hybridity he himself failed) but accomplishes this by materializing the vital agency of alternative forms of indigenous speech.

Oral narrative (as counter history) is another mode of indigenous speech that has not only been discussed as a salient feature of Fourth World films transnationally (Kilbourn, 2014; Siebert, 2006; Columpar, 2010; Wood, 2008; Gay Pearson & Knabe, 2015) but also reveals material traces of this [Flaherty's] first documentary's role in reproducing coloniality/modernity. Flaherty had posed his own two wives as Allakariallak's wives in the first documentary, a revelation followed by another upending that documentary's onto epistemological claim to

authenticity: in a scene locating Flaherty's son's family in Port Harrison, his son Josephie's wife May and her granddaughter admit Flaherty had abandoned his Inuit children. Visibly reluctant to discuss her husband's history, May hones in on the fact that it was an Inuit man who raised her husband, not Flaherty, a claim she repeats when asked for her opinion of the film and yet again when pressed about why she doesn't answer, insisting that she is in fact speaking to the film via this fact; besides, she says, she wasn't there then. Rather than the indigenous subject as absent presence, Flaherty stands accused as having absented himself from the tribal real of kinship practice, with indigenous labor and oral history asserted instead as truer registers of authenticity, in both their preservation of indigenous collective life and acknowledgement that one cannot know that for which one has not been present. Audra Simpson's formulation of ethnographic refusal amplifies my reading here, emphasizing the subject's resistance evident even in the purportedly critical second documentary, a text that is thus revealed to also possess ethnographic investment in knowledge re/production of an authentic indigenous voice that, historically, has serviced the affirmation of colonial selfhood. (Simpson, 2007) The second documentary also flips which racialized subject becomes the object of ethnographic taxidermy, that phenomenon Tobing Rony coins and argues is part and parcel of the first film's impulse to capture as alive what is already imagined as dead (Tobing Rony, 1996).

Authenticity as generic dilemma would seem to blame the liberal colonial gaze of non-tribal and white subjects, but the second documentary's turn, to educating the (non-Inuit) "South" on the (Inuit) "North," reproduces stereotypical staples of indigenous consumption that have functioned in tandem with notions of indigenous authenticity. Notably for the purposes of this project's concern with caste, *Nanook Revisited* visualizes an anxiety around consumption and erasure that, I argue, figures this version of commensality as one marker of caste hierarchy.

The last few clips of *Nanook Revisited* moves to classroom scenes, particularly one in which a teacher guides Inuit children on how to gut a seal. The children are immersed in the material of the seal and its unravelling—shown blowing the bright red lungs, cutting slabs of meat, painting the school floor and writing the alphabet in blood—visuals accompanied by the teacher’s insistence that its characterization as raw consumption is the South’s imposition upon what, to the North, is just seal. Then in an incredible series of statements—asserting that seal needs to be eaten raw, its blood needs to be drunk, that the people of the North could not have survived on fruits and veggies before for the nutritional requirements set for people of the South—the film reinscribes one parameter of the savage/civilized binary in its historically depicted relation to consumptive styles even as it labors to demystify and contextualize this particular food practice in a discursive trajectory towards the category of the human.

A final school scene scales up the film’s anxieties around consumption and, relatedly, erasure in a frame showing kids in a computer room flipping through a *National Geographic* titled “What Future for the Wayana Indians?” The scene opens strategically by situating the kids in the typical exploration of a contemporary activities room, such as reading, typing on the computer, and joking around, but soon belies the normative tenor of this setting with the close-up shot of the magazine’s question, itself shot through with colonial discourse on primitive possibilities, a multi-layered shot suggesting the ongoing education of Inuit subjects on their own limited futurities. For it is the seal-gutting teacher’s declaration in the previous frame—that they cannot live in the past though they can have pride in it—that ironically echoes into this one as the sonic equivalent of the magazine’s despondent question mark. That hope for residing in futurity rests, in the film’s closing meta-text on visibility, on the indigenous gaze back spatiotemporally. So that the frame in which Inuit children wash head portraits into visibility in a darkroom (a

work sequence that feigns backward temporal movement in its chemical retrieval of the moment of imagistic capture) suggests their mastery of the camera-as-colonial-apparatus can shift their position as pre-modern tribal object to modern human subject.

I borrow Aileen Moreton-Robinson's relational transition here, when she thinks through notions of race, property, and the possessive investment in whiteness, in linking Oceania and North America (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). If, as Moreton-Robinson argues, settler colonial nation-states are founded and sustained on racialized dis/possession that properties white settler subjects and renders indigenous peoples both propertyless and, at times, property themselves (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, xix-xxi), then a turn from the prototypic salvage ethnography of *Nanook* to a contemporary feature like *Samson and Delilah*, concerned as it is with notions of value and dispossession, should not seem far-flung. Instead, in keeping with this project's assertion that relational readings, especially in the field of Indigenous Studies, can yield new transnational theorizations on race, indigeneity, and power, this transition asserts Fourth World films' consistent concerns with indigenous incommensurability, alternative speech forms, and liberal colonial authenticity demands.

Samson and Delilah: Teleologies of The Prior

Samson and Delilah, the harshly poetic 2009 film directed by Warwick Thornton, tells the story of two aboriginal teenagers named Samson and Delilah near Alice Springs, Australia. The plot moves patiently from reserve to city back to reserve, narratively tracking the characters' struggle to eke out autonomy from the dismal conditions of reserve life and within the racist segregations intact in the city. The warm undercurrent to the film's grim social portrait is the wordless romance between Samson and Delilah, lending the film a two-tiered corollary to the

enduring child purposefully abandoned to late liberal society's basement (Povinelli, 2011). Thus the film, advertised simply as a story about love and poverty for its titular characters, speaks on other levels as commentary on settler colonialism's ongoing effects for aboriginal spatial and material possibilities, as visually bold portrayal of the speech acts of seemingly inarticulate aboriginal bodies, and as subdued hope for the endurance of aboriginal communities in the face of corrosive odds. Despite the many awards heaped upon the film by critics internationally, it received limited attention in mainstream North American circuits that recognized, though not to a much greater degree, the burgeoning wave of counter-cinema by Native American artists (*Smoke Signals*, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*, *Drunktown's Finest*). I turn to a reading of this Australian film not only to emphasize the resonances between its social themes and its more visible American counterparts but, in following a reading of *Nanook* and *Nanook Revisited*, to implicitly outline an evolving trans-tribal imaginary that continues to grapple with questions of authenticity, speech modes, and value. While the limited scholarship on this film (Davis, 2009; Huijser and Collins-Gearing, 2014) has emphasized its departure in style and historical moment from more commercially successful Australian films (*Rabbitproof Fence*, *The Sapphires*) and from colonial representations of the noble savage that fail to capture aboriginal peoples' complex sense of belonging (Huijser & Collins-Gearing, 2014, 73); my reading focuses on the dilemmas of value, trauma, and time that the characters, via the film's alternative lexicon, consistently articulate as imbricated in coloniality/modernity.

My first frame set's concern with value is rendered legible via an implied Marxist vocabulary that traces the de/valuation of Delilah's paintings within a national circuit of production and consumption. As viewers, we are introduced to the aboriginal paintings in a scene in which Delilah and her grandmother paint together on the reserve, moments before/after a

white buyer drops in to commission future paintings for purchase. Already, an art-making practice which the film explicitly frames as collective and specifically tribal is situated in a national outside that infiltrates the indigenous space, i.e. the commodity market. So that the use-value of the paintings—their kinning function, meaning making, and spatialization of the artist’s individual expression—is understood to soon-be-sublated into exchange value in the settler colonial market. In fact, the film’s commentary about the simultaneous commodification and devaluation of aboriginal material is made clear in a much later frame, in which Delilah wanders into a city gallery in which her grandmother’s works are displayed, extravagantly priced. The obvious point is that Delilah has lost so much of tangible value—her grandmother, their home, their work, the profit the white gallery owner instead accrues—as a result of settler colonial violence that alienates the aboriginal subject from her ancestral land and as a result of market relations that have extracted labor’s surplus for the profit of the capitalist owner, relations inflected by raciality, coloniality, and, in this frame set, a gendered division of labor/capital. But the more subterranean point, in an inversion more in accordance with New Materialist-Native American Studies Indigenous Studies thought, is that this commodification and devaluation can be traced, at the level of the bodily, to a coloniality/modernity dynamic irreducible to modern capitalist relations. If these multiple indigenous materialities were understood as enmeshed in and productive of each other—Delilah, her grandmother, their collective art, the land—as New Materialist-NAIS epistemologies would understand them both from the standpoint of science as well as cosmology, then it is Delilah’s collective ancestral body—her grandmother, the materially deceased transformed into artistic matter, the living cultural practices embodied in the material work—which a stunned Delilah witnesses pinned up as commodities on the gallery wall. And it is not only capitalism that has determined that their bodies, rather than the white

owner's, should be thus museumified; it is coloniality/modernity that, in the Australian situation, manifests in a settler colonial structure that has positioned Delilah at the door, holding up an original replica of an art piece the white owner, at his desk with his computer, cannot recognize as an "authentic" second version of the commodified first version. A scene of the particular burden of incommensurability borne by indigenous subjects under the gaze of the liberal settler state, this depiction of Delilah's subaltern status subtly animates dilemmas situated in coloniality/modernity rather than in capitalism. There is the dilemma of recognition as viable producer, a legibility which hinges on adequately performing an authentic aboriginal identity, (regardless of the actual complexities of modern aboriginal existence). There is the necessary complicity with a teleology of progress that understands two to follow one for those appropriately situated in Euro-capitalist modernity, that understands one to be necessarily repeated for those historically situated as prior, a disciplinary teleology the scene critiques through Delilah's failure at legibility, despite our outsider knowledge of her work in replicating the "original" painting. There is also thus, in the unfurling of Delilah's painting roll and its subsequent re-closure, a demonstration of the material trajectory so definitive of indigenous subaltern speech, which must additionally labor to be heard within particular liberal settler parameters but, failing, must retreat upon itself in a trajectory misinterpreted as backwards, propelling Delilah outside of the museum space, on the periphery of the market, where she watches white settler subjects engaged in consumption she cannot afford.

Against this frame set of aboriginal devaluation, the film compiles an alternative lexicon of subaltern speech and value via sound and movement. Much of Delilah's habit across the narrative arc of the film repeats the multi-stepped process of paintings; a process that, by his shifting involvement in and understanding of it, also reflects Samson's entanglement with this

alternative lexicon/embodiment of value. For Delilah returns to the painting process regardless of its market translatability and her own gravely diminished means—both teens striated to homelessness and hunger for the last half of the film—a lexicon of patterned movement that articulates the value of the painting process as a kind of sustenance itself, if only as cultural connection and individual self-expression, though of course these seemingly divergent traditions of artistic expression are understood as profoundly linked in the film. And Samson, even in his consistently failed attempts to support Delilah’s painting process, emerges as a witness for whom her particular visual speech is legible, in contrast to the white gallery owner who possesses art market knowledge but not a sufficient lexical hearing beyond aboriginal matter as commodity.

Then there are the songs opening and closing the film, Charley Pride’s “Sunshiny Day” and “All I Have to Offer You (Is Me),” respectively. The romantic refrains of both country songs evoke alternative economies of value, set against an explicitly named scarcity of landscape, possessions, and future possibilities:

“So let the howlin’ wind start blowin’ let the raindrops keep / on flowin’ / Everytime they touch my face just kiss them away / Even with the clouds above me long as I’ve got you to love / me / Every day is a gonna be a sunshiny day. (Sunshiny Day)

There’ll be no mansion waiting on the hill with crystal / chandeliers / And there’ll be no fancy clothes for you to wear / Everything I have is standing here in front of you to see / All I have to offer you is me.” (All I Have To Offer You Is Me)

It is aboriginal (vital) matter—the body, love, loyalty—that, the film’s placement of the songs suggests, will help weather the grim weather of aboriginal life (Bennett, 2010; Vora, 2015). Significantly though, the film arcs this hopeful articulation across a late scene song, “Night Blindness” by Troy Cassar-Daley, that juxtaposes aboriginal conditions of poverty and subalternity in a frame sequence that multiply frames, via film, car window and Delilah’s

embrace, Samson's centered lips: desiccated, purple, still.

"A million to one outsiders / night blindness can't see / your bright eyes are what / the time is / twenty five past eternity / you are listening to the silence / coming closer, not farther away / what we gonna do / when the money runs out / wish there was something left to say / where we gonna find the eyes to see / a brighter day?"
(Night Blindness)

This sequence, narratively climaxing the film at the point in which Samson, heavily drugged, is retrieved by Delilah and a male relative, also bridges the film's economic commentary with its commentary on indigeneity, subalternity, and trauma, a material-theoretical concern that has been drawn across contexts by indigenous and tribal theorists and writers. This complexly layered frame sequence belongs to a second frame set, I argue, that evokes the real violence of settler colonialism upon linked aboriginal land-body-and vital matter, a specifically tribal subjection that not only depicts temporalities of violence but the violence of Temporality.

Trauma, as it has been theorized to appear in the cinema of modernism and postmodernism (Kaplan, 2004; Pollock, 2013), becomes a key trope across the second frame set that consists of frames of multiple violences. I thread together frames of instantaneous, dramatic violence—such as the women beating Delilah after her grandmother's death, the reserve boys beating Samson, Delilah's gang rape, Delilah's accident—with frames of more muted, cumulative violence—Samson's sniffing addiction, Delilah's eventual sniffing, both teens' implied orphaning, their desperate trajectory from reserve to city and back to reserve. Because popular attention is often caught and response galvanized, by the instantaneous and dramatic, the impact (at times more devastating precisely for its slow, cumulative nature) of the muted and slow can be sidelined as negligible to the detriment of readings of indigenous experiences (Nixon, 2011); but my pairing of these two types of violences is meant to argue, by rendering visible the weight of each, their dually weighty entanglement with structures of settler

colonialism that have overdetermined, in response to historically accumulated conditions of poverty, dispossession, and marginalization, the aboriginal characters' grappling with despair, rage, and shame. What is recuperated by a more expansive treatment of temporalities of violence is a reading of the violence of Temporality; by which I mean not only the cumulative wrecking of aboriginal possibilities within the settler colonial nation-state but, again, that queering of aboriginal subject that relegates them to the necropolitical outside of Hegelian and Darwinian time. There, in spacetimes defined as prior (to borrow Povinelli's term), aboriginal subjects are exhausted by a Temporality predicating national progress on their eventual disappearance.

Of course, trauma theory's own reconfiguring of linear temporality, to describe the traumatized subject's experience of time (and memory) as fragmented, amnesiac, and flashing/cyclical, is relevant here for thinking through temporalities of violences as well as the violence of Temporality. The film's strategic gesture to trauma-and-time is not made explicit till the end, nevertheless I read its technical adjustment of narrative time in earlier parts of the film in relation to trauma. So that what emerges as deliberate filmic strategy is: rekeying visual-and-sonic sequencing to elaborate on temporality as materially experienced via multiple registers of the frame and body. (While I don't want to essentialize this film's subjects, or those of other Fourth World films, primarily through the discursive lens of trauma, these films repeatedly return to trauma as a central concern, entangled with Temporality, temporalities, and coloniality/modernity.)

If trauma can be read, cinematically, as rupture, disassociation, and symptomatic repetition (Kaplan, 2004; Pollock, 2013), then Samson's gasoline-sniffing overtly articulates such an encounter. His habit, which Delilah picks up after her gang rape, staves off visible discomforts—hunger upon waking, the emotional and material torpor of reserve life, her sexual

humiliation—though it also implies historical and collective violences specific to the coloniality/modernity of aboriginal life. The conditions to which both teens respond are structural rather than natural, as is their inability, despite repeated efforts, to scale the material and cultural barriers erected by subtler colonial biases. Samson, followed by store security, figuratively castrated by men on and off the reserve, and ultimately heckled for the collective truck he steals to whisk himself and Delilah off the reserve, experiences the range of structural positionings sedimented by settler colonialism as well as late capitalism, which frames him as aboriginal, black, poor, with all the “dangerous” precarities these entail. His inability to transcend these, experiencing instead a circular mobility that mirrors immobility, is powerfully tied to the only moment he speaks, stuttering his name.

Thinking here Spivak and NAIS scholars’ preoccupation with subalternity, indigeneity, and what Spivak has called the subaltern’s definitional inability to experience vertical mobility, the juxtaposition of Samson’s relative verbal and material paralysis locates him as not only subaltern within the national setting but carefully interweaves this into his indigenous precarity. The explosive nature of Delilah’s trauma, on the other hand, articulates what NAIS theorists have argued as the entanglement between disproportionate levels of sexual violence against indigenous women and the heteronormative patriarchal violence of settler colonialism (Smith, 2005). The late frame, in which the film imag(in)es the symptoms of such trauma, shows Samson lying alone under the vulvic V of the highway, the temporary kinship of Delilah (and Gonzo) gone. Delilah appears, in fact, to Samson as well as to the viewer as stereotypical specter, though the film’s innovation with this visual trope of the vanishing Indian is to historicize her disappearance in sexual trauma and, by re-introducing Delilah as Samson’s savior (rather than his undoing), by transforming her brief absence into survivance. Nevertheless, the implication is

that Samson and Delilah are lucky for now in love and life and that kinlessness, as a recurring theme of the film, accurately articulates the historic dimensions of settler colonial violence upon aboriginal networks.

More specifically, this flux in kinship/kinlessness must be situated within Australia's settler colonial history of removal, from territorial dispossession beginning with 18th century "discovery" predicated on the colonial "terra nullus" frame, to the ethnocide enacted via legislation, military action, and sociocultural exclusion, to the legislated removals of half-caste children and non-white husbands (many Melanesian and Asian), to the spatial segregation of full-blood and mixed-blood families. There exists ample writing on the devastation such modes of erasure wreaked upon aboriginal kinship networks, which had been a central organizing feature of cultural identity and belonging (Haebich, 2000; Povinelli, 2006). The film's narrative tracking of this tenuous situation of the teens' kinship/kinlessness, both essentially orphaned for much of the film, gestures to this history of familial/cultural dispossession; and the trauma layered therein, as both cause (Delilah's grandmother's death, for example) and effect (their friendlessness in the city, aside from another aboriginal man Gonzo, living under the bridge), recurs as a trope entangled with kinlessness. One of the primary narrative trajectories—Samson and Delilah's heteronormative romance plot—arcs towards the characters assembling something like a heteronormative family structure, when Delilah takes Samson back to her land, clears house, and Charley Pride's romantic ode plays. Arguably a too-rosy projection of the heteronormative paradigm as redress for aboriginal wounding, i.e. a narrative script too closely resembling the settler colonial scripts meant to civilize savages, this final filmic frame nevertheless offers light-suffused, song-buoyed relief to the trails Samson and Delilah have had to traverse, which have mostly led away from home to nowhere or no one encapsulating a

sufficient version of this.

Rather than rehearse here the various definitions of dispossession—as a central feature of indigenous precarity and indigenous trauma, as outlined by the ILO, the UN, and many NAIS scholars of settler colonial societies—I turn to this particular Australian film’s thinking through of dispossession as not only symptomatic of settler colonial structural violence but, in dispossession’s many dimensions (affective, psychological, corporeal), as entangled with the queering of aboriginal subjects in coloniality/modernity. This queering, I argue across the films of my dissertation, lies at the crux of the pre/modern binary which consistently demands either structural or self-relegation of indigenous subjects to spacetimes peripheral to those defined as modern, a non-normative positioning that queers indigenous subjects relative to hegemonic notions of national and reproductive belonging. I draw this observation from preceding writers invested in Indigenous Studies, from contexts as varied as North America, Latin America, and South Asia, who have noted, at times in agreement and at times not, the language of extinction, the arcane, and generally the necropolitical so often locating indigenous subjects outside Hegelian and Darwinian spacetimes. But the film’s contribution to this conversation is its attention to the visual and cultural rites enacting this queering and its carefully built portrayal of the entanglement between the temporally queered indigenous subject, structural settler colonial dispossession, and the impact of the non-indigenous gaze.

Samson & Delilah: Teleologies of the Prior (cont’d)

What haunts, and perhaps motivates, the narrative arc towards the heteronormative nuclear family paradigm is the historic binary manufactured between essentially white citizenship and the aboriginal outcaste, to use Haebich’s evocative title and startling evidence.

(Haebich, 2000, 135-146) In contrast to the citizen, whose whiteness was constitutive of their suitability for citizenship in the Australian nation-state, aboriginals were multiply excluded in practice if not via the legal letter of an essentially vague notion of citizenship; situated among national as well as transnational discourses about the primordial unity (Haebich, 2000, 135-7), Blackness, colonial savagery, and U.S. and Canadian Indian removal, Aboriginals were thus multiply pathologized and queered in relation to the heteronormative family paradigm that was a central prerequisite of citizen belonging.

To return to an idea proposed in my prospectus, it should strike interest that at the same time that this outcasting of aboriginals was being assembled, Asians were experiencing resonant though not identical modes of dispossession from national belonging; from Asian women's exclusion from benefits of maternity allowances (Haebich, 2000, 160) to the removal of Asian male partners from mixed aboriginal families to the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, concerned with excluding non-white immigration, especially that of the Chinese and other Asians. There possibly emerges, then, an Orientalist underpinning to these co-temporal exclusions, a linkage already drawn in other contexts such as the U.S., Brazil and, as I argue holds for Orientalized indigenous and tribal peoples of Northeast India, also South Asia. This framing not only throws up the possibility of a transnational discursive circulation on the Orientalized/tribalized figure, but also points to a possible slippage of the aboriginal between frames of blackness and frames of Orientalization, via racial discourse on the one hand and citizenship regimes on the other (and, of course, their entanglement with each other). As Jodi Byrd has argued for Native Americans' positioning as original domestic terrorist and Asian-Americans' paradoxical framing as cowboy/Indian within US racial ideologies (Byrd, 2011), Australian aboriginals and prospective Asian Australians also emerge as native/foreigner, as

domestic threat, as culturally and linguistically unfit for belonging within the modern, white, settler nation-state. There emerges too the positioning to subalternized status of Asians who, failing to pass the 1901 Dictation Test set up during the period of the White Australia Policy, were barred from immigrating. Assessing fluency in a “prescribed” (usually European) language, the test effectively conflated an inability to speak in a way legible and legitimated by the liberal settler nation-state.

Dispossession is, of course, a central feature of various working definitions of indigenous precarity and indigenous trauma. Rather than rehearse here the variations of these definitions, I turn to this particular Australian film’s thinking through of dispossession as not only symptomatic of settler colonial structural violence but as entangled with the queering of aboriginal subjects in coloniality/modernity. This queering, I argue across the films of my dissertation, lies at the crux of the pre/modern binary which consistently demands either structural or self-relegation of indigenous subjects to spacetimes peripheral to those defined as modern, a non-normative positioning that queers indigenous subjects relative to hegemonic notions of national and reproductive belonging. I draw this observation from preceding writers invested in Indigenous Studies, from contexts as varied as North America, Latin America, and South Asia, who have noted, at times in agreement and at times not, the language of extinction, the arcane, and generally the necropolitical so often locating indigenous subjects outside Hegelian and Darwinian spacetimes. But this and other films’ contribution to this conversation is its attention to the visual and cultural rites enacting this queering and its carefully built portrayal of the entanglement between the temporally queered indigenous subject, structural settler colonial dispossession, and the power of the non-indigenous gaze.

Which is to say, in line with Karen Barad’s exciting and persuasive theorizations about

entanglement, intra-action, and differential mattering, this particular Fourth World film savvily deploys the mediating lens of the filmic/colonial gaze, historically used to define the indigenous subject as primitive object, to enmesh us in a visual ritual of recognition that re-establishes, via the familiar narrative trajectory of dispossession and queering in settler colonial spacetimes, Samson and Delilah as aboriginal subjects. The film, of much of its last half, thus unfurls a recognizable map, dependent on a legend of Cartesian and colonial binaries such as the rez/the nation, aboriginal/settler, speaking/pre-verbal, reproductive/endangered, in service to evoking audience sympathy for the teens' plight, which centrally occupy the narrative frames.

But the film also undermines the hegemony of this inherited script via its retooling of, again, this dominant lexicon. The title, for instance, referencing the Biblical Samson and Delilah, is not exactly reproduced by the film's character pair who, rather than seeking to undermine each other, fitfully cooperate to survive. Delilah cuts her own hair, rather than Samson's, in mourning after her grandmother dies and just before she and Samson leave the reserve—an act composite of a gender queering that renders Delilah, perpetually in loose jeans and hoodie, androgynous in ways echoed by Samson's own struggles with recuperating a heteronormative masculinity, encumbered as he is by physical impediments (sniffing, stuttering, at times in a wheelchair) and his inability to consistently protect or support either himself or Delilah. The synchedocal framing here—Delilah's shorn hair, Samson's nose-in-cut-can of gasoline, her post-rape bloodied face, his un-uttering lips, her limping and casted leg, his wheelchaired body—evoke a hegemonic lexicon of aboriginality in transnational imaginaries: the savage head fetish, ravaged indigenous matter, the impossibility of primitive mobility.

This same synchedocal framing also redefines such tropes via the narrative and material entanglement of these queered bodies with their depicted dispossession with the (liberal)

settler/colonial gaze, i.e. a material logic emerges across frame sets that establishes a cause-and-effect relation between the precarities of aboriginal bodies, the spacetimes to which they're relegated, and the passive/structural complicity of non-aboriginal onlookers, including viewers. So that historically-placed grief and trauma elaborate Delilah's shorn hair and Samson's nose-in-cut-can; so that settler colonial violence and related aboriginal poverty are directly implicated in Delilah's post-rape bloodied face, Samson's un-uttering lips; and so that a confluence of both are implied in Samson and Delilah's immobilized bodies. If "intelligibility and materiality are not fixed aspects of the world but rather intertwined agential performances," (Barad, 338) then the film's subtle but cumulative redefining of historical visual tropes of aboriginality simultaneously reworks the colonial lexicon for decolonial ends and unspools, via the very filmic matter that composes and is composed of aboriginal bodies, a novel onto epistemology of aboriginal matter, one in which object is remade into subject and a subaltern lexicon reaches to suggest if not conjure, by negotiating inherited tropes, alternate possibilities.

SETTLER VALUE, COLONIAL JUNK

Authenticity as Generic Dilemma

Read against the documentary genre precedent of *Nanook* and the subaltern poetics of *Samson and Delilah*, the 2016 feature *Charlie's Country* highlights the blurring of genre lines that posits such a film as fictional yet collapses its story too readily into the tradition of authenticity demands that haunt indigenous figures. A film whose plot centers around the struggles of an aging aboriginal man, Charlie, in staking out home, in defying the settler state's disciplinary governance, and in resisting the necropolitics of reserve life, the fictional story is shadowed by journalistic accounts narrating the film as an attempt, on the directors' part, to save

the actor Charles Gulpilil from a similar such plight. This uncomfortably autobiographical rendering of an ostensibly fictional work signals, unsurprisingly, to a lineage of “authentic” salvage ethnographies begun with *Nanook*, lending the film its complex affective sway even as it exasperatingly reproduces stereotypical tropes such as the disappearing native, the noble savage, and the abject primitive. *Charlie’s Country* thus joins other Fourth World films that inhabit a liminal place between the fictional and the documentary—such as *Atanarjuat*, *Rabbitproof Fence*, *Yawar Mallku*, *Birdwatchers*, and *Bandit Queen*, among others—in their explicitly stated reliance on historical material to legitimate their fictional accounts; and in their collapsing of the filmic and real to attain an affective impact reliant on endowing the viewer with a kind of ethnographic knowledge if not settler colonial gaze.

Located at the other temporal extreme of a teenage narrative like *Samson and Delilah*, *Charlie’s Country* tracks the effects of dispossession that shadow an older aboriginal character’s life, in a moment of generational decline as well as cumulatively across his sixty plus years of life. Charlie’s struggles with alcohol addiction, homelessness, poverty, and kinlessness are tropes appearing also in *Samson and Delilah*, tropes arguably speaking to the traumatic effects of settler colonial dispossession. Except in *Charlie’s Country*, there is reduced possibility of refuge in heteronormative coupling, in a reclamation of land, or even in the rehabilitative triumph of community. If there had been, the film suggests, Charlie would not be cycling through the necropolitical spaces of the reserve, the hospital, and the bush at a stage of life otherwise marked, for non-tribal characters, by accumulated value, comfort, and the social capital of heteronormative family. Rather than being a subject whose personhood is defined by such possessions, Charlie is instead shown to be propertyless and, in scenes in which he is reduced to being a ward of the state, property himself (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). If, as Moreton-Robinson

argues, this aboriginal whittled relationship to personhood and property are results of settler colonialism and white patriarchal sovereignty, then Charlie's orientation towards propertylessness, Thing-hood, and reduced visibility and audibility are arguably effects of these structures of power. The film thus teeters between a knowing rendering of the entanglement between aboriginality, personhood, and property and a staple reproduction of authenticity tropes that together affirm a cultural conception of the pre-modern, one locating figures like Samson and Charlie in a Temporality propelling the tribal figure towards erasure in the visual and material maps of modernity.

Aesthetics of the Necropolitical

In frames animating an aesthetic of the necropolitical, Charlie watches one male buddy after another airlifted to hospitals far from home; the final frame, a close-up shot of tears discreetly reshaping the outer and inner landscapes of Charlie's face, intimates that a kinless decline far from home will be Charlie's irreversible fate—and he keenly knows it. One is made to wonder, at this end point, how “real” the character's tears are in a film signaling the closing stages in the life and career of Australia's first and most prominent aboriginal actor. Both character and actor are thus also reified in a tradition of visual portrayals—of the aboriginal face in particular—what Tobing Rony calls ethnographic taxidermy. In that tradition, the film's very subtext of imminent aboriginal decline justifies the film's material existence (as liberal colonial intervention and gaze). And given the stark facts of aboriginal life, the final framing of Charlie's face inevitably invokes hyperreal readings of aboriginals as simulation and absence rather than well-versed actors of endurance (Vizenor, 2008).

The geriatric tenor of the film does cull, more sharply than *Samson and Delilah* does, the

curtailed materialities of aboriginal longevity, wellness, and possibilities. The older men who are wheeled before and away from Charlie have given themselves up to this erasure: “You know I’m sick don’t you? My kidneys are no good. Soon, they’ll stop working . . . They’ll take me to Darwin.” Charlie’s (and, by proxy, the actor’s) lean, stalking rage in the twilight of disappearing possibilities registers the material stakes stolen by settler colonial dispossession, the end of an earlier chapter of aboriginal activism and representation, and the limits of a cinematic apparatus still reliant on problematic tropes to speak to liberal settler societies’ sympathies. The only hopeful signal that distinguishes our hero from a vanishing archive of aboriginal figures is the closing narrative turn in which Charlie teaches aboriginal boys to sing-dance in the traditional way.

This particular resuscitation of Charlie’s value as social member, tellingly possible only within aboriginal society, stands in contrast to the devaluation that marks him and other aboriginal figures throughout the movie. The object I track as a signifier of this contestation over value is the morphing form of a hunting utensil. Not only does this hunting utensil—initially a gun, then a simple spear, then a multi-headed spear—most immediately animate the historical location of the aboriginal as hunter-gatherer or embody the phallogocentric exchange between Charlie and the white cop continually confiscating his hunting utensil, but demonstrates what Povinelli has theorized in her early work as a cultural economy articulating indigenous difference:

“The importance of studying non-Western notions of productivity and their discursive uses lies in the need for a countervoice to the hegemonic frame of Western economic policy. When those of us interested in the political consequences of human labor and action in complex societies (which this study assumes includes the Fourth World) treat a counter discourse of labor-action as something other than what values are produced when humans act in the

world, we contribute to the state's domination, delegitimization or, worse, contextualization of indigenous knowledges as primitive (or irrelevantly subaltern) in one way or another." (Povinelli, "'Labor's Lot,'" 12)

In *Charlie's Country*, it is the difference rooted in specificities of cultural economic notions of productivity, of work, of value that undergirds the dialectic of use value in almost every conflict between Charlie and the cop over the hunting utensil. Is the rifle really to be used for hunting or for recreational use? Is the spear really to be used for food or to kill someone? While these terse debates, like various others in the film, are heavy-handed in their political messaging about the deaf-dumb-and-blind abuses of the settler colonial state, they remain savvy in their revelation of how, structurally, Charlie can neither win nor eat, as a result of this misreading of the hunting utensil's use-value. Cultural difference emerges, then, as fundamentally informing such a misreading and as fundamentally binarized—settler versus aboriginal—across the coloniality/modernity apparatuses that legitimate the cop's misreadings and appropriations:

"We'll put you down as a recreational shooter" (cop) / "What? Recreational? That thing is not recreational. It's for food." (Charlie) / "Still need a license." (cop) / "How much it gonna cost me?" (Charlie) / "Sixty dollars." (cop) / "Sixty dollars? To buy my gun back?" (Charlie)

One might argue, then, that the hunting utensil holds a kaleidoscopic array of more subtle meanings excavated by a close reading of this dialectic between cultural economic notions of use-value: first, the hunting utensil as trophy in the ongoing conquest by and resistances to settler colonialism as structure that must play out in such law enforcement encounters; second, as the material thinginess of indigenous orality, a kind of disembodied tongue meant to appease the

deprived indigenous tongue but instead, in its dismemberment from indigenous hands, un-dams indigenous counter-speech; and third, in its multiple incarnations, as the evolving persistence of indigenous survival, despite a plethora of frustrating obstacles, including the cumulative exhaustion from the extra reproductive labor Charlie must take on, in re-constructing some means of acquiring food and shelter, that (as Povinelli has theorized) threatens to unravel alternative indigenous futurities.

Cannibalizing Indigeneity

Unsurprisingly, land and/or property, as in so much Fourth World Cinema, is the other primary object in the film's dialectic of value. In numerous conversations between Charlie and various settler characters, the contestation over land-and-belonging highlight how indigenous epistemological rubrics for territorial sovereignty, such as embodied cultural memory, kinship networks, and oral histories—"You've got a job. And you've got a house. On my land. Where's my house? Where's my job?" (Charlie)—are so often at odds with settler epistemologies which read land-and-belonging via measures of property, ownership, and proximity to white supremacy as legislated in the Euro-Australian tradition—"Government's already given you one good house. You wanna walk away from that, that's your problem" (Arrow). The most jarring expression of this conflict, however, is not in Charlie's spirited assertions, that aboriginals have been left homeless as settlers accumulate property, wealth, and the good life, but in the depictions of Charlie's chronic homelessness that reify him as endangered object in the tradition of salvage ethnography. The opening frame of the film, for example, establishes a scene the film significantly re-visits: Charlie planning in a makeshift tent. This repeated frame introduces an initial plotline propelling Charlie's movement through the film, to reclaim sovereignty over self,

territory, and diminishing possibilities in a continent that was once entirely aboriginal but is now legislated as property to historically more fortunate settler descendants of the nation-state—a narrative argument supplementing Moreton-Robinson’s point that settler colonial structures in Australia essentially render whiteness as property-owning and aboriginality as either/both propertyless and property itself.

Moreton-Robinson’s particular intervention, via this and other theorizations in *The White Possessive*, is to build towards the undertheorized intersection of indigeneity and race studies. Borrowing her framework for *Charlie’s Country* illuminates how, beyond a reductive reading of the film’s socioeconomic divides as ones perpetuated and sustained by capitalism alone, settler colonialism and white patriarchal sovereignty work in tandem to reduce Charlie to homelessness and hunger as it privileges land and resource acquisition towards white settler citizens. More specifically, Charlie’s status is sustained through the figures of the racist police, culturally narrow state regulations, and evocations of British imperial rule. For example, it is the disciplinary state that constantly confiscates Charlie’s hunting utensil, thus creating for Charlie the burden of extra reproductive labor, and it is the state that engages Charlie in unwaged work in order to manage settler governance over traditional or squatter aboriginal areas. Ultimately biopolitical governance, such state management is enacted through a racializing lens that assumes “darkies” and “blackies” only perform certain low-value activities (tracking, drinking, fornicating, drifting), a logic legally sanctioning the cordoning off of settlers and aboriginals into zones ranging from the life-sustaining to the liminal to the necropolitical. But this racialization is additionally refracted through the needs of white patriarchal sovereignty, which foundationally invented the legal fiction of *terra nullius* to claim aboriginal lands as colonizable property and to continue governing over “prior” inhabitants in ways sustaining a settler colonial regime of

power, including the classic tactic of cannibalizing indigeneity as a marker of settler subjectivity and heteronormative national belonging (Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Povinelli; Morgensen, 2011; Vizenor).

Thus it is through an NAIS framework that we may recognize Charlie's multiple attempts at producing food, shelter, and dignity as a cycling through those zones hierarchized by settler colonial governance and those life chances cannibalized by white patriarchal sovereignty: from the necropolitical reserve into the liminal wilderness of a romanticized past (that he has internalized and that the film brutally sweeps away with rain), into the heavily policed outskirts of the city where poor aboriginals camp and drink, into the prison system that, in a filmic nod to the disproportionately skewed statistics naming nearly 30% of the incarcerated as aboriginal of the 3% that constitute the total national population (Korff, 2017), back into the reserve once again working a fire before a makeshift tent. Heavy-handed here as the film may be in its reliance on stereotypical tropes of indigeneity—destitution, drunkenness, the cave, the half-shelter, etc.—*Charlie's Country* nevertheless makes a compelling claim for dispossession as an ongoing event spatiotemporally and settler colonialism as existing structure, which actively situate Charlie and other aboriginal figures in conditions of exacerbated material and emotional precarity.

Against this panorama of dispossession, the film presents as visual counterpoint panoramas of the land as vital, primordial, unbought. Here too, in what I argue across my chapter is a critical contribution of Fourth World Cinema to studies of film, space, and subalternity, the land becomes a vibrant entity all its own, acting upon as much as it is acted upon (Bennett, 2010). As in *Samson and Delilah*, it is the land that, despite its harsh face, maneuvers aboriginals into sustenance and collectivity for those who can read its contours. The rare point of pride, for

example, in *Samson and Delilah* is the moment when Samson returns triumphant, a long kangaroo slung over his shoulder, past the curious eyes of the reserve denizens; Charlie and his most constant buddy set out with their hunting utensils into the bush for food, even if the bush and aboriginal activity upon it are characterized as unproductive. When they do finally capture prey, a handsome black bull whose bulk swells up the truck, the camera spends a significant amount of angled time centering the bull's gleaming density—and the men's glee. Not only has their work in the traditional aboriginal mode paid off enormously, but the entanglement of the bull with the land in its vibrancy embodies the agential potential of the bush to sustain aboriginal survival. (While the film does not explicitly depict aboriginal cosmologies that understand the land as living, it nevertheless affirms the agential land, whatever the cause, via encounters with the non-aboriginal world that re-route Charlie's journey.)

The most powerful non-human agential impact comes, however, from the torrential rain that foils Charlie's plan to stake out traditional bush life—an attempt that, after one successful stint with a single speared fish, disintegrates into Charlie's cold-induced illness. Shelter, strength, and food thus washed away, Charlie's buddy finds him semi-naked and near-mute on the ground, reduced to the very necropolitical state Charlie had sought to escape. Taken for treatment to the hospital, before finding his way into an urban camp town and finally prison, Charlie is swept by the rain far from a romantic return to any sort of authentic aboriginal lifestyle and onto a path routed instead towards the liminal zones of exception aboriginals are shown to inhabit. The vitality of the land, the film suggests, might be seductive but it is no less brutal or complicit than “pure” settler colonial zones in aboriginal suffering; this reading echoes Morgensen's argument that, contrary to standard post-colonial understandings of colonial subjects and zones as lying outside the “bodies” of Europe and whiteness, settler and indigenous zones are necessarily

imbricated in settler colonialism via an indigenization of settlers and, I argue, a cannibalization of indigeneity (Morgensen, 2011). The rain might be read via this structural entanglement—as not only the condensation of aboriginal sweat mythically and historically accumulated in the land (Povinelli, 1993), but as the multiple material deposits of combined settler and aboriginal presence—and for filmic purposes, as the settler state’s symbolic biopolitical governance, outcasting the aboriginal figure through zones of exception in order to bulk up patriarchal white sovereignty.

Muted Starving

But the indigenous matter most under film scrutiny, in keeping with a trans-tribal tradition of displaying abject indigenous nudity (Tobing Rony, 1996), is Charlie himself. If the opening frame of the makeshift tent introduced viewers to a central theme of indigenous dispossession, then the closing frame, which returns to the delicate iconography of Charlie’s face, echoes a long visual tradition of the aboriginal face as landscape of exotic stoicism, of the vanishing prior, of the inscrutable and scriptable terra nullius (Tobing Rony, 1996). This closing frame of Charlie’s face become a visual echo of similar such close-ups, punctuating and counterpointing the panoramas of the splendid bush with the wiry toughness and barely hidden desperation of both.

Filmic dialogue reinforces the compressed metaphorization of Charlie/bush as it articulates the corrosive effects of settler culture upon aboriginal bodies. “White man’s poison, white man’s junk,” Charlie and his friends call the alcoholic grog, the cheap convenience store food that, they at times imply, at times declare, has landed aboriginals in wheelchairs, missing limbs, with kidney and liver failure in the hospital. In other words, the penetration of settler

colonial materiality into aboriginal ones has left aboriginal bodies and lands dismembered, disintegrated, and disfigured. In perhaps the film's most original commentary on the confluence of settler colonial violence upon aboriginal materialities, Charlie removes his ill-fitting dentures before his doctor, his teeth corroded by the ill-fitting diet to which aboriginals have been reduced: "I can't eat," he says. "I'm starving." Presumably, Charlie cannot speak either, not easily anyways, without teeth, and so the gesture also embodies the subalternization of the aboriginal figure within settler colonial structures. This poignant confession may be counterpointed against a recurring image that itself contrasts indigenous and imperial speech: the photo of Charlie's glory moment dancing before the Queen at the Sydney Opera House. There, architecturally-sonically laid out is the resounding scope of British Empire; and there, via the legible speech of aboriginal traditional dance, is the imperial subject expending his labor to legitimate Empire's rule.

Why is it that the articulations of toothless Charlie, in his old age, goes unheard by the very colonial elite that required and valued another kind of articulation in Charlie's youth? Other than the liberal colonial register that recognizes some forms of "authentic" indigenous articulations and not others, and other than the abandonment of aboriginal welfare as an integral part of liberal colonial violence (Povinelli, 2011), what is it that determines the cumulative devaluation of Charlie's voice down to the bone? This question of de-valued speech, rather than an alternative lexicon of subaltern expression, is more the film's concern, as Charlie hurls his invectives against, it seems, the colonial wind. Of all his interactions with white Australians—all but one an institutional authority figure—only the sympathetic liquor store owner seeks out Charlie's voice, in an unusual moment when Charlie safeguards himself (and his lover) in silence (Simpson, 2007). Warning Charlie that the "coppers" have been busting groups buying and

drinking grog, especially if no longer permitted to do so, the store owner's momentary alliance with Charlie against police surveillance suggests that the alcoholism of the group registers as a speech mode eliciting his understanding beyond commercial interest and moving perhaps towards populist solidarity across caste lines.

While the film does not move in the explicit direction of Samson and Delilah towards trauma commentary, beyond settler colonialism as traumatic encounter and effect locatable in indigenous deprivation, the movement-silence-and drink synced rhythms of the aboriginal characters locates that trauma too in subaltern modes, as *Samson and Delilah* does with gas-sniffing. When the grog is addressed among the aboriginal characters, it is through the rebukes of Charlie's two reserve friends, who once again have had to find him. ". . . That's poison you're drinking. It rots your brain," they chide him and, shaking their heads as they walk from his obstinate silence, they compare his falling into this particular group with settler colonial greed. "He just helped himself to a woman," they say incredulously (if we are to read the rare appearance of an aboriginal woman in the film as the common metaphor for aboriginal land), though this judgment might also be understood as a metonymic reading of devaluation: Charlie, escorted by the aboriginal woman, withdraws money from the ATM, then buys up grog for the group, then is beaten and seized by the police, all till he is down to literal and spatial zero. The floating signifier of the Opera House across these routes of devaluation accentuate the gap in value between the aboriginal (without property and as property) and patriarchal white sovereignty: "I danced for the Queen," Charlie refrains over the photo and across the film. Unlike metonymic association with the aboriginal woman or aboriginal land, it is metonymic association with the racialized and gendered sovereign figure of British Empire that temporarily ascribes to Charlie his pinnacle of value.

At a broader scale, Charlie's devaluation might be metonymically read as the film's concern with Charlie's queerness. "He never could keep on the path, always went off," his friends pronounce as they parallel walk off together. Seemingly kinless and itinerant, bachelor Charlie owns none of the commodities signifying value in modern society: no job, no car, no house, no woman, no hunting utensil even. This journey to accrue at least one of these embodiments of value is a central narrative engine, and the lack (even loss) of these by the film's end formulaically sums up that devaluation. All the aboriginal men, in a film consisting almost entirely of male characters and preoccupied with these value dilemmas of heteronormative masculinity, are faintly queered in relation to these typical material markers of value. Either quite young or growing old, these lone male figures are stigmatized by aboriginal poverty, and the alternative economy of value they generate must happen when they congregate—into scheming resistance (against the drug dealers as well as cops), into fire-stoked laughter, into the generational sharing of indigenous knowledge such as lore and dance. Arguably then, it is the re-assembling of indigenous masculine traditions and structures that save the characters from queerness, devaluation, and, metonymically, extinction. In this sense, the film's imaginings of alternative economies of value in response to the problem of devalued indigenous materiality remains anchored to a resurrection of an alternative and almost sacrosanct form of heteronormative patriarchy: women and other pleasures must be eschewed, men must be men together around the nighttime fire, and past glories reflecting back royal power must be re-embodied, however invested these strategies may be in the logic of caste mobility. Yet the sweetness of this cross-generational transmission, in the transfixed eyes and jubilant bodies of the boys, is hard to deny. For it is hard to dismiss a circle, however phallogentric and "priestly", in which (Australian) aboriginal futurity appears to move towards survivance rather than decay.

AMERICAN BLACKNESS AS (LIBERAL) ROUTE TO ABORIGINAL LIBERATION

Synopsis & Liber(al)izing Scores

The final Australian feature I turn to is the breakout hit, *The Sapphires* (2012). Loosely based on the Vietnam War period girl group, The Sapphires, the film explicitly focuses on the indigenous sonic. It also explicitly focuses on caste in the Australian context, as legislation around caste mixing and aboriginal assimilation begun as early as the late 19th c haunts the central aboriginal characters. Those four characters are the sisters Gail, Julie, Kay, and Cynthia and their Irish manager, Chris, and the plot travels with these five as they perform for U.S. soldiers in Vietnam. During the course of these travels, a few tropes emerge that I outline as significant to my reading: first, that the girls' most catalytic interactions are with African-American soldiers, emphasizing the film's point about Black solidarity on a transnational scale. Second, that their increasing sonic power, via Black soul music, makes a point about avenues to self-authorship for indigenous women. Third, that the focus on each girl's romantic liaisons against the backdrop of interracial combat and romance articulates the film's imagining of that classic triad: race-coloniality-sexuality. Fourth, that the plotline propelled by the shifting relations among the sisters also speaks to internal tensions of class, caste, and ways of inhabiting intersectional gender identity. And finally, that the stolen sister Kay's return to her aboriginal family and land, at the film's end, apexes the narrative trajectory towards aboriginal (semi)sovereignty. In the reading that follows, I examine each trope in one of Australia's most popular recent films on aboriginal life, even as I argue that the film falls short of making a cogent critique of multiple kinds of colonialisms and complicities.

Perhaps the appeal of *The Sapphires* partly lies in its accessible score. The sisters' repertoire moves progressively from country to American soul or what their Irish manager Dave

devoutly calls real music that's not "shite" or the "other 10% is soul." Thus, early in the film, an affinity between American blackness and aboriginal blackness is established—an affinity the film also narratively builds via the girls' romantic dalliances with Black soldiers in Vietnam. Dave characterizes that affinity best in an early frame, at the pub contest where he is first smitten with the girls' voices. Soul thus becomes the sound epitomizing triumph over odds, in contrast to the baleful country tunes the sisters grew up with (Starrs, 2014)—a sonic metaphor reproducing the old binary of Black struggle versus aboriginal despair—and affinity with American blackness, over the sonic and narrative course of the film, becomes a utopic liberal route inducting the aboriginal sisters into cosmopolitan freedom, market survival, and global visibility and audibility. It is the American Black sonic, in other words, that saves the girls from aboriginal subalternity in the backwoods and catapults them onto the more "civilized" stage of U.S. Empire.

D.B. Starrs' article, "Sovereignty, song and 'The Sapphires'", historicizes this sonic transition in *The Sapphires* in, first, the assimilationist pressures of settler colonial Australia; so that Gospel and Country were traditionally the preferred genres for aboriginal peoples (for whom the sonic had historically been a principal vehicle of cultural memory), as these genres were more acceptably Christian and not overtly pushing sovereignty demands (Starrs, 2014, 45-47). Starrs also points out that the historical moment of the film—the Vietnam War and a robust Civil Rights movement in the U.S.—coincides with the granting of citizenship rights to aboriginals for the first time: "This decision resulted in the worldview-changing 1967 referendum which gave Aboriginal Australians the right to be counted in the census as citizens of Australia" (Starrs, 2014, 48). Thus, three significant battles that are also arguably battles over some form of self-determination contextualize the girls' sonic "development" from singers of resigned country to

singers of protest soul. Which is to say, the girls' entry into sonic self-actualization is synecdoche for collective aboriginal political gains within the liberal settler colonial nation.

One frame set that captures this use of the American Black sonic, as liberal progression from aboriginal subalternity to cosmopolitan self-actualization and freedom, begins with an early scene of the girls first singing off-reserve and moves to the frame of the girls officially singing in Vietnam. At the pub contest, which the girls lose, the two sisters permitted to travel sing *Welcome to Country* to a white Australian audience that, blatant in their racist disgust, alternate between ignoring the girls and calling them racist epithets. (Starrs points out that the film's ambivalent use of this popular official song acknowledging aboriginal heritage, which arguably accommodates settler guilt by allowing for what bell hooks calls consuming the Other, is one way the director advocates for more overtly political aboriginal demands) (Starrs, 2014, 50-51). Midway through this scene, Julie, who is the biggest voice among the girls, joins her sisters onstage, but even this is not enough to acknowledge their obvious skills with the prize; the scene also establishes Dave as ally through the self-righteous tirade on behalf of the girls that follows and that gets him fired. Afterwards, when Julie solicits Jimmy's labor in getting the girls ready to compete for singing to U.S. troops in Vietnam, Jimmy diagnoses the girls' misrecognized talent beyond white supremacist racism; they have not tried hard enough to vocalize the right sound: "if you want to perform for the brothers in Vietnam, you gotta give them soul." The sound of Black struggle, the Irishman advises the aboriginal sisters, will remedy the historic dimension of their economic and political troubles, i.e. the historic struggles and achievement encapsulated in the Black American sonic will serve as liberal conduit for actualized aboriginal liberation.

In the most telling silence of the film, it goes unremarked that the political and economic freedoms to be won for various subjects thus marked by the coloniality of race must happen on

the backdrop of a Cold War contest in which other subjects, caught in the racializing and colonizing containment projects of U.S. Empire, i.e. the Vietnamese, are rendered largely mute and invisible. And in what I deduce must have been a deliberate omission in the U.S. marketing of this Australian film, the scene which Starrs describes as resolving this tension is entirely absent: the frame in which the girls speak in Yurta Yurta to Viet Cong soldiers, who block their passage, in order to ask the soldiers for entry and declare their respect for Vietnamese sovereignty. Starrs interprets this scene as an admission of anti-colonial, indigenous solidarity, resolving the girls' compromised political positioning between the Viet Cong and the U.S.

Army:

“Her speech is apparently understood by the soldiers as an Acknowledgement of their (Viet Cong) Country. Despite the overwhelming language barriers, the act is one of self-determination for all; Kay has her identity as a strong Aboriginal Australian woman affirmed and the Viet Cong seemingly recognize the sincerity of the reconciliatory gesture as voiced in the tongue of an equally oppressed Indigenous people. It is a win-win situation when The Sapphires ask for and receive a trans-cultural welcome to Viet Cong country and life-threatening cultural tensions are quickly diffused.” (Starrs, 2014, 52).

While this moment reads in my project as too empty of a gesture to signify effective material solidarity across indigenous and tribal struggles, I do find the (absent) frame significant for, once again, signaling the ways in which the aboriginal figure slips between frames of Blackness and Orientalization—and for affirming the film's commitment to a multicultural liberal ethos rather than to a radical critique of various kinds of colonial and imperial activities tied up with an ideological (cold) war. A transnational anti-racist, anti-colonial (much less anti-capitalist) critique can only be audible, it seems, when the histories and demands for sovereignty do not implicate various (racialized) subjects' complicities with U.S. Empire.

The second frame signaling the girls' telos into liberal speech, selfhood, and belonging in

coloniality/modernity shows the re-united sisters singing in glamorous get-ups— nervously at first, then confidently, before finally stirring up audience momentum—to a club audience of mostly Black soldiers in Vietnam. The stakes for accomplishing this transition have been set earlier, upon the girls’ arrival, by the promoter, Byron, who warns them that, if they don’t deliver on their excellent reports, they will be flown straight back. Thus their success with the Black soldiers, i.e. performing the soul pieces well enough to hold their attention, is as much economic guarantor as telos from genealogical to autological subject. But this telos matters, as does the emphasis on collective Black liberation that underpins it, as a reproduction of colonial logic about aboriginal subjectivity even as the film posits the girls’ arrival on this stage as collective Black liberation. According to Povinelli, aboriginals are the genealogical subjects of liberal modernity, in contrast to the self-making autological subject (Povinelli, 2011) who is necessarily non-aboriginal (and in more specific contrast to New World Blackness, which has closer associations with modernity as an onto epistemology rooted in plantation-based chattel slavery (Beckles, 1997)). The girls’ successful transformation in this frame is thus the transformation from genealogical to autological subject. And whereas they were once two, then three—a material trace of the fracturing of aboriginal families due to half-caste removal—the sisters sing re-united as four, i.e. a pathological Black aboriginal kin unit unpronounceable as the Cumberagunja Songbirds transforms across several frames into the consumable Black aboriginal kin unit tellingly renamed The Sapphires. Clunkily symbolic as the renaming may be, it is significant for emphasizing a classical liberal telos shot through with Darwinian and colonial notions of raciality, indigeneity, and value: nature to commodity, savagery to sophistication, the untameable non-human to heteronormative domesticity (the name deriving from the engagement ring on Cynthia’s finger). In an ironic nod to the film’s epigraph, which notes the categorization

of aboriginals as flora and fauna prior to 1967, the girls' transformation encodes real travesties perhaps motivating the girls towards so-called liberation on the very battlegrounds on which resonantly dehumanizing violence are being enacted upon Southeast Asian subjects.

Orientalizing & Decolonizing Aboriginal Femininities

A gender reading makes clearer the limited promises and muddled solidarities this liberal telos proposes, as it visibilizes caste and race complexities across enmities and alliances. Without over-dwelling on the visual and sonic invisibility of Vietnamese (or Asian) presence in a film situated, for half its duration, in Vietnam, it thus becomes more striking that the most consistent appearance of any such character is the promoter's Asian, presumably Vietnamese, girlfriend. In fact, both Southeast Asian and aboriginal sexuality appeared framed within Orientalist fantasies of the hypersexual, promiscuous "Other" woman. In scene after scene, the girls' eager sexual desires, a corollary of their sensual expressions on stage, simultaneously racializes and classes them as "authentic" aboriginals according to tropes drawn across transnational contexts. Kay, the half-caste sister stolen away and partially raised in white society, becomes the prime parameter of authentic aboriginal sexuality, as she changes from the frigid, bourgeois-aspiring, white-passing socialite to the Sapphires singer acknowledging her blackness to her black lover. Thus, the materialization of Black unity, via sexual expression as one but not the only mode, draws upon Orientalist enactment to make an aboriginal (female) identity legibly authentic.

In a rare scene of intra-gender physical violence that pushes its way to this critique, Julie and Gail come to blows over the quandaries of thus achieving aboriginal blackness: "Going out with a Black fella isn't gonna make you any Blacker, Kay," Gail taunts. In other words, Gail seems to call the bluff on Julie's strategy, while reiterating aboriginal notions of belonging such

as kinship practice and consistent social identification rather than momentary self-identification coupled with sexual pleasure. But it is hard to imagine, within the narrative options offered to Kay for racial, sexual, and caste self-authorship, how else she might have manifested a legibly “authentic” aboriginal sexuality fitting in with her sisters’: Gail who becomes Dave’s unbeknownst mistress, Julie who is already a mother, and Cynthia who is stereotypically boy-crazy. The fault, it would seem, lies in the script’s crude treatment of Asian and aboriginal women’s sexuality at large and in those historical circumstances that leave Kay little choice but to legitimate her aboriginal Blackness simultaneously through the rhetoric of transnational Black liberation and the performance of Orientalist sexual tropes (Shimizu, 2007).

Thus it is too that Gail, whom Dave flippantly calls a “witch” and “mama bear,” plays out the role of aboriginal mother to her sisters, and her hard-hitting, working class verve is the counterpoint to Kay’s hesitant, school-marm politesse. But the other archetypal entryway into authentic aboriginal female identity is the stereotype of the spiritual female elder. Whereas with Gail, Kay must be initiated via violence into aboriginal blackness, she is initiated with the elder aunt through ceremony. In a late frame that pairs movingly with the early epigraph historicizing the film in a roughly sixty-year period of half-caste removal, the aunt “brings” Kay home. The scene is an overtly gendered one. A close-up of Kay and her aunt in some wild patch of their land, the scene thus suggests the entanglement of various feminized bodies in an explicit rite of gendered healing that also implicates removal as gendered settler colonial violence of dismemberment, disembodiment, and deracination.

Thus it is Kay’s trajectory most of all that becomes an embodied analogue for the violence of colonial assimilationist policies upon aboriginal materialities—the annexation of land, the kidnapping of children, the assimilationist tactics amounting to cultural genocide, the

corrosion of aboriginal spaces like the reserve, the family, and cultural memory—and also of decolonial moves. The cross-generational and gendered ritual of return, strategically placed at the film’s end, aims to heal the effects of settler colonial violence by reconnecting the stolen aboriginal child with her family, culture, and ancestral land, via a rite emphasizing the gendered materiality of decolonization: the aunt brushing a stem along the landscape of Kay’s face and murmuring the only continuous bit of dialogue in a historically de-valued and discouraged aboriginal language:

“With your country I cleanse you and return you home and make you one with your land once more. No one can ever remove your spirit from here, this is where you belong. This is where you will always return, where your spirit will always remain. Welcome home, my daughter.”

The making tangible of gender here as an aspect of settler colonial violence as well as decolonization points to the entanglement of settler colonial violence with patriarchal white sovereignty (Moreton-Robinson, 2015) and to the feminist politics grounding the Kay’s romantic, familial, and political trajectory the film posits as decolonial return to Black collectives of multiple types. So that the re-establishment of this matrilineal network of aboriginal matter—the most obvious being the sisterhood that unleashes mellifluous aboriginal speech and possibility—counters the heteronormative, patriarchal nature of settler colonial structures that have historically fractured, queered, and erased aboriginal bodies.

Visual Politics of Caste

As a visual medium, film is especially suited to thinking through racial formation as an exercise in the visual politics of genre (Omi & Winant, 1986; Lye, 2009). In the case of *The*

Sapphires' foregrounded historical period—the legacy of the late 19th c. Half-Caste Act that legitimated the kidnapping of visibly mixed and/or light-skinned aboriginal children, i.e the 10-33% of children seized between 1910-1970 that constituted The Stolen Generation (Korff, 2017)—a reading of the physiognomy of feature and color as the film deploys these becomes indispensable to understanding the film's reckoning with caste, coloniality, and decolonial Blackness. The frame sets I read here, towards these ends, selects moments focusing specifically on the entanglement between physiognomy, caste, and de/coloniality: first, the opening (and recurring) scene of the government pursuing and finally abducting Kay and other light-skinned children; second, the sisters' search for and re-integration of Kay into their circle; and third, Kay's growing acknowledgement of Black stigma and solidarity in Vietnam. But I will read these “backwards”—not only to exercise one decolonial Indigenous methodological intervention but to test what, in an understanding of caste as hierarchical structure prior to raciality, might be thus recovered through trace—so that it might also be clearer what dis/connections emerge in the film's rendering of aboriginality and Blackness together.

The two moments that visually denote the entanglement of aboriginality and Blackness are close-ups of the skin of the face, the hands—those appendages through which The Other is scripted and mis/recognized in its radical (indigenous) alterity. In the first, Kay confesses to her Black soldier boyfriend that she is Black; “me too,” he jokes. The in/stability of Black as signifier points to the distinctions between historical constructions of U.S. Blackness and aboriginal Blackness, to questions of race as biologically valid or socially consistent category, and to the difficulties of physiognomic readings in ascertaining heritage or social marginalization. Also, the camera's panning of Kay's anxious eyes as she confesses to being Black suggests the universal import of this identification in shifting [her] social reality. She thus

claims her aboriginal heritage, affiliation with her Black boyfriend, and identifies her trajectory as racialized being to viewers presumed to have access to the meanings of this particular lexicon. Thus Black as caste category, i.e. stigmatized social positioning that exceeds mere raciality, indigeneity, or class alone, is offered up as a universalizing rubric that does not erase difference but makes space for its complex relationalities in articulating dynamic social existence.

In the second moment, Kay is identified by another character as Black via that historical epithet, “nigger.” The speaker, a dying white soldier who snarls at Kay to get her hands off him, even if that means denying skilled work that might ease his suffering, brings to Kay’s shocked face a recognition of her stigmatized identity. While the moment leaves unaddressed what kind of Blackness exactly the speaker thus inferiorizes, the articulation of a dehumanizing epithet too-recognizable across contexts clarifies Black as stigmatized identity and constructed sub-humanity in relation to white supremacist ideology and identity; and the embodied movement of Kay’s hand from the white soldier’s wound to the Black soldier’s clasp metaphorizes the shift in alliance as a result of her growing race and caste consciousness. (More broadly, the counterpointing of these moments emphasizes the dual mechanisms of self-identification and social identification necessary in articulating social existence; Kay’s self-identification in the first moment is limited to a private confession of solidarity without bearing the full consequences of stigmatizing social identification by non-Black subjects, and the exclusionary social identification in the second moment belongs to a broad and ambiguous repertoire of white supremacist affirmation of selfhood that does not require Kay’s assertion of her aboriginal Blackness within a broad and also (filmically) ambiguous rubric of global Black identity.)

I return here to the film’s uptake of multiple figurations of the Black sonic as liberal route to aboriginal self-actualization and freedom. In these counterpointed scenes, what is presented as

a trajectory towards liberated aboriginal Black identity is also a shift from the genealogical to the autological subject. By departing from her traumatic aboriginal past—assimilation as half-caste child into white settler society—and moving to integrate with the sounds of multiple Black collectives—by singing soul with the Sapphires, by performing for the U.S. army in Vietnam, by developing intimacies with her Black boyfriend—Kay moves from that aboriginal subject ensnared in genealogical inheritances to a more “authentically” independent, self-determining individual legible to liberal society (Povinelli, 2011, 26-27). In other words, I read skeptically against the film’s assertion that Kay travels triumphantly from white supremacist settler colonial assimilation into an “authentic” aboriginal freedom via an identification with the rhetoric and soundscape of Black identity and liberation; as I have pointed out earlier, this reading airbrushes the war setting in which this liberal telos is made possible for the central characters, and thus limits a fuller realization of that telos’ liberatory promises, as they are arguably denied by the conflict to racialized and colonized “others.” Instead, Kay’s arrival into aboriginal blackness can also be read as possible because of the decolonial work and anti-colonial example of once-and-still colonized subjects such as her sisters, her Irish manager, and the complex positionings of differentially racialized soldiers on both sides of the War. The sisters, after all, seek out and persuade Kay to join their work and lives; Dave orchestrates her integration into the group; and both the Viet Kong and African-American soldiers offer a different politics of resistance from distinct sociohistorical contexts.

NO TIME FOR THE NATION

South Asia as Site

I turn to South Asian cinemas, or specifically Bollywood as the Hindi-language industry

is called, not only to acknowledge work from the world's largest film industry but to offer a situated geopolitical understanding of the indigenous, the tribal, and the subaltern that differs from the particularist-turned-universal definitions prevailing in Western academe. While the term indigenous remains contested in India, especially with the advent of a Hindutva that deploys the term to enact Islamophobic governance, this project adheres to a definition offered by numerous scholars of tribal communities (Ed. Karlsson et. al., 2006) and separatist regions (namely, Northeast India and Kashmir). While this project does not purport to take sides, especially given the historically complex and morally fraught relationships between vulnerable communities, insurgent outfits, and national representatives, it nevertheless remains committed as an Indigenous Studies project to reading the alternative lexicon of subaltern speech offered by select films.

The South Asian Subaltern Studies project was the first to name peoples of these peripheral regions and low-caste communities as part of those groups they called subaltern to the subcontinent's historiography; and Gayatri Spivak's readings of Mahaswata Devi's writings on tribal peoples remain some of the most significant, if at times reifying, efforts to think indigeneity and subalternity together in South Asia. The inclusion of South Asia then into my chapter on Fourth World film should seem neither unorthodox nor unprecedented; but I do heed the precaution of Native American Studies scholars who have distinguished NAIS as a project indebted to but distinct from Postcolonial Studies, which drew heavily from late 20th c decolonial movements in South Asia and Africa (Byrd and Rothberg, 2011). For NAIS, as Byrd and Rothberg argue in their introduction to a special issue of transnational scholars thinking indigeneity and subalternity together, the "post" is not yet here for indigenous communities of settler colonial nations in North America and Oceania (Byrd and Rothberg, 2011). But it is for

this reason that I re-introduce South Asia into the conversation, as resonantly aligning itself through similar claims made by regional separatists, and as thus enriching an understanding of not only the indigenous, in a country with the world's most militarized border zone and one of its longest-running insurgencies, but also the tribal, in a country that has more tribal peoples (over 100 million) than any other. And it is in India where caste, that consistent discursive question across my chapters, finds most abundant expression in its relationship to the indigenous and the tribal.

Synopsis

I open with Mani Ratnam's 1998 film *Dil Se*, a rare Bollywood film on insurgency in Northeast India, the last region incorporated into British India (Yandaboo Treaty, 1826) and one marked by resistance to Indian national governance in every state, beginning with the Nagas in 1947, the year of Indian independence from British colonial rule. In a troubling move, the film does not explicitly name the origin of its main figure representing anti-colonial resistance, i.e. the suicide bomber Meghna/Moina. Moina and her failed romance with Amar, the son of an Indian Army officer and an All India Radio investigator, thus become symbols for conflated resistance movements across India, a consumable multicultural generalization echoed by visual song-dance optics that jump from Northeast India to Delhi to Ladakh to South India to fantastical desert scenes. But I read Meghna as Assamese, not only because her true name Moina is an Assamese term of endearment for young girls, but for the markers of Assamese culture and (ULFA) resistance that pepper the film: from the critiques of Amar's interviewees to the language Moina speaks at home to ethnonationalist symbols like the rhino and the rising sun to regional fixtures like the gao (village), the dheki (grinding beam), and the gamoosa (red-and-white cloth).

Ratnam's film was part of a trilogy of work that otherwise made clear references to violences the Indian state pronounced communal and terrorist, from the Hindu-Muslim clashes in Mumbai (*Bombay*, 1995) to the Kashmir conflict (*Roja*, 1992). In *Dil Se*, the plot is driven by Amar's (and the viewer's) quest not only to romance Moina, from the very first scene, but to learn who she really is. Why won't she tell Amar? Why won't she love him? Why does she keep disappearing? What is she preoccupied with that keeps her distant? These are questions as loaded as Meghna's bomb-strapped body in the final scene, when the dialectic of heteronormative patriarchal nationalism and queer anti-colonial resistance, that other plot engine, is fully articulated. But what distinguishes this film among Ratnam's trilogy, and renders it suitable for the purposes of this chapter, is the entanglement of subalternity and indigeneity that the film makes explicit. Amar, the loquacious son of an Indian army officer whose job description, as he likes to point out, is [investigator] for All India Radio; and Meghna/Moina, the Assamese orphan insurgent whose stubborn terseness and epileptic bouts are tied to her traumatic past as well as her underground activities. Heavy-handed though the contrast may be, it sets up an embodied binary begging one of the film's most charged questions: what histories endow one subject with access and agency to language, knowledge production, and circulation while another subject is labyrinthined into fragments, mutedness, and eventual erasure?

The film teeters between, one, a partial historicization, as revealed through character dialogue and cross-cuts and flashbacks, which explain the power differential in terms of center-periphery economies, ongoing colonialism, and the gendering (and queering) of regions and bodies; and two, that dialectic of non-violent assimilation versus extremist vengeance that frustratingly reproduces two-dimensional stereotypes of Northeastern militancy and romantic nationalism even as it invokes viewer sympathy for the doomed love affair that is metaphor for

Delhi's relationship to the Northeast. What I read here are the significant frames connecting speech/lessness to these historical reasons for the power differential, and I argue that the film's alternative lexicon of subaltern speech, as offered by Moina, registers via her oft-centered, Orientalized face, her spoken and written riddles of truth, and the embodiment of the after-effects of state violence. I also argue that what this lexicon reveals is a biopolitics of difference that characterizes the distance between the two characters as the space between the good life for upper caste mainlanders and the state of exception for those at the bottom and peripheries.

Erotic Geopolitics of Subalternity

The opening frame, at a train station on a rainy night, depicts Amar asking for a match from a completely shawled figure he mistakes for a man. *Bhai saab* or *brother*, he tellingly says but, upon discovering that Moina is in fact a woman—a literal reveal when the wind momentarily sweeps the shawl from her face—he begins hitting on her. The film establishes in this fluctuating moment of queer desire across a platform the trope of Moina's arresting if inscrutable face, Amar's mishearing against her one uttered line, and the failed human connection superseded by the train connection Moina makes, taking her further away. Thus, queer desire is compounded with distance with illegibility in this introduction between the representative mainlander and the representative Northeasterner, a filmic rendering of an erotic geopolitics of subalternity that is maintained across the film, and despite Amar's repeated efforts to "bridge the gap"—as the following scene affirms, showing Amar dancing suggestively with another woman atop that phallogentric symbol, a train, crossing into the Northeast.

Moina's own tersely stated desire—*ek cup garam chai* or *one cup hot tea*—cues a more subdued reading of economics and value. As India's central tea-producing region, Assam usually

invokes romanticized tea gardens in the national imaginary. And as a generally resource-rich region (petroleum, wood, etc.), Assam has presented, as a major grievance of the insurgencies, the appropriation of these resources for surplus accumulation in Delhi and the correlating impoverishment of Northeasterners, so that Moina's one cup of "hot tea" articulates, in a language not her own, not a flirtatious invitation but historically produced hunger. What Amar tragically hears, however, is an affirmative response—"my future depends on this," he coaxes the *chaiwalla*, whom he asks for extra-special tea—and jokes to her, as he runs off, not to touch his suitcase or else the bomb inside will blow up. The irony, the film gradually reveals, is that *she* is the bomb and that, in getting her tea, he is curtailing his own future.

This opening frame counterpoints the denouement frame when, in a fiery conversation between Moina and Amar on Indian Independence Day, they hug despite the bombs strapped to Moina, and both are blown up. The geopolitics of subalternity that the film had introduced as seductive reads now as a prescription for national death, i.e. a biopolitical argument against reconciling center-periphery distance and all that this distance entails. The risk, it seems, is that innocent and patriotic mainlanders will, like errant and criminal Northeasterners, purposelessly die. Queer desire, the frame set thus suggests—for the woman who is man, for the queer figure peripheral to the heteronormative nation, for trajectory towards anarchic suicide rather than the secure life—will get you, good citizen, killed too. The frames that precede this denouement frame confirm this conclusion: Preiti, Amar's fiancée, screams and pleads over the phone for Amar to return to that zone of good life, to not lose himself (and her hopes) obsessively in the death zones Moina traffics through, but Amar hangs up on her. That this decision to distance himself from Preiti rather than Moina results in Amar's death suggests the film's biopolitical judgment on the first frame's fateful meeting: like Moina, Amar too should have suppressed his

queer desires, should have maintained the difference marked by distance, even if that meant demolishing some part of himself, as Moina's arrested comrade has done when he commits suicide by eating cyanide in order to avoid being interrogated by the police. For if Moina and her group's allegiance must be to ethnonationalist resistance (to the state of exception), then Amar's should be to the bourgeois nationalist elite (and their preservation of the zone of the good life), and while it is Moina who insisted they deny the erotic charge of their difference measured by distance, it is Amar's foolhardy sacrifice, of that good life predicated on others' lives-at-risk, that suggests him at the film's end to be a martyr.

The Un/easy Face

The queer desire that works in tandem here with the historical de/valuation towards Northeastern materiality finds its filmic expression in Moina's oft-centered face. Presented as strangely alluring yet therefore untrustworthy, described between the characters as having small eyes and a flattened nose, and denuded of the usual markers of femme glamour like make-up or jewelry or joy, Moina's face is a reconfigured version of the barbaric Oriental stranger. Not even at Amar's engagement ceremony can she manage an easy smile, whereas Amar's middle-class, North Indian fiancée is all dimples, giggles, and optimism. Pointedly voluble in contrast to Moina, Preiti invokes the idealized wholesomeness of the virginal North Indian Hindu bride; when she, and multiple women in Amar's family, ask him who Moina and her friend are and why they want to stay in the (metaphoric) family house, Amar fumbles insistently over some response but cannot completely explain what he himself does not completely know. Only in the transactional market space of the All India Radio building, where Moina brings Amar her resume, does he interrogate her and, of course, she refuses an easy answer (Simpson, 2007).

Thori bhi humdardi hein kya tumharin dil mein? // Don't you even have a little bit of empathy inside your heart, he declares. Moina's downcast face and stuttering suggest that, in contrast to his rhetorical gymnastics, she feels and knows more than she can easily articulate or than can be fairly accommodated by his one-dimensional and self-serving question.

Moina's speechlessness in the liminal desert frames, when the couple is finally removed from spaces that agentially re/produce their politicized differences (Barad, 2007) and can instead script a more playful (if soon-to-be swept away) rapport between them, offers a defense of Moina's supposedly cruel and duplicitous signals. In a troubling of the paradigmatic romance of the first kiss, Amar's forceful attempts with Moina result in her first epileptic seizure of the film, an involuntary speech act that finally registers to Amar a history he had not imagined. But Amar (and the viewer) only learn the entire backstory via flashback to child Moina's very first seizure, in the film's denouement frame in Delhi, when we visually travel with the child Moina to scenes of witnessed and experienced rape. The historical point adult Moina articulates in this flashback scene is a furious response to Amar's contemptuous characterization of insurgent goals and his patriotic defense of the Army (*"Mein jantan hoon foj jya hein . . . Agar foj na honti to ish desh ka hazaar tukre hojati samji. // I know what the army is . . . If it weren't for the army, this nation would be in a hundred pieces, understand."*), which is that the history of militarized (gendered) violence, economic deprivation, and resulting colonial despair in Northeast India is largely unknown to Amar. So who is he to preach and condemn? The film suggests that it is only here, at the verge of her own suicide on Indian Independence Day, that Moina surges out of her speech paralysis, itself induced by experiences approximating or producing death, to articulate and perform this double-bind: those most ensnared upon soundscapes of violence are least easily able to historicize (or be audible as historical subjects of state violence) for the symbolic perpetrator.

Mimicking the Nation's Beat

The band music sheet found after one character's Gimti's capture and suicide is a floating signifier for the insurgent group's necropolitical predicament. The score is interpreted in a later scene as patriotic music to be played at the parade, which Moina's group had planned to bomb. Thus the music sheets by proxy become imbued with some essence of the character who, like Moina, resists speaking and is, therefore, even more suspect in the ploy to kill good citizens. Tellingly, the sheets are discovered in a morgue scene marked by techniques of biopower: the chief police investigator riffles through Gimti's things as a medical expert reports on Gimti's body, laid out under a blue sheet in the frame's center. But I also read the scene using frameworks, proposed by Chris Fowler, Jane Bennett, and Mel Chen, in which the subject is not read as indivisible or impermeable but, in association with some object (in this case, the sheet music), as partible (Fowler, 2004), with one's materiality having altered and having been altered (biologically and socially) by the object (Chen, 2012; Bennett, 2010). So that the sheet music not only comes to signify an excavated part of the deceased Gimti—a literal and figurative (hidden in the) organ (of a tuba)—but, once translated, confirms official preconceptions of the character whose most dramatic speech act until then was to run on gaunt legs with a terrified face from the police. He is no ordinary civilian or musician; he could not possibly have been a boy who, like so many jobless boys, was economically induced to join the insurgency; he is another duplicitous militant pretending to be patriot, i.e. an enemy of the state.

Because the music turns out to be a tactic of peripheral resistance rather than a celebration of Indian state hegemony, mimicry as colonial tactic suggests itself as another reading of the sheet music (Bhabha). This reading casts up not only the film's general assertion of a colonial relationship between the Northeast and the Indian state (as Moina declares to Amar

in the denouement scene: *Mera desh nehin, tumhara desh / Not my country, your country*) but emphasizes the inescapability in India of the “post”-colonial question, beyond basic analyses of center-periphery economics and the geopolitics of subalternity. External rather than internal colonization is the controversial claim that becomes audible, and what is at stake is not only economic deprivation but the past, present, and future of multiple other (militarized, gendered, and political) violences, as Moina contextualizes in the denouement scene:

“Janno ki galti? Kya hai janno ki galti? Masoom logon ki jaan leina? Yeh? Ya gao ka gao jala dena? . . . humein neyain nehi de sakte, to kya neyain manga mein jurum hein? Chote chote baachene bandookhein utha li aur unki gharwalle oose roka tak nehin. Kyoon? Kyoonke agar vo marbhi gaya to fark nehin parta. // The state’s mistake? What is the state’s mistake? To take the lives of innocent people? This? Or to burn village after village? . . . You can’t give us justice, is it a crime to ask for justice? Small, small children have taken up arms and their families haven’t stopped them. Why? Because even if they die, it would make no difference.”

Thus the sheet music as floating signifier cannot be contained within frameworks of center-periphery economics or geopolitics of subalternity alone, as it emerges like a strategic organ from bodies consigned to necropolitical status. As signifier of collective resistance, by subjects normalized to the state of exception (AFSPA), the sheet music becomes simultaneously passport-life support-and weapon in a battle not only for political sovereignty but for something approximating the good life promised though undelivered by the nation. Furthermore, as object extracted as organ of mimicry from the inanimate tuba, as object intended to exchange subjects between the state of exception and that of the good life, the sheet music signifies how late liberal governance actively hierarchizes those consigned to spheres of Non-Life and those inhabiting spheres of Life; these spheres are, in fact, interdependent (the other defined against the

normative, or Life possessing qualities that do not belong to Non-Life), as the trajectory of the sheet music reveals (Povinelli, 2016). But it is precisely the sheet music's ability to transgress these boundaries that signal as dangerous the tuba, Gimti's body, and the collective insurgent body in Delhi—i.e. those objects relegated to the sphere of Non-Life—and reveals the hierarchies late liberal governance seeks to keep “in place,” by protecting the lives of heteronormative, middle-class, upper-caste, and legible citizens in the nation's capital.

The sonic counterpoint to the unplayed tuba music is Amar's radio song, *Ae Ajnabi*, which he deploys to attract Moina after they part ways in the desert. A widely circulated song that likens two separated lovers in their shared quandary of fragmentation and subalternity, these lyrics become, in the political context of the film, a false analogy that instead highlights the (representative) state's appropriation of the (representative) subaltern's predicament for a romantic nationalism:

Aye ajnabi tu bhi kabhi aawaaz de kahin se. Aye ajnabi tu bhi kabhi aawaaz de kahin se. Main yahan tukdon mein jee raha hoon. Main yahan tukdon mein jee raha hoon. Tu kahin tukdone mein jeen rahi hai. // Hey stranger, you should also call out sometime from somewhere. Hey stranger, you should also call out sometime from somewhere. I'm here living in pieces. I'm here living in pieces. You're living somewhere in pieces too.

The song appears midway through the film in a scene in which Moina, accurately reading the motivations for its airing, is drawn to listen before shutting off the radio dial, then turning it on again. She cannot trust, it seems, either the motivation or the words, precisely because of the song's seductive reach, which she can never approximate. The scene, which also counterpoints the labor of each character (Moina, working in the insurgent group's hideout; Amar, working from his All India Radio station booth), suggests that the distinct de/valuations of each labor

form is why Moina is drawn to the radio song yet retains an ambivalent relationship to its false analogy.

No Time for the Nation

The economic divide hinted at in the film, which is aligned with a center-periphery, urban-rural analysis, is never fully historicized or complicated. It is touched upon in an early frame when an Assamese farmer says to Amar's recorder in Assamese: *Amaar eyaat kuno saddhi kotha nai. Kotha kobo ahise. Amar uporot dhon lutise . . . aami khabo napai, xukh khai mori goi aasu // There is no talk of saadhi here for us. You've come here to tell us. We've been robbed of our product . . . we don't get to eat. Eating our own happiness, we're dying.* This one representative moment aside—of ULFA's paradigmatic complaint that the Center has economically exploited the Northeast—other moments in the film reproduce the narrative of valuelessness attached to Northeastern and insurgent figures, whether they be the lazy/slow Assamese, the pre-capitalist tribals, or the non-reproductive suicide bomber.

The first market exchange we see between an Assamese and a mainlander is at the bazaar, where Amar's contact, Ms. Burman the station director, chastises the vendor into accepting less money for the vegetables he has sold her. *Ekdam badmash ho gaye ho tum. / You have all become completely bad,* she says. In other words, the commodity he sells is not worth the money he demands—like him, the commodity too is bad—an overvaluation of the work that has gone into bringing his produce to bear. This moralistic devaluation of Northeast labor appears throughout the film, from the lounging native aboard the early frame train carrying Amar into the Northeast, to the half-sleeping, semi-competent figures occupying various office posts, to the film's presentation of Moina's work at All India Radio as deadly ruse. Amar's colleague's

rage at discovering that Amar has hired her is not only anger at Amar's gullible obsession—she has already nearly gotten them both killed—but articulates his assumption that Moina is, otherwise, unqualified for the job. The work for which the friend assumes Moina has been hired is sexual labor that, he warns, will only get Amar into the same bigamist pickle he is in.

Meghna herself seems to affirm this valuelessness, as the trope of suicide bomber becomes enmeshed with the trope of disappearing time. How can she produce anything of value, she and the film argue, if she is going to die soon anyway? When Amar asks Moina to marry him in the desert scenes at Ladakh, her cryptic answer is *samain nehin hai / I don't have time*. In this specific instance, she not only refuses heteronormative reproductivity because she doesn't have time but her chosen work—suicide bombing—heralds even more clearly her non-reproductive trajectory. A refrain explicitly and implicitly repeated throughout the film, the curtailed time repository of Meghna ties into the socially necessary labor time she does not have enough of. By this default, anything she produces will not carry as much value because of this reported projection of her time limit: her lessened reproductive value as Indian woman citizen, her lessened productive value as worker for a national institution, her lessened re/productive value as social member inducted temporarily into Amar's kinship sphere. Even the affective labor she fails to exert for Amar, in his pursuit of romantic connection and pleasure, is partially explained by her brief time repository; what is the point of smiling, flirting, laughing if she is going to die soon? Amar counters in a rare desert scene depicting Moina's laughing and singing: *Marne-ko kaun kehta hein? / Who is telling you to die?* Of course, Moina doesn't bother answering, and the deflected answer we hear is given to her group leader, who questions her resolve in the face of Amar's charm. *Does he have any suspicions*, he asks. *No*, she says. *He is very innocent*. This is not only the innocence of having suffered past violence but of suffering anticipated violence.

Thus the film's rendering of Moina in terms of labor, time, and value fits into a broader cross-contextual imaginary of indigeneity in relation to these terms. First, there is the overt figuration of the indigenous as queer militant destroying not only their own re/productive value but the integrity and stability of heteronormative national futurity; second, there is the more subtle association between an unfortunate relationship to socially necessary labor time for the indigenous and/or tribal figure, one also spatialized in terms of regions of capitalist modernity versus pre-capitalist underdevelopment; and finally, there is the trope of the disappearing indigene, whether through slow or rapid genocidal circumstances, the natural progression of homogenous national time, or the implied social Darwinian vocabulary predicting erasure of the losers in the literal war over survival.

WORKS CITED

- Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Beckles, Hillary. "Capitalism, Slavery and Caribbean Modernity." *Callaloo*. 20(4): 1997. pp777-789.
- Bennett, J. (2010). *Vibrant Matter*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Precarious Life*. London and New York: Verso.
- Byrd, Jodi. *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Byrd, J., Rothberg, M. (2011). Between Indigeneity and Subalternity: Critical Categories for Postcolonial Studies. *Interventions*, 13(1), 1-12.
- Chen, Mel Y. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012.
- Columpar, C. (2010). *Unsettling Sights: The Fourth World on Film*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Davis, T. (2009). Love and Social Marginality in *Samson and Delilah*. *Senses of Cinema*, 51. Retrieved from <http://sensesofcinema.com/2009/feature-articles/samson-and-delilah/>
- DuBois, P. Seminar. (2016).
- Fowler, Chris. *The Archaeology of Personhood: An Anthropological Approach*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Freedgood, E. (2006). *The Ideas in Things*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gay Pearson, W., Knabe, S.M. (2015) *Reverse Shots: Indigenous Film and Media in an International Context*. Gay Pearson, W., Knabe, S.M. (Eds.) Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Guzmán, T.D. (2013). *Native and National in Brazil: Indigeneity after Independence*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Haebich, A. (2000). *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families, 1800-2000*. Fremantle, W.A.: Fremantle Arts Centre Press.

- Huijser, H., Collins-Gearing, B. (2014). Shades of Indigenous Belonging in *Samson & Delilah*. *New Scholar: An International Journal of the Humanities, Creative Arts and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 69-84.
- Kaplan, A., Bang, W. (2004). *Trauma and Cinema: Cross-Cultural Explorations*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Ed. Karlsson, Bengt T. and Subha, T.B. *Indigeneity in India*. London and New York: London University Press, 2006.
- Kilbourn, R.J.A. (2014). If this is your land, where is your camera?: *Atanarjuat, The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* and post-cinematic adaptation. *Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance*, 7(2), 195-207.
- Korff, Jens. "Aboriginal Prison Rates." *Creative Spirits: Law & Justice*. *creativespirits.info*, 18 May 2017, <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/law/aboriginal-prison-rates>. Accessed Summer 2017.
- Korff, Jens. "A Guide to Australia's Stolen Generation." *Creative Spirits: Law & Justice*. *creativespirits.info*, 18 August 2017, <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/politics/a-guide-to-australias-stolen-generations> Accessed Summer 2017.
- Loureide Biddle, J. (2016). *Remote Avante-Garde: Aboriginal Art Under Occupation*. Durham; London: Duke University Press.
- Lye, Colleen. *America's Asia Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Moreton-Robinson, A. (2015). *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Morgensen, Scott. *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Nixon, R. (2011). *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ed. Omi, Michael and Winant, Howard. *Racial Formation in the United States*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2015.
- Pollock, G. (2013). *Visual Politics of Psychoanalysis: Art and the Image in Post-Traumatic Cultures*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Povinelli, E. (1994). *Labor's Lot: The Power, History, and Culture of Aboriginal Action*.

- Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Povinelli, E. (2006). *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Povinelli, E. (2011). *Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Raheja, M. (2010). *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Shimizu, Celine P. *The Hypersexuality of Race: Performing Asian/American Women on Screen and Scene*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Siebert, M. (2006). Atanarjuat and the Ideological Work of Contemporary Indigenous Filmmaking. *English Faculty Publications, Paper 57*. Retrieved from <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/english-faculty-publications/57>
- Simpson, A. (2007). On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship. *Junctures*, 9, 67-80.
- Smith, A. (2005). *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. Nelson, Cary and Grossberg, Lawrence. London: Macmillan, 1988.
- Spivak, Gayatri. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Starrs, D.B. "Sovereignty, Song and 'The Sapphires' (Wayne Blaire 2012)." *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*. 17(2): 2014. pp43-55.
- Tobing Rony, F. (1996) *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Vizenor, G. (2008). *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Vora, K. (2015). *Life Support: Biocapital and the New History of Outsourced Labor*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mignolo, W. (2009). Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and De-Colonial Freedom. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(7-8), 1-23.
- Wood, H. (2008). *Native Features: Indigenous Films from Around the World*. New York: Continuum.

CHAPTER III
FOURTH WORLD FEMINIST CLOCKS

Methodology

Following the global scale of the preceding film chapter, this chapter also reads across contexts, with a focus on the articulations of indigenous and tribal women. My aim here is to present a relational reading of transnational formulations of gender as it intersects with other lived categories specific to indigenous and tribal women. How do they experience and represent coloniality/modernity *as women*? Given place-specific legacies of heteropatriarchal colonialisms, do emerging sovereignty demands entail *a gendered decoloniality*? Do these women writers translate the *radical alterity* that distinguishes the indigenous, the tribal within the nation-state *as gendered alterity*? Across these questions, I seek articulations of gender responsive to several modes theorized by multiple and at times conflicting schools of feminist thought: gender as performance (Post-Structuralism, U.S. Feminism), gender as division of labor (Third World Feminism, Feminist Marxism), gender as differential vulnerability to [colonial, racial, heteronormative, and bourgeois] violences (Native American Indigenous Studies, Black Feminism, Women of Color Feminism), gender as entangled with irreducible sexual difference (New Materialism, French Feminism), and gender as bodily experience that translates into gendered aesthetic (French Feminism, Native American Indigenous Studies, New Materialism). While this project acknowledges the rich contributions of these varying traditions, all valuable for their feminist commitments, it hews most closely to thinking through frameworks posed by Native American Indigenous Studies and New Materialisms. NAIS offers the most obvious frameworks for reading works speaking specifically to questions of coloniality/modernity, sovereignty, and radical alterity. Select valences of the emerging New Materialisms—an exciting field returning to the ontological question, to ways of thinking materialities that include but are not limited to labor, and to justice-minded questions of race, gender, and post-humanism—most

deeply suit the intersectional commitments at the heart of this project. Of course, that intersectionality—as a politics of difference that values the histories and challenges posed by admitting rather than erasing a subject’s complex social positioning—has been the crux of Women of Color feminist theorizing. And while this project doesn’t rely primarily on this framework, its thinking through of the lived category of gender alongside indigenous and tribal women’s definitive relationship to coloniality/modernity, sovereignty claims, and radical alterity remains indebted to the important Women of Color feminist analytics that have refused the reductions and erasures of Humanism’s universalist theories.

These three intersectional points of analysis repeat emphases that appeared in the previous chapter’s film readings, and are also drawn from Subaltern Studies (Mignolo, Quijano, Dussel and Moraña, Spivak, Chakrabarty, etc.) and Critical Race and Caste Studies (Hong & Ferguson, Ferreira da Silva, Weheliye, Rao, Dirks, etc.). Thus this chapter too, alongside a reading of gender, reads for articulations of caste. If caste is understood as a complex historical phenomenon predicating its hierarchies on un/cleanliness, strictures around endogamy and commensality, hereditary labor, and material practices of stigma, then de/colonial and alterity-marking practices within local economies and cultures are important apparatuses for formulating caste locally. Coloniality/modernity, for example, continues to be a global matrix of power felt most palpably by indigenous and tribal peoples as it typically entrenches them at the bottom; resulting demands for sovereignty and decolonial futures acknowledge that anti-capitalist demands, while indispensable, are insufficient to fully liberate peoples who assert ongoing colonization as a significant material impediment; and radical alterity, as one reason for this disillusionment with the liberatory promises of orthodox materialist frameworks, continues to queer tribal peoples in relation to heteronormative national and reproductive belonging and in

contrast to hegemonic (multicultural) paradigms of racial and religious difference in the U.S. and Europe. Caste, that discursive backbone interlaced through every chapter, appears here as onto-epistemological tool in parsing out gender's relationship to indigeneity. How does each writer/text name caste, if at all, in their gendered historicizing and imagining of tribal pasts and futures? If caste is understood as a culture of im/material stigma, how do these writers/texts situate the tribal woman in national "matters" of caste? What are those means of resistance through which indigenous and tribal women decolonize the cast(e) of their worlds? As an NAIS and New Materialist feminist exploration, this chapter thus centers textual themes of *gendered indigenous embodiment, labor, cosmology, and temporality*, understanding these to be definitive of fourth world feminist articulations necessarily entangled with local iterations of caste hierarchy resonantly structured by coloniality/modernity, im/material stigma, and radical alterity.

My four con/texts of choice—Brazil, the U.S. Southwest, Northeast India, and New Zealand—are chosen for the range of perspectives they offer to the above questions. While Brazil and India are not typically studied in established conversations on global indigeneities, there are several reasons for supporting their inclusion within global indigenous literatures. Brazil's indigenous communities, though numerically greatly diminished since contact in 1500, have had an inordinate influence on Brazil's cultural conception of itself, and exert some of the most powerful and devastating accounts of contemporary tribal resistance to state-corporate takeover (Guzmán, 2013; Ramos, 1998). India, the country with the world's highest number of tribal peoples, has in its Central Belt and Northeast region the densest concentration and variety of tribal cultures, demands, and insurgencies. As nations that constitute some of the most numerically significant and demographically complex democracies in the world, Brazil and India suggest themselves as research sites to at least consider, even if they do not fit squarely into the

settler colonialism frames that largely define NAIS. Indeed, these sites' atypical relationship to the indigenous, the tribal help expand NAIS paradigms of the indigenous, the tribal. In Brazil, a complex combination of settler and extractive colonial methods subjugated and assimilated indigenous peoples and consolidated historically tribal lands into national property in a nation that touted a tri-racial *mesticagem* even as it genocided its tribal peoples and exploited enslaved Blacks, poor white settlers, and Asian immigrants and refugees. In India, the out/caste classes to which tribal peoples typically belong have historically experienced the most acute sociopolitical peripheralization, various degrees of bondage, and have been deliberately governed in the "post"-colonial nation through the state of exception; but they have also periodically thrown up, alongside Dalits, some of the bloodiest and/or longstanding resistance to Indian state hegemony, caste apartheid, and transnational corporate exploitation.

The U.S. Southwest and New Zealand/Oceania, however, do suit the dominant idiom of settler colonialism in NAIS, and foundational theories and writings in the field (on indigenous genocide, decolonial methodology, playing Native, and tribal reparations, etc.) have come precisely from these regions and their histories: Lorenzo Veracini, Patrick Wolfe, Scott Morgensen, Linda T. Smith, Philip & Devine Deloria, Mishuana Goeman, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Elizabeth Povinelli, Avril Bell, etc. In pairing these sites—one set unorthodox, another canonical in NAIS—this chapter seeks to complicate understandings of the indigenous, the tribal. And, in relationally reading gender as lived category in these transnational literatures, this chapter seeks to amplify NAIS and New Materialist Feminist theorizations through the poetics and politics of Fourth World feminist writers.

Historical Alterity:

While the most populous and politically organized of Latin America's indigenous communities lie in the Andean regions and in Mexico, the indigenous peoples of Brazil (less than .5% of the national population) have borne a long history of contact, influence, and resistance that are also valuable for understanding debates around coloniality/modernity, sovereignty claims, and difference within the mestiço nation. From Cabral's landing in 1500 and Vaz de Caminha's consequent letter to the Portuguese Crown (inaugurating canonical versions of Brazilian history and literature) to the early colonial period (mid-16th-18th c) of Jesuit influence and exploitation in the *reduccões* and *aldeias* to the 19th c rubber boom that further enslaved and decimated indigenous peoples to the 20th-21st c period of tribal resistance, against MNC projects such as the Belo Monte Dam and against sustained settlement by cattle ranchers on tribal ancestral land—the experiences of Brazil's indigenous peoples offer alternative testimonies of settler and extractive colonial processes and tribal survivance in Latin America. Specifically, *indigenous* re/scriptings of indigenous subjectivity via literature, film, and the performative critique canonical narratives in which civilizational and national progress rely on the stigmatization of the indigenous figure, more than any other, as radical alterity in Brazil's multi-racial “paradise” (Hemming, 2004; Guzmán, 2013; Ramos, 1998).

Predictably, colonial accounts and, arguably, coloniality/modernity first formulated the tribal figure as radical alterity in the national imaginary. That figure occupied a series of conflicting positions that included the noble savage, the hostile cannibal, the fixed child of evolution, and the lascivious forest sage. The earliest versions outlining one or more of these were the famous 16th-17th c accounts of capture and cannibalism in Hans Staden, Andre Thevet, and Jean de Lery. The 19th c would witness, in its Romantic phase, an Indianist revival as part of

a foundational myth of origin in the post-colonial nation (1822), offering up the Brazilian counterpart to the North American Pocahontas myth in *Iracema*. And the early 20th c Modernists would, in *Anthropofagia* and *O Manifesto Antropófago*, draw upon indigenous iconography and romantic ethnography to formulate a uniquely Brazilian aesthetic of cultural mixture and transformative consumption in opposition to European notions of high art and formal purity. Late 20th c popular and legal cultures would continue to draw upon these tropes, deploying them in telenovelas, media representations, and governance (Guzmán, 2013); so that, in a century marked by the Highway Transamazônica and other renewed frontier expansion projects, indigenous peoples fighting for greater political clout and resisting further encroachment on traditional lands again variously emerged as the noble savage, the hostile cannibal, the fixed child of evolution, and the lascivious forest sage (Ramos, 1998).

While this chapter focuses largely on textual literature and, in the four chosen contexts, on just one writer/text, it is important to note that indigenous artists in Brazil are practicing across multiple genres. This includes a significant indigenous blogosphere, pointing not only to a counter-stereotypical merging of the pre-modern and the technological in Brazil but the transnational reach of tribal writers across contexts. Thus the current moment of tribal cultural and knowledge productions seems an apt one for tracing a trans-tribal discourse.

De/colonial Narrations

Eliane Potiguara, one of the most visible among Brazil's new wave of indigenous writers (Daniel Munduruku, Olívio Jekupe, Graça Graúna, etc.), is also arguably part of a wave of women writers articulating what I think through here: Fourth World feminisms. Their cultural productions, whether textual, visual, or performative, are marked by a specific relationship to

indigenous and/or tribal un/belonging to heteronormative and alternative nationalisms within the nation-state, to alternative temporalities in dialogue with coloniality/modernity, to a specifically tribal and tribally specific rendering of the body and other materialities, and to examining the gender of ongoing colonialisms and war. The global scale of my reading is not meant to flatten the multiple differences among these writers and their histories but, drawing upon the place-and-body sensitive methodologies of women of color feminisms, to think through the ways these differences constellate into a deeply gendered dimension of a trans-tribal discourse. The “difference” of these Fourth World feminist articulations, within the tradition of women of color articulations, from intersectional difference lies in a politically marked relationship to coloniality/modernity rather than solely raciality, sexuality, and/or national affiliation. Walter D. Mignolo’s invaluable theorization of our global order inherited from early modern colonization, what he calls modernity/coloniality (which I flip here to emphasize a viewpoint situated in indigenous experience), is a central concept throughout this project. So that the foundational assumptions of my readings are Mignolo’s frameworks for situating power today since the 16th C, that is a colonial matrix of power in which the colonial difference between those inhabiting modernity and those inhabiting tradition is defined by the rhetorical figure of a linear, progress-oriented, developmentally forward “time.”

I open with Eliane Potiguara’s bold novel, *Metade Cara, Metade Máscara* or *Half Face, Half Mask*, not only to center work from the largest country in a continent most critically facing violent repression of its land activists, but to establish crucial Fourth World feminist themes apparent in works by indigenous and tribal women from other contexts. Potiguara’s novel introduces generic hybridity that privileges oral traditions and poetics (Gehlen, 2011), the importance of the bodily, territoriality, and other materialities in understanding indigenous

experiences, alternative temporalities that are explicitly political revisions of coloniality/modernity, and the gender of ongoing colonialisms and war. Thus, my overall readings necessarily search for these four indigenous and tribal women writers' (Eliane Potiguara, Leslie Marmon Silko, Temsula Ao, and Patricia Grace) inscription of coloniality/modernity from their standpoint and, more critically, for the decolonial option (Mignolo, 2012) they offer via narrative strategies. Alternative temporalities become a central focus here, as these work against the Hegelian and Darwinian telos that have historically articulated indigenous and tribal peoples as located not only in spaces of underdevelopment but in necropolitical timelines of erasure. Alternative temporalities also offer alternative worldviews and cosmologies (Viveiros de Castro, 1988) that center, rather than peripheralize, indigenous and tribal histories of their communities, their ties to and imaginaries of the land, and more vibrant futurities than that projected by the genocidal impulses of coloniality/modernity.

The generic hybridity of Potiguara's text—moving as it does between alter-histories of indigenous peoples in Brazil, a mythopoetic account of Cunhataí and Jurupiranga, and the repetition of poems per chapter—acknowledges multiple hybridities engaged by the text. First, that biological “mixture,” i.e. *misgemação*, that marks Brazilian national and racial ideologies, thus destabilizing colonial notions of an authentic Indian; second, that cultural hybridity necessitated as survival strategy for indigenous peoples under ongoing colonization, one that resorts to national as well as tribal idioms and narratives; third, a move between the privileged narrative traditions of Western modernity (the novel, historical fiction, History) and those of tribal traditions (orality, materiality, a particular cosmological shape). The overtly strategic use of hybridity in Potiguara's text embodies the multiple terrains (ideological, temporal, and generic)

its tribal characters must navigate—a fluid liminality that underscores a central thematic, that of ongoing colonization.

The second overt strategy—one I call a synecdochal move intrinsic to indigenous notions of kinship and materiality—is the use of the central characters as symbolic figures for all indigenous peoples in Brazil:

“Esses personagens são atemporais e sem-locais específicos de origem. Eles simbolizam a família indígena, o amor, independente do tempo, local, espaço onírico ou espaço físico, podem mudar de nome, ir e voltar no tempo e espaço.” (30-31) // “These characters are atemporal and without specific starting points. They symbolize the indigenous family, love, independent of time, place, dreamlike space or physical space, can change name and come and go in time and space.” (30-31)

Jurupiranga and Cunhataí stand in specifically for indigenous peoples as kinship unit, and just as key, enact the indigenous synecdochal drama across multiple spacetimes in the long history of pre/colonial Brazil. Right away then, alongside the politics of hybridity, the text engages specifically tribal notions of indigenous belonging and temporality. That is, to refer to a geopolitically distinct history of the indigenous (Australia), an alternative epistemology of aboriginal belonging and temporality understands individuals as sutured into ongoing collectives that are at once culturally distinct, trans-temporal, and deeply bound up with the materialities of aboriginal bodies, productions, and territories (Povinelli, 1994). This is not to simplistically reify the tribal figure as the fixed and pre-modern genealogical subject of the liberal imagination, for even as indigenous peoples often re-enact authenticity demands to survive in liberal nation-states, they also accomplish this by evolving aboriginal forms of collectivity, strategies of navigating hybrid spaces and cultures, and asserting sovereignty in the face of obliteration. It is

instead to suggest one resonance, in texts divided by context, that defines a trans-tribal identity—an identity that *matters* because it is repeatedly entangled with territorial, political, and economic stakes—as a synecdochal identity, for better or worse. Tribal individuals, Potiguara suggests, are inevitably part of a collective body that spans not only the space of the immediate historical moment but across historical periods and geographic terrains. These synecdochal moves become not only the means to visibilize tribal identity stakes but to mobilize for decolonial liberation. Thus, the genre hybridity of Potiguara’s text might be read as a suturing attempt towards resurrecting a new aboriginal futurity for healed aboriginal collectives. By re-historicizing past and present accounts of indigenous presence in Brazil, Potiguara demands accountability for the slow and necropolitical violence of coloniality/modernity as enacted by the *mesticagem* imaginary of the Brazilian nation-state. And by using tribal aesthetics (Gehlen, 2011) and multiple spacetimes to imagine global pan-tribal solidarity and liberation, Potiguara configures a version of post-nationalism not wedded to a neoliberal market ideology as the dark underbelly of late capitalist modernity but to a tribal mobility as the decolonial possibility and elixir for the coloniality that has always been the sinister Janus face to modernity’s mask.

Finally, the titles and sequence of the chapters outline a narrative logic implicitly arguing for the ongoing colonial structure of the Brazilian nation and projecting future indigenous victory:

(1) Invasão as terras indígenas e a migração // Invasion of indigenous lands and migration (2) Angústia e desespero pela perda das terras e ameaça a cultura, as tradições // Anguish and despair because of the loss of lands and the threat to culture, to traditions (3) Ainda a insatisfação e consciência de mulher indígena // Still the dissatisfaction and conscience of the indigenous woman (4) Influencia dos ancestrais na busca pela preservação da identidade // Influence of the ancestors in the search for the preservation of identity (5) Exaltação a terra, a cultura e a espiritualidad indígenas // Exaltation of the land, culture, and indigenous spirituality (6) Combatividade e resistência // Combat and resistance (7) Vitória dos povos // Victory of the people. (Sumário / Summary page)

Thus, the narrative telos as summarized by the chapter outline evinces a decolonial temporality. Chapter by chapter, the novel structurally encapsulates an indigenous alter-history

of the Brazilian nation marked by the first contact as invasion rather than discovery, of the consequent psychic and material costs for indigenous collectives, and the various strategies of resistance deployed towards realizing sovereignty. Significantly, it situates “migration” not as internal diaspora but as forced movement that nevertheless did not deprive indigenous peoples of the legitimacy of their cultural identities but, instead, confirmed their stigmatized status as colonized subjects. The text is adamant on this point about ongoing colonization, as are so many texts by writers self-identified *as well as* politically marked within the nation-state as indigenous or tribal, never conceding the legitimacy of Brazilian national rule or teleological narratives of national progress. In fact, the novel’s thematics reveal such “progress” to be predicated on the dispossession of tribal peoples from those realms of the good life that are then promised for legible citizens in terms of territorial continuity, cultural citizenship, collective integrity, and surplus value situated at the far end of biopolitical alterity. Taking these thematic cues from the text, I do a close reading of three chapters that elaborate on these modes of dispossession, de/valuation, and de/colonial temporality—Chapter 2 which addresses ongoing colonial trauma, Chapter 3 which focuses on the subjectivity of indigenous women, and Chapter 6 which elaborates on strategies of combat and resistances—chapters that generate a rich poetics of indigenous materialities, worldviews, and “clocks” in which tribal women strike back precisely by disrupting the necropolitical timelines “gifted” to them through coloniality/modernity.

Chapter 2: The Trauma in Things

The first two paragraphs of Chapter 2 introduce the text’s running arguments that “discovery” was actually *invasão*/invasion and that the exploitative labor conditions that resulted were akin to *escravidão*/slavery:

“O processo de colonização e neocolonização dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil os conduziu ao trabalho semi-escravo . . .” / “The process of colonization and neocolonization of the Indigenous Peoples of Brazil led them to semi-slave work.” (43)

“. . . E mais, as dificuldades locais levaram muitas pessoas a migração, a submeterem-se ao trabalho semi-escravo, as péssimas condições demoradas.” (43) / “And more: local difficulties led many people to migrate, submitting themselves to semi-slave work, the worst living conditions.” (43)

While these opening excerpts legibilize indigenous trauma in more recognizable idioms of labor and diaspora, they nevertheless continue to ground these in the originary events of dispossession that historically affect tribal peoples in un-analogizable modes specific to settler colonialism. From there, the text then turns to expand on trauma as one enduring effect of ongoing settler colonialism; that is, the *sintomas*/symptoms the text names in the following paragraph:

“distúrbios mentais, como a loucura, o alcoolismo, o suicídio, a violência interpessoal, afetando consideravelmente a auto-estima dos seres humanos indígenas” / “mental disturbances, such as insanity, alcoholism, suicide, interpersonal violence, considerably affecting the self-esteem of indigenous human beings.” (43)

Significantly, Potiguara situates these symptoms of trauma in an explicitly named racism that arises in tandem with the very *misgenação* deployed to officially disavow race or racism as modes of power within (the myth of) racial democracy. Pressing further, Potiguara outlines the hierarchy, arguably the contemporary residue of *casta*, embedded within the mixed nation, one

that situates poor whites, Blacks, and tribal peoples as that bottom tier from which mixed peoples must move away, in aspirational progress:

“O desejo de ascensão da população miscigenada e/ou branca e construída com base no racismo implícito e no processo de escravidão, semi-escravidão, exploração da mão de obra barata dos mais oprimidas segmentos da sociedade, como os miseráveis pobres e negros e a população indígena.” / “The desire for ascension of the mixed population and/or white population is built on a base of implicit racism and on the processes of slavery, semi-slavery, and the exploitation of cheap manual labor of the most oppressed segments of the society, such as miserable poor peoples, black peoples, and the indigenous population.” (44)

Thus, the historical structuring processes of colonization, caste, and slavery are constitutive of the hierarchy Potiguara unearths under the Brazilian myth of racial democracy, a hierarchy Potiguara calls out as racist and responsible for indigenous trauma.

Potiguara also situates indigenous trauma in the materiality of the ongoing everyday: architecture. In a descriptive section following her historicization of indigenous trauma in the mission system in Guarani territories (1610-1768), Potiguara describes the mission ruins as permeated by the sweat and cries of the indigenous enslaved:

. . . criada pelas bem-intencionados jesuítas contra os espanhóis e portugueses que queriam submete-los, subjuga-los como escravos . . . Eu senti um enorme calafrio, andando pelas Ruínas das Missoes, em Santo Angelo, no Rio Grande do Sul em 1978 . . . Parecia que nos entroncamentos se ouviam os gritos de dor ecoando pelos ares e que as paredes estavam impregnadas [nu] suor da escravidão e racismo . . . O mesmo aconteceu quando visitei as ruínas da igreja de São Miguel e o cemitério indígena, já na área Potiguara . . . A voz dos oprimidos ecoam igualmente, em qualquer momento da história.” // “. . . made by the well-intentioned Jesuits against the Spanish and Portuguese who wanted to submit them, subjugate them as slaves . . . I felt an enormous shiver, walking through the Mission Ruins, in Santo Angelo, in Rio Grande do Sul in 1978 . . . it seemed that at every juncture, one could hear the pained cries echoing through the air and that the walls were full of the sweat of slavery and racism . . . the same happened when I visited the church ruins of São Miguel and the indigenous cemetery, now in the Potiguara area . . . The voice of the oppressed echoes similarly, in whichever part of the world. And we must hear it so that justice can be built from whatever historical moment. (46-47)

In this passage saturated with a fine articulation of indigenous and new materialist thought as much as with dramatized details of the seemingly mundane, Potiguara locates indigenous bodily suffering as transfixed in the architectural material built from their enslaved indigenous labor. While de-mystifying those extremely uneven social relations between Jesuit and Guarani that have produced the Mission architecture, Potiguara goes one step further in asserting the materially felt pressure of indigenous being within the thing itself. This move gestures to both indigenous and new materialist notions of human-nonhuman relationality, in which, on one hand, the maker transmits something of himself (his spirit or essence) to the art and, on the other hand, embeds specific aspects of embodied self (sweat, cries) in the building matter (walls, graves). This human-nonhuman relationality is not only in excess of space but time, as the energies transformed *back then* are transmitted more than once into Potiguara in the *closely narrated present*, first as shivering, then in a burning heart and nightmares. Potiguara drives home this point about the pliability of spacetime in locating indigenous suffering, as she describes the vitality of indigenous matter—body and production—across the world, and how justice itself might be yet another production made from this in “qualquer momento da historia.” Her justice, made as it is from indigenous matter across an indigenous cosmological and cartographic imaginary, is thus a decolonial one revising the initial failed attempt by the Jesuits to liberate the Guarani from enslavement by the Spanish and Portuguese, only to perpetuate it themselves. Non-linear temporality and worlding thus become crucial aspects to a decolonial future that is not equivalent to a neoliberal, cosmopolitan capitalist logic, but seeks to connect and redress the starting and ongoing spacetime points fundamental to the varying faces of colonial expansion, liberal modernity, and neoliberal capitalism.

The solution or *cura* Potiguara offers to indigenous trauma is the creative act whose curative powers she names as love: “o Ato de Criação é um ato de amor. (57) // The Act of Creation is an act of love.” (57) Love of oneself, love of the other, love of nature—in a narration/listing of multiple kinds of matter invigorated by the labor of love, before she turns to listing the collective ingestion of material trauma (“tivemos que tomar muita agua envenenada” / “we have had to drink a lot of poisoned water” (56-57), Potiguara places in opposition the suffering collective and the free individual. It is a typical colonial liberal paradigm (Povinelli, 2007)—the genealogical narrated in the past tense versus the autological subject narrated in the future perfect—that culminates in an affirmation.

Just as Potiguara names curative love in multiple forms—oneself, the other, nature—she also names the products of love’s labor—texts, music, painting (57). In establishing this link between what is ostensibly immaterial and what is typically identified as the material congealment of labor, Potiguara takes a feminist turn in rewriting that cliché—*labor of love*—that so often invisibilizes women’s reproductive labor as valuable labor, thus depriving women’s work of the wage. The syntactical disruption of the cliché—*of* substituted with the verb *is*, or the grammatical structure indicating possessive analogy switched for the clarifying grammatical structure meaning onto epistemological equivalence—this disruption prioritizes the complex reproductive nature of creative work, simultaneously emphasizing it as work while acknowledging that it may still meet the gendered problematic of women’s labor as essentially reproductive labor. Beyond articulating a now established feminist revision of orthodox Marxist notions of legible labor, Potiguara’s declaration also articulates a specifically tribal notion of body-spirit im/materialities. In other words, there is no strict Cartesian division or hierarchization of mind over matter or of the body-spirit split; instead, Potiguara joins many New Materialist

feminists and NAIS thinkers in emphasizing the entanglement of the mind/anima and matter. In Potiguara's particular (and possibly tribally specific) take, mind, spirit, body, and creative works all possess degrees of materiality, and each influences the other:

“Nosso corpo pode estar doente porque nossa alma esta. // “Our bodies can be sick because our soul is.”
(57)

In this clear assertion, Potiguara additionally locates the area for bodily symptoms of collective indigenous trauma in spiritual remedies, which she goes on to explain necessarily happen at the individual level:

“São atos só nossos. Ninguém pode senti-los. Por isso, quando morre um parente indígena, seus perences são todos depositados em sua tumba. Somos seres coletivos, mas antes temos nossa individualidade, inclusive nossa solidão, como no ato do pensar e da escrita.” // “These acts are ours alone. No one can feel them. For this reason, when an indigenous relative dies, his things are all deposited in his tomb. We are collective beings, but before, we have our own individuality, including our solitude, as in the act of thinking or writing.” (57)

In this linear life narration of the confluence of genealogical obligation, material entanglements, and persistent liberal individualism, Potiguara seems to fall back on the colonial liberal valorization of the autological subject alone as scriptable and survivable into modernity. Her curative solution, after all, is in the individual's creative act. While there is certainly a sliding into this logic of liberalism, in Potiguara's solution, I want to suggest that her articulation, in substance and style is also a radical revision of colonial liberal framings of the indigenous subject. Historically, the tribal figure has been featured as that pre-modern relic fading out of modernity, in part because its genealogical ties forbade the necessary “evolution” into modern

participation and in part because the literal and cultural onslaught of a modernity invested in nation-state development guarantees indigene disappearance. Against these paradigms of the Brazilian national narrative of *mesticagem* and modern progress, Potiguara situates a tribal figure overcoming the traumatic encounter with national (and colonial) modernity by navigating the multiple terrains of tribal obligation, individual expression, and im/material entanglements. Even as she deploys the stereotypical association of the indigenous body with the bodies of land and mortality, Potiguara refuses to reduce the colonized tribal subject to either the un-thinking body or the museumifiable object. Instead, indigenous reality is understood as layered, dynamic, and breaching longstanding borders (which have reserved thinking and writing for Man) through the “ato do pensar e da escrita.”

As has been argued by scholars in generally distinct schools of thought—Subaltern Post-colonialism, New Materialist Feminism, Critical Race Studies, and some Post-structuralism—these boundaries between Man and Other finds its corollaries in the binaries of nature/culture, wo/man, savage/civilized, and the un/free (Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2015; Da Silva, 2007; Spivak, 2014). I argue here that Potiguara simultaneously depicts a caste binary while also working to critique and disrupt it: the pre/modern as marked by characteristics definitive of caste hierarchy. She does so in part by simply narrating the agential natureculture worlds of some of her characters, a depiction that stands in contrast to racist and colonial perceptions of the unchanging wilderness of tribal presents and deathly futures within the *mestizo* imaginary; she also does so by revising notions of cleanliness that have historically demarcated caste difference and almost all (if not all) the mentioned binaries. The act of creation is critically also an act of purification, one that expunges traumatic colonial effects from indigenous matter: “No ato da criação se dá a purificação do espírito, da *anima*, da alma e conseqüentemente a purificação do corpo e a extirpação de velhos utmores, velhos fantasmas” (58). By thus highlighting and decolonizing the usual use of

“pure” so fundamental to caste hierarchy, as well as the colonial difference articulated as caste and other binaries, via an imaginative narration of multiple and entangled im/materialities, Potiguara troubles the implied hierarchy that posit tribal peoples, spatially, in the abject bodily alone, and, evolutionarily, in pre-modern peripheries of wilderness, and, temporally, in a vanishing pre-Christian and pre-Colombian past.

The collaged poems that close this second chapter might be read—cued by these themes of hybridity, trauma, entangled im/materialities, labor, and caste binaries—as a resurrected if fragmented body that attempts multiple interventions. As decolonial curative praxis, this suturing of the poems enacts Potiguara’s assertion that art-making is restorative as well as valuable reproductive labor. Specifically, the art work’s restorative value is partly accrued by the sustainment of indigenous orality embodied in the chapter’s shift to poetics (Gehlen, 2011). As indigenous epistemology, the variations in voice and spacetimes across the poem resist a clear subject/object binary so foundational to Western claims upon objective knowledge production and attendant racist readings of indigenous peoples as monolithic things; instead, the multiplicity of perspectives suggest a cumulatively collective set of counter-memories complicating official colonial and national narratives of Brazilian progress acquired by (here explicitly repeated) indigenous dispossession and erasure. And as an articulation seemingly directed towards diverse, semi-sympathetic readers—tribal and non-tribal, ancestral and future—Potiguara’s text reproduces some of these readers’ cultural practices and memories and, through the pleasure and evocations offered by the text, some of those readers’ capacity to return to the work of survivance.

As a gendered remapping of settler spatiality and temporality (Goeman, 2013), the multi-directional points of the collage indicate a dense history and sense of spacetime produced by

forced migration, gendered violences, as well as indigenous cosmologies and resistance. For instance, the brief verse *Agonia dos Pataxós / Agony of the Pataxós* articulates this sense of dislocation:

“Às vezes / Me olho no espelho / E me vejo tão distante / Tão fora de contexto! / Parece que não sou daqui / Parece que não sou desse tempo.” // “At times / I look at myself in the mirror / And I see myself so distant / So out of context! / It seems I am not from here / It seems I am not of this time.” (60)

Significantly voicing the indigenous gaze upon the indigenous self, through the mediating apparatus boundary of the mirror, the verse articulates the internalization of the colonial gaze in understanding the paradigmatic expunged Indian as simulation. But given the verse’s placement in the collage, it also cues the reader to hear the narrative assertion of ongoing colonization, i.e. of settler colonialism as not event but structure (Wolfe, 2006), that marks this particular set of displaced migrants as specifically tribal within the nation. This predicament necessitates the creation of new indigenous spaces, via re-collectivization and mixed-genre narration, as demonstrated by the longer verse piece *Uni-ão / UNI (União das Nações Indígenas) // Union (UNI (Union of Indigenous Nations))*. (62) Here, the poetic refrain of offer (“o que tenho pra te oferecer amigo” // “what do I have to offer you my friend”) accompanies a poetic refrain of indigenous solidarity in the face of war (“Enquanto bebo tua fonte que me espera . . . enquanto sugo de teus olhos uma velha história? . . . enquanto me aqueço no calor de tuas mãos?”) (62) via the reproductive solace of friendship. A refuge of alternative space and sustenance emerges, one that the speaker locates within himself:

“Amigo, tu moras no fundo de minh’alma / E o que tenho pra te oferecer?” // “Friend, you live at the base of my soul / And what do I have to offer you?” (62)

Indigenous im/materialities are mapped here within indigenous bodies and souls, in contrast to the colonial imaginary produced by nation-making narratives of Brazilian *mesticagem* and Indian disappearance (Guzmán, 2013) from the physical body of the nation; and the reciprocal return meditated on by the refrain is the offer of supportive resistance to such disappearance:

“... garra luta . . . gratidão . . . pra [nuva] desvencer . . . pra nunca desmerecer . . . // “. . . drive . . . fight . . . gratitude . . . so that [nothing loses] . . . so that nothing loses value (62)

Rather than fracture, the materialization of solidarity across tribal lines serves as a micro-example of the macro-suturing operating through the genre collage. Thus, the poem simultaneously narrates the re-mapping of spaces of indigenous belonging and embodies this within the body of the collage, which names and collects multiple tribal voices: *Tocantins de Sangue, Agonia dos Pataxós, Pakararu, Sepé Tiaraju, Velho Índio*.

Chapter 6: Entangled Bodies

The close of Chapter 6 is a poem aptly titled *Terra* or *Earth*, and is addressed by an unknown narrator to the general figure of a macaw or *as araras*. Right away, the birds lift from the language of the poem via color (*verde-amarela-azul e branca!!/ green-yellow-blue-and white!*), musicality (*de tantos gritos, de tantos gestos // of such cries, of such gestures*), and motion (*te vi voando / solta / livre / pelos ares // I saw you flying / alone / free / through the air*)

(130). The physicality of these themes affirm the materiality emphasized in the title, *Terra*—in a condensed narration that reveals the stakes of indigenous freedom, macaw liberty, and territorial integrity to be entangled stakes. In other words, liberty is imagined not as an abstraction but as an embodied teleology of liberation in which endangered indigenous bodies are fed, homed, and allowed to travel freely in the end. The selection of the macaw carries metaphorical and historical weight in this regard, as a creature on the verge of extinction in many parts of Brazil, as well as a symbol of indigeneity in the iconography of Brazil (Martins Teixeira, 2017). In that cultural imaginary, the arara might be the tribe itself, the anthromorphized clan of araras, and/or the wild indigene. What is certain, from both the poem’s title and these closing lines, is that these possible meanings of the arara(s) are materially entangled with the land and embodied liberty:

“Eras tu mesma / minha terra querida!” // “It’s you yourself / my dear land!” (130)

As counterpoint to this scaling of the figure of the land, upon the small, fragile body of a bird, is the chapter’s scaling move at the start. There, Jurupiranga is shown as moving across multiple spacetimes that span continents and centuries, a plot trajectory that scales the figure of land up into the planetary and transhistorical. The section opens with this clear key to scale:

“Viajou presente, passado e futuro. / He traveled the present, past, and future.” (128)

Using this key, we pass with Jurupiranga through an essentially historic overview of indigenous experience in Brazil from a specifically tribal viewpoint. Significantly, that panorama of alter-history opens with indigenous enslavement, continues with war, and closes with pan-tribal resistance and the reclamation of ancestral land:

“Quando chegaram ao povoado dos colonos, viram centenas de indigenas de outras tribos escravizadas . . . nesses seculos, Jurupiranga, com sua lingua, combatia os inimigos, tornando-se um guerreiro sem terras, andarilho e solitário . . . Jurupiranga, despertando . . . o poema Terra.” // When they returned to the people of the colonies, they saw thousands of indigenous peoples from other tribes enslaved . . . in these decades, Jurupiranga, with his language, fought the enemies, turning himself into a warrior without lands, roving and solitary . . . Jurupiranga, awakening . . . the poem Terra.” (127-130)

Such a grand scaling, in contrast to the figure of the land compressed into the arara, affectively registers as the momentum of yearning for return that drives the plot and, relatedly, the themes of indigenous dispossession, resistance, and return—as the chapter title states (*Combatividade e Resistência / Combat and Resistance*). But I also want to suggest, in line with Mishuana Goeman’s arguments about the geopolitics of narrative space and the spatial politics inherent to de/coloniality, that there is a de/colonial subtext to this counterpointing of scale. One is that, in traversing multiple spacetimes, Jurupiranga is not fettered by the linear boundedness of settler colonial spacetime. Remember that, in variations of this settler spatiotemporality in Brazil as well as the U.S., the figure of the Indian must be contained and absented for the sake of national development and progress. Jurupiranga’s “wild” travels resist the necropolitics underwriting this bounded and linear spatiotemporality—a decolonial narrative depiction that imagines Jurupiranga’s resistance in this sense to crucially culminate in the chapter’s epiphany--pan-tribal resistance, return, and victory:

“Como num sopro divino e nas asas de luz e do amor seguiu firme adentrando sua aldeia—*sua nação indígena*—totalmente refeita come a força da *consciência do povo*.” // “As in the divinations and wings of light and

love, he continued firmly entering his aldeia—*his indigenous nation*—completely remade with the force of the *people's consciousness*.” (130)

A final note on form and language: while this chapter, like the other chapters, appears to use the postmodern literary techniques of collage (of prose and verse sections), the prose section itself appears to use modernist techniques. The prose deploys stream-of-consciousness, a panoramic view of war and ruin, and the individual's forced alienation from both national and tribal societies. However, I am reluctant to read the entire aesthetic of the chapter as fixedly modernist or postmodernist. A reductive categorization as modernist neglects the optimistic arc of the narrative, one that is also decidedly not a break from “the past” of tribal tradition, but understands past preservation as a fundamental part of indigenous futurity. And reductive categorization as postmodernist risks [reproducing the Indian as simulation (Vizenor, 2010), a cultural tendency that has worked across national contexts to posit tribal peoples as present absence.

A New Materialist reading—specifically one that champions the human agency of tribal subjects and also the vital agency of non-human subjects—seems more capacious in accommodating the text's multiple aesthetic modes. It explains much of the placement and thematics of the closing portion of the chapter, *Terra*, as the entanglement of im/materialities in a teleological embodiment of indigenous liberation; it permits for a quantum-like point of view traversing spacetimes, in the middle of the chapter, that lends plausibility to this tribal imaginary; and it illuminates the collective disintegration, at the level of political economy, cultural integrity, and individual psyche, that propels the start of the chapter. A synecdochal teleology thus emerges with a New Materialist sensibility: destruction-recomposition-birth. The entanglement of peoples and land are evident throughout the vast middle section in which

Jurupiranga sees both ensnared with each other, by the forces of capitalist greed and (neo)colonialism:

Caminhando muito mais, viu indígenas trabalhando nas minas de Potosi, viu a colonização pelo estanho, pelo ouro, pela prata, pelo carvão, pela macaxita . . . latex . . . Viu a água do planeta ser contaminada e despendisada . . . Jurupiranga estava no topo do mundo e dessa aldeia podia ver o quão grandioso era a Terra e os próprios territórios por onde passava. Seu casco era grosso, sua alma de ferro, suas mãos de aço. Sua voz e sua consciência eram de ouro e seu olhar sábio era de diamante!” // “Walking much more, he saw indigenous peoples working in the mines of Potosi, saw colonization by iron, gold, silver, coal, [macaxita] . . . latex . . . He saw the planet’s water being contaminated and [lost] . . . Jurupiranga was on top of the world and from this aldeia he could see how large was the Earth and his own territories through which he passed. His skull was thick, his soul made of iron, his hands of steel. His voice and his conscience were made of gold and his wise gaze of diamond! (127-8)

New Materialism appears as a frame that visibilizes, beyond theorizations that understand these descriptive passages as outlining capitalist and (neo)colonial violences threatening to eradicate both tribal and planetary survival, Jurupiranga’s body as comprised of the sought-after objects of these processes. Iron, steel, gold, and diamonds. But rather than being mere collage of the raw materials of capitalist processes, Jurupiranga’s bodily transformation, in a narration of his becoming-warrior on behalf of tribal lands and peoples, illustrates a suit of armor that embodies his bond with the mineral marrow of the land.

Chapter 3: Post-Humanist Marks

The last chapter I read here is the one most directly speaking to this dissertation chapter’s concern with Fourth World feminist articulations. Titled *Ainda a Insatisfação E a Consciência de Mulher Indígena // Still the Dissatisfaction and Conscience of the Indigenous Woman*, the chapter works through a definitional description of indigenous women’s resistance that is anchored in the ethnocide and genocide of tribal peoples, their subaltern resistance, and a feminist telos oriented towards collective audibility and resurrection. The hybrid chapter—also

opening with prose, also closing with poems—consistently emphasizes these themes, implicitly asserting a particularist embodiment of “woman” historically and materially shaped by coloniality/modernity. The additional dimension shaped by coloniality/modernity is spiritual, in accordance not only with a NAIS understanding of tribal cosmology as important to an indigenous sense of history but in accordance with other chapters examined here. Tribal cosmology has been presented as a core feature of depicted indigenous communities’ strategies of survivance, and also as complementing a New Materialist reading of the entanglement between indigenous im/materialities, whether these be human, non-human, or the land. Thus the “woman” represented here is configured through historical and material processes but, crucially, via spiritual practice that arguably distinguishes Fourth World feminist articulations from prior waves of feminist thought. As in other chapters, that practice is posited as tribally specific and at odds with evangelizing, colonizing imperatives, thus marking the historical and material processes at play even in the spiritual dimension articulated in this figuration of woman.

Significantly, the body and mind of Cunhataí, the novel’s archetypal indigenous female character, is described in its synecdochal spacetime hybridity. A body made up of various earthly aspects and a mind that traverses indigenous spaces of resistance to project an alternative futurity, the figure of Cunhataí resonates with paradigms of mind-body entanglement in New Materialism and alternative temporalities in NAIS:

“Cunhataí tem os olhos de agua, Cunhataí tem a memoria dos elefantes. Cunhataí tem as pernas de uma alce, velozes como as eguas. Cunhataí vislumbra o novo, apesar da sua angústia e quer saber onde está o seu amor . . .” // “Cunhataí has eagle eyes, Cunhataí has elephant memory. Cunhataí has elk legs, speeds like mares. Cunhataí glimpses the new, despite her anguish and wants to know where is her love . . .” (70)

In contrast to the animalized indigenous woman (not in the sense of discounting human animality but “animal” as hierarchizing figure demarcating the threshold between the privileged Human and the racialized non-Human), Cunhataí as indigenous female archetype is the synecdochal embodiment of hybrid materialities. The metaphorization of eagle, elephant, elk, and mare as figures of animal power; the partial compression of interdependent ecological lives; the fantastic/al reconstruction of multiple vitalities channeled towards collective resistance. The text explains this strange onto-epistemology in a preceding phrase figuring Cunhataí herself as synecdoche for all indigenous women in Brazil:

“Na realidade, a simbologia de Cunhataí demonstra o compromisso que ela tem com todas as mulheres indígenas do Brasil. Sua dor, sua insatisfação e consciência de mulher é a mesma trazida pelas mulheres guerreiras dos tempos atuais, que ora se organizam.” // “In reality, the symbol of Cunhataí demonstrates the compromise that she has with all indigenous women in Brazil. Her pain, her dissatisfaction and conscience as woman is the same brought by warrior women from contemporary times, who now organize.” (69-70)

Cunhataí’s human body is thus composed, via the language of metaphor rather than simile or metonymy, of visibly valued non-human parts, racialized Others, and their attributes. Her abilities and affects significantly traverse multiple spacetimes, an emotional body composed of the painful past as well as decolonial desire. “Onde está o seu amor” // “where is her love” is a question that propels that emotional body, a rhetorical synecdoche for the narrative trajectory towards Cunhataí and Jurupiranga’s reunion at the end of the novel.

The remainder of that brief paragraph of prose depicts Cunhataí’s spacetime crossings through various landscapes, the hybridity of both her traversals and her body as rooted in coloniality/modernity:

“Cunhataí sai pelas matas, pelos ceus, pelos rochedos, pelas montanhas, rios e lagos buscando suas raízes fragmentadas e fragilizadas pelo colonizador de todos os tempos. Viaja pelo espaço e vai percebendo, como num filme, as histórias de outras mulheres, de outros guerreiros, crianças, velhos e velhas ou viuvos(as).” // “Cunhataí leaves through forest, through skies, through cliffs, through mountains, rivers, and lakes looking for her roots fragmented and made fragile by the colonizer of all times. She travels through space and goes perceiving, as in a film, the histories of other women, of other fighters, children, elders or widow(er)s.” (70)

The colonizer of all times, perhaps the matrix of power that is coloniality/modernity or a synecdochal archetype of the colonizing figure in contrast to figures like Jurupiranga and Cunhataí, is responsible for the fragmentation and fragility of dispossessed tribal peoples. Rather than fragmentation, thematically and aesthetically, being the (Jamesonian) postmodern logic of late capitalism, it is asserted here as the condition of the still-colonized subject. Presumably then, hybridity is a strategy towards some sort of decolonial wholeness that neither erases the violent fracturing enacted and sustained by colonization nor denies the complicity of late capitalism in aggravating this deterioration: “Ela vai testemunhando a destruição das terras, a poluição dos rios, o saque das riquezas minerais.” // “She continues testifying to the destruction of lands, the pollution of rivers, the sacking of mineral wealth.” (70)

But the hybridity that most marks the passage is the mark upon Cunhataí’s own face, the literal birthmark that functions also as a figurative mark of her ancestry, and that opens the chapter. It is described as:

“o lado direito que quase morreu. So ficou roxo como uma marca, “um sinal” e sobreviveu para ouvir os espíritos, os antepassados as velhas mulheres enrugadas pelos séculos.” // “the right side that almost died. It just stayed purple as a mark, “a sign” and survived to hear the spirits, the ancestors and the old women wrinkled through the centuries.” (67)

With one side marked and another unmarked, Cunhataí's face thus appears itself "mixed," a material narrative figure that performs work in several areas critical to the novel's formulation of indigeneity. First, Cunhataí's hybrid face embodies the ancestral hybridity not solely the provenance of mestizos, troubling both the myth of evolutionary progress encoded in mestizagem and liberal colonial notions of the authentic Indian. Second, what is unusually foregrounded in this hybridity are not phenotypic markers of upper caste heritage (color, white features, Iberian assimilation) that would make *casta* mobility more likely, but the mark of attempted indigenous erasure and yet indigenous survivance. Specifically, the narrative that precedes this quote describes how Cunhataí's mother attempted to abort Cunhataí, as part of her general despair around indigenous collective life. But because Cunhataí's grandmother intervened, the abortion was modified in effect. Cunhataí was still born but with the right side of her face thus marked; and her mother, for a period, became mute and blind. In contrast to the mother's blindness, Cunhataí is overmarked by a frightening capacity for sight:

"A semente ferida e mutilada nasceu triste e com uma estrela no olho direito." / "The hurt and mutilated seed was born sad and with a star in the right eye." (67)

It is that expanded capacity for sight marked by this star, and for hearing ("ouvia os espíritos da mata" // "she heard the spirits of the jungle," 67) that terrifies Cunhataí's mother into the attempted abortion. But it is those same capacities, and the physical markedness on Cunhataí's body, that assures her legibility and integration into the indigenous collective; for this is how the elder leaders recognize Cunhataí's ancestry and her destiny:

“O seu olho direito roxo . . . foi identificado pelos líderes . . . o pássaro que *anuncia*.” // “the purple right eye . . . was identified by the leaders . . . the bird that *announces*.” (68)

In this final enunciation of her mark, Cunhataí materially fulfills a prophecy analogizing her as that animal figure capable of declarative speech. The two types of work that the material figure of Cunhataí’s hybrid face perform in the novel—a politicized hybridity and a foregrounded indigeneity—emphasize the most important aspect of this figure: the indigenous aspect of Cunhataí’s hybrid face as stigma. Simultaneously purple mark, star in eye, and omen of her capacity for over-seeing/hearing/speaking, Cunhataí’s birthmark distinguishes her as apart from other women, regardless of ancestry, but remains deeply entangled with a specifically tribal history. Her purple half is residue of an attempted abortion that might be read as metaphor for attempted indigenous genocide, the star in her eye might be understood as the resulting capacity for insight and panoramic sight, for charting a collective path to liberation; and it is this stigmatic marker of a personal and collective history—past, present, and future—that legitimates her as *indio* and as *pássaro* to the tribal elders. Thus the mark of stigma works as part of the novel’s commentary on indigeneity and raciality in, what I argue here and in other chapters, is a commentary on caste markers. To repeat here, if caste is understood as a material practice of differential stigma, then Cunhataí’s birthmark as bodily stigma, which simultaneously signals her personal and collective past as well as ensures her tribal integration, is the novel’s transformative narration of *casta* differentiation, as enacted by coloniality/modernity, transcribed onto Cunhataí’s body.

It is also a New Materialist rendering of indigenous materiality that stands in contrast to representationalist modes, as (re)exhibited in the passage that immediately follows. There, in a political gathering of pan-tribal peoples (1988, an actual historical event), indigenous peoples

have painted their faces as if they were at war (“como se fôssemos para a guerra . . . Ailton Krenak pintou o rosto de jenipapo.” // “as if we were going to War . . . Ailton Krenak painted his face as a macaw,” 68). The individual/collective interface here is distinct; this time, in a scene of indigenous demands from the colonial state, indigenous peoples must perform an “authentic” Indian identity to render their identities, and thus their demands, legible to the liberal settler state. In an echo of many NAIS scholars’ commentary on indigenous radical alterity in the face of national modernity and on the incommensurability of indigenous speech within liberal colonial registers (Byrd, Povinelli, Deloria, Vizenor, Guzman, etc.), indigenous peoples appear performatively here in a scene posited as battleground. Even the well-known indigenous scholar-leader, Ailton Krenak, performs this display for the state—significantly as that animal figure of human-like speech, the macaw—and significantly, the passage closes with failure. Indigenous demands are largely unmet, even under the socialist regime of Lula. The failure of representationalist politics and orthodox Marxist politics for tribal peoples is, it is suggested, situated in a failure to acknowledge and thus redress an aspect of indigenous materiality irreducible to labor/capital conflict and incommensurable within liberal colonial registers hearing only the performative Indian that is also the disappearing or assimilating Indian—and that is a materiality and history grounded in the triad/triage of land-body-coloniality/modernity: “avançou-se pouco no que se refere as conquistas.” / there was little progress in terms of the conquests.” (69)

Ao Naga Memo(i)r/ies

Starting in the year of Indian independence from Britain (1947), the Nagas began their long-running insurgency for sovereignty and independence from the neo-colonial rule of the Indian state. Insurgent outfits in every other Northeast state would follow suit, variously demanding greater Center investment, demilitarized rule, and complete independence (Bhaumik, 2015). But the Nagas maintain the distinction of not only being the first to protest Indian rule but also one of the most strategically unique in organizing pan-ethnic solidarity. Although officially sixteen tribes with distinct languages and customs, the Nagas formed a pan-tribal “entity” and pidgin lingua franca (Nagamese) to evolve an oppositional identity to neo/colonial rule (1918, 1951) (Daniel, 2013). The writer Temsula Ao, whose rich body of fiction, pays deft emotional attention to the effects of the insurgency, is also notable for her non-fiction writings that ethnographically take up the complexity of modern Naga life. I read her recent memoir here to examine the experience of a tribal, particularly Naga, voice against a backdrop of hegemonic Assamese and mainland Indian societies, and also to think through any fourth world feminist inflections made im/possible via the generic parameters of memoir. As with Potiguara’s work, I particularly read for a place-specific account of coloniality/modernity, the notion of the tribal woman as gendered radical alterity, and for indigenous-specific reconfigurations of New Materialism and time. And I argue that, through the memoir’s cachet as a genre trafficking in “authenticity” and as a non-fiction subgenre focused on event rather than linearity, Ao recalibrates traditional notions of the naked Naga in the “post”-colonial imaginary, of supposedly forward-moving progress for low-caste citizens, and of the male bildungsroman averse to questions of difference beyond race and class.

Historicizing Ao's memoir in Indian state-Naga relations requires naming the militaristic violence that has so defined the Northeast, to the detriment of fuller narratives about an incredibly heterogeneous region (Sanjib Baruah, 2009). In a 1986 report, *The Naga Nation and its Struggle Against Genocide*, issued by the International Working Group in Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), estimates on the number of Naga deaths at the hands of the Indian Army run as high as 100,000; and details of army violence range from electric torture to imprisonment to burning villages to particularly degrading forms of rape to incentivizing Nagas to soldier against other Nagas. Nagaland, as well as the greater Northeast region that was once placed under the umbrella category "Assam," was the first post-colonial region placed under military governance (1958), as articulated by the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, an enduring law that grants the Indian army expanded powers in the Northeast. Within this set of powers are the right to shoot upon suspicion, the right to search homes without a warrant, and army impunity from prosecution. I couple a reading of the Foucauldian state's biopolitical governance here with frames drawn from Marxism, Critical Race Studies, and Caste Studies. These additionally legitimize such necropolitical practices of power to be formulated and enacted through politicized geographic difference (center-periphery, the "frontier"), through colonial apparatuses inherited from the British (in relation to ruling the Irish) that consolidates economic extraction from a resource-rich region, and through a persistent racial colonial imaginary that delineates the "savage" or "out/caste" in order to legitimate foreshortening their life/chances.

Ao's memoir, *Once Upon a Life: Burnt Curry and Bloody Rags*, is divided into three parts that I read in a manner similar to Potiguara's text: tracking chapter-specific themes. While the collective chronology of the sections follows the form of a feminized bildungsroman—childhood, education, then married life—I argue that the text teems with underlying temporalities

that challenge the liberal telos of Enlightenment progress, from tribal savage to civilized subject. Thus I draw upon conceptualizations of persistent subaltern lifeworlds, as in Chakraborty's description of History 2 under the History 1 of capital, the Subaltern Studies Collective's call to read for the figure obscured in traditional historiographic writings, and NAIS and New Materialist assertions around, relatively, decolonial and alternative temporalities. For beneath the neat telos, and continually signalled by crises in belonging and specters of political violence, there are temporalities that harken to *both* prior and present of Ao Naga tribal life, to the disjuncture between the tribal subjects' place within the Indian national polity, and to the steganography of caste coded in particular tropes: un/cleanliness, the fragile consanguinity of the orphan, and the struggle towards modernity as represented by historical and linguistic il/legibility. The first section, which narrates the familial dissolution that turns Ao into an impoverished orphan, thus emphasizes her kinlessness throughout, in a post-1947 text that early on references the Naga insurgencies against Indian rule. The second section, which narrates Ao's experience in an Assamese boarding school, is at once a feminist articulation of her entrance into womanhood and a complex subaltern herstory of Ao's navigation of non-tribal and mainstream Indian norms. And the final section, which narrates the bumpy and surprising journey of Ao the married woman, professor, and author, expands the geopolitical scale of Ao's mobility in strokes that re-define *indigeneity* within an affective and literary landscape that emerges as *already worlded*.

The three themes that fill Ao's first section, "Childhood," illustrate the duress not only of her childhood but of the socioeconomic conditions tied to the orphaning, the poverty, and the caste/labor hierarchies depicted. That is, Ao's account of childhood is shot through with an acute sense of the fraught relationship between the Nagas and the Indian state, between her father's

clan and rival clans, between tribals and non-tribals under Assamese hegemony in the Northeast. Against this complex backdrop, Ao's early loss of both parents reads as a casualty of Global South, regional, and tribal poverty and possibly war: her father bled to death unexpectedly from a removed tooth and her grief-stricken mother died nine months later, technically from surgical stitches that became infected. The sudden loss is unremarkable in the annals of subaltern lives, not only in Northeast India but across the Global South. I'd like to push this depiction of tenuous consanguinity further in asserting Ao's narrative trope of her orphan status as metaphor for the Naga subject's position in the newly post-colonial Indian nation-state. The metaphoric force of this trope accumulates through key details—some details historicizing her grand/parents' public political engagement within the anti-colonial movement (re: British rule), other details making concrete the Naga subjects' peripheral dis/location within emerging democratic liberal modernity.

Section 1: Naga Orphan & Tribal Value

The orphaning with which Ao opens the "Childhood" portion of her memoir serves as a narrative metaphor for the Naga subject's position within the newly post-colonial Indian nation-state. These metaphorized features—kinlessness, fragile consanguinity, and the ironic falsity of Christian promises of resurrection—accentuate the second-class citizenship that has marked "post"-colonial Naga experience under mainland Indian cultural hegemony, AFSPA governance, and the missionary presence that sought to elevate Naga status while additionally marking them off from a majority caste-Hindu populace. These and other features additionally resonate with caste tropes I trace in Chapter V's caste-themed Indian novels. That is, fragile consanguinity, notions of im/purity, and an im/material culture of stigma are caste tropes that appear in the

opening chapter of Ao's memoir, locating her central tribal characters at the bottom of caste hierarchy, regardless of shifting class position. Thus, the narrative choice of orphaning in Ao's memoir, a genre that emphasizes politically and emotionally-laden event over linear, biographical-style historicization, does the deliberately political work of performing post/colonial and caste commentary.

If the indigenous figure of the mother is read as the classic symbol of indigenous culture and kinship unit, then Ao's early loss of her mother, following upon the strange, sudden loss of her father, a figure that is itself a classic symbol for patriarchal authority such as clan leadership, tribal sovereignty, and the indigenous state—then Ao's simultaneous early loss can be read as a related loss of, first, indigenous Naga sovereignty under “post”-colonial Indian independence and, second, “traditional” Naga modes of cultural reproduction. The death scenes connected to the figure of the father is shrouded in the political minutiae of village clan codes and rivalries, not the least of which is each side's allegiance within the anti-colonial, Quit India movement. Ao's father is rumored to be a Gandhian supporter; the rival clan has contacts among the British political elite. The Naga father is thus configured as symbol of a long-running, anti-colonial ethos, and while his views on Naga sovereignty within the post-colonial Indian nation-state are not broached, Ao's positioning of her father as a proto-anti-colonialist intimates the Naga sentiment and insurgency shadowing the remainder of the novel. More significantly, Ao uses this political stance as a synecdochal move, at once indicating her father's moral repertoire and, relatedly, its origin in Naga village identity:

“Father took pride in his own ‘sense of self’ and derived his moral strength from the belief that no power on earth could deprive him of his history, heritage and rightful place in society . . . Our parents did not leave us any material legacy; but what we inherited from them is this priceless sense of belief in our intrinsic worth. And if there

is any lesson to be learnt from their ordinary lives, it is this: political power may prevail for a time, what money can buy is always relative; they all pass. But the truth about lineage and heritage on the other hand is unassimilable and is therefore incorruptible by unscrupulous men and their machinations.” (35)

Ao develops this synecdochal emphasis further when describing other events defining her father’s life, such as his argument with his medical supervisor that ironically won the supervisor’s favor, such as the fear and hostility he inspired in a rival clan, which becomes a legacy Ao’s mother must negotiate. Ao locates the source of these events in her father’s integrity which she further traces back to rootedness in Naga tribal identity. Her father not only remained deeply connected to this origin, despite having been politically exiled to Jorhat, Assam, but strove to keep his children connected to ancestral village life and history. In effect, Ao elaborates, via the language of synecdoche, on her broader understanding of value and integrity. That is, in her Naga father’s case, the integrity that gave him value in her and others’ eyes derived from a commitment to his Naga tribal identity, an identity she describes as synecdochal to his social status, as steganography to his person:

“As I reflect on this aspect of his life in the ‘alien’ land, I have gained an insight that is relevant to all: to every life lived on this earth, there is an inner context, the context of a person’s birth and heritage, no matter how obscure or insignificant it may seem to an outsider. He is both a product of and subject to this truth. The person’s life is lived out, be it in his own environment or an alien one, like that of my father’s, with this intrinsic context, and the worth of that life is eventually measured in terms of the person’s integrity to the context.” (31)

This “inner context”—i.e. a subject’s origin story—becomes a synecdochal move within the text explicating the subject’s relation to a broader material entity that is at once trans-corporeal and trans-temporal. It also becomes the material through which Ao recalibrates value

according to a fourth world feminist metric. Rather than the Marxist framing of value as socially necessary labor time, it is political commitment to indigenous heritage that legitimizes and generates value to the fourth world feminist subject(s). These definitions of value are not easily reconciled, as Povinelli has noted in arguing for considerations of cultural economy that would recuperate value for indigenous life and labor (Povinelli, 1993). One entails the legitimization of value under capitalism, as captured in the commodity (that paradoxical congealment of both use and exchange value); another entails the legitimization of value that is material for tribal subjects outside the circuits of labor/capital, thus emphasizing the significance of *indigenous difference* as ontoepistemology.

Another account/event offering an alternative economy of value focuses on Ao's mother's gracious response to the deceased father's rivals. That response, I argue, also evokes an alternative economy of value beyond that articulated by Marxist theory, an economy more akin to Povinelli's notion of cultural economy and Karatani's notion of modes of exchange (Karatani, 2014). Specifically, that alternative economy of value revolves around a cultural understanding of honor, grievability, and tribal reciprocity that Ao asserts as intrinsic to the Ao Naga way of life:

“Death is the moment signaling the cessation of hostilities and in the old days, anyone coming across a dead body in the jungle, be it friend or foe, was morally bound to transport it to the deceased's family. Failure to do so would result in severe stricture from the village authorities and there would be the inevitable fine . . .

. . . I consider it a day of great significance for our family, when through her humanitarian gesture of extending to the ‘enemy’ the temporary hospitality of her kitchen, mother was able to impose this legacy of moral debt on behalf of her husband's clan on the offspring of his rival for all time to come.” (34-5)

Even though the rival clan fails to meet this reciprocal obligation of honoring the dead, instead celebrating the death of Ao's father, her mother returns the tradition-breaking slight with a tradition-complying offer of succor and support. Thus the moral debt the mother (that gendered symbol of indigenous culture) generates exists outside the circuits of labor/capital, as narrated by Ao; her reproductive labor, as feminist Marxists would name the mother's work, is performed on behalf of reproducing Ao tribal tradition rather than the dead worker's vitality. In other words, this is reciprocal obligation as mode of exchange (Karatani, 2014), characteristic of the very tribal society Ao names. It is within the terms of value and power relations laid out by such a mode that Ao's mother establishes her moral superiority over the father's enemies. This narrative line, if extended in a metaphoric direction as I've done for Ao's orphan status as Naga subject in the Indian nation-state, additionally suggests the salience of tribal systems alongside other systems such as capitalism, semi-feudalism, race/caste hierarchy, etc. That is, Ao's mother's gesture represents a subaltern History 2 underneath the official History 1 of capital and "post"-coloniality written into Indian historiography. That History 2, made legible via the generic emphasis on event and memory particular to memoir, reveals in Ao's mother's gesture a tribal mode of exchange (reciprocity) that is also an alternative economy of value. Despite the tribal affiliation that relegates her to the bottom of Indian caste hierarchy, despite the widow status that queers her within norms of Indian femininity and heteronormativity, despite the second-class citizenship accorded to the Northeastern periphery of the Indian nation-state, this alternative economy of value manages to recuperate dignity and accrue a moral debt claimed by Ao's mother.

Additionally, the nine months between Ao's parents' passing registers, in the generic context of memoir and particularly this first section, "Childhood," as a birthing of Ao's new

status as orphan, personally and politically. Ao also emphasizes this trope through the ironic juxtaposition of her mother's funeral close to Easter Sunday, the day when Naga Christians celebrate the resurrection of Christ. In her recounting of the complex emotional weight of these recurring dates, Ao points out that the ironic temporal juxtaposition continues to render the sacred day devoid of meaning, a confession whose political undertones trouble the linear narrative of progress underwriting Nagaland's political inclusion in India and the Nagas' emancipatory conversion to Christianity. If read symbolically, the coinciding dates of the funeral versus resurrection might also register as the disjointed temporalities of foreclosed tribal futurity versus European messianic time. Ao's judgment thus evinces what Dipesh Chakrabarty, in *Provincializing Europe*, has called the disruption of History 1's totalizing thrust by the fragmentary, elusive eruptions perpetuated by History 2. The "prior" that is Ao's mother's death/anniversary and is the tribal figure itself nevertheless manages, yearly, to trouble the transcendent present/future of Easter, and in a sense is immanent throughout a memoir that is profoundly shaped by this "prior," across its three bildungsroman sections and their liner configuring of past/present/future:

"And as I grew older and understood the full implication of the event, the day seems to have been divested of its religious significance, though I profess to be a Christian. Instead, it has acquired a negative symbolism as a day of great personal loss. Easter Sundays may not coincide with the date when mother died but the association of the two events still troubles me and I cannot help feeling depressed on the day which is supposed to be a day of rejoicing for all believers." (24)

It is at this point that I argue that Ao's fourth world feminist tinkering of temporality begins to emerge most forcefully. In its evocation of an alternative economy of value, one

entangled with tribal practices of reciprocity and tradition, in its consequent legibilization of a subaltern History 2 at play beneath official History 1, in its rendering of the affective impact of time as cyclic and haunting rather than linear and liberatory, Ao's focus on events that continually disrupt Enlightenment temporalities and that recalibrate linear temporality through tribal memory yield a more complex narrativization of Naga experience and resistance under neo/colonial rule—certainly than exists in nationalist post/colonial Indian historiography, a Marxist telos of the (tribal) peasant awaiting emancipation, or a Western liberal feminist telos culminating in the rights-bearing individual subject. And Ao's specifically gendered take—in this first section, narrating the father's commitment to Ao heritage in exile, the mother's commitment to traditional Ao reciprocity—renders this narrativization as a feminist one in its sensitivity to the dialectic between gender and de/coloniality within an evolving “post”/colonial India. That is, the two symbolic parent figures navigate the Naga post/colonial predicament through strategies gendered by tribal as well as hegemonic cultural prescriptions.

The other central tropes in this first chapter, “Childhood,” consists once again of caste and class markers. Ao's loss of her parents propels the economic duress that structures so much of the remaining first (and second) chapter(s). In particular, Ao meditates on the valences of hunger—physical, emotional, and social—that marked her orphaned childhood and that serves as a preliminary bildungsroman. It is hunger that most acutely materializes Ao's ejection from the haven of heteronormative, middle-class family life into adult socialities skewed by capitalism, caste, and gender roles. Ao recounts a childhood memory illustrating precisely this trajectory. At a doctor's feast in the hospital compound, a feast to which she and her brothers are not invited, the children nevertheless show up in the hopes of leftovers:

“ . . . at first we were ashamed to face the crowd, but the hunger was so overwhelming and the prospect of food so tempting that we shuffled our way to the line squatting on the ground and joined them in eating the food served by the lady. Of course the rice was from the bottom of the pot and slightly burnt.” (45)

The titular burnt curry of Ao’s memoir makes its first appearance in this key passage on hunger. That burnt curry, the dregs of the banquet served to invited guests, comes to signify the poverty of the Ao children, who no longer have parents to secure the income or care previously provided. The scene, of the children squatting and hiding, even as they hunger, delineates a family in shambles, a family attempting to camouflage their need. It also affectively delineates the nature of the children’s shame, which seeks but fails to pull off this cover and cannot reject the charity offered by the spectacle of upper middle-class conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1961):

“Even while we were eating, there was a nagging feeling in my mind about our presence in the company of the workers. Young though I was, I was aware of the sense of ‘shame’ in eating the food we were not invited for.” (45)

Beyond the explicit economic distress in this passage, I additionally read caste overtones. There are, once again, the tropes of: fragile consanguinity as represented by the orphaned children, the im/material culture of stigma and commensality as represented by the camouflaged begging and burnt curry. It is also a scenario of hunger that takes on other aspects across the memoir, appearing in a comparative passage on Ramadan and again in a comparative passage on the hostel kitchen workers, that meditates on the multiplicity of subaltern hunger. Ao’s startling realization, after learning from a Muslim classmate about the ritual fasting of Ramadan, that

there are chosen versus involuntary forms of hunger is a revelatory moment. It accentuates the economic misery of the orphaned Ao children—“ . . . it amazes me to realize how one type of hunger had so much significance whereas the hunger we experienced seemed so cruel and meaningless” (51)—and subtly metaphorizes, however problematically, the types of deprivations endured by two subalterns of the Indian nation-state: that is, the presumably middle-class but ultimate religious Other (the Muslim figure) versus the poor, orphaned tribal citizen-subject. Ao follows this revelation with a rumination on emotional hunger that she also subtly metaphorizes as the condition of the low-caste or untouchable subject:

“My only constant companion during that period was my younger brother . . . when we went to bed, (we slept on the same bed), a game would start innocuously like ‘don’t touch me. . . . the irritating touches would be exchanged until a retaliatory touch would become a hand slap . . . we would find ourselves in the middle of a genuine physical encounter with each other. This may have been because often we had to go to bed hungry or with very little food. Or some inner rage that sought release would make us behave in this manner at the slightest provocation.” (51)

The low-key re-enactment of socially stigmatized status in the private sibling “play” escalates into a more intense frequency of violence reminiscent of the (internalized) disciplinary violence integral to caste hierarchy. But most potent here in its delayed admission is the unexplained rage at the heart of the children’s “play.”

In contrast, in a larger school scene in which hunger is satiated by burnt curry, the kitchen workers’ appetite reframes burnt curry as delicacy:

“No matter: it was a prize for the cooks! After the curry was doled out, they would scrape the burnt rice from the bottom of the pot into the big karahi, where some burnt curry clung at the bottom, and mix the two and

make them into balls, one for each of the cooks. This was the coveted extra which made the onerous job of the cooks bearable!” (66)

Here, Ao again uses a framing of food, commensality, and hunger to articulate class and caste hierarchy. While relegated to service work within the social world of the boarding school, the presumably working-class kitchen workers are nevertheless shown to enjoy a level of pleasure and exercise techniques of power unavailable to the young Naga narrator, whose bildungsroman is driven by this exploration of multi-valenced hunger. The burnt curry balls are a treat for them and, when a student misbehaves, they can deprive her of the usual portion of untainted food. Class has relegated these workers to a shared experience of food with the Naga narrator but caste status and other markers of power are legitimized via their control over the food politics of that social world and the distinction between what the pleasure of the burnt curry remaining from the group meal signifies for the workers and the caste stigma it signifies for the orphaned tribal girl who, when attempting to cook for her orphaned siblings, too frequently proffers burnt curry as the group meal itself.

Finally, I close my reading of the first third of Ao’s memoir by honing in on two humble objects: the gramophone and the cloth fan. While Ao doesn’t spend much time on them, she does historicize her childhood—and its colonial context—by evoking the worlding function of the old-school gramophone and the colonial/caste labor hierarchy reified by the cloth fan. She likens the eventual abandonment of the gramophone to the dislocation of the Ao children’s lives, a simile that suggests the object status of the children in circuits shaped by neo/colonialism and capitalism, and accentuates the disposability of each object of comparison perhaps related to their “prior” status. The cloth fan, on the other hand, culls up colonial and caste labor

hierarchies—via a heavy device that must be worked by hand, and remains as a relic in rich homes:

“No one uses these contraptions anymore though a few more richly decorated ones can still be seen in old havelis around the country as ornamental furnishings in addition to modern fittings and also perhaps as reminders of the owners’ princely past. And the more ornate version of the kind of gramophone I remember has now become a collector’s item.” (56)

Although the woman worker of Ao’s memory refused to pull the cloth fan when the teacher was absent, although Ao asserts that such workers are no longer needed for these relics of comfort, the objects that are no longer commodities nevertheless circulate within the diegetic and “post”-colonial spaces as repositories of colonial and caste hierarchies (Freedgood, 2010). A mere metonymic glance at their brief mention in a (memoir) genre privileging event and object biography over linearity and commodity culture (Appadurai, 1986; Freedgood, 2010) yields an insight into the haunting endurance of the “prior”: childhood pleasures, colonial sound and sweat, and the imprint of work entangled with caste affiliations.

Section 2: Cast(e)ing & Worlding a Naga Bildungsroman

The substantive middle chapter of Ao’s memoir delves more deeply into the caste question, even though it is not explicitly named. I read the tropes marking Ao as (Naga) outsider within Assamese society as a commentary on social relations forming non/tribal/caste hierarchy, and the story of her friendship with a girl she does label a pariah as most poignantly evoking their shared subaltern predicament. The brief but rich depiction of their friendship is one among several mini-events that emphasizes gender as a powerful dimension of Ao’s memoir as

bildungsroman. What emerges is a fourth world feminist articulation of an Ao Naga girlhood marked by reminders of tribal/caste difference, a wry sensitivity to failures in meeting hegemonic norms of femininity, and a quiet sympathy with the numerous acts of gender rebellion and solidarity extended across the chapter. Finally, the accumulation of sundry details of hostel life subtly outline a sense of time that is not linear or flat but concavely worlded.

The friendship between Ao and an unnamed student is described in a brief section titled “Girl with the Creepy Hand” (112). Immediately, I highlight what seems a synecdochal move in Ao’s narrativization, in this case the girl’s unusual hand attached to and standing in for a stigmatized body Ao describes as a pariah body:

“Because of the superstition attached to her deformity, she became almost a pariah and no one wanted to pair with her on our outings. As a result, she remained aloof and distant from most of the girls” (113).

Ao’s evocation of the religious in this passage—both of the superstitious and the conjecture that “the creator had left an important part of her anatomy unfinished” (113)—is a meta-synecdoche that figuratively positions the unusual hand as an extension of Divine Lapse and that evokes the Manusmriti origin story metaphorizing the lowest castes (Shudras) as another appendage (feet) of Manu. What else works as meta-synecdoche in the figure of the unusual pariah hand is its connection to the numerous deformed and im/mobilized bodies of subalterns, particularly Dalits. For Ao follows the paragraph describing her friend’s body with a paragraph describing the hyperflexible legs of a baby boy seemingly born without bones:

“Obviously he could not crawl or sit up; he just lay there in his cot with a smile on his face . . . for that hapless little boy, his useless legs in a way had become his very plaything.” (113)

While Ao's take on the boy's misfortune refuses to sentimentalize, Roy's matter-of-fact depiction of Velutha's paralyzed brother's legs more bluntly asserts the metaphor of im/mobilized Dalit life/chances. Ao cannot, as girl narrator/character of the memoir as bildungsroman, assert this social-contextual knowledge; but she resonantly poses this question of *why*, describing the curiosity that prompts her to reach out her own hand in friendship, so to speak:

“I was totally overwhelmed by her problem; I wanted to know why and how this had happened to her.”
(113)

The poignant passage of the girls' connection that follows not coincidentally raise those historical tropes of un/touchability and commensality that I've traced in three post-1947 Indian novels. In one section, Ao describes an “undressing” in which, alone together in a room, the girl reveals her hand for Ao to touch and herself strokes Ao's face. The emotional tenor of a scene that is a literal and figurative reveal—the macabre tinge, the sensual delicacy, the vulnerable relief—more complexly embodies the affective life of the outcaste figure than might be possible outside a creative genre. And it powerfully if subtly legibilizes the steganography of caste lurking, as the private does under the public, within the ostensibly utopic world of hostel life:

“Frightened as I was by the sight of the stump I took a step backwards as if to avoid touching it. She chuckled and said, ‘It's alright, I am myself afraid of it sometimes.’ Then she did a strange thing, she stroked my face ever so gently with those tiny mock-fingers and began to cry. I put my arm around her and let her cry for sometime.” (114)

The parting gift between the girls is the delectable dessert of a laddoo, a round ball made in a typical Northeast Indian style of sesame seeds and brown sugar. The laddoo, a metonymic figure of the girls' friendship and the unusual hand, also evokes an exchange that articulates strictures around commensality defining caste hierarchy. Those strictures, which prohibit the communing of distinct caste groups around food, are ironically articulated here, in a literally and figuratively sweet exchange that cements the girls' shared out/caste status:

“She must have understood that I was suffering from a similar sense of alienation and reached out to a kindred soul for mutual comfort.” (115)

The second key aspect to Ao's bildungsroman, as it transpires in the hostel, is the narrative of worlding that inducts the tribal orphan into cast/e/d adult socialities, coloniality/modernity, and capitalist modernity. That is, hostel and school life expose Ao to those objects metonymically evoking the colonial enterprise that, first, labelled the Nagas savages and, second, expanded imperial trajectories that would track Ao into an Assamese boarding school. It is a bildungsroman, then, reproducing the liberal colonial narrative of progress, particularly for indigenous subjects: the induction into the space of literacy (the library) and its revelatory objects:

There were books of many kinds, essays, journals, magazines and illustrated books on science and atlases. But what attracted me most were back issues of *Time*, *Life* and *The National Geographic* magazines. Reading these helped me immensely with the English language as well as expanding my horizon of knowledge in so many different ways. The big illustrated atlases intrigued me, making me realize how big the world was and how varied. They showed me the wonderful flora, fauna and other resources of the continents and gave fascinating facts about each. When I went to the sections illustrating the mineral resources of different countries, the precious and semi-precious stones captivated my imagination and made me weave fantastic dreams of owning some of them one day! (99)

The journals, deploying the stereotypical and archaic version of the anthropological gaze as well as the logic of linear temporality, become a teaching apparatus inducting Ao into coloniality/modernity and capitalist relations. For one, they civilize her through Anglophone education and expand her sense of place and scale according to colonial cartographies of World. For another, the iconography of exploitable Nature and commodified minerals induct Ao into capitalist desires and metrics of value, colonial extraction, and ownership. The moment in the library that, for the Western non-tribal subject, might ordinarily be an anthropological window into indigenous lifeworlds is ironically reversed here; instead, the institution of literacy inducts the tribal Ao into the larger, non-tribal world as well as its literal and affective economy of colonial journeys and colonial desires.

This worlding that is central to Ao's childhood and adolescent years transpires in a hostel she describes as a kind of utopia. There is "no hierarchy" (158), the narrator recounts, and pinpoints the utopic roots of hostel life in its disciplinary code and educational achievement drive, rather than the decontextualized elements of class, caste, or tribal identity and status. The juxtaposition of Ao's cognitive worlding alongside the social idealization of the hostel space establishes a connection between the two that reads as reified colonial cosmopolitanism—i.e. Ao doesn't overtly address the colonial history underpinning the revelatory objects or explain how it is that no hierarchy exists among the hostel denizens admittedly marked by differences of class, caste, religion, etc. Instead, within the idealized space of the hostel, Ao implicitly argues for a double worlding: that of the fractious heterogeneity of Northeast Indian society and that of the Naga subject upon the colonial terrain of the planet. This cosmopolitanism, albeit reifying colonial knowledge production, makes clear Ao's investment in a Humanist, Hegelian temporality, i.e. a linear progress-oriented trajectory that worlds the adolescent Ao, through the

revelatory objects of the utopic hostel, into other spacetimes signifying the World that she, in the final chapter narrating her adult life, will join as professor and published author.

Ontological Spirals

“And the stories continued well into the night, moving from one person to the next about the house until the circle had been fully turned. Then the people slept. / But the telling was not complete. As the people slept there was one more story to be told, a story not of a beginning or an end, but marking only a position on the spiral.” (Grace, 180)

“Right then, I saw what the man saw as he turned and looked at the three of us and as my eyes met his eyes. I saw what he saw. What he saw was brokenness, a broken race. He saw in my Granny, my Mary and me, a whole people, decrepit, deranged, deformed. That was what I knew. That was when I understood, not only the thoughts of the man, but also I understood the years of hurt, sorrow and enslavement that fisted within my Granny Tamihana’s heart. I understood, all at once, all the pain that she held inside her small and gentle self. / And the pain belonged to all of us, I understood that too.” (102)

Patricia Grace’s canonical Maori novel, *Potiki*, was published in 1985, at the cusp of the neoliberal turn in New Zealand (Bargh, 2007). Chronicling the conflict between two Maori communities and a development company over a bid for ancestral Maori land, *Potiki* also narrates through form, plot, and cosmological references the ontological clash between (traditional) Maori ways of being-with-land and (capitalist) Pakeha ways of being-with-land. That is, the Maoris’ corporeal and spiritual entanglement with the land, which they defend as ancestral body and for its use value in subsistence, is at odds with that Pakeha invasion/privatization of land that constitutes the neo/colonial limbs of a global neoliberal turn. The novel itself never articulates this jargon, relying instead on a clear poetics that emotes the grief and greed of the ontological clash through a mix of “mythic” language, bi/cultural dialogue, and first-person narration. The novelistic space itself consists of chapters told by a range of voices—a pluralist form emphasizing the collective life of the depicted Maori community as well

as a narrative sequencing that resists linearity and instead loops around re-told events. These central narrative voices, belonging to the Kararaina-Tamihana family, move between the mother Roimata, the father Hemi, the son Tokowaru-i-te-Marama, and the daughter Tangimoana, each character signifying a play on a central Maori deity and thus foregrounding Maori cosmology as intrinsic to the novel's chronicling work on contemporary Maori life (DeLoughrey, 1999). I foreground the novel's explicit rendering of the Christ-like Toko as a figure gifted with second sight, in order to argue that his prophetic vision and premature death serve as meta-narrative for the novel's own prescience about neoliberalism's effects in New Zealand as reconfigured form of neo/colonialism.

My reading of Grace's formally inventive and politically brave novel pivots, therefore, on discussions of these as well as consistent chapter concerns around gender and caste. But first, I consider the ontological war that lies at the heart of the Maori-Pakeha conflict, a war that cannot be reductively characterized as epistemological differences over value and possession. Such a characterization regurgitates dualistic Cartesian logic and the colonial anthropological gaze upon indigenous subjectivity. Instead, I draw upon contemporary anthropology's ontological turn (de la Cadena, 2010; Blaser, 2010; Latour, 2002; Latour, 2013; Viveiros de Castro, 1988), in order to read for the fundamental gap in ways of being (in-land, in-community, in-time) that just as significantly drive the novel's Maori-Pakeha conflicts. Second, as part of this inquiry into Maori ontology, I look more carefully at the novel's articulation of the spiral, of second-sight, and of non-linear time. These articulations comprise a way of being that does not move linearly, on either a horizontal or vertical plane, but complexly traverses Maori spacetime through the modes of story, architecture, kinship, and knowing. Finally, I converse with Elizabeth DeLoughrey's rich reading of gender in *Potiki*, extending her focus on the postcultural to the ontological, to

suggest that the novel's re-tooling of gender roles in fact reifies the masculine (heroic resistance vs. neoliberal machinery) as the reproductive node of de/coloniality and consigns the feminine (divining Toko vs. pillaged land) to inert and foreclosed (tribal) futurity. In this sense, the feminine remains casted below the masculine, even as the novel sympathizes with Maori resistance against Goliath developers, and lays out a hierarchical positioning on both interpersonal and inter-communal scales. Finally, the Maori-Pakeha war is ultimately a caste war, even if that is nowhere explicitly named yet often evoked. Toko, as the possibly half-caste and certainly liminal child figure, prefigures the doomed possibilities for biculturalism and coalition within the caste war, as his demise by fire dramatizes neoliberal forces as the new nexus of political and economic power capable, once again, of incinerating precariously im/mobilized and casted lives.

I close this introduction by contextualizing the novel in New Zealand's historical relationship to settler/colonialism and to the recent expansion of neoliberal capitalism. That is, New Zealand stands as one of the significant geopolitical points of 18th c. imperial expansion, in Cook's voyage across the Pacific world (1768-1780)—part of the Enlightenment liberalism tracking Venus' transit and all that it signified. Jodi Byrd has theorized this global expedition as an imperial Worlding that generated an ontological, scientific, and political parallax, both in the difficult assessment of Venus' transit and in the difficult encounter between indigenous peoples and settler colonialists (Byrd, 2011). Which is to say, for the purposes of the ontological emphasis of my reading of *Potiki* and the novel's neo/liberal moment, the broader geotemporal context to which the novel's 20th c. ontological war gestures and with which it resonates is this 18th c. ontological parallax, a spiral-like Moebius at once troubling any "true" measure of Venus' transit and the imperial invasions it seemed to inaugurate. The neo/colonial event of

neoliberalism in New Zealand is dated, by Maria Bargh in her analysis of Maori resistance to neoliberalism's wrecking of Maori ontologies, to 1984 or a year before *Potiki*'s publication (Bargh, 2007). And Bargh hones in on the dimensions of neoliberalism, beyond its aggressive assertion of market supremacy and "freedom," that extend colonialism's paternalistic mapping over of indigenous ontoepistemologies (Bargh, 2007). Thus it is the cyclic incommensurability of this ontological clash, re-animated by the neoliberal encroachment *Potiki* chronicles, that I read as informing the de/colonial concerns of the novel:

"Neoliberal practices threaten Maori world-views, which understand the relationship between Maori and resources as diverse and holistic, rather than market based. For many Maori, if neoliberal ways of thinking cannot coexist alongside other world-views, but instead seek to dominate and colonise Maori world-views, then these practices must be resisted." (15)

House of Tipuna on the Living Land

"Our Uncle Stan spoke about foresight. 'We have our eyes,' he said, 'We have our eyes, and after years of trying to please others we're going on our own, and we can see. There's no lack of foresight, as you put it. It's because we have foresight that we will not ever, not ever, let the land go. Take away the heart, the soul, and the body crumbles.'" (97)

"The hills will be scarred for some time, and the beach front spoiled. But the scars will heal as growth returns, because the forest is there always, coiled in the body of the land. And the shores, the meeting places of the land and sea, if left will become clean again. We will put the boats out into clear water again and go for kahawai, moki and shark, and will put lines down for kelpie and cod. There will be good shellfishing again. There will be tuna to hang above the smoke fires." (169)

Land is one of the central earth-beings in *Potiki* (de la Cadena, 2016), Patricia Grace's un/timely novel about a Maori community fighting to save their subsistence gardens and ancestral territory from Pakeha privatization. It takes on an animate dimension that is not apparent or common-sensical within Pakeha ontoepistemologies, an incommensurability Mario Blaser has described as the problem of reasonable politics (Blaser, 2016). That is, the Maori rendering of the animate and spiritually imbued land registers as backwards perception within the Pakeha World view, an example of the ontological clash misrepresented as epistemological clash among plural Western and indigenous worlds (Blaser, 2016). Grace's novel not only asserts, in multiple descriptive passages of animate matter, the land as earth-being but details a human genealogy and entanglement that binds human and earth beings in relations exceeding those dictated by capitalism:

“ . . . land does not belong to people, but that people belong to land. We could not forget that it was land who, in the beginning, held the secret, who contained our very beginnings within herself. It was land that held the seed and who kept the root hidden for a time when it would be needed.” (110)

In contrast in the novel, the Pakeha approach both land and Maori in capitalist terms that clarify their own neo/colonial and neoliberal ontoepistemology: land as buyable property, as indigenous commons waiting for “true” economic development, and as awaiting evacuation (of its history, its spirit, its people) in order to be integrated into nationalist and liberal cartographies of belonging. This last point in particular is made laughably clear during a negotiation, when one money man proposes shifting the house closer to the center of the town, a proposal that simultaneously reveals competing Maori versus Pakeha cartographies of space and the incommensurability of indigenous ontoepistemologies:

“Everybody had laughed then, because the man had not understood that the house was central already and could not be more central. The man had a surprised look when the people laughed and looked down at his clothing as though he could suddenly be dressed strangely. It was then that we all realized that the man had not, had never, understood anything we had ever said, and never would.” (100)

It is not only the land but the meeting-house itself that is animate, an object ontology so to speak, so crucial that the house-object’s “birth” opens the novel in the “Prologue.” The language, pace, and imagery of this chapter carries folkloric qualities, historicizing through mythological moves the house-object as well as its “parent,” i.e. the childless carver who bears a vital relationship with the living wood: “. . . he would not bring out this final figure with his eyes or mind, but only with his hands and his heart. And when he spoke to the wood he only said, ‘It is the hands and the heart . . . that will bring you out of the shadows . . .’” (11) It is through several such descriptions that the house becomes an object endowed with cross-temporal and anthropomorphic abilities, on the one hand pregnantly bearing figures awaiting liberation through creative carving and through future events, on the other hand stealing its life capacity from the carver who dies soon after. Significantly, Grace’s attentive detailing of the carver’s work on the house-object does not fit two of Marx’s most enduring descriptions of capitalism, i.e. commodity fetishism and worker alienation. The artist here retains an intimate connection to and control over the trajectory of the house-object, a trajectory that is destined not for exchange on the market but for use in collective community life. And applying *fetishism* here seems a colonial descriptor more revealing of the ontological war than of the falsity of Maori belief/narrative. The house *is* alive to the wharae, animate in the material of the wood, in the birthing process that circulated life energy from creator to carving, in the stories that in Maori cosmology are historically true for a non-linear

past, present, and future. In a sense, the plotting of the remainder of *Potiki* is a fulfillment of the house's prophetic powers and thus its legitimate life.

But even the house is not inseparable from the land. At the level of story, the house “carried forward the stories of the people of long ago” via its carved iconography. Tellingly, the iconography described emphasizes the plural life of the land that is so central to the collective life of the people: varieties of fish, species of trees, patterns of weather/elements. And at the level of (non-linear) temporality, the house embodies and inhabits past/present/future, through its mythic historicizing of Maori life, its materially etched prophecies within the architecture, and its burial space behind the house. The Maori ontology thus delineated—through relation to land and multiple earth beings, through the animate house-object rightly placed in a Maori rather than Pakeha cartography, through the embodiment and inhabitation evoking non-linear temporality—also delineates one world of the Maori-Pakeha ontological war. That the legitimacy of multiple ontologies, of the (Zapatista-like) pluriverse is asserted through *tipuna* or story makes a case, via analogy if not empirically, for what Karen Barad in STS has brilliantly called ontoepistemology. That is, the operations of the world can only be known through entangled enactment with the measuring apparatus, i.e. an entanglement of ontology (ways of being) and epistemology (ways of knowing) that famously pitted Niels Bohr's theory of indeterminacy against Heisenberg's theory of uncertainty in the early 20th c. debates on the wave/particle nature of light. That is also, among Bohr's radical revision of classical physics into quantum physics' strange terms, an observed “phenomena” was constituted by the object *as well as* the measuring apparatus, so that the ontology of the object potentially changed if/when the measuring apparatus changed. This elegantly bizarre insight, if extended as an analogy for the small revolutions in ethnography/story's ontological reaches if/when changes in epistemological frames happen,

helps argue for the link between narrative/theoretical device and reality/being in the ontological wars. That is, Grace's repeated and various uses of multiple narrators, story types, and spiral temporalities helps explain a Maori ontology that is legitimate when known through the framing device of Maori story/myth/History 2—in contrast to the Pakeha ontology that is only knowable, and thus self-reflexively legitimate, through universal History 1, science, and reasonable politics.

Queer De/colonial Moves

Toko, the youngest (adopted) son of Roimata (by her sister Mary), is the Christ-like figure of *Potiki*, whose death-by-immolation galvanizes the community's final stand against Pakeha privatization in the novel. Elizabeth DeLoughrey has argued that the incorporation of Christian theology into the Maori novel is one example of its biculturalism (DeLoughrey, 1999); what is relevant for my chapter's feminist inquiry into indigeneity, temporality, and de/coloniality is the author's rendering of Toko's gentle persona alongside his gift of second sight. This character rendering is a queer rendering, as it imbues Toko with stereotypically feminine qualities such as empathy, physical fragility, and communal concern and, within the masculinized context of the Maori-Pakeha conflict, the colonial surrender that is dramatized as death. And the second sight that the novel returns to repeatedly queers Toko through disembodiment and (cosmological) alterity, rendering him a figure whose de/colonial potential lies precisely in this gender subversion. Thus, within the novel's de/colonial imaginary, the neo/liberal Pakeha tactics that are presented as neo/colonialism are also presented as stereotypically male; and a key Maori figure such as Toko achieves his saintly decolonial status through a pleasing queering that partly reifies the indigenous male as feminized colonial subject within neo/colonial discourse. This queering works against the colonial tradition of European

representations of Maori as hypermasculine warrior-chiefs, a tradition that switched gear with early 19th c print culture's tendency to portray the Moari body in necropolitical terms (Ballantyne, 2014). That switch was accentuated by the humanitarian narrative that emerged in the 19th c., with its focus on the vulnerable Maori subject in need of colonial and missionary intervention, a genre that Grace seems to draw upon in the “feeble figure” of Toko in order to elicit audience sympathy upon the eve of New Zealand's neoliberal turn.

Toko's queer liminality between mothers, cultures, and worlds—as adopted son, as Christ-like Maori boy, as maybe-mixed child seer—also articulates a notion of racialized indigeneity that draws upon earlier postcolonial theorizations of hybridity, mimicry, and double consciousness (Erai, 2011; Bhabha, 1993). And his ultimately fatal liminality (dying on the threshold of the meeting house burned by developers) dramatizes a relationship between indigenous ontology and non-linear temporality that, specified as spiral in the novel's Maori lifeworld, works as a queer de/colonial move in the text. Specifically, Toko's extra-cognitive capacity to see beyond his present spacetime location evokes a figure moving/seeing along a Maori temporality that does not abide by the linear temporality of heteropatriarchal settler colonialism (Goemann, 2013; Byrd, 2011). (T)his second sight that hinges on the spiral ontology of time is mentioned in various points of the novel through various voices: Roimata notes her son's gift early on, Toko himself describes moments of premonition, and the novel opens and closes with poetic stanzas to fulfilled prophecies. In Grace's hands, Toko is merely the most paradigmatic example, as character, of the temporal ontoepistemology that functions as re-animation of and player in (Byrd's) liberal colonial parallax. Which is to say, Toko's second sight works, at the level of plot, to continually warn the Maori of future besiegement by neoliberal Pakeha forces, a predicament subtly suggested to be an extension of the violent settler

colonial contact that has already devastated so many Maori lives and will claim Toko's in the end. When indigenous ontology and temporality are accepted on the novel's queer terms rather than on Enlightenment Pakeha terms, then neoliberal violence registers as a chameleon form of settler colonial violence for Maori peoples.

Tangi, on the other hand, initially appears as a heroine disrupting gendered paradigms of the hero (DeLoughrey, 1999). It is her covert violence—setting the developers' vehicles on fire—and overt critiques—calling out the Maori council members who support Pakeha privatization—that wrests a temporary victory for the Maori community. Yet while Grace's re-gendering of the undertones of heroic epic in her novel promise a feminist turn, they nevertheless reify masculinized violence as the triumphant decolonial strategy in the face of Pakeha neo/colonial encroachment. What might it mean for de/coloniality to be re-imagined so that feminized ontologies appear in terms analogous to the alternative temporal ontology, i.e. from unidirectional line to queer spiral? For example, could the novel have narrated fourth world feminist resistance through the kinship reciprocities, the animated human/non-human entanglement, and the re/productive women's labor that not only fill the plot but structure the polyphony and ecology of a novel richly inhabited by peoples and terrains, mythic and real? Instead, the novel restricts these ample tools to the space of description and design, and relies for its teleological vision upon the overworn techniques of masculinized aggression, vertical conflict, and violent squabbling over land as property to temporarily resolve the novel's Maori-Pakeha war. For example, early in the novel, Tangi's father Hemi describes both his daughter's fearlessness and his fear that she will suffer for it, imagining that in some other historical moment, she would have joined him and other men in battle. Certainly, as plot driver in Grace's novel, Tangi moves along masculinized vectors of the bildungsroman: higher education,

communal rebellion, and de/colonial resistance. And she is a figure who is finally protected by the community, which refuses to reveal her insubordination to the investigators, and is not punished as other female heroines typically are for defying gender norms.

Minor characters in the novel also throw into relief the gender of de/coloniality. Mary and Roimata, the sisters who mother Toko, appear as that near-twin pair that populate so many aboriginal stories, in this case signifying the biculturalism defining modern Maori existence (DeLoughrey, 1999). Mary's impregnation by a stranger named Joseph—understood as rape by her community, given her mental limitations—evokes the Biblical story of Jesus' parents. And Roimata's marriage with Hemi, a romance rekindled at Hemi's mother's burial, re/produces the Tamihana family line through the substituted maternal figure. Thus the sister pair—the Christian analogue for Mary and the maternal analogue for Maori re/production—represent the biculturalism that fosters Toko, the liminal maybe-mixed seer child who finally succumbs to neoliberalism's assault. A feminized trio—Mary, Roimata, Toko—the three also metaphorize the gendered violence of settler colonialism that, theoretically in NAIS and Critical Geography, has been understood as the heteronormative mapping of settler colonial spacetime over indigenous ontoepistemologies (Goemann, 2013; Tuan, 1977) and that, empirically, has shown aboriginal women and girls to be the most vulnerable to sexual assault, transnationally (Smith, 2015). The other (queer) trio—Mary, Toko, and the childless carver—again harkens back to what Tony Ballantyne has argued as the “feeble figure” within colonial narratives of Maori subject/tion. When read against the cyclic neo/colonial violence of the 80s neoliberal turn in New Zealand, the non-re/productive trajectory of this queer trio re-cast(e)s the feminized indigenous subject as queer death object of settler colonialism's biopolitical differentiations now renovated as neoliberal capitalism's necropolitical impulses. Thus the novel's depiction of de/coloniality

cannot avoid the multiple matrices of gender, sexuality, and violence that have always undergirded settler colonial realities for Maori peoples and that, as suggested by the novel's depiction, posit the bicultural effect/subject as inadequately equipped against neoliberal capitalism's aggressive bids for homogenized expansion.

The most paradigmatic figure of the masculinized neoliberal capitalist appetite is the character Mr. Dolman nicknamed "The Dollarman" by the Maori. Opening the second of the novel's three sections, the chapter titled after and introducing the Dollarman consists mostly of a pre-negotiation between the Maori community and the Dollarman, in which he makes multi-million dollar offers for their land. In perhaps one of the least nuanced scenes for the novel's characterizations, the Dollarman's debate nevertheless serves as a valuable dialectic between neoliberal capitalist logic valuing privatization of all possible matter in the name of "progress" and indigenous ontoepistemologies resisting dispossession partly by recounting an ancient historical and spiritual link to the land and sea. (It is important to note here that this dialectic doesn't neatly mirror racial lines, as there are Pakeha allies among the Maori and Maori sell-outs among the developers [DeLoughrey, 1999]). The Dollarman's argument consists of telling phrases such as:

"Well, there's this great potential you see, and this million-dollar view to be capitalized on. And I'll mention once again that once we have good access, it's all on, we can get into it. And benefit . . . not only ourselves but everyone, all of you as well. We'll be providing top-level facilities, tourist facilities and so upgrade the industry in this whole region. It'll boom" (89)

"It's all job-creative. It'll mean work, well-paid work, right on your doorstep, so to speak. And for the area . . . it'll bring people . . . progress" (90)

“But look. I’m not sure that you have fully understood, and this is something I haven’t pointed out previously. Your land here would skyrocket. Your value would go right up . . . A million dollar view, so to speak, that . . . you have not seen its full potential. I’m not talking just about tourists now. I mentioned before the family people. I’m talking about giving families, school children, an opportunity to view our sea life” (92)

“I didn’t expect people to be unreasonable” (93)

The Dollarman’s language is the neoliberal multicultural rhetoric of freedom and value-generation through privatization and inclusion, and posits Maori refusal in racist colonial terms reiterating indigenous unreasonableness (Riedner, 2015; Melamed, 2011; de la Cadena, 2010). Maori logic, on the other hand, offers a definition of value anchored in historical memory, ecological kinship, and synecdochal survival beyond capitalist wealth accumulation. The combined good humor and staunch assertions of sovereignty with which the Maori counter the Dollarman’s argument appear as Grace’s legibilization of subaltern ontoepistemologies. The sea is a commons already and not destined as tourist destination; land is not property but ancestral body, with the dead present even at the meeting; and the Maori cultural economy, most notably in the shared gardens, offers a valuable sustenance that the promised jobs cannot. Thus the ontological war that is at the heart of the novel’s Pakeha-Maori conflict is articulated here, an incommensurability of worlds that NAIS scholars and artists have, over and over, pointed out in legal events, in narrative dissonance, and in—what I call a variation of—caste war:

“This land we are on now—Block J136, the attached blocks where the houses are, and J480 to J489 at the back of the houses, is all ancestral land—the ancestral land of the people here. And there are others too who don’t live here now, but this is still home to them. And a lot of them are here today, come home for this meeting.” (89)

“Not even in these days of no work. We’re working the land. We need what we’ve got. We will not sell the land, nor will access be given. Apart from that, apart from telling you that none of this land here will go, we have to tell you that none of us wants to see any of the things you have outlined. We’ve talked about it and there’s no one, not one of us here, that would give an okay on it.” (90)

“Everything we need is here . . . what we’re doing is important. To us. To us that’s progress.” (90)

“What we value doesn’t change just because we look at ourselves and at the future. What we came from doesn’t change. It’s your jumping-off place that tells you where you’ll land. The past is the future.” (94)

The concluding assertion the Maori offer, in dissecting the notion of value among distinct cultural economies and lifeworlds, is that the Dollarman’s neoliberal offer of employment within the (persistent) settler colonial nation would merely re-cast(e) them as slaves (95). The Maori elaborate that, while they might be working in the new economy generated by the developed land, they would be working to serve Pakeha tourists and consumers. *Thus we come full spiral in tracing the steganography of race/caste within neo/liberal capitalism.* First, caste emerges as the “prior” that is present, i.e. the racial caste order that bifurcated colonial/indigenous power and un/belonging within New Zealand along the lines of racialized Maori-Pakeha categories (Erai, 2011; Heim, 1998), in part by unevenly allocating rights and access to property, employment, and lineal and collateral consanguinity. Second, caste emerges as that political economy hierarchizing producers and consumers along lines marked by raciality and indigeneity as well as the class divide funneling surplus value from workers to owners. And ultimately, caste reads as that im/material culture of stigma re/producing the divisions of the (colonial capitalist) caste war, i.e. the Maori who resist the neoliberal Pakeha encroachment upon their ancestral ecologies that *is*, in their lifeworld, *also* cyclic neo/colonial relations.

Caste Parallax, Cast(e)rated Gender

I extend Jodi Byrd's parallax metaphor, for the Worlding of imperial ventures and the transit of U.S. settler colonial ideology and practice, to encompass an articulation of *caste war as parallax* in the emerging global order driven by coloniality/modernity and neoliberal capitalism. Parallax in the astronomical and Zizekean sense, as reviewed by Byrd, is first, that change in an observer's perspective on a faraway object with a change in vantage point and, second, the incommensurable descriptions of phenomena that concord more with the "dual", never-meeting geometry of a Moebius strip. And caste war, as articulated in this dissertation by reviewing the work of Caste Studies scholars and writers, is the discursive and material conflict emanating from that culture of im/material stigma structuring the biopolitical differentiations between Non-Life and Life. Taking parallax and caste war together, I suggest that an *articulation of caste war as parallax* entails the ontological clash instigated at the advent of coloniality/modernity, the subsequent gaps in capital, mobility, belonging, and grievability that structure caste hierarchy, and an in/ability to define and concord on stigma as matter entangled with (sign) value within neoliberal capitalism. This dissonance in discursive-material versions of reality is perhaps one of the most intriguing reasons for why thinking caste—beyond race and class as they have been hegemonized in U.S. discourses on global inequity—caste as ontoepistemology, that is, should not be dismissed. Caste war as parallax might explain why subjects positioned along incommensurable routes of Transit in their accounts and experiences of oppression named as raciality, class, homophobia, sexism, etc. nevertheless maneuver to "transcend" biopolitical differentiation in order to "arrive" at multicultural liberalism's endpoint promise of equality, liberty, and fraternity. And caste war as parallax could clarify how it is that subjects on opposing sides of the caste war might appear to inhabit one harmonious Transit—their incommensurable

routes seem to converge without a trace within the event of Worlding—even as that Transit deploys colonialist caste imaginaries of Indianness, Dalitness, blackness, queerness, and tribal primitivity to split, along the “prior” Moebius break that I metaphorize as ontological clash over stigma and its de/valuation, the Enlightenment Humanist universal into discomfiting caste particularities.

WORKS CITED

- Ao, Temsula. *Once Upon A Life: Burnt Curry and Bloody Rags: A Memoir*. New Delhi: Zubaan, 2014.
- Ed. Appadurai, Arjun. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Ballantyne, Tony. *Entanglements of Empire: Missionaries, Maori, and the Question of the Body*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, 2014.
- Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Bargh, Maria. *Resistance: An Indigenous Response to Neoliberalism*. Wellington, NZ: Huia, 2007.
- Baruah, Sanjib. *Beyond Counter-Insurgency: Breaking the Impasse in Northeast India*. New Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Bhaumik, Subir. *Troubled Periphery: Crisis of India's Northeast*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2015.
- Blaser, Mario. *Storytelling Globalization from the Chaco and Beyond*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *The Posthuman*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013.
- Byrd, Jodi. *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Chakraborty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Daniel, Kaba. "Politics of Nationalism: Insider's Views of pan-Naga Ethnic Community's Nationality Question in Ethnic Boundary Line." *International Journal of Advancements in Research & Technology*. 2(7): July 2013. pp135-160.
- de la Cadena, Marisol. "Indigenous Politics: Beyond Politics As Usual." *YouTube*, uploaded by New York University, 28 May 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zoGOjOo0T3g>.
- Ed. de la Cadena, Marisol & Stam, Orin. *Indigenous Experience Today*. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007.
- da Silva, Denise Ferreira. *Toward a Global Idea of Race*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

- Press, 2007.
- Deloria, Vine. *God is Red*. New York: Laurel, 1983.
- Deloria Jr., Philip. *Playing Indian*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.
- DeLoughrey, Elizabeth. "The Spiral Temporality of Patricia Grace's 'Potiki.'" *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*. 30(1): January 1999. pp59-83.
- Dirks, Nicholas. *Castes of Mind*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Ed. Dussel, Enrique D. and Moraña, Mabel. *Coloniality at Large: Latin American and the Postcolonial Debate*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Erai, Michelle. "A Queer Caste Mixing Race and Sexuality in Colonial New Zealand." *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory*. Ed. Driskill, Qwo-Li, et. al., The University of Arizona Press, 2011. pp66-80.
- Freedgood, Elaine. *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Gehlen, Rejane Seitenfuss. "Identidade de Eliane: A Face Potiguara, A Máscara Indígena e O Eco de Vozes Silenciadas." *Boitatá—Revista do GT de Literatura Oral e Popular da ANPOLL*. 12: Jul.-Dec. 2011. pp81-103.
- Goeman, Mishuana. *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Grace, Patricia. *Potiki*. Auckland: Penguin Random House New Zealand, 1986.
- Guzmán, Tracy Devine. *Native and National in Brazil: Indigeneity after Independence*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013.
- Haraway, Donna. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Heim, Otto. *Writing Along Broken Lines: Violence and Ethnicity in Contemporary Maori Fiction*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998.
- Hemming, John. *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians*. London: Pan Books, 2004.
- Ed. Hong, Grace and Ferguson, Roderick A. *Strange Affinities: the Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.
- International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. *The Naga Nation and Its Struggle Against Genocide: A Report*. Copenhagen: IWGIA, 1986.

- Karatani, Kojin. *Structure of World History: From Modes of Production to Modes of Exchange*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Latour, Bruno. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Latour, Bruno. *An Inquiry Into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Martins Teixeira, Dante. “Com o Diabo no Corpo: Os Terríveis Papagaos do Brasil Colônia.” *Anais do Museu Paulista: História e Cultura Material*, Jan/Apr 2017. http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0101-47142017000100087. Accessed Sept 2017.
- Melamed, Jodi. *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Mignolo, Walter. *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Mohan Rao, Mohit. “Caste system has left imprints on genes: study.” *thehindu.com*, 27 Jan. 2016, <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/Caste-system-has-left-imprints-on-genes-study/article14022623.ece>. Accessed July 2017.
- Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.
- Morgensen, Scott. *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Potiguara, Eliane. *Metade Cara, Metade Máscara*. São Paulo: Global Editora, Instituto Indígena Brasileiro para Propriedade Intelectual, 2004.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth. *Labor’s Lot: The Power, History, and Culture of Aboriginal Action*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth. *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth. *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Ramos, Alcida Rita. *Indigenism: Ethnic Politics in Brazil*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.
- Riedner, Rachel. *Writing Neoliberal Values: Rhetoric Connectivities and Globalised Capitalism*.

- Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Salesa
- Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. Nelson, Cary and Grossberg, Lawrence. London: Macmillan, 1988.
- Spivak, Gayatri. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1977.
- Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. New York: Random House, 1961.
- Ed. Venkateswar, Sit and Hughes, Emma. *The Politics of Indigeneity: Dialogues and Reflections on Indigenous Activism*. London and New York: Zed Books, 2011.
- Veracini, Lorenzo. "Settler Colonialism and Decolonisation." *Borderlands e-journal*. 6(2): 2007. pp1-12.
- Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. 4(3): 1988. pp 469-488.
- Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2010.
- Weheliye, Alex. *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research*. 8(4): 2006. pp387-409.

CHAPTER IV

ABOLITIONIST IMAGINARIES:

PRECARITY, UNFREEDOM, AND THE “PRIOR”

IN 19TH C. BRAZIL & 20TH – 21ST C. INDIA

SECTION i

Bound Un/Freedoms in the Age of Imperialism

The world's first anti-slavery conference took place in London in 1840, and was attended by abolitionists from England, the U.S., and France, etc. (British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1840). This Chapter Four section reads select speeches from the 1840 Convention's transcript to think through periodized notions of slavery, especially in relation to sites of abolitionist concern for this chapter: 20th-21st c. India and 19th c. Brazil. In part, my reading of this critical 19th c text is a historicizing move. How does a close reading of "slavery" panoramize un/freedom across British Empire, the U.S. South, and Brazil? How does this 19th c. panorama situate current forms of unfreedom in these sites as *persistent* bondage? Thus this close reading buttresses my central argument that, by parsing through definitions of un/freedom and, specifically, slavery, we may more clearly see how "prior" forms of bondage in South Asia were sustained through today as, in fact, *contiguous* slavery. Key sections of the 1840 Convention transcript delineate a slavery system that would be formally abolished in the subcontinent more reluctantly than in other sites such as the West Indies and U.S. South; for instance, these sections specifically reveal that earlier attempts at formal abolition in British India went largely unimplemented, so that, even in 19th c. abolitionist debates, frequent concerns are raised that, for all intents and purposes, abolition has not been and will not be achieved in British India, site of what was at times, even then, projected to be the world's highest number of enslaved subjects.

I read such refrains on Indian slavery, in the 1840 Convention transcript as well as across later 20th c. texts, as evidence that perhaps "modern slavery" and certainly "neo-slavery" are not the most capacious or accurate terms for the South Asian context. Rather, "contiguous" (to borrow a term situated in the 1840 transcript) best delineates slavery's historical saliency across

Indian epochs. If, in India, formal abolition was never fully implemented, if feudal modes of production co-exist alongside capitalist ones, and if specific forms of bondage named in the 19th c. text as slavery (praedial, domestic, etc.) are still prevalent as the dominant forms of bondage today, then Indian slavery was not only never eradicated but had no need to significantly evolve. Certainly, slavery in India wasn't handled with the degree of legal machinery that was applied in sites like the U.S. and Brazil, where a "clear" abolishing imperative preceded the devious morphing of racialized chattel slavery into other forms of unfree labor like the chain gang, prison labor, and domestic and sex work (Davis, 2003; Gilmore, 2007; Alexander, 2010; Williams, 2013; Childs, 2015). As British governance, then post-colonial Indian governance, largely failed, when they did try at all, to enforce several laws against forced labor, there was no need for this level of legal creativity in India. Further contextualizing the 1840 Convention debates in the era of imperialism, the sustainment of bonded labor in/from India under the guise of "free" trade speaks to the role 19th c. liberal political and economic thought played in camouflaging rather than ameliorating new global hierarchies of (colonial) difference, race, and labor crucial to British imperialism. (Lowe, 2015).

However, the reasons for this failure in implementation were not only practical/philosophical but, significantly, culturally and territorially specific. Slavery in South Asia was far too grand on far too vast a scale for easy remedy; the loss in surplus value/profit from Disraeli's "Jewel in the Crown" would be too high for both British and Indian administrators, businessmen, and landowners; the troubling resilience of caste as cultural practice would continue to legitimate the historically disproportionate bonding of low-caste peoples; and generally addressing regimes of dominance/subordination inherited by the British from prior Mughal and Hindu rule, already encoded in indigenous law, would prove incredibly

complex (Major, 2014). But I want to additionally suggest that the 1840 Convention transcript reveals a devil's bargain across hemispheric spaces and historical periods, in line with Indrani Chatterjee's and Andrea Major's arguments about the sustainment of South Asian bondage in exchange for freedom in Western sites. India is often portrayed in the transcript as site of a milder slavery, one offered as a pawn to be kept by imperial interests in return for the more contentious question of abolition in colonies/plantations like the U.S. and the West Indies. I also want to reiterate that freedom for slaves in the West is tied to "free" production of the same goods (namely cotton here) in India, without elaborating on whether such production in India, where bondage functioned differently and along a scale of un/freedom, was in fact tied to older slave systems in the Indian Ocean World. Thus, a combination of liberal economic philosophy, geopolitically biased priorities, definitions of un/freedom manipulated by imperialist agendas, and an Orientalist imaginary underscored by a Christian rhetoric of liberation and progress bound up Black freedom in the West, as illusory as it would be, with the equally illusory premise of "free" labor in the East, i.e. with camouflaged and contiguous slavery within the subcontinent itself.

"Priors" and "Posts" in Abolitionist Imaginaries

Right away, the preface of the 1840 transcript juxtaposes slaveries in the U.S. South and British India, naming it as such in both sites:

"But this is not all. In the Southern section of the United States, and in British India, a vast internal slave-trade is carried on, second only in horror and extent to that which has so long desolated and degraded Africa." (7)

Discussion of slaveries in each site would be pressing enough to demand significant time and attention in the Convention's itinerary. The slave trade in India and the U.S. would be discussed on the second day of the planned ten days; the specific question of cotton as product of un/free labor in the U.S. and India would be addressed over the eighth morning; and the numbers and Islamic histories partially contextualizing Indian slavery would be addressed on the eighth evening; slavery in Brazil, not a British holding but still a Portuguese one that nevertheless held the highest number of enslaved black peoples in the New World, would be left to the ninth day. The significant abolitionist figure invited to report on slavery in British India was William Adams, a Baptist minister and Harvard professor who had studied and worked in India and, early on, made the astute critique that abolition in England's West Indian holdings did not mean abolition in British India (British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1840). Adams' paper, presented on the second afternoon of the Convention, goes into noteworthy detail about slavery on the subcontinent. The startling picture that emerges, beyond India as site of concern in the Anti-Slavery Convention proceedings, is of an old institution with myriad faces and complex causes.

In enumerating and historicizing South Asian slavery, Adams describes estimates ranging from at least half a million to ten or twenty million, though Adams' own safest estimate "to avoid exaggeration" is one million (93). Adams then lists the forms of slavery, which he identifies as primarily predial and domestic, as originating in conquest, kinship sale, self-sale or bonded labor, outcaste slavery, kidnapping, and trade import. This final source, in contrast to the Black Atlantic Trade that sourced the West with Afro-descendant slaves, was numerically far tinier than the internal trade of the subcontinent that accounted for most slaves and owners as Indians. The last and principle source of slavery—strikingly like slavery systems in the West at

the time—was hereditary. While Adams does not explicitly call hereditary slavery a kind of slave caste production, the link between caste and slave status is named later in the 1840 transcript by R.R.R. Moore (453-54) and, of course, by recent scholarship on the persistent entanglement of low-caste status with slave status in 20th c India (Kara, 2012; Bales, 2005; Mohan, 2014; Chatterjee, 2006).

What I want to emphasize about Adams’ impassioned and moving testament, on behalf of enslaved Indians, is not only the painstaking detail with which he fleshes out an incredibly long-surviving practice, or the (passive) complicity of local elites in maintaining an unfree labor force, or even the terrible descriptions he provides that name and nuance the sale aspect of bondage in India in order to render it legible as slavery by Western rubrics:

“What a picture of society and of law does this exhibit! What a depth of physical wretchedness or of moral obtuseness, or of both! A mother emancipated from slavery again selling herself for the necessities of life; receiving the gift of her own daughters, from her former master to be in like manner sold for the relief of her wants—sold at the age of five and seven by their own mother into perpetual slavery, perhaps to vice and infamy; and the perpetuity of the sale under such circumstances, when called in question by the daughters after the attainment of mature age, affirmed by Hindu law, and confirmed by the authority of a British court of justice.” (81)

What I want emphasize, in addition to all this, is Adams’ and other abolitionists’ acknowledgement that British colonialism has played a significant hand in sustaining and even worsening inherited forms of slavery and that immediate abolition of not only the trade but slavery itself, *and effectively applied*, is the best recourse. Joseph Pease’ testament linking the notorious British land-tax to heightened duress and starvation among Indian subjects to the spike

in self-bondage echoes what Indrani Chatterjee has noted as historically true for the prevalence of bonded labor, generationally, in Indian regions especially vulnerable to famine:

“ . . . it was proved that the land-tax was most oppressive, leading to want and starvation, and compelling millions to become slaves for a long series of years.” (87)

And the unfortunate moment, discussed in the transcript, when the abolition clause of the 1833 repeal, renewing the East India Company charter, was taken out in the House of Lords, echoes what recent writers and scholars have reiterated as the primary logic behind the sustainment of South Asian bondage, i.e. denial (Chatterjee, 2005): that it is not in fact slavery, in part because it is mild. The Duke of Wellington, responsible for removing the clause, counters Adams’ experience in India with his own:

“I have served in that country, and lived among the people, and I never knew an instance of cruelty being practiced towards the slaves, if slaves they ought to be called.” (467)

British colonial management of India and manipulative narrativization of Indian un/freedom emerges in the 1840 transcript as key mechanisms for perpetuating Indian bondage; and the voices of those denying Indian slavery past and present resonate disturbingly with the Duke of Wellington’s fanciful account. As a sidenote, I would like to underscore what the enduring weight of these colonial legacies means for critical readings of bondage today. In contrast to disdainful dismissals of contemporary post-colonial analyses, particularly from Anglo/Euro-descendant scholars who have geospatially and politically reaped the benefits of European colonialism’s plunder, the repeated commentaries linking British colonial practice with

Indian bondage points to the still-urgent usefulness of post/colonial frames. Rather than understanding such readings to be a deflection, i.e. a variant of neoliberal false consciousness, that detracts from the ultimate “true” analyses of global capitalism and anti-capitalist struggle, how might a refusal to acknowledge past and present colonial tactics and legacies, i.e. modernity/coloniality, in fact be a kind of ostrich consciousness itself complicit with multiple systems of oppression, including the global capitalist exploitation and neoliberal life/death differentiations built upon inherited colonial networks? Sticking one’s head in the sand to avoid viewpoints or histories not fitting into one’s universalist doctrine does not mean other material realities disappear, no matter how comfortingly airbrushed the Anglo/Euro-centric sands might be or how finely trussed one’s reductively black-and-white “post”/erior.

At least two sections of Adams’ presentation on the second day of the Convention addresses precisely this entanglement, between British rule and prior slave systems preserved by Hindu and Mughal rule and law. In the first address, focused on law in British India, Adams notes that it is in fact the ambivalent treatment of “prior” Hindu and Mohammedan laws on slavery, and British public silence regarding any real redress, that has aggravated Indian slavery. Thus it isn’t actually il/legality that determines the “reality” of Indian bondage but slavery as an embedded part of Indian cultural and economic practice bolstered by corrupt British legal treatment:

“Practically, slavery in India does not rest on law but custom, for it can be proved to be illegal, and this illegal custom has been invested by the British government in India, with the desecrated forms and sanctions of law and justice.” (97)

Adams also devotes an entire section detailing the various recommendations that have in fact been made regarding Indian slavery, “all which recommendations have been wholly neglected.” (99) These suggestions have included the prohibition of kinship sale (sale of children by parents and others), the sale and separation of predial slave families, the limiting of the extension of an individual’s bond to his wife and children, and the right to purchase manumission by slave themselves. (99) These are just four of the myriad recommendations that, on one hand, implicitly enumerate the chameleon faces of Indian bondage, and, on the other hand, outline the passive British complicity that, Adams and others argue in the transcript, have effectively sustained slavery in British/India.

Indigo, Cotton, and Other Soft Promises

“In their eyes indigo was, if anything, associated with swindle and oppression. There was not one among them who did not think so and not one, too, who thought of their movement as anything other than one against the planter. They were determined to exorcize the ghost of indigo from the country.” (Bhattacharya, “The Indigo Revolt of Bengal”)

As key commodities in imperial and un/free labor networks, indigo and cotton merit a closer look. Certainly, they appear repeatedly as symbolic signs of the slave’s distress and the liberal abolitionist’s hope in the 1840 transcript. Specifically, cotton signifies slave labor in the U.S. South and Brazil, unfreedom that might be remedied via its “free” production in India, and specifically, indigo’s older story seemingly maps this “progressive” abolitionist journey. To some extent then, cotton and indigo’s symbolic signification in the transcript functions as a kind of commodity fetishism. While their production is revealed to be the result of slave-master social

relations in the U.S. South, their past and future production in India is fantastically judged to be the product of fictitious, and thus obscured, relations of “free” labor and trade in India.

The historical events that help demystify this particular liberal myth of Indian freedom in the 1840 transcript would not occur, however, till two decades later. The 1859 Indigo Revolt of most of Bengal, not as well-known as the pivotal 1857 Sepoy Mutiny across central India or the subsequent 1858 transfer of India from Company rule to Crown colony, is considered by some as the first major non-violent resistance act to British trade and rule that would culminate, via the Quit India movement, in liberation from British colonization. In fact, Gandhi’s emergence as a significant anti-colonial leader, and the first signal use of *satyagraha* or non-violent civil resistance, blossomed in a related, later rebellion known as the Champanar Movement of 1917 in Bihar. Both rebellions, separated by more than a half-century, were rooted in the exploitative, forced cultivation of indigo in India for the demands of the European market. While the *longue durée* of indigo production ties it more closely to the subcontinent than to the multiple other sites in which it was grown (Guatemala, Carolinas, West Indies, etc.), indigo’s production in India for colonial capital would spike most dramatically (30% to ~90% of demand) between the late 18th c and mid-19th c (Kumar, 2012). That increased production relied on a series of coercive methods ranging from: plantation models structuring essentially bonded labor, the legislation of land leases by Indian zaminders to British planters, and a disciplinary apparatus that employed *lathials* or *stick-wielders* and the threat of imprisonment for disobedient workers (Bhattacharya, 1977; Tuteja, 1993; Kumar, 2012). In fact, workers were asked to reserve the best portions of land not for a crucial food crop such as rice but for the cash crop indigo. And the systemically produced depths of debt that resulted would bond workers to the plantations in long cycles that didn’t deviate much from semi/feudal or pre-capitalist relations bonding mostly low-caste

peasants to largely upper-caste landholdings. In other words, Indian workers' rebellions against the slave/like conditions of British indigo plantations serve as material evidence belying the "fact" of "free" labor in India as the liberal abolitionist solution to bondage in the West.

Similarly, cotton production by "free" labor and trade in India would be offered as the solution to discontents both in India and the U.S. South:

That there is every reason to believe, that the success which has attended the application of free-labour to the growth of indigo in India, would follow upon the extended cultivation of other tropical produce, by the free natives of that vast empire, so as to supersede in other articles, the produce of slave-labour, and thereby contribute to extinguish both slavery and the slave-trade. That, in particular, as slavery in the United States is mainly dependent for its existence upon the import into Great Britain of the slave-grown cotton of America, to the amount, in 1838, of more than 400,000,000 lbs. weight, were measures adopted to encourage the growth of cotton in India, by free-labour, not only would an incalculable benefit be conferred upon the millions of the Indian Empire, but, by supplanting slave-grown cotton in the European market, it would, as the certain result, lead to the extinction of American slavery. (413-414)

The abolitionist imaginary of India evoked by the basic proposals of this passage are repeated numerous times across the 1840 transcript: India as site of not only "free" labor that would, by being more cost-effective than slave labor in the West, help abolish Western racial chattel slavery, but India as fertile market for both future labor needs and profitable consumer demands. In a sense, this imaginary of India—as source of grateful labor, whose poverty would be alleviated by British largesse, and source of ready consumers for manufactured British cotton—functions not only as colonial capitalism's next spatial fix but as humanistic liberalism's temporal and race/caste tabula rasa. In that cheerfully amnesiac schema, there is only a passing mention of British colonialism's hand in the Indian poverty that "free" trade in cotton would now alleviate; and in another of humanistic liberalism's airbrushing gestures, there is negligible cultural and de/colonial accounting for how the Western use of "free" Indian labor, both real and

rhetorical, might be a new Anglo/European avatar scavenging “difference,” whether that be Indian land, labor, or caste precarity:

In British India it is well known, there are large tracts of waste uncultivated land, which is capable of producing excellent cotton, in abundance, and thereby furnishing an ample supply for the whole wants of our great commercial empire. By bringing those tracts into cultivation, we shall likewise produce a double benefit. A large number of our fellow-subjects in British India are greatly distressed by heavy taxation, and want of employment, on the one hand; and by a consequent succession of famines, which have desolated numerous parts of that interesting land, on the other . . . We may, in the manner now suggested, afford them employment, and thus they will not only be enabled to obtain a comfortable subsistence for themselves and their families, but also plentifully supply the demands of Manchester and Liverpool with cotton of a good quality, the whole produced by free-labour, and thereby destroy American slavery, by withdrawing the demand for the staple slave-grown commodity. (431)

Thus India, the *tabula rasa* for liberal abolitionist hopes, emerges as passive Orientalist figure/fiction circulating within an 1840 transcript that thus encapsulates paradigmatic colonial-capitalist thought. Specifically, regarding the temporal face of the Indian *tabula rasa*, there is little mention of historical slave/caste orders from which “free” Indian labor would be drawn; on the geo-spatial face of that *tabula rasa*, there is almost no acknowledgement of how exactly, in a “universal” schema eagerly calculating the reduced costs for British owners and Western workers (“ . . . will cost little, if at all more than the half, that this country at present pays for the cotton raised under the sighs and teats of the poor oppressed of colour”), the most vulnerable Indians’ standards of living would miraculously elevate from starvation to beyond subsistence levels. And from the liberal voices framing that *tabula rasa*, there is zero moral compunction, despite the heavily Christian undertones of the Convention debates, about accessing the abundant lands that presumably were recognized by Indians at least as *theirs* under indigenous systems rather than as British under abolitionist aspirations and imperial ambitions.

What does emerge clearly from the 1840 transcript is a careful economic plan that falls squarely in line with the 19th c. political liberal thought that animated and justified expanding

British imperial practices, especially in Asia (Lowe, 2015). This specific portion of the 1840 transcript, for example, traffics heavily in a rosy free market philosophy that would supposedly employ, and thus “liberate,” poor Indians, British workers, and enslaved Blacks. The strategic elision of richer aspects of liberty in the transcript—decolonial sovereignty, annihilation of economic and caste indebtedness, and a detailed thriving beyond survival—a steganographic elision that maps the figure of India in the 1840 transcript as an Orientalized (and contiguously slaveable) tabula rasa for liberal abolitionist hopes resonates with what scholars of liberalism argue formulated 19th c. British liberal thought, i.e. that the British need to grapple with colonial difference and manage colonial encounters gave rise to a liberal political philosophy that would de-link indigenous sovereignty and the abstract subject of freedom from the racial/colonial civilizing mission and the imperialism of free trade (Lowe, 2015; Gallagher and Robinson, 1953).

The market logic of the proposed shift in cotton cultivation, by unfree labor in the U.S. South to “free” labor in India, is finally admitted by Mr. O’Connell (440-442). In order to convince his audience that such a shift would be economically wise, O’Connell declares openly that India would also become a vast market for British goods:

“Does he think that we are about to get cotton from India without paying for it? We pay the Americans for cotton we purchase, and we shall pay India for what we procure from thence; so that whether we get it from America or from India, the result is the same. The great pecuniary advantage, that we shall gain by the use of East India cotton, will be this; the inhabitants there will become consumers of our produce.” (426)

I read O’Connell’s admissions here as an affective and historical flashpoint. Affectively, O’Connell’s defensive tone follows a paradoxical passage in which he once again bemoans Indian slavery, alongside an eager mention of future cotton production in India:

“Another point on which you have spoken, is the growth of cotton in the East Indies, and it is delightful to see how the evolutions of practical humanity aid each other . . . But slavery never can produce cotton there, in the quantity demanded by this country; it must be the produce of the cheaper free-labour system. That brings you at once to the contemplation of another might moment on behalf of humanity; and that relates to the state of the tenure of lands in the East Indies.” (441)

Despite the subtext of liberal concern here—that cotton production in India might overlap with its slave system rather than with “free” labor—O’Connell deftly turns away from addressing how this clean division might be achieved and, in fact, recommends that the Anti-Slavery Society not concern itself with Indian affairs. Instead, a separate society should be set up, not to ensure this division between slave labor and “free” labor in Indian cotton production but to mimic the (imperial) governance design he notes for Africa (as figure) and to focus on Indian land tenure for “free” cotton production (“I think, as you have very properly kept yourselves distinct from the African Civilization Society—and there is an abundant sphere for your action—so there ought to be constituted another body, whose express business it should be to look to the estate of the land tenures in India,” 442).

The complex affective registers here fore/shadow the passage as Benjaminian flashpoint in British-Indian relations. India would indeed become a significant market for manufactured cotton goods from Britain—a colonial design that, first, devastated the indigenous handloom and textile economies, that, second, precipitated Indian frustration and support for Gandhi’s anti-colonial *khadi* or *homespun* movement, and, relatedly and finally, would be a key pivot in

Swadeshi or anti-colonial, nationalist arguments for Indian independence from British colonial rule.

WORKS CITED

- Alexander, Michelle. *New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York, NY: New Press, 2016.
- Bales, Kevin. *Disposable People*. Berkeley: UC Press, 1999.
- Bales, Kevin. *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves*. Berkeley: UC Press, 2007.
- Bales, Kevin. *Understanding Global Slavery*. Berkeley: UC Press, 2005.
- Bhattacharya, Subhas. "The Indigo Revolt of Bengal." *Social Scientist*. 5(12): 1977. pp 13-23.
- British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, 1840: Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and Held in London, from Friday, June 12th, to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840*. London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841.
- Chatterjee, Indrani. *Gender, Slavery, and Law in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Chatterjee, Indrani. *Slavery and South Asian History*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006.
- Chatterjee, Indrani. "Abolition by Denial: the South Asian Example." *The Aftermath of Abolition in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*. Ed. Campbell, Gwynn. New York and London: Routledge, 2005. 150-167.
- Childs, Dennis. *Slaves of the State: Black Incarceration from the Chain Gang to the Penitentiary*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.
- Davis, Angela. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2010.
- Gallagher, John and Robinson, Ronald. "The Imperialism of Free Trade." *The Economic History Review*. 6(1): 1953. pp1-15.
- Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- Kara, Siddarth. *Bonded Labor: Tackling the System of Slavery in South Asia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
- Kumar, Prakash. *Indigo Plantations and Science in Colonial India*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Lowe, Lisa. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. Durham and London: Duke University Press,

2015.

Mohan, P. Sanal. *Modernity of Slavery: Struggles Against Caste Inequality in Colonial Kerala*. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Tuteja, K.L. "Review: An Analysis of the Bihar Peasant Movement." *Social Scientist*. 21(3/4): 1993. pp102-106.

Williams, Erica. *Sex Tourism in Bahia: Ambiguous Entanglements*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

SECTION ii

Slavery Dialectics: An Overview

The contradictions centered on too stringent a mapping of slavery along the grid of New World models of enslavement, markets, and slave use—once by imperial administrators and then a second time by professional historians. While the effective power of denial aided an imperial bureaucracy in successfully staving off meaningful abolition of slavery in the subcontinent in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the selective acknowledgments and denials of the institution in colonial English-language records in turn conditioned the intellectual projects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (*Abolition by denial: the South Asian example*, Indrani Chatterjee)

A close reading of definitional arguments asserted by three key abolitionist and scholarly figures on slaveries past and present—Kevin Bales, Orlando Patterson, and Indrani Chatterjee—clarifies the natures and scope of unfree labor situated, since the advent of coloniality/modernity, centrally in the Global South. This dissertation chapter focuses on abolitionist writings in 19th C Brazil and 21st C South Asia, two central sites in these relative periods of slaveries. Brazil and South Asia were entangled not only by 19th C British debates on abolition but initially via the Portuguese transport of onto epistemologies of “caste” that, while not singular examples of the colonial fantasizing of local hierarchies, significantly marked human subjects most vulnerable to exploitation by site-specific slavery economies. I open here with a reading of the debate between Patterson and Bales, to parse through understandings of historical slaveries and the frictive points in identifying contemporary practices of unfree labor as such. I then turn to Indrani Chatterjee’s rich historical work to distinguish how practices of enslavement in South Asia departed from dominant models informed by the Atlantic experience.

I thus expound upon my own position in this chapter—that slaveries be recognized according to distinct spatiotemporal experiences that, nevertheless, reveal transnational connections and dimensions. In so arguing, I elaborate on recent waves of scholarship transnationalizing dialectics and practices of slaveries with what I describe as the

commensurable triad of raciality-casta-caste. In other words, unique yet resonant figurations of place-specific hierarchies, which were variously produced by and productive of site-specific slaveries, are read here via select genres attentive to questions of slavery, difference, and place. These genres include literary forms such as the novel and autobiography, abolitionist rhetorical pieces, historical and journalistic accounts, metonymic associations among commodities entrenched in slave labor, and visual portrayals of spaces of slaveries. Which is to say, close readings across key historical moments reveal, first of all, the deep kinship the triad raciality-casta-caste bears with periodized slaveries. Close readings across genres reveals, second of all, the ways in which the requirements of genre illuminate and/or restrict our perceptions of un/freedom and specifically slavery. And third of all, close readings of precarity, un/freedom, and the “prior” across sites illuminates the transnational entanglement of raciality, casta, and caste with each other, in sites as seemingly disparate as Brazil, India, and the U.S. (Loomba, 2013). Finally, what is fundamentally contested in the emerging debate is not the empirical existence of slavery as a pressing economic and moral issue of global modernity—but the recognition of heterogenous unfree labor forms that would simultaneously locate contemporary practices along a genealogy of slaveries and also most effectively inform abolitionist tactics.

Between Patterson and Bales’ debate emerge crucial differences around understandings of what constitutes slavery today. While they agree slavery is an extremely unequal power relation based primarily in the economic but also marked by the sociopolitical, their methods of measure vary from a more encompassing method not bound to legal definitions (Bales, 2012) to identifying historical markers such as bodily violence, alienation, and degradation (Patterson, 2012). Bales argues from the outset that it is the lived experience of slaves which must be foregrounded in identifying slavery, a rhetorical move (and methodology) that would seem to

emphasize Patterson's critique of the conflation of particular historical markers of slaveries with slave-like conditions with more general labor exploitation under global capitalism. For if, slavery is indeed recognizable as "a state of being," (Bales 1) then Patterson's point about the historiographic risks here—"if we accept the fact that all forms of forced labor today amount to slavery, then we are compelled to view the entire history of the world, and especially of all the advanced societies from Near Eastern antiquity up to the rise of modern industrial capitalism in the 19th c, as the history of slavery" (9-10)—critiques both Bales' loose definition and notes its resonances with more orthodox Marxist categorizations of especially brutal labor-capital relations as wage slavery.

While hardly an orthodox Marxist, and more concerned in his essayistic response to Patterson with methodological validity, Bales' opening assertion resonates with assertions from that camp as well as subaltern theorists in its seeming investment in retrieving experiences of enslavement via the oft-observed voices of the enslaved. No doubt, there is activist integrity motivating Bales' rhetorical and methodological moves but they also deploy a circular logic that remains problematically open-ended—despite Bales' avowed desires to pinpoint "the essential criteria of slavery no matter what sort of cultural or social 'packaging' surrounds it" (12), a desire seemingly in accordance with Patterson's ultimate aim albeit via a divergent methodology. Which is to say, motives alone cannot substitute for rigor or legitimacy of method, and that Patterson's more thoroughly researched account and particularist attention to, the varieties of historical slaveries lends more credence to what he asserts as a kind of universalist definition, while still acknowledging variations across spacetimes.

On the other hand, Bales' return to the validity of a definition asserted by the victim of the crime (and drawing upon rape as analogy, one that is itself conflationary and problematic in

translating the experience of one category of violence through another) holds moral appeal but risks losing out on the empirical and conceptual rigor offered by Patterson's studies in *Slavery and Social Death*. Both sociologists usefully move towards a definition that, via diverging methods, would have universal applicability, but Patterson avoids the subjective vagueness and semi-ahistoricity that are real risks of Bales' rhetorical and methodological moves in his essayistic response to Patterson. Patterson's definition also notes persistent specificities of subjection, pre-dating capitalism's increasing reliance on enslaved labor, that suggest his definition to be more attentive to what has remained consistent about slave-master power relations, which pre-date and exceed the turn to global capitalism, that both scholars characterize by extreme inequality. In this regard, Patterson's seminal book as well as his essay reiterate qualities of natal alienation, corporeal violence, the act of possession distinguishing subject/object, and ritual degradation, with an extra essayistic emphasis on the heavily gendered component of contemporary slavery. Bales has significantly elaborated on disposability as definitive of modern slavery, and as a fundamental aspect of today's late capitalism, but, according to critics of the neoliberal underpinnings of Bales as well as other neo-abolitionists' crusade to liberate the Third World, without calling for the dismantling of capitalism as a primary fount of today's slavery.

Indrani Chatterjee, in her extensive research on the colonial archive in British India, has argued for the sustainment of domestic slavery in the subcontinent facilitated through a combination of self-interested colonial denial, misleading semantic debates, and the dominance of the Atlantic model. She thus hones in on the crucial role played by the debates on how to define slavery, and how the definitions formulated at the expense of domestic slavery in the subcontinent were in service to the territorial and financial interests of British administrators in

retaining lucrative South Asian enterprises. Chatterjee's historically informed and carefully situated understanding of subcontinental slaveries asserts, in line with Bales' and numerous other scholars' assertions about its persistence and prevalence in South Asia (Kara, 2012; Mohan, 2015; DuBois, 2009; Quirk, 2011; O'Connell Davidson, 2015; etc.), the need to depart from Atlantic models in grappling with the long lineage and complex configurations of unfree labor forms that not only appear slave-like but that, from their duration, their disproportionate gendering, and their dimensions of de-kinning, punitive associations, and im/mobility, closely resemble Patterson's own rubric of enslavement.

Chatterjee is not alone in her fine-tuning of our historical over/sight of subcontinental slaveries—the host of South Asian and slavery researchers who join her, such as Gyan Prakash, Keya Dasgupta, and Siddarth Kara to name a few, all emphasize India as site of the highest number of enslaved subjects today, about half of the global estimate and more than were transported during the Black Atlantic Trade—though I address her arguments here not to engage in the dubious competition of comparison but to emphasize what emerges as relationally applicable about both Bales and Patterson's studies to her aim to define slaveries in the South Asian case. I also highlight how she joins other contemporary abolitionists in the Bales' camp in arguing that the duration of what ostensibly is named as indentured servitude in fact comes to resemble more closely, via the particular trappings of debt bondage, multi-generational enslavement. To which I would also add, amplifying Hofmeyr's reading of terminology, that the hasty naming of servitude in South Asia as indentureship itself reflects the racialized underpinnings of the settler-slavery-indentureship spectrum reliant on the Atlantic experience, and proves an insufficient paradigm for the unfree labor forms pre-dating and outlasting the Atlantic experience. Chatterjee also troubles the entrenchment of slavery definitions in property

through subtle historical readings that indicate the expansive notions of “sale or barter” in South Asia that likened the enslaved to property and also reveal notions of indebtedness to be one figuration of ownership.

These scholars’ turn to the transnational nature of slavery, as both dialectic and practice, resonates with my relational methodology here, attesting to the importance of unearthing understudied transnational links undergirding 19th century abolition debates and multiple slaveries in both the Indian Ocean and Black Atlantic contexts. As poetic paradigms justifying relational readings, I reference Édouard Glissant, Shu-mei Shi, and Karen Barad’s works, as disparate as they may seem, which assert, relatively, the political value of relational poetics and the fact of global networks embodied in world history and the literary text as well as the entanglement and intra-agential mattering that quantum physics characterizes as our fundamental reality. Thus, I draw upon the literal and figurative keys offered across disciplinary and geographic sites for the importance of not only studying but acknowledging relational slaveries and abolitionisms. My hope is that this methodological move will be justified by my readings of 21st century accounts of South Asian slaveries, 19th century Brazilian abolitionist writings, and the raciality-casta-caste triad I locate and legibilize as an indispensable means of charting those degrees of un/freedom that have traveled between the Indian Ocean and the Black Atlantic.

Finally, my borrowing of Povinelli’s theorization of the “prior” is expanded on for my diachronous study of racialized/casted slavery across periods, in order to argue that formal abolition did not preclude chameleon forms of unfreedom for Afro-descendants in Brazil, site of the largest transport of enslaved Black peoples to the New World, or of persistent forms of historical bondage for low-caste peoples in South Asia, where an estimated 90% of modern slaves are Dalits and tribal peoples. In a very Benjaminian sense, race and caste difference haunt

those slaveries crucial to the expansion of capitalism in the early modern period and the global consolidation of neoliberal and finance capitalism today. Thus this chapter—whether reading across novels or speeches or films, whether tracing genealogies of un/freedom across ancient, colonial, and contemporary periods—consistently thinks difference, culture, and place alongside political economy. This methodology is not only drawn from Patterson or Chatterjee, from Race and Caste Studies scholars, or from Women of Color theorists, but from Povinelli and other Native American Indigenous Studies theorists who have long grappled with the beauty and burden of notions of the “prior.”

In grafting Povinelli’s “governance of the prior” from the Australian settler colonial context to the South Asian and Brazilian contexts, I experiment with practicing her recommendation that indigenous critical theory intervene in the consignment of the abstracted indigenous to an exclusionary material and political spacing as well as refuse the narrative division of the figure scripted in the past perfect and the figure scripted in the future redemptive. In the Indian case, where the vexed questions of “prior-ness” and caste are also entangled ones, I translate the Australian meaning of the prior for a context differentially inflected by British colonial governance, in order to unpack how that governance, as well as earlier religious codes imagining and enacting caste identities, located Dalits and tribals in specific formations of “prior-ness” that continue to consign them, as political, cultural, and economic subjects, to the pre-modern periphery of the nation-state. Do state-corporate conflicts with the “prior” in India resonate with Povinelli’s theorization of the prior in the sense of liberal governance at all? Do the selected texts here reveal prior-ness as the “narrative tense of the other” (Povinelli, 2011) unequally distributing commensurability, truth-value, and life mattering?

In Brazil, the prior might multiply apply to *both* Amerindians who were enslaved in the early colonial period and during the 19th c rubber boom *and* Brazilians marked by the ontoepistemological conditions over-associated with racial chattel slavery and labor practices reproducing conditions of Black un/freedom. This too is why I argue that thinking “caste”, if race and caste indeed serve as “prior” keys to contemporary labor precarity and unfreedom, is crucial to the legibility of slave testimonies and abolitionist rhetoric constituting those imaginaries I examine here. Both 19th c. and 20th-21st c. abolitionist imaginaries historicize a version of the “prior” for formerly and still-enslaved communities whose various precarities is narrativized not only in terms of heightened unfreedom but also in terms of a Benjaminian haunting of the present by the past as well as a living or collective death. In sum then, this chapter elaborates on Povinelli’s “prior” with a reframing that not only foregrounds caste as a fluid cultural practice of hierarchy predating and coinciding with hierarchies structured by capitalism or caste as complex historical phenomenon exceeding Orientalist discourse and even nationalist critiques of Orientalist discourse—this chapter reframing attempts to re-situate “prior” groups marked for necropolitical Hegelian and Darwinian destinies in the legible space of their once-invisibilized labor, their belonging in coloniality/modernity, and their possible futurities.

21st C. South Asian Qua(nda)rries.

When I say I was a slave, or that my parents were slaves, I want you to understand what I’m talking about. If I wanted to cycle on the road, the moment I stepped onto my cycle, I would be stopped and thrashed. The reason? I didn’t get the slave owner’s permission to use the road. If I walked out of my house, if I wanted to sit somewhere, if I wanted to eat, if I wanted to drink, any single action at any point in time, anything that I wanted to do, I required permission. That’s what I mean when I say I was a slave. Freedom of movement was something I didn’t know existed. And it was not just me. My mother, my father, my grandparents had to live through this, generation after generation. It was deep in the psyche. (Ramphal testimony, *To Plead Our Own Cause*, Bales & Trodd).

To Plead Our Own Cause, a collection of personal testimonies edited by Bales and Trodd, a collection organized by those forms of unfree labor the Bales' camp has argued as definitive of modern slaveries, includes a select array of South Asian accounts across the sections focusing on debt bondage, child labor, and sex slavery. Most of these accounts, which read as heavily edited transcriptions of oral testimonies, emphasize corporeal violence, the poverty driving (and locking) families into bondage, and particularly arduous labor conditions (length of work day, inconsistent and insufficient pay, and either hypermobility resulting in natal alienation or an immobility sustaining a kind of social death). Additionally, the anthology's arrangement of South Asian labor accounts—which consistently feature the use of descriptors like “slave”, “traffickers”, and “slave-owner”—among accounts from other global site accounts featuring similar rhetorical moves, minus a historical accounting for place-situated economies and poverty, suggests the anthology as fluctuating between a kind of ethnographic collage and docu-“fiction” tailored to those definitional arguments of slavery posited by the Bales' camp.

For instance, where is an accounting of the raciality-casta-caste triad structuring the historical vulnerabilities to poverty that *do* emerge in these testimonies? This absence is conveniently in line with what the editors argue, in their introduction, characterizes modern slavery as largely independent of questions of difference: “. . . slavery today is not dependent on race or ethnicity . . . though race, caste, tribe, and religion do initially look like markers of slavery, these differences simply make people vulnerable to slave traders: behind every assertion of ethnic difference is the reality of economic disparity.” (11) A troublingly ahistorical claim that fails to account for the oft-seen correlation of caste status and class in South Asia or of the legacies of colonialism and racism on visibly marked inequity in Brazil, this assertion props up the logic for the anthology's arrangement, in collage form and repeated rhetoric, of multi-global

accounts that speak to late capitalism's predation on the chronically poor. Thus disposability, which the editors repeat create conditions in a glutted market in which the enslaved "are worth very little but also that they are capable of generating high profits," is a recurring trope as well across these testimonies. (11)

Yet ironically, the aesthetic and narrative collation of these testimonies parrots a neoliberal multiculturalist logic that compress difference into a kind of harmonious disharmony that supposedly, via repression and inclusion, moves towards reparative justice and liberation through individual articulation and effort. Of course, the editors' narrative logic is more complexly articulated in the introduction, but it omits a detailed qualification of the unfree labor forms that would historicize and place these accounts more accurately and complexly, organizing them instead by a liberal teleology of progress and freedom as articulated by the post-Enlightenment subject. (Lowe, 2015)

The first pair of testimonies, which open the collection, emphasizes tropes of the slave narrative as it is known in the U.S.: natal alienation, hard labor, and coercive violence. Shanti, for instance, names herself then immediately acknowledges "I do not know my age" and Munni makes a similar move, guess-timating her age and also indexing like Shanti, her maturity, reproductive capacity, and duration of bondage via the number of children she has borne. The precarity of the individual, as resting on a flux in kinship/kinlessness, to bonded labor, echoes the editors' introductory description of the imperatives and sustainment of bonded labor in South Asia and Latin America in the family. For example, Shanti's account immediately foregrounds her husband's death as the cause for her and her daughter's contract at the stone quarry where, the more physically intensive lifting suitable for her husband, had been shifted to Shanti and her nine-year old daughter. An account emphasizing Bales' consistent characterization of

contemporary unfree labor as precarious in its fungibility and thus disposability, Shanti's detailing of the corporeality of bondage simultaneously highlights capital's fragmentation of the worker's body and that body's relegation to the necropolitical [liminal] across recognized spheres of life and death: "If you die I will take your dead body out of the mud and make you work to return my debt." (46)

The other key aspect foregrounded in both testimonies is the complex nature of the debt arrangement that, arguably, reduces these workers to slaves. Relative to loan amounts in First World countries like the U.S., the borrowed amounts seem small (\$180 for Shanti who earns \$9 every ten-twelve days and \$200 for Munni who is inconsistently paid about \$9-11 every fifteen days), a trait the Bales camp has emphasized in emphasizing the precarity of the poor to debt bondage that may extend for generations. For in addition to these uneven equations of debt to wages, there is the exploitative element of interest for workers who often have neither the knowledge nor the means to shift these usurious abuses, which the Bales camp has also emphasized as inducing precarity to generational enslavement.

I think I must have paid about half the loan by now and half might still be due. But then again that's not taking into account the fact that he may be cheating me. If that's the case, I'm not sure how much of my loan has been repaid. What he's doing is not right. I don't know what the law says, but I don't think it's right. I have no choices. Where will I go? What will I do? This is my house. This is my home. This is the only way I can survive, because I have no money and that is all I can do. I can't run away. How will I run? Where will I run? What will I run towards? I'm here. I spend my whole day here. (Munni *in* Bales and Trodd, 48)

The tropes of precarity and unfreedom here—via limited knowledges and thus leverage, curtailed mobility in economic as well as spatial terms—echo what U.S. paradigms of slavery have established as characteristic. The anthology, not coincidentally, opens every chapter with a pair of quotes consistently consisting of one quote by an African-American writer (Douglass, Truth, and Jacobs) and a contemporary slave testimony. This move might be read—beyond just a

cross-temporal and cross-spatial connection that supports Bales, Patterson, and Chatterjee's assertions of the ubiquity of slavery across spacetimes—as a move rendering legible non-U.S. slaveries via more recognized U.S. models.

The sixth volume, *Voices of The World*, of Boaventura de Sousa Santos' Social Emancipation series also collages global testimonies of struggle, not solely focusing on slavery, but I turn to its inclusion of an Adivasi testimony that not only powerfully touches upon contemporary bondage's ties to chronic tribal poverty but narrates, via Kaluram Dhodade's collective autobiographical account, the importance of acknowledging the role of historical differences such as caste and tribal identity in (re-)defining precarity. Dhodade's testimony is also distinguished by its difference from the Bales' testimonies, structured as they are by a liberal telos imagining material and political emancipation for its subjects partly through a growing awareness of and pacific resistance to their current state of unfreedom. Knowledge, as disseminated by abolitionist voices of First World persons, Third World elites, or the formerly enslaved of the Third and Fourth Worlds, is thus understood as a crucial tool for the trajectory from being unfree to being a rights-bearing subject. Dhodade's deeply interrogative account, however, consistently points out the fallacies of certain knowledges, whether because they are too elitist, too close to colonial practice, or too caste-ist to avoid reproducing hierarchies that reposition tribal peoples at the bottom.

For example, even as Dhodade espouses both socialist as well as violent resistance, he offers astute critiques of how these approaches might fail Adivasi liberation in their neglect of caste and tribal dynamics of power (203). Which is to say, he is neither strictly Gandhian nor a universalist Marxist, repeatedly purporting in his testimony the need for Adivasi leadership, knowledge, and sovereignty over traditionally Adivasi land. The temporality of progress in

Dhodade's account thus necessitates room for what I call "prior" knowledges and histories to not only burst forth, in a Benjaminian sense, but to legitimately attempt reconfiguring the Adivasi present towards flourishing rather than mere survival.

Early on, Dhodade positions his testimony against a literary genre such as the novel, typically enshrined as the genre most capaciously describing a social-historical milieu. Dhodade, in narrating his encounter with novels in schools, dispels this easy ascription to the novel of social truth: ". . . the novels one read were of one type, and social reality was another type. What was in books was not in society. So I realized that books are also the monopoly of the oppressive, upper castes. Even as a youngster I had understood this. They would take our grain, our land. The police used to support them—they were all together in this exploitation." (201) A quote that opens a section titled *Influences*, Dhodade goes on to narrate histories of Adivasi struggles against both British and Indian governance, thus noting a continuity in anti-tribal policies that situates Adivasis as "prior" presence in relation to the land even as it suggestively gestures to Povinelli's "governance of the prior" entangling settler and aboriginal in Australia's colonial structure that foreclose the notion of justice for those politically and narratively positioned as "prior." Most importantly for the question of genre, however, is how Dhodade closes his alter-histories of Adivasi struggle in a section thus hologramming new meaning out of *Influences*: "There is nothing written about him [19th c leader Bagoji] in Marathi, but the people from Mokhada (in Nashik) came from village to village and told us, through *Thala* and *Pat*. The Adivasi always resisted the British. I learned these old stories as I moved around in this region. I did not learn this from books—there was no connection between this and what I studied in school." (202)

Fundamentally, the alter-history Dhodade presents centers a struggle over land claim, if not sovereignty per se, that is deeply bound up with the phenomenon of dispossession and exploitative usury. The first footnote to Dhodade's testimony not only defines *Adivasi* in terms of "prior" inhabitation but tracks Adivasi vulnerability to dispossession by development, at the

startling projected rates of 10 million in upcoming decades, in addition to the 10 million already displaced—about half of the total displaced and one third of Adivasis yet to be displaced at the millenium’s turn (Ed. de Sousa Santos, 2010). Which is to say, both Dhodade’s account of the entanglement between tribal identity, dispossession, and debt bondage as well as the footnotes clarifying key national legislation and local Adivasi practices, presents an argument for considering the prior of caste and tribal identity as crucial aspects of tribal precarity to contemporary unfree labor practices. Unlike in Bales’ account, where enslaved subjects are airbrushed of longstanding histories and homogenized into slightly varying examples of the unitary enslaved subject, Dhodade’s account passionately and complexly historicizes this entanglement of caste, coloniality, and bondage with tribal precarity in order to critique the false promises of the postcolonial condition and in order to advocate for armed resistance to a mortgaged Adivasi future.

What else Dhodade did not learn in school was about *sat bara* or the Revenue Code section related to land entitlement. The retrieval of this knowledge for Dhodade and the reader segways into a description of how processes of dispossession, which include flouting the Code and other legal reforms often via police violence, render the Adivasis more vulnerable to debt exploitation and, relatedly, bonded labor. The class conflict that emerges—between the *saokars* or upper class money lenders and the Adivasis deprived of most of their land—is thus inflected by the political and cultural, in the form of police discipline as well as ritual caste violence. For if we read between the lines of Dhodade’s account of *palomodi* or bonded labor, in the exploitation of the Adivasis’ lack of knowledge or political power, by the saokars and police, we might read the historical traces (Rao, 2009) of mechanisms used to reinforce caste hierarchy, such as humiliation, archaic labor roles, and the policing of the purity/pollution binary.

First, there is the chronic tribal poverty that forces the Adivasi subject into a bonded labor arrangement that might last indefinitely: “. . . even after one year’s labor, the saokar would not give freedom to the bonded laborer.” (197) This, coupled with interest rates “between 800 and 1,000 percent” (197) meant that eventually all Adivasi land was alienated, paving the way for Dhodade’s increasing involvement with the Adivasi Sewa Mandal, though the failure of its Gandhian tactics to truly redress sustained police (and caste) violence biographically moves Dhodade towards armed resistance in the Bhoomisena or Land Army. Second, there is the more explicit caste coding of the temporally briefer incidents of violence Dhodade describes, in a sweatshop conflict and debt repayment failure, which I register via the explicit naming of Adivasi identity as collective stigma, the un-redressability of Adivasi murder, and ritual humiliation in relation to purity/pollution.

After the sweatshop protestors are beaten to death and Dhodade demands a customary postmortem, the police in turn demand genealogical proof to supposedly comply: “To protect the police, this was not done. I thought that this was not right, that this was how Adivasis were denied justice. The police asked me, ‘How are you related to these people?’ I replied, ‘I am not related.’” (199) This astonishingly rich if brief account casts up a few insights key to my running argument on the entanglement between tribal precarity, bondage, and notions of the “prior.” One is Dhodade’s matter-of-fact observation on the workings of the law, as represented by the police, that cannot translate into justice for Adivasis; another is the narrative trajectory that routes the cyclic relationship between tribal poverty, tribal precarity, and tribal premature death; the last, if we borrow Povinelli’s theorizations of the governance of the prior in its division of the autological and genealogical subjects, is the liberal state’s demand on the autochthonous to establish authentic descent and kinship in order to garner state protection. The next incident more overtly suggests caste violence, though the speaker does name it as such, but the marks of humiliation, bodily

degradation, and a policing of purity/pollution read as unmistakable: “There was this man from my village, hardworking and poor. They beat him up until he defecated, and then forced him to eat his feces. We had no justice. People were afraid” (199) This scene, which Dhodade introduces as one childhood memory among many such memories, is linked to debt as meager as one rupee.

Works Cited

- British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, 1840: Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and Held in London, from Friday, June 12th, to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840*. London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841.
- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New Press, 2010.
- Ed. Allain, Jean. *The Legal Understanding of Slavery*. "Rejoinder: Professor Orlando Patterson's Response to Professor Kevin Bales." United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Ed. Allain, Jean. *The Legal Understanding of Slavery*. "Professor Kevin Bales' Response to Professor Orlando Patterson." United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Bales, Kevin. *Disposable People*. Berkeley: UC Press, 1999.
- Bales, Kevin. *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves*. Berkeley: UC Press, 2007.
- Bales, Kevin. *Understanding Global Slavery*. Berkeley: UC Press, 2005.
- Ed. Bales, Kevin and Trodd, Zoe. *To Plead Our Own Cause*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Ed. Boaventura de Sousa Santos. *Voices of the World*. Brooklyn, NY: Verso 2010.
- Ed. Campbell, Gwynn. *The Aftermath of Abolition in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*. New York and London: Routledge, 2005.
- Chatterjee, Indrani. *Gender, Slavery, and Law in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Chatterjee, Indrani. *Slavery and South Asian History*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006.
- Chatterjee, Indrani. "Abolition by Denial: the South Asian Example." *The Aftermath of Abolition in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*. Ed. Campbell, Gwynn. New York and London: Routledge, 2005. 150-167.
- Dasgupta, Keya. "Plantation labour in the Brahmaputra Valley: Regional enclaves in a colonial

- context.” *The Aftermath of Abolition in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*. Ed. Campbell, Gwynn. New York and London: Routledge, 2005. 169-179.
- Davis, Angela. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003.
- DuBois, Page. *Slaves and Other Objects*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- DuBois, Page. *Slavery: Antiquity and its Legacy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.
- Loomba, Ania. “Race and the Possibilities of Comparative Critique.” *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses*. Ed. Felski & Friedman. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. 199-228.
- Lowe, Lisa. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015.
- Mohan, P. Sanal. *Modernity of Slavery: Struggles Against Caste Inequality in Colonial Kerala*. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- O’Connell Davidson, Julia. *Modern Slavery: The Margins of Freedom*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth. “The Governance of The Prior.” *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*. 13(1): 2011. 13-30.
- Quirk, Joel. *The Anti-Slavery Project: From the Slave Trade to Human Trafficking*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.
- Rao, Anupama. *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India*. London, England: University of California Press, 2009.
- Shih, Shu-mei. “Comparison as Relation.” *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses*. Ed. Felski & Friedman. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. 109-134.
- Vora, Kalindi. *Life Support: Biocapital and the New History of Outsourced Labor*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.
- Williams, Erica. *Sex Tourism in Bahia: Ambiguous Entanglements*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

SECTION iii

An Indian Abolitionist in Brazil

As a text encapsulating the transnational and diachronic shifts of this chapter, Kailash Satyarthi's speech at the III Global Child Labour Conference in Brasilia, Brazil (2013) concretely connects the central sites of slavery my project reads. While Satyarthi never explicitly references the three hundred years plus of racial chattel slavery in Brazil, he nevertheless addresses the audience (and names Brazilian allies and friends) in a speech that treats the problem of child labor as a transnational one and the proposition of Global South solidarity as an exciting solution:

"I am happy because it is for the first time ever that a developing nation has demonstrated commendable leadership by hosting this historic conference. This indeed is a strong message that emerging economies and even nations will play an important role in combating the menace of child labor hereafter. This conference marks the onset of a new era of South-South cooperation." (1)

Embedded in Satyarthi's declaration is an acknowledgement of neo/colonial histories that helped bifurcate the world into a Global North and South and the systems of power that have generated delays in arriving at such a collective South gathering. Although Satyarthi, again, does not explicitly name what those systems might be, I read his naming of conditions that anger him as a critique of not only capitalist circuits distinguishing consumers of the Global North from producers of the Global South but differences of nation, race, gender, and class that undergird these circuits and spatializations:

“In Bangladesh, I met a number of adolescent girls in the garment sweatshops whose only desire was to don at least once the beautiful branded apparels, but that remained a distant dream. A few months ago when I met a cocoa growing community in a remote village at Cote d Ivoire, the children who worked in the cocoa fields confessed that they had never tasted a chocolate in their life and had never even dreamt so.” (2)

In referencing these examples and their implied historical subtext, I assert the “prior’s” enduring and operational power in understanding slaveries past, present, and relationally. In foregrounding colonial legacies that render/ed some places and peoples as inferior and exploitable, I excavate an intimation of the “prior” in Satyarthi’s text that makes legible the lattices of coloniality/modernity, the de/valuation of difference, and the new global caste order implicated in “Global South.” This method of looking for the steganography *of and between* historical systems of bondage—*racial* chattel slavery in Brazil in *relation to casted* debt bondage in South Asia—i.e. tracing the “prior” beneath Satyarthi’s statistics for contemporary child labor (primarily agricultural and significantly sexual, heavily linked to gender, curtailed education, and generational poverty) demystifies the current “post”-slavery fetishism in order to delve into the specifics of bondage today. Most emphatically, in applying the frame of the prior to the relational pairing of South Asia and Brazil, these readings cull up, like the slave ship in Baquaqua’s auto/biography that would carry enslaved Africans through the Middle Passage and the duress that would propel indentured Indians across the Kala Pani (Black Water), the entangled ontoepistemologies of caste, labor, and the colonial difference that would forge an unexpected but real link between India and Brazil in early modern networks. It is such a reading, through the frame of the prior, that suggests a logic for why most Indian child laborers come from the poorest, lowest castes, why most child labor in Brazil is centered in its poorest, Blackest region (the Northeast, also the center of colonial Brazil’s sugar production), and why a quarter of

modern slaves today are these children and others just as vulnerable to late capitalism's predatory scouting of difference-pocked precarity.

Brazilian Interfaces

Within abolitionist debates of the 19th c., Brazil holds the dubious distinction of being both site of the largest demographic of black peoples held as ex/slaves—more than one million enslaved and about four million free by the 19th c. (Klein & Vidal Luna, 2010; Baranov, 2000)—and the last country in the Western hemisphere to legally abolish racial chattel slavery (1888, Lei Aurea). The crucial transnational impetus to Brazil's late entry into official abolition was its exposure to 19th c. U.S. and British abolitionist debates and legislation. In that brief period leading to abolition, there was considerable opposition from conservatives, the plantation oligarchy, and other social elites, and gradual emancipation would be the chosen strategy via staggered laws: Law of the Sextagenarians (1885), Law of the Free Womb (1871), and finally the Golden Law (1888) signed by Princess Isabella. This chronology fails to articulate the numerous organized rebellions, quilombo communities, and other subaltern/slave strategies of everyday resistance that punctuated Brazil's long history of slavery (Isfahani-Hammond, 2008; Klein, 1986; Klein & Vida Luna, 2010; Baranov, 2000). But for the purposes of this section and the chapter as a whole—that is, the genealogical tracing of difference and precarity in relation to bondage across periods as well as sites—I focus in the Brazilian literatures on writings by canonical figures in a key moment of the 19th c. abolition debates.

These figures are Joaquim Nabuco, Mahommah Baquaqua, Castro Alves, and Luiz Gama, and their writings span genres (political oratory, autobiography, poetry, and satire, respectively), indicating the versatility of approaches to addressing questions of un/freedom and

difference as well as providing an opportunity to examine the work of distinct genres in articulating responses. These men are also selected for the varied socio-spatial places they occupy and cross in pre-emancipation Brazilian society, a real-life corollary for the capacities and boundaries of their works, including genre choice. Nabuco was part of the Northeastern plantocracy and his European travels greatly contributed to his thinking and influence; Northeastern-born but Rio-lived Gama and first-generation, far-ranging Baquaqua are rare Afro-descendant figures among the public debates dominated by social elites, and had themselves been enslaved once; the Romanticist, white Bahian writer Alves was known as o Poeta dos Escravos or The Poet of the Slaves and his early comradeship with Nabuco helped radicalize Nabuco, the heir apparent to the Massangana/Pernambuco sugar fortune (Bethell & de Carvalho, 2009). In fact, the subplots of (failed) romance, (broken) kinship, and (long-lived) friendship would become critical undercurrents to the Brazilian abolitionists' trajectories examined in this chapter. This is why, though I open with portions of Nabuco's famous polemical text, *O Abolicionismo* or *Abolition*, I also read the arc of his personal correspondence with British abolitionists, especially his close friend Charles Harris Allen, as a kind of epistolary narrative unfolding in real-time, as framed by a collection such as *Joaquim Nabuco, British Abolitionists and the End of Slavery in Brazil: Correspondence 1880-1905*. One reveals Nabuco the celebrated figure with his mesmerizing if eugenicist rhetoric; the other a beleaguered man whose powers of persuasion and perception evolve alongside the events of Brazil and his own life. The contrast in these two Nabucos clarify how genres differentially depict figures and their ideas, via their aesthetic capacities to register questions of race/caste, character, culture, and trans/national space.

O Abolicionismo

When Vasconcelos said that our civilization had come from the coast of Africa, he clearly but unintentionally revealed the crime which our country committed when it enslaved the very persons who civilized it. We have seen the importance of this race in the formation of our people. Modern slavery rests upon a foundation different from that of the slavery of the ancient world: the color black. No one thinks of reducing white men to bondage; for this blacks alone are reserved. However, we are not exclusively a white people and so should not tolerate this curse of color. On the contrary, we should do everything possible to cast it off. (21)

While this section acknowledges the Brazilian tradition of paternalistic white authorship in texts treating themes of chattel slavery, blackness, and (the myth of) racial democracy—a tradition Nabuco's treatise *O Abolicionismo* crucially formed, locating Nabuco in the white liberator role (Isfahani-Hammond, 2008)—this section focuses on Nabuco's perception of precarity and (race) difference in relation to broader transnational, diachronic debates about the nature of bondage and caste. In these respects, I argue that Nabuco's definition of both slavery and abolition are surprisingly expansive, more so than contemporary celebrations of formal abolition and racial democracy in Brazil. So that despite astute criticisms of his and other white Brazilians' deployment of a multicultural (rather than postcolonial) version of "hybridity" in narrating Brazilian slave society (Isfahani-Hammond, 2008), it is critical to his definition of slavery that he consistently notes its racial character and distinguishes it from wage labor.

Repeatedly throughout the text, Nabuco names and historicizes blackness as significant to Brazilian labor and life, historicizing Afro-Brazilian bondage in the unique violences of the Black Atlantic Slave Trade and appraising Afro-Brazilian culture in often contradictory ways for its contribution to Brazilian *mesticagem*. For even as he notes that the master role crosses color lines, he consistently characterizes the Afro-descendant enslaved as Black. This admission encodes his fear of Black contamination into the white seigniorial ranks (Isfahani-Hammond, 2008), thus mapping a master-slave class distinction undergirded by *something else* which, again, I emphasize as a culture of im/material stigma or racialized stigma as a variant of caste.

Surprisingly, Nabuco also asserts that the urgency of Black un/freedom cannot be met by formal abolition alone, an uncanny prediction that historicizes racialized disparity in one of the world's most economically unequal nations today (International Social Science Council, 2016). Thus Nabuco's linking of racial Black difference and un/freedom to the present prior of bondage for Afro-Brazilians stands in ironic contrast to his white seigniorial anxieties and monarchist loyalties; his complex oratory wrestling with Afro-Brazilian legacies also troubles the transnational abolition debates in which he would participate, underpinned as those debates were by a liberal rhetoric de-linking difference and slavery.

Nabuco posits a broader interpretation of "abolitionism" and "slavery" in order to push against the gradual emancipation that has not yet completely ended racial chattel slavery and that, even after formal abolition, cannot fully erase slavery's far-ranging effects without vigilant political intervention:

"After the last slaves have been wrested from the sinister power which represents for the black race the curse of color, it will still be necessary to eliminate, through vigorous and forthright education, the gradual stratification of three hundred years of slavery, of despotism, superstition, and ignorance." (10)

"All three parties [Liberal, Conservative, Republican] base their political aspirations upon a social reality in which equality is granted no importance. Abolitionism, on the other hand, begins with the principle of equality. Before debating the best way for a *free* people to govern itself—and that is the issue which divides the others—it tries to make that people free, eliminating the immense gap which divides the two social castes." (15)

"In the first place, the part of the national population which is descended from the slaves is at least at large as the part descended exclusively from the masters; this means that the black race gave us a people. In the second place, everything which has existed until today in the vast territory called Brazil was constructed or cultivated by that race; this means that it was the blacks who built our country." (20)

Pulled from the opening chapters of Nabuco's treatise, these quotes capture central points about truly effective emancipation and articulate the inextricability of race/caste and un/freedom in Brazil. That is, Nabuco argues that formal abolition is a crucial, immediate first step for arriving at Black emancipation but cannot be the lone step, given slavery's deep-rooted hold on Brazilian society. Moreover, his use of the word *caste* is notable here, legitimizing not only the question of difference but all those dimensions of difference-making and difference-sustaining that *caste* implies: stigma, color, degree of (racial) im/purity, and hereditary labor role. While his complex view of racial chattel slavery cannot by any means be called racial capitalism, as pioneered and theorized by the Black Radical tradition (Robinson, 2000; Cox, 1948; James, 1938), it nevertheless offers an articulation of caste as hierarchy—one tiered by color and phenotypic difference in Brazil's particular racial schema (Telles, 2006; Hordge-Freeman, 2015; Nascimento, 2008)—a hierarchy entangled with the capitalist exploitation of enslaved labor. And while some of Nabuco's writings offer disclaimers about caste as hierarchy in Brazil, in contrast to the visible racial caste order of the U.S. (Isfahani-Hammond, 2008; Alexander, 2016; Cox, 1948), I argue that those moments in which Nabuco acknowledges the master-slave divide as a caste divide are more significant slippages that emphasize the inextricability of slaveries and race/caste structures.

Relatedly, what emerges from Nabuco's expansion of "abolition" and "slavery" is a eugenicist apprehensiveness about Brazilian progress. This racial bias—as much as the far-sighted concern about what effective emancipation would look like for Black Brazilians—is in keeping with the tenor of hegemonic mesticagem, the myth of racial democracy, and subsequent branqueamento policies that characterize/d 19th-20th c. Brazil. Which is to say, these modes of racial thinking all articulate a racial scale valuing blackness and whiteness at extreme ends, with

a desired trajectory towards whitening the Brazilian nation which, as revealed through Nabuco's complicated laments, is so heavily constituted by Afro-descendant peoples (Isfahani-Hammond, 2008). Chattel slavery figures into this eugenicist ideology as an unjust apparatus of Black exploitation but one that creates additional collateral for the mestizo nation. On the one hand, chattel slavery has exacerbated the worst tendencies of a backwards Black people, and on the other hand, in an echo of Social Darwinist fears, the demographic numbers and "mixture" generated by chattel slavery have disordered and debilitated the white-aspiring body politic (Isfahani-Hammond, 2008). The effective emancipation of Black Brazilians offers an opportunity to not only free them from the shackles of labor exploitation but their own accentuated, innate degradation and, eventually, to thus *melhorar a raça* or improve Brazil's own racial, cultural, and national destiny. Thus even in Nabuco's calculations of a Brazilian future without slavery, there exists deeply entrenched racist assumptions that suggests race/caste thinking predates/influences the formulation of both chattel slavery and un/freedom:

"But even if we take into account what was most characteristic about that race, it can be argued that if that race had been brought to Brazil at a time when religious fanaticism did not exist, when there was no shortage of acclimatized populations and, most important, no slavery, domestic and personal, the cross-breeding of whites and blacks would have been accompanied not by the bastardization of the more advanced race by the more backward, but by the gradual elevation of the latter." (102)

Isfahani-Hammond's argument, that eugenicist thinking and white seigniorial anxieties underlie and frame Nabuco's deceptively progressive rhetoric on behalf of enslaved black peoples, is an important reading that articulates a critique of the myth of racial democracy and a Brazilian literary and political tradition of anthropophagy, in which social/racial elites

simultaneously appropriate and erase blackness (90). But I want to emphasize here other dimensions of Nabuco's contradictory text. While his treatise should certainly be read as a literary strategy of black containment that would foreshadow future literary and political strategies of black containment, it should also be read for its prescience in refusing to equate formal abolition with full emancipation. Instead, Nabuco articulates the Black presence in Brazil as a version of the prior that has, by his racial calculus, indelibly marked/stigmatized Brazilian peoples and that will, through the long-ranging legacy of chattel slavery, continue to haunt the nation. Of course, that ideal future nation he imagines, in line with the branqueamento sensibilities that would argue against Asian immigration and instead legislate mass European immigration in the late 19th c. - early 20th c., is a whiter mestizo nation that has gradually diluted its black and indigenous inheritance/traits.

“ . . . who does not see the colossal image of the accursed race rattling the chain on their wrists, scattering their blood upon the land? This is the revenge of the black race. It does not matter that so many of their bastard sons have imposed the same yoke upon their brothers, have linked themselves as accomplices to the fortunes of the murderous institution. Slavery in America has always been the crime of the white race, the predominant element of our civilization, and that miserable state to which Brazilian society has been reduced is nothing less than the retinue of the African nemesis which visits at last the graves of uncounted generations.” (138)

“ . . . with slavery, Jose Bonfácio said in 1825, ‘Brazil will never create an intrepid army and a flourishing navy, as she urgently must,’ since with slavery there is no national patriotism, only the patriotism of caste or of race.” (133)

In a passage troubling the 20th c. myth of racial democracy that would follow, rooted as that myth is in a Freyrean fantasy of erotic and consensual master-slave relations, Nabuco places

the responsibility for chattel slavery as exploitative labor system and caste hierarchy squarely upon white Brazilians. The specter of the still-enslaved, the haunting of Brazilian territory by their bloodshed and thirst for justice is hypervisible in Nabuco's imaginary of Brazil. While this speaks to elite fears about latent rebellion, it also locates culpability upon white Brazilians rather than potential Black subversives. And in the last passage again naming *caste*, Nabuco quotes another Brazilian political celebrity to assert that racial caste is already one legacy of racial chattel slavery that threatens to keep the nation fractured. Ironically again then, Nabuco's appropriative white authorship of Black Brazilian bondage and emancipation names the race/caste and slavery entanglement that in transnational debates (at least in the 1840 document) appear severed from each other. I've called this de-linking of race/caste and bondage a liberal tabula rasa that helped legitimate the expansion of free trade and British imperialism under the guise of gifting freedom, knowledge, and progress to the universal post-Enlightenment subject, even as it overburdened and bonded the most vulnerable Indians, most of whom were low-caste. Nabuco's framing of race/caste in his white-authored text of Black bondage and emancipation may not go far enough, discursively or politically, but it exceeds in honesty and accuracy the liberal tabula rasa that refused to acknowledge bondage elsewhere as critically entangled with those other key structures of power and precarity, i.e. race/caste.

A Brazilian Slave Narrative

The only auto/biography to have been written (and found) by a Brazilian slave is *The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua: His Passage to Freedom in Africa and America*. Published in 1854, during a peak period in transnational abolition campaigns, the Baquaqua biography is, therefore, not only a rare account of Brazilian slavery from the perspective of the

enslaved but a significant 19th c. slave narrative that, through its diegetic and extra-textual circulation, traces slavery and abolition's transatlantic span. Baquaqua divides his narrative in two significant sections geospatially and temporally. The first takes place in West Africa and details significant customs and commerces in several local communities, including his brief enslavement in the continental African trade. The second follows Baquaqua on his second journey as a slave, this time via the Black Atlantic Trade from Benin to Brazil to the U.S.. This second half of the narrative, dense with the dramatic events of capture, torture, and escape, repeat many themes central to U.S. slave narratives. That is, the Baquaqua auto/biography works as a tale of religious redemption as well as a plea for abolition. Over the course of both sections, Baquaqua builds to his conversion from Islam to Christianity, and the text as well as extra-textual details about his post-conversion life end around the point that he arrives in Britain and plans to return as a missionary to Africa. Arguably also over the course of both sections, Baquaqua builds a vividly detailed case for ending slavery. For one, his emphasis on the elaborate traditions of his prior life make a case for the complexity of Black African societies and peoples and his multiple accounts of slavery's physical and psychological brutality as well as his various strategies to cope and resist make a case for abolishing the cruel trade/practice.

But because Baquaqua's story routes through Brazil—and Brazil's particular practice of slavery and race/caste—Baquaqua's text also complicates canonical formulations of New World chattel slavery and the slave narrative as genre. For Baquaqua, the central corrupting motive of slavery is not difference, and what is gridded onto this, but "power." Indeed, in Brazil, both Euro-and-Afro-descendants were part of the slave-owning class (though the master/slave classes were overall disproportionately raced white/black). And in terms of slave narrative as genre, there is not the usual lengthy white-authored preface guaranteeing authenticity and veracity in

the Black narrative; here, the editors Law and Lovejoy argue, there is a fluctuation in voice across the text that blurs genre lines, positioning the work at times as auto/biography, at times as co-authored memoir. Could this ambiguity gesture to the more fluid race relations that set Brazilian society apart from a more rigidly segregated American society? Or does it also accentuate Baquaqua's unorthodox journey, one that itself fluctuated across more geospatial sites than many U.S. slave narratives did? While answering the many possible questions regarding the slave narrative as genre is not my objective here, I hope other studies will take them up in the case of Baquaqua's valuable but understudied work; for my own project, I focus on his narration of the entanglement between precarity, difference, and (his version of) the "prior" in regards to slavery and abolition.

Supplication & Slavery

The first section of Baquaqua's auto/biography might be read as a history of Baquaqua the free African prior to Baquaqua the enslaved Brazilian. As with U.S. slave narratives that begin with a chronology of birth, parentage, and name to establish subjectivity, context, and authority, Baquaqua's personal historicization asserts a personhood beyond the cultural and geographic confines of reader expectation. The portrait of the prior Baquaqua draws up of Zoogoo, Benin reads like an ethnographic text—the first six chapters dutifully filling out their titles ("Government in Africa," "Appearance and Situation of the Country," "Agriculture, Arts, & c,")—that depicts not entirely Africa the Dark Continent but an Africa materially replete with history, culture, and economy. The substantial space Baquaqua allots for this ethnographic attention suggests that he is countering the logic of slaveability that ascribed savagery, pre-history, and outsidership to the African figure:

“The city of Zoogoo is in the midst of a most fertile and delightful country. It is not in the midst of a wildness, as some suppose, but there are some quite extensive plains, covered with very tall rank grasses, which is used by the people to cover their houses, after the fashion of thatching.” (105-6)

“Birds are abundant, such as geese, turkeys, peacocks; guinea hens and bath fowls; the latter are very large and are in great abundance . . . / The rivers abound with the river horse, the crocodile, & c.” (112)

“Children are brought up to be obedient and polite; they are never permitted to contradict or sit in the presence of an aged person . . . Should not these facts put to shame the manners of the children in this country towards the aged?” (173)

“When a young man wishes to marry, he selects a choice fruit called Gan-tan, and sends it by his sister or some female friend to the object of his choice; if the fruit is accepted he understands that he will be favorably received . . . during this time she remains veiled and has a number of female friends with her, who spend their time in play and amusements. The bridegroom in the meantime confines himself at home and is attended by his young friends, who spend their time in feasting and merriment until the seventh day.” (115)

Thus the “other” Africa Baquaqua so painstakingly maps—not only via these ethnographic notes but via a literal map of his mother’s hometown, which appears at the very start—is one brimming in verdure and ceremony.

Significantly and ironically, Baquaqua also opens his narrative by naming the Islamic faith into which he was born. The transcriber notes Mahommah describing his father as devout, praying four times a day. And at the heart of the chapter is an onomatopoeic rendering of the call to prayer:

“The priest commences the devotions by bowing his head toward the earth and saying the following words: ‘Allah-hah-koo-bar,’ the people responding ‘Allah-hah-koo-bar,’ signifying ‘God, hear our prayer, answer our prayer.’” (99)

This seemingly transparent recording, one that begins Baquaqua’s conversion narrative from Islam to Christianity, one that thus places Baquaqua’s auto/biography in the genre of slave narratives, nevertheless offers some textual instability. For if Baquaqua’s intent in the first section of the text is to prior/itize Africa as site of history, culture, and economy in order to assert his personhood and the moral necessity of abolition, then the placement of Islamic prayer in this section, as an opening marker of pre-conversion heathenism, disrupts the implicit claim to Africa’s prior greatness. This deconstructive moment in the text is supported by the “other” slave narrative in Baquaqua’s auto/biography; that is, this section’s brief tale of Baquaqua’s prior enslavement within Africa links various barbarities to Africa as site of a particular kind of prior: domestic slavery, Islam, and an isolationist innocence about the outside world, including white men and their technology. Unlike the white men, whose metaphoric eye, the telescope, is omniscient, Africans are ignorant, fearful, and uncouth:

“They consider the white people superior to themselves in every respect . . . they imagine, for making [needles], the whites have the power to put out their eyes . . . the story circulated by the wonder-mongers of the sable tribe.” (120-1)

This narrative bildungsroman tracks not only Baquaqua’s conversion journey to spiritual and civilizational freedoms but his journey from slave to emancipated post-Enlightenment subject. In this regard, Baquaqua’s auto/biography takes up abolition as a second critical feature

of the slave narrative genre, and the repeated assistance he receives towards his emancipation comes primarily from the aforementioned white men whose metaphorical eye—their Christian goodness, their abolitionist mindset, their perception of his capable humanity—affirm their superiority, in contrast to his very first (black) and later captors. Also in the tradition of the slave narrative, Baquaqua describes several horrific scenes of slave torture and subjection that work to concretize slavery's cruelty and solicit support for the abolitionist cause.

The most direct plea Baquaqua makes for abolition is articulated in the slave ship scene. Filled with horrific details of the foul transport conditions, the severe withholding of sustenance, the various methods of torture and disposal, the slave ship scene proffers an eloquent appeal to abolitionist sympathies that locates the text solidly within the slave narrative genre. At the same time, Baquaqua emphasizes that some violences cannot be recounted, only gestured at by those who've survived them. This subaltern move locates both text and enslaved subject within the rich under-literatures of the subaltern, and foregrounds the value of Baquaqua's abolitionist moves within canonical debates dominated by elites:

Its horrors, ah! who can describe? None can so truly depict its horrors as the poor unfortunate, miserable wretch that has been confined within its portals. Oh! friends of humanity, pity the poor African, who has been trepanned and sold away from friends and home, and consigned to the hold of a slave ship, to await even more horrors and miseries in a distant land, amongst the religious and benevolent . . . We were thrust into the hold of the vessel in a state of nudity, the males being crammed on one side and the females on the other; the hold was so low that we could not stand up, but were obliged to crouch upon the floor or sit down, day and night were the same to us, sleep being denied us from the confined position of our bodies, and we became desperate through suffering and fatigue. / Oh! the loathsomeness and filth of that horrible place will never be effaced from my memory . . . Let those *humane individuals*, who are in favor of slavery, only allow themselves to take the slave's position in the noisome hold of a slave ship, just for one trip from Africa to America, and without going into the horrors of slavery further than this, if they do not come out thorough-going abolitionists, then I have no more to say in favor of abolition. (153-4)

Sold first to a baker in Pernambuco, then to a captain in Rio, Baquaqua chronicles the variations and violences of his two-year captivity in disturbing moments of degradation,

deprivation, and whippings that define Baquaqua as enslaved subject. But that violence begins in Africa, before the slave ship, where/when Baquaqua essentially narrates the transformation of human subjects into early capitalism's racial commodities. Thus, Baquaqua maps the origin point of slavery's violence geospatially in Africa/n complicity, economically in the expanding slave trade, and hierarchically in the metonymic and symbolic references laden in the ship, waiting as it does in the liminal space of the Black Atlantic:

Whilst at this place, the slaves were all put into a pen, and placed without our backs to the fire, and ordered not to look about us, and to insure obedience, a man was placed in front with a whip in his hand ready to strike the first who should dare to disobey orders; another man then went round with a hot iron, and branded us the same as they would the heads of barrels or any other inanimate goods or merchandise. / When all were ready to go aboard, we were chained together, and tied with ropes round about our necks, and were thus drawn down to the sea shore. The ship was lying some distance off. I had never seen a ship before, and my idea of it was, that it was some object of worship of the white man. I imagined that we were all to be slaughtered, and were being led there for that purpose. (149-51)

Of course, Baquaqua's premonition about Black genocide is not far off, given the notorious conditions of the Middle Passage and the necropolitical legacies of racial chattel slavery that haunt Afro-descendants across the Americas. The particularly hazardous conditions in Brazil partly account for the 3.6 million enslaved who would be shipped to that country, in a yearly average of 34,000 by the mid-19th c., landing into difficult if not foreshortened life chances (Baranov, 2000). But what I find startling for its subtle but rigorous insight is Baquaqua's mode of reading the scene of his and his people's impending doom. That is, Baquaqua employs a kind of metonymic reading himself, in keeping with Elaine Freedgood's methodology that recuperates historical meaning through a return to the thing's origin, place, and intent (in the commodity chain). The ship, which the reader knows will carry Baquaqua and the enslaved to their New World destinations and which Baquaqua imagines as an idolatry object of white men and as death endpoint for black men, is both a material thing and figurative linkage

between humans-and-humans-turned-things. Within Baquaqua's metaphorizing of the ship as idol is an astute metonymic reading that locates the ship in a capitalist circuit and commodity chain that does not merely mention the ship as landscape detail; instead, the ship literally and metonymically floats up as a laden symbol of the Black Atlantic Trade and Middle Passage that also transports the post-Enlightenment universal subject into a racial caste hierarchy differentially marked by violence.

Liminal Flows/Forms

Those scenes of subjection (Hartman, 1997), standard though they may be in slave narratives and abolitionist propaganda, nevertheless retain the power to horrify. The pre-embarkation moment in Africa casually describes the first use of disciplinary and branding mechanisms that would both render humans as commodities and define their caste status in slavocratic society:

“Whilst at this place, the slaves were all put into a pen, and placed with out backs to the fire, and ordered not to look about us, and to insure obedience, a man was placed in front with a whip in his hand ready to strike the first who should dare to disobey orders; another man then went round with a hot iron, and branded as the same as they would the heads of barrels or any other inanimate goods or merchandize.” (149-50)

Across multiple scenes in Brazil, under different slave owners, Baquaqua depicts the fickle cruelty to which even seemingly benign masters could resort.

“Whilst worshipping, my master held a whip in his hand, and those who showed signs of inattention or drowsiness, were immediately brought to consciousness by a smart application of the whip.” (158)

“I next tried what it would do for me by being unfaithful and indolent; so one day, when I was sent out to sell bread as usual, I only sold a small quantity, and the money I took and spent for whiskey, which I drank pretty freely, and went home well drunk, when my master went to count the days, [sic = day’s] taking in my basket and discovering the state of things, I was beaten very severely. I told him he must not whip me any more, and got quite angry, for the thought came into my head that I would kill him, and afterwards destroy myself. I at last made up my mind to drown myself; I would rather die than live to be a slave.” (160)

“The captain’s lady was anything but a good woman; she had a most wretched temper. The captain had carried her off from St. Catherine’s, just as she was on the point of getting married, and I believe was never married to her. She often got me into disgrace with my master, and then a whipping was sure to follow. She would at one time do all she could to get me a flogging, and at other times she would interfere and prevent it, just as she was in the humor. She was a strange compound of humanity and brutality.” (163)

What is also in keeping with traits of the slave narrative genre are the multiple good white abolitionists who appear to assist Baquaqua. Two key appearances in the text’s liberation trajectory are in New York and in Haiti. In New York, where Baquaqua and fellow captives run away from the captain’s ship but are caught and jailed, it is a group of abolitionists who break the runaways out and help them flee to Boston. And in Haiti, it is the Reverend Mr. Judd and his wife who save the freed Baquaqua from penury, convert him, and support his return to the U.S., where he attends New York Central College in Cortland, New York and publishes the said text in Detroit. Early on, in fact, in the slave ship embarkation scene in Africa, Baquaqua clarifies that it is not color but power that corrupts people into master/slave divides:

“After a few weeks, he shipped me off to Rio de Janeiro, where I remained two weeks previous to being again sold. There was a colored man there who wanted to buy me, but for some reason or other he did not complete the purchase. I merely mention this fact to illustrate that slaveholding is generated in power, and any one having the

means of buying his fellow creature with the paltry dross, can become a slave owner, no matter his color, his creed or country, and that the colored man would as soon enslave his fellow man as the white man, had he the power.”

(162)

Thus, in a curious rendition of slavery’s obvious hierarchy, it seems that Baquaqua understands capital, disciplinary violence, and dubious character to be those elements constituting the “power” he identifies as the hierarchy’s true metric. Color, by his calculus (unlike Nabuco’s), is less significant, suggesting that while Baquaqua asserts some version of caste, it is not equitable with raciality.

The same might be argued about the genre’s fluctuations in voice, form, and spatial range. If a stable and unitary notion of race relies on a geospatially specific set of histories and definitions (Omi & Winnant, 2015; Nascimento, 2008), then Baquaqua’s movement from Benin to the U.S. and beyond hardly offer a consistent set of loci on which to define the stable workings of “race” for Baquaqua and thus for adhering to typical genre conventions of the slave narrative. The polyvocal fluctuations of the text, between white and black voices, may point to a specifically Latin American version of fluid race relations that account for the polyvocality and genre blurring. What remains faithful here to slave narrative conventions—i.e. the narrative arc towards conversion and emancipation—suggests that Baquaqua too succumbed to the seductions of post-Enlightenment liberal thought, in which versions of Anglo-superiority and assimilationist progress rose to the text’s surface as determinedly as that slave ship and the capitalist trade and slave cast(e)ing it both signified and embodied. This, among other deconstructive aspects of the text, marks Baquaqua’s auto/biography as a rewarding object of study for questions of difference, precarity, and bondage, beyond its significance as the sole surviving slave narrative of Brazil.

Alves' African Out/Cast(e)

Like Nabuco, Castro Alves was a white member of the slave-owning class in Brazil, and like Nabuco, he was one of the period's more well-known abolitionists, influenced early in his brief life by other progressives. Alves' astonishing output, before he died at twenty-four, included an abolitionist play *Gonzaga* and several canonical poems savaging slavery's violences and advocating for abolition. For the purposes of this chapter, I read select poems—*Tragedy at Sea: The Slave Ship*, *African Body*, and *Hopeless*—although the play would be a valuable genre to consider in a later draft, for thinking through the spatial politics of bondage, abolition, and difference. In Alves' work too, as in the works of Nabuco, Gama, and Baquaqua, I hone in on the writer's treatment of the questions of difference in relation to bondage, arguing that, while Alves himself enacts the cannibalistic authorship of black experience that is characteristic for white signors in Brazil, he also clearly affirms the racial nature of chattel slavery. Specifically, the recurring tropes of the poems examined here are highly racialized—the slave ship, the blood of the slave, the violence of bondage, the violence of de-kinning—and inform Alves' moral rebuke and appeal to his audience. While his use of *caste* is not as explicit or numerous in these poems as in the writings of Nabuco and Gama, his few references to *caste* yield potentially provocative connections to other moments and sites of abolitionist literatures. Specifically, Alves' insistence on a genealogy of the slave figure which is both biologically-inflected and liminality-bound resonates with early modern notions of blood im/purity in Europe and colonial notions of Dalit un/belonging in Hindu hierarchy. I translate such resonances into Alves' framing of the Afro-descendant enslaved as a permanently distinguished out/caste class.

Alves' rhetorical moves must be situated in Condoreirismo or the third phase of Romanticism in Brazilian national literature (Bernardi, 1999). In contrast to the first-phase

Indianists re-imagining 19th c. Brazilian national identity and the second-phase morbidity of Ultra-Romanticism influenced by German Romantics, Condoreirismo took a politically engaged turn that focused on the Black slave figure and collective un/freedom. While it did display typical Romantic obsessions—with God, Nature, nation(alism), the individual, and the colloquial—its concern with collective justice and its use of hyperbole, an omniscient narrative eye, and turn to the corporeal (of love) distinguish it from the previous phases of Romantic cultural thought. These new rhetorical moves, in Alves’ poems at least, become ample keys for confronting the questions of race/caste, synecdoche, and bondage that thread throughout this dissertation. Which is to say, such rhetorical moves suggest that, in taking up the project of abolition and slavery’s relationship to difference, Condoreirismo acknowledged an entanglement between difference, labor, and the body rather than a legitimate de-linking of these, as in the 19th c. liberal rhetorical moves of idealized universalism and abstract individualism.

Un/Romantic Spaces

“The Slave Ship,” Alves’ poem most explicitly narrating the Middle Passage, is a long, segmented work that crescendos into a patriotic appeal for abolition, twenty years before formal abolition would be finalized in Brazil. That appeal rests on images of slavery’s violences, the idealized freedom of an African past, and a nationalist pathos articulating slavery as an especially Brazilian shame. The poem’s lyric style with declarative and recurring phrasing on the slave’s blood, the master’s whip, the hellish vessel, enhance the drama of this logic through Romantic-style moves, working to characterize Afro-Brazilian slaves in Biblical terms as unwitting victims transported from their civilization to European savagery rather than the other way around. And the trans-temporal narrative voice, which roams from allusions to ancient

Rome and Greece to a pre-slavery African landscape to the 19th c. Brazilian abolitionist first person narration, staunchly historicizes Brazilian slavery as an unnatural, racialized abomination. In this last respect, for this particular poem, Alves' use of the omniscient narrative eye appears to depart from the anthropophagic strategy of white abolitionists like Nabuco. However, as poems like "African Blood" and "Last Embrace" reveal in their uses of close third person and first person voice, relatively (81, 97), Alves' overall oeuvre also performs a paternalistic voice-over, impersonation, and representation in keeping with the white seigniorial tradition of both inscribing and evacuating the black body.

Still, the imaginative density of Alves' ship poem reconfigures the slave ship as a circle of Dante's hell, evoking a liminality of both ship and slave as figures caught between geo-temporal terrains and ontoepistemological upheavals:

"Black-mouthed and listless children / Hang at their black mothers' exhausted breasts / Spattered with blood / Shivering and naked girls, / A crowd of ghosts dragging / Their wretched bodies . . ." (15-17)

"Yet the captain marshalls this grim parade / In full view of the beautiful sky / Lying pure on the sea, / And orders, between puffs on his cigar, / 'Shake the whip harder, sailors, / Make them dance more.'" (17)

"These are women shamed, / Like exiled Hagar / Thirsty and exhausted from / A long, long journey— / Marching with reluctant steps / Sons and shackles on their arms," (19)

The enslaved figures of these passages, caught between the realm of the living and the dead, between sea and sky, articulate those aspects of bondage Patterson, Chatterjee, and others have called definitive of slaveries ranging from chattel to debt to caste. That is, these scenes bear the marks of social death, natal alienation, kinlessness, deep degradation, and the violence of

human community abstracted into human commodity. While the poetic prodigy Alves could not have drawn upon these 20th c. frames to graphically illustrate contemporary formulations of bondage, these 19th c. Romantic-style scenes float up from among the plentiful abolitionist writings of the era with eery as well as relational force. They draw a genealogical cartography, via space, of an out/cast(e) community. That community was critically forged as out/cast(e) in the crucible of the Middle Passage (ship); its peoples were “swept” from lands where indigenous status rendered them free and proud into other indigenous lands where their “mocked” arrivant status was defined by both whipping and dancing (21); and the national(ist) imaginary of this racially stigmatized community remains haunted by liminality as historical condition—liminality of passage, of un/belonging, of (social) death.

Relatedly, the Africa these enslaved have left is imagined in majestic and romantic terms, an account that departs from Baquaqua’s imaginary of complex native societies fraught with their own injustices, including slavery. Alves cites “wars and lion hunts,” the “sleep of the free” as Manichean counterpoint to the diasporic reality of the new Afro-Brazilian slave, trapped in a nautical hell “fouled with excrement and sweat,” allowed only a “fitful sleep interrupted by the scrape of a corpse dragged to the rails . . .” (21) Once again, a particular characterization and historicization of bondage arises from this Manichean depiction: the 19th c. slave ship as necropolitical site of a liminal transit between Black un/freedoms, as capitalist conduit for the transformation of humans into commodities that would undergird the global expansion of early modern capitalism. In a Romantic move, the poem closes with a second person appeal to God, Nature, and the Brazilian people, to acknowledge and redress the gravity of slavery’s violences. Invoking the agency of all three subjects via this Romantic address, Alves configures a world order both divine and secular, a national imaginary romantically local yet transnational. His

closing critique, of the use of that nationalist symbol, the flag, to camouflage the source of national prosperity in slavery, also invokes the failed fulfillment of liberal Enlightenment ideals of freedom, equality, and fraternity. It is unclear whether the people who will be shrouded in the future flag will be the slaveholding class or the enslaved; but it is clear and surprising that, at the poem's end, he indicts both the slave trade and the legacy of colonial exploration, via Columbus, for what he calls "fatalidade atroz" or atrocity (23). In this move relating slavery and coloniality/modernity, Alves locates post-abolition freedom for slave and nation in a spatial erasure of the ship, the passage, and the flag. Which is to say, if his Black slave figure is imagined as an out/cast(e) configured through space, then this emancipatory spatial erasure is also one mode of disturbing Brazilian caste hierarchy:

"Andrada, tear this flag from the wind! / Columbus, close the doors of your seas!" (23)

Savage Blood

A sense of vengeance crystallizes into the figure of the avenging slave in "African Blood." A brief poem, with none of the narrative sweep of "Slave Ship" or even any significant narrative turn, the portrait of a slave turned "savage" pivots upon the revelation of his true blood:

"A bloody light shone from his eyes . . . And in his chest, in the chambers of his heart / Agitates the blood that will not deny its race, / Blood burnt by the sun of Libya, / Boiling with an equatorial passion in his veins." (81)

I read the essentialist reduction of the slave figure, via the trope of savage blood, as a biologically-inflected articulation of *casta* entangled with enslavement. First, let us contextualize Alves' poem in 19th c. formulations of race as biology, and let us register *casta* as formative

steganography animating this rendering of Brazilian racial difference. Then, the revelatory transformation of the enslaved to vengeful savage reads as simultaneously a return to early modern caste discourses of blood or *sangre*, a slippage of this older discourse into ongoing formulations of racial difference, and a rendering of blackness in particular as marked by pre-Christian but heroic wrath and resistance.

Alves' poem "Hopeless" more explicitly names caste within its similarly resonant revenge plot. At the heart of the poem, Alves extends his own definition of a slave, someone of unfortunate descent and someone repellent among men:

"To be a slave is to inherit a dark cradle / Descended from beasts made evil by the market . . . / Son of calamity, bastard by descent / Without even a drop of milk for a dry mouth." (87)

"To be a slave is to be an outcast among men / To be chased away like a wild animal; / Being of two brothers the most craved food, / A delicacy to jaguar and men alike . . ." (87)

The tropes that I've argued elsewhere in this dissertation as linked to caste—fragile consanguinity, culture of im/material stigma, hereditary labor, and a consumptive use of the slave body simultaneous with strictures around commensality—appear here too. Whether Alves intended to evoke these characteristics in a pre-meditated articulation of caste is unclear—after all, the original Portuguese text uses the term "homens repellido" or "repelled men" here as analogue for "escravo" or "slave" (86). But my point in accepting the translation here, and in embracing the commensurability of race-casta-caste across the dissertation, is to track literary resonances that make their slippery object, *caste*, cohere/nt across period and place, despite caste's in/famous fluidity.

Alves names the slave figure as descended from white masters but, because of slavery's peculiar calculus, robbed of that lineal and collateral consanguinity that would give the slave child the same milk transferred from the slave nurse's body to the slave master's child. Instead, between these "two brothers," the slave child grows to be himself "the most craved food," even as s/he is also peripheralized as the repelled among men and animals (86-7). All the while, the poem makes full Romantic use of the lyric address, the exclamatory line breaks, the stanza-condensed images and repetitions dramatizing the violent rhythms of slave work:

"Crime! Is it a crime when the boa constrictor / Bites the foot that has crushed it?" (87)

"Crime! To whom do you think you are talking / Such stupid words . . . give it up!" (87)

"Perhaps you do not see that we die every day / Before the untiring lash?" (89)

"Come, Maria! Fulfill your destiny . . . / Speak! Tell me the name of the assassin!" (89)

Finally, Alves' poem *Last Embrace*, a dying mother's lament to her son and appeal for forgiveness, throws into sharper relief Alves' re-articulation of crime and murder within racial chattel slavery. If the rhetorical question of "Hopeless" was meant to justify slave revenge/resistance within slavery's cruel caste-producing practices, then "Last Embrace" articulates, through the individual voice of the beleaguered female slave, *why* through humanistic affect. The mother's lament, that she will soon be separated finally from her son, echoes Orlando Patterson's argument that natal alienation is definitive of racial chattel slavery in the Atlantic World. And the mother's rhetorical gestures to the inherited destiny of both herself and her son

(“what a destiny, my God . . . mine in this world!” 97) resemble a synecdochal move positing the predicament of the enslaved body as a generational one and, even, a metaphysical one:

“Son, goodbye! I already feel death / Chilling the root of my heart / Come here, give me your hand . . . /
Look well how not even you / Can give me new strength! . . . / Son, it is the last moment . . . / Death—separation! /
To helplessness, thrown out / Of the nest, poor bird, / Into the deep wilderness, / Small, enslaved, and naked! . . .
”(97)

In Alves’ imaginary, there is no escape, even in death, from tropes of enslavement that thus suggest themselves as synecdochal tropes of caste.

The Self-Styled Advocacy of Luiz Gama

I close my readings of 19th c. Brazilian abolitionist literature with the satirical poetry of Luiz Gama. Though there remain numerous other abolitionist figures canonized for their key part in the movement—Rui Barbosa, Firmina dos Reis, Cruz e Sousa, etc.—and while I hope to cover their contributions in a later, more developed chapter, I focus on the extraordinary and prolific figure of Gama in part because he is one of the few Afro-Brazilians, the rare ex-slave among the abolitionist elite. Gama published only one literary text during his lifetime, *A Trova Burlesca*, from which I read three especially well-known poems, to decipher their rendering of difference and un/freedom as well as Gama’s original use of satire for social critique. But Gama also produced many other kinds of cultural texts and performances, which spanned journalistic pieces and his numerous legal defenses of ex/slaves. A self-taught lawyer or *rábula*, Gama devoted a great part of his career to not only advocating for enslaved Afro-Brazilians in court but a more militant and anti-monarchical variant of abolition than was imagined by many of his

contemporaries, including Joaquim Nabuco. His ideas and testimonies inspired as much animosity as adulation, so that in a private letter to his son, he confessed his fear of assassination (Souza Lima and Pinho, 2016).

Any relational reading of abolitionist literatures, focused on the treatment of difference and an imaginary of post-abolition futurity as well as the prior, must therefore necessarily face Gama's Black radicalism and passionate reference to the synecdochal in understanding his particular depiction of slavocratic society, raciality in Brazil, and Black subaltern histories. In these three poems ("Mote," "Coleirinho," and "Quem Sou Eu"), Gama moves from a scathing portrait of the white-aspiring *mesticagem* impulses of Brazilian society, especially for mulattos denigrating their African roots, to a graphic re-memory of the physicality of enslavement, to a reclamation of the in/dignity and variety of *casta*, which he repeatedly names. Thus the fact of racial difference is recuperated across these poems, a significant move that not only points to the centrality of blackness in Gama's conception of Brazilian racial mixture (and *mestizo* erasure of it within the myth of racial democracy) but to the more multiple dimensions of freedom he articulates against dominant abolitionist discourse calling for gradual emancipation and imperial transitions. Gama's notion of freedom is anchored in synecdochal revalorization of the African "body" rather than a liberal individualism trading the well-worn telos of material and social capital accumulation. And he elaborates on this through the poetic devices of repetition, punning (that reads like signifying), metaphor, and a cutting satirical tone that discomfited not only his contemporaries but later critical readers of his unabashedly Afro-centric poetry. These critics, still wrestling with and often reproducing problematic appropriations of black cultural production while erasing black authority, would variously dismiss Gama's powerful work as

acerbic and inauthentic by virtue of its force, radicalism, and racial authorship (Souza Lima and Pinho, 2016; Krueger, 2000; Estevam Santos, 2015; Alonso, 2012).

Synecdochal Blackness

In the first brief poem, *Mote* or *Motto* (itself a *mote* for many of the thematic turns of other poems in the collection), Gama satirizes the *mesticagem* imaginary that would simultaneously devalorize Brazilian black heritage and distance itself from self-identified Black kin such as Gama. Gama's object of derisive critique is not, therefore, the white plantation owner but the aspiring mixed-race figure whose "lowly" origins are materially embodied and masked and, as such, precariously disclosable. Race, in this particular poem at least, is biologically framed, a heritable essence that can be literally sweated out despite fancy disguise:

"Irrita-se o fidalgo qual demente, / Trescala a vil catinga nauseante, / E não pôde negar ser meu parente!"
(39)

"The nobility becomes irritated like crazy, / They reek of the nauseating, vile drylands, / And cannot deny being my relative!" (39)

The beautiful play on the affectionate diminutive *nega* or *little black one* reads like a signifying move (Gates) that, juxtaposing *black* and *to be* in *nega* and *ser*, suggests the stubborn salience of African heritage in the bourgeois mulatto object of critique. Why should the mulatto, rather than the white owner, be the target of Gama's satire? Perhaps the anchoring of mixed-race ideology in black erasure is one explanation; perhaps this speaks to Gama's broader sensibilities beyond poetry, as an anti-monarchist organizer who sought to build solidarity among the Black enslaved, working-class whites, and poor mixed-race Brazilians (Krueger); certainly, it speaks to

a notion of Brazilianness at odds with that acknowledged but denigrated by white abolitionist elites such as Nabuco, who acknowledged Brazil as significantly Afro-descended but ideally destined, via an early articulation of *branqueamento* thinking, for a largely European mixing that would eliminate Black blood. In contrast to the devalorization of blackness implicit in *mesticagem*, Gama foregrounds Black heritage as noble, powerful, resistant:

“Sou nobre, e de linhagem sublimada, / Descendo, em linha recta dos *Pegados*, / Cujá lança feroz
desbaratados / Fez tremer os guerreiros da Cruzada!” (38)

“I’m noble, and of exalted lineage, / Descending, in direct line from the *Captured*, / Whose fiercely thrown
back lances / Made the Crusade warriors tremble!” (38)

The figure of Gama’s mother, Luísa Mahin, who appears repeatedly in his works and who was herself a formidable revolutionary abolitionist, works symbolically and synecdochally to foreground Black resistance and power (Martins; Fonseca Ferreira; Souza Lima and Pinho; Krueger). Unquestionably black, the noble mother is the African past, one that is historically located at odds with the European, Christian figure from the period of the Crusades on. Thus the African maternal symbol also configures a biologically essentialized lineage of Black resistance to European dominance that, transported and translated to the Atlantic/American world, reproduces Black persistence and power through that surviving progeny engaged in ongoing Black resistance. Such resistance plays out on cultural as well as economic terrains, suggesting both to be critical to Gama’s conception of subordination, and to be linked:

“Minha mai, que e de proa alcantilada, / Vem da raca dos Reis mais affamados; / —Blasonava entre um bando de pasmados / Certo parvo de casta *amorenada*. / Eis que brada um peralta retumbante: / ‘—Teu avo, que de cor era latent, / ‘Teve um neto mulato e mui pedante!” (38)

“My mother, who is of the bottom-market ship, / Came from a race of the most famous Kings; / She blazed through a group of bewildered fools / Of a certain *browned* caste. / It’s they that cry resoundingly: / ‘Your grandfather, who was of suppressed color, / ‘Had a mulato grandson and was very pedantic!” (38)

The status, economic and social, of the gentry relies on the cultural ideology of *mesticagem* that locates blackness at the un/desirable end of “racial” hierarchy. Gama’s explicit use of *casta*—*amorenada* signifying a *browning* that is also a move towards whiteness and away from blackness—is an explicit naming of hierarchy that is located in the cultural realm but rooted in the economic system of racial chattel slavery (Krueger, 2000). Blackness is thus, in the hands of this ideology, also figuratively wrenched from its nobility and rendered into stigma, one that must be hidden by *os morenados* or *the browned ones*. By claimed his Black “mother” and unmasking her, via the sweat that smells of Northeast Brazilian (*caatinga*) labor, in the *casta amorenada*, Gama configures a synecdochal blackness that transfuses the Brazilian body politic and that, if resurrected into an Afro-descendent collective sutured by Black pride and resistance, has the radical potential to expand Brazilian notions of kinship and un/freedom.

Slave Laments

“Colleirinho,” Gama’s woeful first-person portrait of an enslaved man who has lost his wife and baby son, is an eulogy-like incantation of natal alienation, black captivity, and social death. With the repeated command to sing (“canta, canta”), the anonymous first person narrator also invokes the analogy of the collared bird (Krueger, 2000), perhaps echoing the high-toned

Romantic style of the period, Condorismo or Condorism. However, unlike Central Brazilian Romanticists such as Castro Alves and Gonçalves Dias, Gama does not center the Indian as tragic heroic progenitor of Brazilian history but the Black slave. And like many Romanticists, including Alves in his abolitionist poetry, Gama does draw upon the bird and other anthropomorphized figures of Nature (“roixa aurora” or “rosy dawn,” “a luz serena” or “the serene light”) to articulate the brutality of enslavement, the enslaved’s hunger for freedom:

“Quando a roixa aurora vinha / Manso e manso, além dos montes, / De oiro Orlando os horizontes, /
Matisando as crespas vagas . . . / . . . Hoje triste, já não trinas . . . / Hoje, escravo, nos solares / Não te embala a dulcia
brisa;” (79)

“When the rosy dawn arrives / Step by step, beside the mountains, / Of gold bordering the horizons, / fine-
tuning the curly waves . . . / . . . Today sad, you no longer warble . . . / Today, slave, in the suns / The saintly breeze
does not cradle you;” (79)

Captivity as trope girds the poem like one of its key images: the cage. It is an im/material condition, sounded in laments and cries and trills, mapped in spaces that are starkly divided by relief and pain. These im/material aspects of black captivity enunciate the complex weight of natal alienation and social death for the enslaved. For the other refrain is that of the presumably male slave’s separation from his wife and son, the depth of loss emphasized by the sweetness of these persons:

“Não te beijja o filho tenro . . . / Chora, escravo, na gayola / Terna esposa, o teu filhinho, / Que sem pãe, no
agreste ninho / Lá ficou sem ti, sem vida.” (80)

“The tender son doesn’t kiss you . . . / Cry, slave, in the jail / Tender wife, your dear little son, / Who without father, in the wild nest / Stays there without you, without life.” (80)

While there is no overt reference to racial difference in this poem, as in “Mote” or “Quem Sou Eu,” or polemical tendency to Black Pride as exists across the text, the poem is nevertheless marked by contrasts in color as noted in an anthromorphized Nature that tends, more than the enslaved themselves, to channel their voices:

“Nem se casa aos teus gorgeyos / O gemer das gotas alvas / —Pelos negras rochas calvas— / Da cascata que deslisa.” (80)

“Neither will your chirping be married / By the moaning of white drops / —Through the bald black rocks— / That slide from the the waterfall.” (80)

The strange and suggestive racial undertones, even erotics, of the verse are not expanded further in the poem; but even in this condensed form, sandwiched as the verse is between a scene of the hard labor of the alienated slave (“Não te embala a dulia brisa” / “The saintly breeze does not cradle you”) and the de-kinned, isolated prisoner, the verse also suggests the suffocating and interminable load of the burdened black worker. If anything—and perhaps this reveals presentist bias I have not shed—the tropes of imprisonment (cage, iron, captivity) are readable “prior” precedents for the present crisis in over-policing, imprisonment and forced labor in Brazil, still heavily skewed towards poor Brazilians, many of whom are Afro-descendants and/or come from the Northeast (Hoffman French, 2009; Barbara, 2015).

Castes & Goats

The final and most famous poem of the trio, “Quem Sou Eu?” or “Who Am I?,” is often cited for Gama’s explicit critique of branqueamento tendencies among mesticos and its frank assertion that every Brazilian is, in fact, a bit Black. Given this argument, Gama’s treatment of questions of the prior, difference, and enslavement enact a re-memorialization of racial chattel slavery’s enormous scale and impact on Brazilian society. In this implied re-memorialization, the pejorative *bode* or *goat* or *mulatto*, with all the attendant connotations, references the racial mixing that was not only a result of African and Portuguese presence in Brazil but the eroticized power relations of slavery that generated a significant mixed-race progeny from primarily Portuguese (male) owners and African (female) slaves. The various synonymous connotations of *bode* thus delineate the status of blackness for cultural and political citizenship (Krueger) within the mestico nation, a status associated with stereotypically anti-black traits (shiftlessness, hypersexuality, evolutionary primitivity) and to be eventually eliminated by mestiçagem. Gama thus relates blackness as stigma to racial chattel slavery, a relation he emphasizes with his repeated use of *casta*. Used in his poem to play off the racial pejorative of *bode* as also the species category *goat* (“Se negro sou, ou sou bode / Pouco importa. O que isto pode? / Bodes há de toda a casta,”// “If I am Black, or I am goat/mulatto / It matters little. What can this do? / There are goats/mulattos of every caste,” 112), Gama re-articulates biologically essentialist notions of race but with the astute critique that, then, this black blood flows through most mesticos and thus makes them *bodes* too:

“Bodes há de toda a casta, / Pois que a especie é muito vasta . . . / Há cinzentos, há rajados, / Bayos, pampas e malhados, / Bodes negros, *bodes brancos* . . . / . . . Bodes ricos, bodes pobres, / Bodes sábios, importantes . . . / . . . Marram todos, tudo berra;” (112-113)

“There are goats/mulattos of every caste, / Because the species is very vast . . . / There are grey ones, there are striped ones, / Brown horses, plain and painted, / Black goats/mulattos, *white goats/mulattos* . . . / . . . Rich goats/mulattos, poor goats/mulattos, / Knowledgeable, important goats/mulattos . . . / . . . All colliding, all screaming;” (112-113)

Gama’s poetic conflation, in this verse, of the pejorative slur *bode* with species taxonomy highlights a few key ways in which he thinks racial difference and slavery. The most obvious is his emphasis on the cataloguing impulse behind race and species as genres of classification, genres that similarly rely on metrics of visibility and consanguinity (Lye, 2009; Grosz, 2004). Less obvious is the brilliant way in which Gama troubles the givenness of *casta* categories, which he describes as demarcating subsets of goats though all such *castas* constitute one species. His point in his recitation of *castas* isn’t to reify 19th c. categories (of hierarchical animality/humanness) but to illustrate the social constructedness of caste categories, since all types of *bodes*, whether rich or poor, black or white, embody that which demarcates goat, i.e. humans who share black blood. Implicit in this deconstruction of the *castas* of *bodes* is the re-memorialization of racial chattel slavery, and the corollary culture of simultaneously consuming yet eradicating blackness, as the present prior manifesting in lineage, physiognomy, and moments of unmasking as stigma. While Gama obviously relies on a biologically essentialist notion of race, specifically blackness as inheritable, to make this critique of racial taxonomy and black-averse mesticagem, his nimble poetic turns and their Afro-centric assertions remain fresh and provocative articulations for the literary period. For a figure who endured so much racism, including from abolitionist contemporaries, as he bravely pushed for a more radical articulation

of un/freedom, Gama's insistence on making present the prior of *casta* or stigmatized difference lends both a richness and courage to his rendering of slavery's legacies for Afro-Brazilians.

Finally, it is through a closer reading of Gama's sense of un/freedom that his working-class sympathies and background emerge (Alonso, 2012; Krueger, 2000). For Gama doesn't critique the upwardly-mobile, white-aspiring mulatto/mestizo alone. Gama distrusts the gentry as a whole, and opens the poem on this acerbic note: "Fujo sempre á hypocrisia, / Á sandice, á fidalguia. // "I always flee from hypocrisy, / From foolishness, from nobility." (110) Those traits he associates with the rich, and which he generally despises, are ones stereotypically marking the bourgeoisie: hypocrisy, liberal exploitation, bombastic posturing, and condescension. In contrast, those qualities to which he hews closely, and finds most readily among the poor and ascetics, include virtue, intelligence, playfulness, and licentiousness. In fact, it is not like the rich that he wishes to live but like the unshowy sparrow Tico-Tico, i.e. slang for relations without marriage (tico-tico no fubá). With Bakhtinian undertones here, both in his political use of humor and celebration of the subversive carnivalesque, Gama thus lends a class tenor to his deconstructive poetics around *bode* and *casta*. Goat becomes not the derogatory figure-metaphor for black heritage/subjects but animal-counterpart to the ideal Tico-Tico: representative of rural labor, resourceful, enduring, and unabashedly raunch. And *bode* fluctuates across and over *boda* or marriage, disrupting the clarity and station of the second, not in the least by evoking the present prior of slave-master relations that yielded multiple *castas* of *bodes* in the first place:

"Haja paz, haja alegria, / Folgue e brinque a bodaria; / Cesse pois a matinada, /Porque tudo é bodarrada!"

(114)

“Let there be peace, let there be happiness, / Take and play the merriment; / Stop therefore this tumult, /
Because everything is merriment/goat-play/mestico-reunion!” (114)

WORKS CITED

- Alexander, Michelle. *New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York, NY: New Press, 2016.
- Alonso, Angela. "Afro-Brazilian Intellectuals and Activists in the Context of Abolition of Slavery in Brazil" Prepared for delivery at 2012 Congress of Latin American Studies Association. San Francisco, CA: May 23-26, 2012. CUL 7622
- Alves, Castro. *Antonio de Castro Alves: The Major Abolitionist Poems*. New York: Garland Pub., 1989.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and his World*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- Ed. Law, Robin and Lovejoy, Paul. *The Biography of Mohamamah Gardo Baquaqua: His Passage from Slavery to Freedom in Africa and America*. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publications, 2007.
- Baranov, David. *The Abolition of Slavery in Brazil: The "Liberation" of Africans Through the Emancipation of Capital*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2000.
- Barbara, Vanessa. "In Denial Over Racism in Brazil." *nytimes.com*, 23 Mar. 2015.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/24/opinion/vanessa-barbara-in-denial-over-racism-in-brazil.html?mcubz=1>. Accessed Winter 2017.
- Bernardi, Francisco. *As Bases da Literatura Brasileira: Histórias, Autores, Textos e Testes*. Porto Alegre: AGE Ltda., 1999.
- Bethell, Leslie and de Carvalho, José Murilo. *Joaquim Nabuco, British Abolitionists, and the End of Slavery in Brazil: Correspondence 1880-1905*.
- Cox, Oliver C. *Caste, Class and Race: A Study in Social Dynamics*. Miami, Florida: Monthly Review Press, 1948.
- Estevam Santos, Eduardo Antonio. "Luiz Gama and the racial satire as the transgression poetry: diasporic poetry as counter-narrative to the idea of race." *Almanack*. 11: Sept/Dec. 2015.
- Freedgood, Elaine. *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Gama, Luiz. *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas & Outras Poemas*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2000.
- Gates, Henry L. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely*. Durham and London:

- Duke University Press, 2004.
- Hartman, Saidiya. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Hoffman French, Jan. *Legalizing Identities: Becoming Black or Indian in Brazil's Northeast*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- Hordge-Freeman, Elizabeth. *The Color of Love: Racial Features, Stigma, and Socialization in Black Brazilian Families*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015.
- Isfahani-Hamond, Alexandra. *White Negritude: Race, Writing, and Brazilian Cultural Identity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- International Social Science Council. "World Social Science Report 2016. Income Inequality in Brazil: new evidence from combined tax and survey data." *en.unesco.org*, 2016. http://en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab/sites/default/files/analytics/document/2017/2/chap_21_05.pdf Accessed Summer 2017.
- James, C.L.R. *The Black Jacobins*. NY: The Dial Press, 1938.
- Klein, Herbert S. and Vidal Luna, Francisco. *Slavery in Brazil*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Krueger, Robert. University of Northern Iowa. Prepared for delivery at the 2000 meeting of the Latin American Studies Association. Hyatt Regency Miami. March 16-18, 2000.
- Lye, Colleen. *America's Asia Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Nabuco, Joaquim. *Abolitionism: The Brazilian Anti-Slavery Struggle*. London: University of Illinois Press, 1977.
- Nascimento, Elisa L. *The Sorcery of Color: Identity, Race, and Gender in Brazil*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008.
- Omi, Michael and Winant, Howard. *Racial Formation in the United States*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2015.
- Robinson, Cedric. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Satyarthi, Kailash. "Bachpan Bachao Andolan/Save the Childhood Movement." III Global Child

Labour Conference. Brasilia, Brazil, 8 Oct. 2013. Speech.

Souza Lima, Meila Oliveira and Pinho, Adeíto Manoel. “Autores Afro-Brasileiros: A

Identidade Poética de Luiz Gama.” *Revista de Letras*. 8(1): 2016. *periodicos.uesb.br*, <http://periodicos.uesb.br/index.php/folio/article/view/5551>. Accessed Winter 2017.

Telles, Edward. *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Telles, Edward. *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

Williams, Erica. *Sex Tourism in Bahia: Ambiguous Entanglements*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

CHAPTER V
HUNGRY COMMENSALITIES:
RACIALITY-CASTA-CASTE

SECTION i

Of Castes & Chameleons

Although a formidable field in South Asian scholarship, studies of caste appear, if at all, unfamiliar in the Western academe. The most frequent justification given for this is that caste does not in fact exist, if it ever did, except via Orientalist discourse and Indophilic knowledge production. In this explanation delegitimizing caste, the collusion of anthropology, bureaucracy, and broader colonial knowledge regimes worked to posit a static India in need of colonial intervention and civilizational liberation (Dirks, 2001; Singh, 2014). While this project acknowledges the significant hand British colonialism played in formulating caste as a fundamentally Indian malaise, it aligns itself with that substantial body of scholarship that has understood caste as a complex historical phenomenon pre-dating and surviving through colonial regimes, liberal modernity, and neoliberal capitalism (Teltumbde, 2010; Roy, 2014; Dirks, 2001). This project goes so far as to also argue (Teltumbde, 2010) that caste as historical phenomenon has adapted to (and been adapted by) changing regimes of power, so as to generally maintain resource accumulation and consumption for those historically posited as upper caste at the expense of those historically posited as lower caste, who remain consigned to precarious lifeworlds marked by unfreedom, overproduction, and stigmatized *homo sacer* status. Thus, though this project is critical of the Orientalist underpinnings of certain caste scholarship (Dumont, 1980; Ghurye, 2016; Srinivas, 1997; Dirks, 2011), it nevertheless finds compelling the descriptions of purity/pollution taboos, strictures around endogamy and commensality, and the material practices of stigmatization that are named across texts, regardless of their political bent (Khare, 2008; Ganguly, 2010; Sarkar & Sarkar, 2014; Roy, 2016; Gupta, 2000; Chakravarti, 2006).

The stakes for studying caste, I hope, are self-evident: post-liberalization and its failed promises for India after the 1990s, 1/3 of the world's extreme poor are still to be found there, 1/2 of those trapped in what is arguably modern slavery are also in India, with both groups overlapping significantly with low caste status. To ignore caste reads, then, not only as a convenient tactic for avoiding upper-caste guilt, self-reflection, or structural redress, but as incomplete scholarship privileging Occidental narratives of oppression and progress and calling these universal History and Liberation. Contemporary subaltern literatures of India and other non-U.S. Global South sites emerge as indispensable alter-histories that, increasingly, address the persistence of caste (Teltumbde, 2010) and its entanglement with those exploitations and erasures facilitated by neoliberal policies and late liberal governance. The camouflaging trick of neoliberal and late liberal shenanigans (Hong, 2015; Povinelli, 2002, 2011, 2016) is, of course, precisely the ability to incorporate difference and resistance as a way of asserting progressive "post" resolution while maintaining hegemonic structures of power that include not only dominations of gender, sexuality, race, and class, but caste. Thinking through the resilience of caste (which is not color) and the color of camouflage (which disguises more than labor exploitation or racial terror), caste in India arguably finds resonance in caste in Oceania, and casta and raciality across the Americas, in the twofold dimensions of hierarchy's creation as well as the camouflage that sustains hierarchy. Which is to say, my relational tracing of raciality-casta-caste has two objectives. One is to understand each leg of the triad as a local yet transnationally resonant configuration of power. Another is to read for the economic, political, and cultural means by which such matrices of power remain intact. Without purporting to create false analogies, this relational project seeks, therefore, to enact a few of the ideal benefits of comparative work: first, to trace historical origins beyond geopolitically fixed paradigms,

second, to illuminate their relational legacies in present dilemmas, and finally, to outline new frameworks and alliances conducive to imagining a liberation in which one people's survival does not require another people's death (Hong, 2015; Povinelli, 2011).

Ekalavya's Thumb

Let us begin naming caste by inscribing Ekalavya here. Ekalavya, the tribal chief's son who cut off his right thumb at the behest of the Brahmin guru, Drona, who would not teach him archery. Appearing in the [4th C.E.] Hindu epic, the Mahabharata, the story of Ekalavya and Drona has been debated as a story of caste violence, extreme guru payment, and the text's grappling with whether, in fact, the ends justify the means. Drona, who had rejected Ekalavya as student because he would not teach a low-caste tribal, nevertheless becomes symbolic guru when the tribal boy honors him as a clay figure in the forest. Ekalavya thus teaches himself, and his eventual mastery of archery becomes visible—and threatening—to the upper-castes only after he clogs Arjuna's dog's barking one day with a tornado of exact arrows. Drona, who had promised the Kshatriya prince Arjuna that he would make Arjuna the best archer in the world, is beset by Arjuna, who worries that a low caste archer who can thus silence a royal dog will become the best. This is how Drona finally enters the forest, to ask Ekalavya to cut off his right thumb. In the ancient world of the Mahabharata, promises are thus fulfilled: Ekalavya honors the teacher-student bond, Drona protects his promise to safeguard Arjuna's excellence, and Arjuna maintains his positioning near the top of the caste hierarchy and, by handicapping Ekalavya's ascendance, the hierarchy's stability itself.

I read the fulfillment of these promises as many scholars have—as compliance with a status quo predicated on violating the bodies, labor, and futurities of low caste peoples—and I

trope Ekalavya's symbolic thumb across this chapter as visibilizing elixir for low caste histories. The dog: that which guards upper caste privilege, by working to track low caste peoples; Drona: the embodiment of knowledge gate-keeping that constitutes Brahmin status; Arjuna: the hereditary prince whose literal battle for the throne preoccupies the world's longest epic; and Ekalavya: the embodied metaphor for low-caste people's subalternization in the literatures of South Asia. His brief mention in an epic that might have transpired differently had he kept his thumb mirrors the invisibility of low-caste peoples in official records; that mention via exclusion from caste society and the violence used to enforce this exclusion is a precursor for the ways in which low-caste peoples appear in textual literatures at all; and his torrent of arrows, his threatening thumb, his blood diluted in the river (where Arjuna tosses the thumb) are the maimed speech-traces of low-caste peoples whose materialities have been bloodily bartered and disposed of. This chapter is an attempt to read, via the collective literatures of low-caste writers across South Asia and other contexts, the trail Ekalavya's thumb has stubbornly left. In part, the waters which were meant to wash away the original caste crime dispersed it further. And in part, Ekalavya's collective thumb speaks precisely via this flash of dismemberment.

Reading Caste War

Although not a traditional literary text, N.D. Kamble's compilation of caste crime cases "Atrocities on Scheduled Castes in Post-Independent India (15th Aug 1947 to 15th Aug 1979)" suggests itself as a cultural text rich with embodied subaltern histories and speeches. Organized chronologically between the significant historical brackets of Indian independence from British rule (1947) to just after The Emergency under Indira Gandhi's rule (1979), Kamble's compilation presents not only a distressing portrait of ancient hierarchical practices carried and

sustained into so-called post-colonial modernity, thus empirically troubling arguments that caste (violence) no longer exists in India; but offers a subaltern poetics of caste violence and resistance via patterns in the text's style and content. Those patterns I focus on (and eventually hope to cover) are: 1) *bodily violence* (dismemberment, torture, rape, and lynching), 2) *immolation & arson* (of person and property), 3) *nominal tactics of un/touchability* (segregation, withholding, mob violence, public humiliation, and food politics), 4) *textual repetition of disciplinary lapses and mechanisms* (Remedy: Nil, police, eviction, etc.), and 5) *subaltern resistance* (education, defiance, endurance, organized clash).

I also read Kamble's text—extraordinary in the amount of labor that must have gone into its compilation—for its rarity. Among low-caste peoples of India, there continue to be high rates of illiteracy, poverty, and disenfranchisement; while a growing number of educated members have accessed middle-and-upper class privileges and productions that constitute some of this chapter's analysis, the most vulnerable among the scheduled castes remain largely absent from record books that they, in various ways, cannot access. The existence and poetics of Kamble's text offers their visibilization within the first eighty years of the young nation's history, a subaltern legibility that has little equal in the past or present.

Surveys indicate that SCs and STs continue to be the poorest demographic in India, constituting more than half of the national population below the poverty line, on a range of measures from housing to illiteracy to income (Ghildiyall, 2011). Among the non-poor, SCs and STs constitute only a quarter, one of several statistics that point to the continued overlapping of economic and social status in India. This historical context as well as specific legislation in key moments of the thirty-year span in Kamble's text also indicate that the documented violence was in response to structural and social attempts at caste mobility; and that such violence works as a

disciplinary mechanism integral to sustaining caste hierarchy. A few key events thrown up in Kamble's text are reforms for land redistribution to SCs, the institutional recognition of Ambedkarite politics, and subaltern resistance to bonded labor.

I also read Kamble's text to trouble the recent spate of critiques, since the 90s, of the Subaltern Studies project (Chibber, 2013). While my own fledgling project agrees with the urgency of critiquing capitalism, as a global system that preys on the most vulnerable of the Global South, and to question those aspects of the (subaltern) project reifying the narratives of the colonial, then indigenous elite, especially under the guise of bourgeois nationalism; I nevertheless hold that caste difference matters, without essentializing away caste's fluid complexity or reducing it to mere identity claims, for understanding descent-based discrimination, historically sustained inequity, and rightlessness in the Global South, particularly in India. This project thus aligns itself with the fresh surge of scholarship across caste lines, from scholars, writers, and activists collectively arguing that caste, rather than being ancient relic or colonial fantasy, has come to constitute a fundamental part of Indian modernity (Sarkar and Sarkar, 2014). It is from this new wave of work on caste that I use shared terms throughout my chapter, such as *Brahminism*, *caste apartheid*, *caste atrocity*, *slave caste*, and *caste annihilation*.

Thus it is the mortuaries pronounced on the Subaltern Studies Project that read, at times, like an ahistorical pronouncement, on the part of elites from the Global South or those more fortunately situated in the Global North, to airbrush the complexities of "other" places too foreign to comprehend and too burdensome to integrate into pat universalist theories that continue to project their long gaze from the Global North. Vivek Chibber's argument integrating capital's universalizing tendencies with the persistence of social hierarchies stands out as one salient critique of the Subaltern Studies project that acknowledges social complexities and is

therefore more plausible and, in acknowledging both capitalism's drive and the existence of hierarchies among workers as well as capitalists, serves as a potential paradigm for my project. But cruder critiques, despite their emphasis on materialisms, ironically turn away from those materials in South Asian archives that would suggest the Subaltern Studies theorists had unearthed something: the historiography of the nation had not only underrepresented marginalized populations but obscured them in codes. My reading of the cultural poetics (Dirks, 2011) of Kamble's text is an attempt to crack one code, in support of the SSP's refrain that the subaltern has always been speaking though we have not always aptly listened. Towards this end, I read violence as both speech act and disciplinary apparatus, asserting the continued presence of caste through select cases of caste violence and resistance. The five categories of violence and resistance that emerge, in fact, yield not only patterns of what I argue is *caste war* but a *poetics of subaltern resistance* despite and through brutality.

Identifying the cumulative violence as caste war emphasizes how caste as hierarchy reproduces itself despite mobilities of class, education, and religious conversion. While this is an argument that has been made by numerous scholars in Caste Studies in South Asia (Kamble, 1981, 1982; Teltumbde, 2010; Roy, 2016; Sarkar & Sarkar, 2014; Ganguly, 2010), minimalizations by scholars on the reactionary right as well as doctrinaire left cater to Brahmanical erasure of caste violence and so requires the extra work of addressing. Kamble's text, compiled by culling across the first thirty years of the newly independent nation from journalistic, legal, and bureaucratic sources, offers one such counter to the caste liberalism of orthodox Marxist and Brahmanical interpretations of inequity in India. A relentless narration, in linear national time, of repeated tactics of violence used by the upper castes against the lower castes, in order to maintain status as well as access to land, unfree labor, and other resources,

Kamble's text depicts a nationally-dispersed, historically sustained conflict best described in its degree of targeted brutality as *caste war*. It is by reading the events of Kamble's text as caste war, heightened in precisely those periods of attempted structural redress of caste inequity, that the low caste predicament becomes legible in ways scholars have remarked define the Dalit body (Sarkar and Sarkar, 2014). While Dalits are not the sole victims or insurgents in the text, they constitute a significant part of the subjects who flash up bodies branded, set afire, and hung, whose homes and villages are razed and outcasted from so-called normative spaces, who cannot find refuge from ritual humiliation, taboos of endogamy, or generational poverty in religious conversion, educational aspirations, or even death. They also constitute a significant portion of those subjects who, despite the persistent atrocities against them, continue to protest their stigmatization, to rebel against labor conditions akin to slavery, and to organize by drawing upon various models such as the Black Panthers, Ambedkarite politics, and queer kinship formations for collective survival. Thus Kamble's text throws up a non-linear clock of caste warfare that not only troubles the Hegelian narrative of progress intrinsic to bourgeois nationalism and romantic anti-capitalism (Day, 2016), but posits a version of subaltern History 2 not subsumed by the History 1 framework of narratives on post-colonial, post-caste India. In other words, my reading methodology in this chapter privileges an excavation of the History 2 embedded in the guise of History 1 records, via subaltern patterns of experiential violence and subaltern poetics of resistance.

Cast(e) Off Bodies

I categorize the persistent physical brutality in Kamble's text by the four most recurring types: 1) dismemberment 2) torture 3) rape 4) lynching. Of course, many of these amount to

murder, and many of these go unredressed, two facts that not only support Kamble's introductory point that caste atrocities often go unreported (from fear) but many race and caste scholars' argument that in/equality is sustained significantly by the cultural as well as the economic and juridical (Molina, 2014; Omvedt, 2006; Hordge-Freeman, 2015; Bonilla-Silva, 2016; Telles, 2006, 2014). Which is to say, many of these atrocities are reported for redress under the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955, and yet recur with a bodily specificity that perhaps should only be surprising in their repetition across the post-colonial text: mutilation of those members that range from nose to ears to limbs and more. (Ekalavya's thumb re-emerges here, as symbolic crippling of low-caste materialities by strategic upper-caste violence.) And what newly emerges is a resonance with bodily violences in other contexts, such as racialized rape and lynching in North America and anti-indigenous eviction and murder in Latin America, violences usually associated with the subjection (and reification) of stigmatized bodies precariously located at the bottom of local hierarchies. Additionally, the sexual nature of many of these caste crimes suggest a re-reading of the Ekalavya-Drona story as one of caste violence predicated on symbolic castration. Last but not least, the extent of rape as caste violence—rape not reducible to re/productive motivations but often as battlegrounds between differentially casted men—suggests SC women's vulnerable positioning as tools of caste warfare within the dilemmas of heteronormative masculinity.

As one example of body mutilation as synecdochal caste violence, I cite a case from the supplementary section of Kamble's text, perpetrated in Maharashtra on 9/17/72. The victim is named as Ramdas Nanavare, an SC youth who was supposedly sacrificed before God because of cholera in the village. Kamble pointedly describes the irony of how the caste violence transpired on Indian Independence Day:

“During night they took him to the direction of potsayni, a village and then cut off his ears and nose. Afterwards they injected red hot iron in his eyes. They crushed his penis, they tied hands and legs and threw him into a well of Mr. Gulab Pehalvan . . . in the first post-mortem in Sawant Hospital, it was reported that Ramdas committed suicide. But in the second post-mortem entire facts were revealed.” (205-206)

The crushed penis stands out not only as literal castration in this incidence of caste violence, but constitutes a synecdochal dismemberment of the low-caste citizen’s body on a day celebrating anti-colonial liberation of the indigenous body politic from patriarchal British rule, i.e. Indian Independence Day. As we shall see not only in this specific case or across Kamble’s text or across multiple texts on caste, this scene of sexualized caste violence and the dismembered low caste body are recurring tropes, ones that in Kamble’s text suggest variously gendered low-caste subjects to constitute the longstanding homo sacer figure bartered for the integrity of the new (national) body politic, with the true subject suitable for the privileges of national citizenship, or *bios*, being the upper caste subject (Agamben, 1998). I’ve chosen this case to tease through this conception of the variously gendered low-caste subject as homo sacer, as the cause stated for Nanavare’s attack is the cholera spread across the village—a sacrificial role not usually attributed to the homo sacer figure.

Is it possible to read Nanavare as a non-religious sacrificial subject for the sake of preserving (the good) life for those defined as *bios*, a differentiation mediated by caste boundaries active into democratic modernity, ritual notions of purity/pollution that take on a biopolitical cast, and the sexual violence frequently appearing in disciplinary caste and thanatopolitical tactics? (Agamben, 1998; Esposito, 2008) While homo sacer is usually defined as that expendable figure not worthy of either juridical protection or religious sacrifice,

Nanavare's body flashes liminally as sacrifice between spheres of the pre-modern and modern, the secular and the religious, in its caste specificity in an event of caste violence in the democratic nation-state. And in this particular case, marked as it is by power scuffles invested in the dilemmas of heteronormative masculinity (male mob violence, literal castration, celebration of patriarchal nationalisms), Nanavare's body as male gendered body is deliberate target, via gendered violence, for making upper caste power cohere in thus remedied patriarchal structures of the village and nation.

Kamble's description offers another underlying reason for Nanavare's violation: he had acquired land previously belonging to caste Hindus. Nanavare's additional transgression, then, is acquiring a critical form of material power typically reserved for the upper caste and, by violating the caste lines historically dividing the propertied class from the landless classes (Kamble, 1981, 1982), for thus soiling the typical paradigms of power structuring the body politic proper. Read another way, Nanavare is punished for attempting to move from the subject position of *zoe* to *bios* by mobility across local class lines, a class-and-caste transgression possibly identified as the cause for the cholera threatening the village and needing purgative violence on Indian Independence Day. The SC body emerges, therefore, as both subject of nation-state biopolitics as well as object of the caste war as historical phenomenon. It should come as no surprise, then, that the disciplinary act inherent in this act of gendered violence happened on Indian Independence Day, for a country liberated from some aspects of colonial governance but not from all aspects of prior regimes of power.

Significantly, Kamble's text opens with bodily violence that echoes the guru-student violence characterizing the Drona-Ekalavya tale. Recorded in the Harijan on May 20, 1950, an SC child was beaten by his Brahmin teacher for touching him, with the cause listed as

“Untouchability.” What else is notable about the incident is not the outline of familiar caste violence but its specificity of body part (the eye), its escalated impact, and its historical subtext.

In the byline Incidence, the event is described thus:

“Teacher beat the child with a shoe causing a permanent injury to the eyes of the child.” (4)

This handicapping of the child, in a school setting, points to the historical barriers for low-caste peoples to educational resources as one important vector for individual and communal upliftment. It also presents as an instructional poetics for reading subaltern violence and resistance in that History 2 embedded in the History 1 text. What if anything had the child written on the slate? If it were blank, and beyond the violation of caste taboo by its physical exchange, what else did the teacher read in the student’s presentation of the slate? Perhaps the injured eyes of the child, a synecdoche for the eyes of low-caste peoples invested in literacy and its relationship to power, a synecdoche too for those capable of articulating the subaltern History 2s embedded in official records, is a warning. Look or write too hard and what you see or say may jeopardize the matrices of power ordered by historiography and caste.

A year later, in another school abuse case reported in Bombay in 1951, an SC student is not only caned but expelled. He had “showed his dislike for the criticism on SCs who were not a party to the discussion.” (9) The policing of subaltern speech here must be contextualized in the broader political shifts underway post-independence, “as Ambedkar introduced the Hindu Code Bill in Parliament.” This Bill, intended to codify and revise personal Hindu law, included the proposed eradication of caste. Kamble’s mention of this historical context suggests the Headmaster and other teachers had, for this reason, been criticizing Ambedkar and SCs—and the

SC students' defense reads as just one example of lower caste assertion and resulting upper caste violence that comprise numerous cases across Kamble's text.

The de facto, if not de jure, persistence of caste is vividly emphasized by the 1961 case of Laxman Raman mang, five years after the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955, for having complained as a group (SCs) to the police against one caste Hindu, one SC man, Raman mang, is subjected to a kind of vigilante justice:

“Caste Hindus ruthlessly tortured Laxman Raman mang a SC during bright day light at 12 noon and butchered him into pieces.” (46)

This case throws up the workings of the law at all, to render protection i.e. impunity to upper caste atrocities against those lower caste voices asserted in an officially legal manner. This inversion of the law's intention points to differential status—*bios* versus *zoe*—of upper and lower caste subjects in post-colonial India as well as to a cyclic animation of Ekalavya's dismemberment. Such dismemberment appears so frequently across the thirty years of Kamble's text that not only does it again liken the caste predicament to warfare but makes necessary, on my part, to select a few cases, to make analysis palatable for both writer and reader.

In a much later case (1971), the cause (“They were suspected to have stolen wool”) signals, in the context of caste's operation, the re-framing of criminality and crime by upper caste atrocity to suspicion, even outright fabrication, against lower castes:

“SCs and STs were severely beaten up and their fingers were cruelly cut off resulting in a lot of bleeding.”
(176)

Had they actually stolen the wool, or had suspicion been enough to mandate caste violence, and what need might there have been for stealing? The resonances here with racialized criminality in the U.S. context is hard to ignore, suggesting criminalization as a defining feature of non-white raciality and low caste status—and impunity as a critical characteristic (and resource) more widely accessible to those previously (and thus) marked by whiteness and high-caste status. Untouchability comes to bear a double-edged irony: first, the relative “untouchable” impunity of actual perpetrators in caste war, and second, the relegation of low-caste peoples to social death except in areas of tactile violence, such as dismemberment or rape.

To emphasize again that caste affiliation does not always equate to class affiliation, although there is significant overlap in the Indian context between caste and class status, I point to another case of dismemberment (1970):

“The tongue of a SC was cut off by some persons said to be Marxists.” (163)

The cause, described as the switching of party loyalties from the Marxist party to the Ruling Congress suggests not only a form of disciplinary action akin to party purging, but the overriding of caste-specific concerns by class-based ideology in the South Indian state of Kerala in 1970. The case also emphasizes, in the literal dismemberment of the tongue, the subalternity of the low caste subject even within the historical telos of Marxist ideology. While I don’t want to posit this case as characteristic—many low-caste peoples were drawn far more to revolutionary Marxism than to Gandhian strategies of non-violent resistance, especially as Gandhi never explicitly repudiated caste as a structure of inequity—I do want to emphasize that my prime object of study, caste/ism, is neither reducible to class nor resolvable within class struggle frameworks. What this case usefully offers, as one example among many, are questions

as to why this might be: why were low-caste peoples not satisfied, even distrustful of orthodox Marxist leadership? How did old (and camouflaged) caste lines re-assert themselves within labor collectivities?

Upper Caste Rape

The gender component of caste, or the caste component of gender, is another intersectional point of social existence, as revealed in the legal fragments, that complicates claims that the low-caste plight is reducible to class alone or that Indian women are monolithic. Across Kamble's text, low-caste subjects who are also educated professionals face ritual humiliation and disciplinary violence from upper-caste subjects whose class or social status, in a specific context, no longer exceed that of the low-caste subject. Both SC men and women are beaten and forced into labor forms historically assigned to particular low-caste groups—agricultural bondage, sanitation, service work—and women in particular are vulnerable to rape. The prevalence of rape as a disciplinary mechanism of caste hierarchy is so glaring and flexible in its appearance across the text that low-caste women emerge as historical objects of a kind of heteronormative violence necessary to legibilizing the masculinity of the assailants as caste privilege over low-caste communities at large. Which is to say, if Kamble's text is understood as an archive of caste war, then the definitive supremacy of caste Hindus over Dalits is frequently marked by the sexual violation of Dalit women. I will take up this point more thoroughly in the Dalit literature later examined, but it seems important to note here that, in accordance with feminist theorizations of gender as a system differentially marking subject/object status, market exchangeability, and de/valuation in community circuits, the body of the Dalit woman in particular is thus multiply stigmatized and de/valued by the interstitial play of systems of caste

and gender (Chakravarty, 2006; Mies, 2014). And as Spivak has argued, calling the Indian woman the shadow in the shadow, the Dalit woman's violated body flashes up in this archive of caste war with an alarmingly erratic frequency also suggesting violent erasure.

Take the 1963 case, reported in the Maharashtra Times, of the SC woman forced to perform sati (Kamble, 74). Kamble's recording emphasizes the caste dimension of this case of sati, as the SC woman is "forced by caste Hindus to jump into the funeral fire of her husband," indicating that the violence of her forced suicide by immolation is not only attributable to the patriarchal codes of Hindu Indian society but to its caste pressures. In contrast then to Spivak's reading of the colonial hysteria around sati, as an example of the white man needing to save the brown woman from the brown man, I read this example of sati for the unnamed SC widow as a discursive location in which elite intellectuals often fail to acknowledge the (brown) upper-caste subject's dis/placing of the (brown) lower-caste woman as an in/advertent means of camouflaging caste traditions. The missing narrative of caste works, in such moments, to not only reify colonial notions of a pre-modern, backwards India caught in outdated, patriarchal exercises but to invisibilize caste as a major apparatus of sustaining hegemonic power in modern, "post"-colonial India. This absence thus also absents any real remedy for the ways in which caste makes vulnerable Dalit and SC women in particular, from fear of sounding racist (though race and caste are not identical) and from a disappointingly standard ignorance of hierarchies that do not centrally feature the U.S..

In a 1965-6 rape case explicitly about caste, the SC woman described is raped then goes, "missing after this incident," missing from the narrative end. The cause given for the incident is that the woman, her husband, and her brother-in-law refused their hereditary role as bonded laborers. In a common cycle of discipline and impunity marking caste hierarchy in Kamble's

text, the men are beaten and the remedy is listed as “Nil.” That the date for this case coincides with the date for the apex of the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S., and the lifting of the Immigrant Quota that subsequently recruited mostly upper-class, upper-caste professionals from India, emphasizes the disconcerting link between caste and class for South Asian workers that is not captured by the prevailing idioms of race, labor, and diaspora as articulated by U.S. social movements and related intellectual formations. This discrepancy in possibility and legibility—as movement across geographic space as well as lifespan—is, however, articulated as it were by the gendered caste dimensions of Kamble’s fragment/Ekalavya’s thumb.

In one last example of physical violence as emblematic of caste war tactics, I turn to the lynching of an unnamed man in Punjab, as recorded in the 1959-60 Report of the Commissioner for SC & ST (Kamble, 38). While the violence is inflicted by the police, the spectacle of his torture takes place across two villages, and the conspicuous lack of intervention by the villagers in the text suggests their complicity in the lynching and the defining characteristics of lynching as necessarily involving public visual consumption:

“He was paraded in the streets of the village and was taken to the neighboring village accompanied by two constables . . . He was taken to the nearby jungle where he was hung on a tree by his legs and was beaten mercilessly. The SC was on the point of death, so he was untied from the tree and was locked up in a house.”

The typically ambivalent cause and remedy—“Not known” and “A case has been registered against the chowkidar in police station”—appear here, as they do in the many variations that exist across Kamble’s text, as a code for caste hierarchy as trigger for caste violence and upper-caste status as ultimately impunity under the law.

They Were Holding Fire in Their Hands

In transitioning to caste atrocities defined by immolation and arson, I jump to the final year (1979)/section of Kamble's text. The years of The Emergency, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi suspended the Constitution and declared rule by decree (1975-1977), is marked by about fifty documented cases of caste atrocities. One of the last cases to close this section and Kamble's text, recorded in a Dalit source, reads as the excoriating power of caste, as coded by fire, despite the conversion strategy attempted by Buddhist neo-Dalits, which unmasks participants on both sides of the caste war.

"Caste Hindus armed with lathis, axes, and sharp weapons attacked Buddhist locality. They were holding fire in their hands. They locked the houses of Buddhists from outside and set on fire. But Buddhists retorted equally and the assaulters ran away for their life." (490)

They were holding fire in their hands. Perhaps there is no better metaphor, or material marker, to illuminate the ravaging power upper caste violence has had for low-caste peoples. In what sounds like some level of economic power, if not wealth, for the Buddhists, the burning of the houses emphasizes the nature of caste violence as status anxiety rather than a liberatory Marxist sensibility—the abolishing of private property, the class war de-mystifying social relations—but in the sense that Buddhist advancement in the areas of property, income, and education would unbearably threaten upper-caste status. (The Cause is listed as the "Renaming of Marathwada University," 490). The ambiguous description of the Buddhists nevertheless emphasizes a resistance that successfully saves them and sends the armed assailants fleeing. In the poetics of this fragment, itself lit with meaning, I read the phoenix-like re-emergence of the Buddhists from the literal fire as the historical resilience of the low-caste body. Fire, rather than

extinguishing them wholly, sparks what is likely an armed response in staking out something as basic—and human—as possessing a name.

WORKS CITED

- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. "Annihilation of Caste." *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol. 1*. Ed. Moon, Vasant. New Delhi: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, 2014. pp25-96.
- Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. and Roy, Arundhati. *Annihilation of Caste: The Annotated Critical Edition*. London: Verso, 2016.
- Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. *The Untouchables*. U.P.: Bharatiya Baudhha Shiksha Parishad, 1969.
- Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. *Who Were the Shudras? How They Came to be the Fourth Varna in Indo-Aryan Society*. Bombay: Thackers, 1970.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.
- Chakraborty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Chakravarty, Uma. *Gendering Caste: Through a Feminist Lens*. Kolkata: Stree, 2006.
- Chibber, Vivek. *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*. London: Verso, 2013.
- Day, Iyko. *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logics of Settler Colonial Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
- Dirks, Nicholas. *Castes of Mind*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Dumont, Louis, [Sainsbury, R.M. and Gulati, Basia.] *Homo Hierarchicus: Caste System and its Implications*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Esposito, Roberto. *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Ganguly, Debjani. *Caste and Dalit Lifeworlds: Postcolonial Perspectives*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010.
- Ghildiyall, Subodh. "SCs/STs form half of India's poor: Survey." *The Times of India*, 12 April 2011. [timesofindia.indiatimes.com, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/SCs/STs-form-half-of-Indias-poor-Survey/articleshow/7953487.cms](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/SCs/STs-form-half-of-Indias-poor-Survey/articleshow/7953487.cms) Accessed Fall 2016.
- Ghurye, G.S. *Caste and Race in India*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2016.

- Gupta, Dipankar. *Interrogating Caste: Understanding Hierarchy and Difference in Indian Society*. New York and New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2000.
- Hong, Grace. *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016.
- Hordge-Freeman, Elizabeth. *The Color of Love: Racial Features, Stigma, and Socialization in Black Brazilian Families*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015.
- Kamble, N.D. *The Scheduled Castes*. New Delhi: Ashish, 1982.
- Kamble, N.D. *Atrocities on Scheduled Castes in Post-Independent India, 15th August 1947 to 15th August 1979*. New Delhi: Ashish, 1981.
- Khare, R.S. *Caste, Hierarchy, and Individualism: Indian Critiques of Louis Dumont's Contributions*. New Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Mies, Maria. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*. London: Zed Books, 2014.
- Molina, Natalia. *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014.
- Omvedt, Gail. *Dalit Visions: The Anti-Caste Movement and the Construction of an Indian Identity*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2006.
- Povinelli, E. (2006). *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth. *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Povinelli, E. (2011). *Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. and Roy, Arundhati. *Annihilation of Caste: The Annotated Critical Edition*. London: Verso, 2016.
- Sarkar, Sumit and Sarkar, Tanika. *Caste in Modern India: A Reader*. Bangalore: Orient Blackswan, 2014.
- Singh, Hira. *Recasting Caste: From the Sacred to the Profane*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2014.
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. Nelson, Cary and Grossberg, Lawrence. London: Macmillan, 1988.

- Ed. Srinivas, M.N. *Caste: Its Twentieth Century Avatar*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1997.
- Telles, Edward. *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Telles, Edward. *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014.
- Teltumbde, Anand. *The Persistence of Caste: The Khairlanji Murders and India's Hidden Apartheid*. London and New York: Zed Books, 2010.

SECTION ii

“Caste System is not merely a division of labourers which is quite different from division of labour—it is an hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one about the other.” (Ambedkar, “Annihilation of Caste,” 47)

Troping Caste in *Scavenger’s Son*

The precarious lifeworlds of the central characters in T. Sivasankara Pillai’s 1947 novel, *Scavenger’s Son*, are also deathworlds carved out by caste. A novel tracking three generations of a Malayali Dalit family engaged in scavenger work in Alleppey, and how each generation negotiates caste hierarchy alongside their struggles towards a more materially and emotionally fulfilled future, *Scavenger’s Son* is a vivid portrait of caste injustice, Dalit resilience, and the Non/Life binary in a newly independent India. Tellingly, the chapter titles and sequence mark out the thanatopolitical cast of the Dalit world depicted: “Death” titles the opening chapter, “Smallpox” marks the transition between the first and middle third of the novel, and “Cholera” punctuates the penultimate chapter, just before “Vengeance,” a closing chapter that surges up with hopeful energy only to also descend into scripted caste death. Tellingly also, death sites and materials such as the graveyard, exhumed corpses, and the refuse with which the Dalit characters work mark significant tropes and plot points in the novel. Finally, if the subaltern immobility of the stigmatized scavengers’ life chances is understood as relegating them to labor worlds akin to social death, then the Dalit lifeworld, as vibrant and hopeful as it may be, is also a difficult deathworld.

Synecdoche as trope appears in this caste literature too, as it did in previous chapters thinking through indigenous notions of materiality and kinship. In the case of caste, and if synecdoche is understood as the part that stands in for the whole (and vice versa) in a material sense, the individual Dalit’s body is constantly read through general caste markers of impurity,

stigma, and ritual violence/humiliation just as the novel's depiction of the curtailed life chances of Dalit scavengers as a group is used to contextualize the individual and father-son trajectories of the three main Dalit characters, a generational tracking that suggests caste/d subjects inhabit a temporal synecdoche as well. Thus synecdoche—rather than metonymy, metaphor, or irony—appears as narrative strategy especially suited to articulating the caste predicament, especially for those low-caste bodies over-associated with stigmatized groups consigned to, in Pillai's novel, the hereditary labor of manual scavenging.

The third trope is the most obvious one—untouchability—but which I additionally read here for the novelistic innovations on the terrible effects out/caste status has had for the Dalit characters. Untouchability as bearing the material effects of caste stigma, as thanatopolitics of exclusion, as social hatred internalized at the level of the family. This rendering of untouchability's multiple and humiliating dimensions is not only revealing in our times but was notable in Pillai's time for uniquely focusing on the interior psychology of the Dalit characters and assuming their inherent, also-human complexity, their subsumed yet hard-wrought dignity. The work of scavenging was and remains an occupation historically assigned to the lowest caste.

And the final trope is, of course, the material impetus that marks the plot drive: Dalit momentum towards wresting adequate and fair wages from exploitative bosses, towards acquiring access to those domains (education, job opportunity, political sphere, etc.) that promise class mobility. In Pillai's novel, both Marxist and Christian ideologies offer an escape hatch to the Dalit characters. And in his novel, Chudalamuttu's betrayal of his fellow scavengers characterizes him as morally bankrupt, i.e. too much in the thralls of capitalist individualistic thinking; whereas his son Mohanan's participation, and subsequent death, in the armed Communist party argues for the bravery and vision of his character and collective commitment.

But while Pillai's novel sees anti-capitalist, Marxist ideology as an important avenue for Dalit liberation, he never erases the primacy of caste as causing Dalit misery in the first place. Caste and class, in Pillai's world, are the entangled materialities of co-existing structures of power in the newly independent India—i.e. caste hegemony via cultural practices and semi-feudal relations in the village. This complex rendering of power in Dalit lifeworlds resonates with multiple scholarly and writerly accounts of caste culture, feudal structures, and capitalist labor relations as entwined realities in “post”-colonial India (Ed. Chaturvedi, 2012; Roy, 2016; Ganguly, 2010; Chatterjee, 2002, 2007; Chakraborty, 2008).

Dalit Deathworlds

The opening chapter, “Death,” of Pillai's novel centers around the transition of the scavenger role from father Ishukkumuttu to son Chudalamuttu, and the father's death as a result of the son's failure to fully submit to the indignities of the scavenger role. Because the scavenger eats from those scraps given to him from the houses (or latrines) he cleans, and because Chudalamuttu is too proud in the beginning to accept either food or water in this way, both father and son go hungry. But in Ishukkumuttu's case, as he is shown to be ill and unable to work in the opening lines of the chapter, Chudalamuttu's proud refusal results in his death, despite Chudalamuttu's belated attempt to return and beg for scraps:

“When day broke, his Ishukkumuttu whole body ached. So he sent his son Chudalamuttu to see the overseer and let him know that he would have to take two days' leave.” (1)

“Ishukkumuttu listened. The boy must have been delayed today because of the heavy work. Yet why was he so late? Did he not know his father was lying there with no water to drink?” (4)

“The old man had suffered whatever might be necessary to bring up Chudala since the latter had been one year old. It was for his son that he had lived. Chudala was thinking that it was because he had had no water to drink for the whole of that day that his father had suddenly passed away. He had killed his father.” (4)

The thanatopolitical cast of Dalit life, depicted relationally across the father-son labor transfer, is also emphasized in the social relations Pillai concretely describes between the upper and lower caste subjects, most bitterly embodied in the refuse transaction. In that transaction, Chudalamuttu daily goes about upper-caste locales, cleaning the latrines. The material of the latrines—thanatopolitical in the sense that feces, refuse, etc. are the end waste of living beings/cycles and groups human scavenger workers with non-human scavenger figures, i.e. dogs in the case of Pillai’s fictional world—stigmatize Chudalamuttu as outcaste in the social order of the novel. He is shunned by the Savarna or caste characters at multiple points, who variously demand he move through different spaces, or return at different hours (when the latrines are full again), or deny him food, water, and other forms of sustenance (comradere, respect, wages, etc.) explicitly because it inconveniences them and implicitly because there is a cultural (caste) script at play (Molina, 2014):

“He did not want anyone’s coffee or rice. If he could drink a mouthful of fresh water that would do. By the roadside a girl was taking water from a standpipe. Because of his thirst and weariness he asked without thinking, ‘would you run a little water into my mouth?’

Pinching her nose with thumb and finger, the child ran off.” (3-4)

In addition to emphasizing the caste script that dogs Chudalamuttu at every turn, this opening section of the novel highlights the charity/*jajmani* aspect that structures reproductive

in/capacity for the Dalit worker. Chudalamuttu must rely on the literal charitable scraps Savarna characters give him, as he makes the latrine rounds, for food and water that is not always enough to sustain more than one person at the day's end. The consequences when he chooses to not participate in these charity relations, as he does in the start of the novel, is deadly—as his sick father dies from dehydration. The reproductive relations thus structured by caste—via the refuse and food transaction—facilitate ongoing life for Savarna characters and precarity and deathworlds for the Dalit ones. Relatedly, Pillai's terse prose is significantly dense with descriptions spatializing Savarna lifeworlds as distinct from Dalit deathworlds:

“From a big house came the smell of mustard seed being fried for a tasty curry. On both sides houses rose up like symbols of brightness and joy. Yet all this well-being and happiness, thought Chudala, is it not because the latrines are clean? . . .

It is a fine moonlit night. The wall that can be seen in the distance is the night-soil depot. Beyond that can be seen the black dots that are the scavengers' huts. They lie there lifeless and dilapidated.” (7)

In this scene, Chudalamuttu's observations on his work trek map the stark differences marking Savarna spaces from Dalit ones—the former characterized by the im/materialities of pleasure, property, and futurity (the fragrant mustard seed curry, the lit houses, the good health) and the latter characterized by thanatopolitical im/materialities (proximity to the waste disposal, the peripheral scattered huts, the dying father in one of these). And the scene immediately following this spatialized caste binary is one that centers the dead body of the father, Ishukkumuttu. That scene brackets a chapter section that also ends with morbid imagery, after the father's illegal burial under a cashew tree in the waste compound, in which Ishukkumuttu's body is itself scavenged by lurking dogs.

Despite the stark caste divisions he notes via their Non/Life situatedness, Chudalamuttu never assumes that these socio-spatial relations are natural or just. At various moments in the opening chapters, essentially scripting a Dalit bildungsroman in which Chudalamuttu enters and grows aware of the adult socialities of his father's work world, Chudalamuttu silently critiques the uneven re/productive relations between out/caste characters. For example, when he is harassed by four well-dressed, presumably Savarna characters into walking on another side of the road because of his labor status, Chudalamuttu responds thus:

“Chudala said nothing. There was a sharp reply on his tongue. But he kept it back. So he ought to go on one side! It seems that he stinks! That which causes him to smell so foul, those fine gentlemen are carrying inside them!”
(6)

It is not, therefore, that waste is permanently attached to the Dalit body, as the caste script distributing stigma would have it. Waste *originates* in the supposedly “pure” Savarna body, as Chudalamuttu's “silent” subaltern commentary points out. It is instead the re/productive relations structured by caste—relations in which the Dalit scavenger alone must handle everyone's literal and figurative shit for little to no remuneration and relations in which the Savarna body is freed to engage in more socio-spatial mobility and thus more economic and social capital accumulation as a caste class—it is these culturally structured re/productive relations that Chudalamuttu perceives as the source of his caste and class subjection. The extremity of the Dalit's positioning in these relations—and the troubling of race/caste-blind readings of human-animal difference—is emphasized by the dogs' mauling of Ishukkumuttu's corpse. Even after death, and in fact emphasized by complete powerlessness in death, the Dalit body is made to

reproduce animal life, thus troubling too-easy hierarchizing of the abstract human as always superior to the abstract animal:

“If a corpse is buried and covered over, some sorrow too will be buried. But even that consolation is denied the scavenger. Even after the body has decayed the son must see it again.” (13)

The scene preceding this one, which offers a graphic description of the father’s corpse, works as a lurid symbol of the thanatopolitical cast/e of Dalit “existence,” even in death:

“The dogs have scratched at the ground where I’s dead body is buried and have uncovered half of it. They have bitten, torn and mauled the face and neck. The eyes seem to be staring. They are looking at him. From them drips a bluish liquid.” (13)

Other living Dalit characters, unaffiliated as kin with Ishukkumuttu or Chudalamuttu, also bear the brunt of Dalit stigma. For trying to bury Ishukkumuttu within aspirational norms of dignity, the other Dalit scavengers are first beaten and then their wages are docked, caste retaliation that additionally legibilizes the Dalit scavengers as vulnerable working-class subjects. This plot trajectory harkens back to two of the tropes Ishukkumuttu trace as caste critique in *Scavenger’s Son*: first, that the actual re/productive relations enabling the binary of Savarna Life vs. Dalit Non-Life is revealed through transactions of thanatopolitical materials such as refuse and waste, and second, that the Dalit characters’ predicament is entangled with but not reducible to class alone, literally and figuratively dogged as they are by tactics of caste hierarchy, such as strictures around un/cleanliness, commensality, hereditary labor roles, and ritual violence/humiliation.

Synecdochal Questions

The other chapters I note here—"Smallpox" and "Cholera"—emphasize the thanatopolitical cast of the Dalit characters' worlds. These illnesses ravage both Savarna and outcaste communities, but make especially acute the precarity of Dalit life and the synecdochal questions of caste. In the chapter "Smallpox," Chudalamuttu and his wife Valli partake in the discussion around resolving the smallpox crisis just as it hits the community; specifically, the members debate how to handle Sundiram's unnamed wife's smallpox attack, a central plot pivot preceding the spread of the disease across the community. And in the late chapter "Cholera," Chudalamuttu and Valli's young son, Mohanan, loses himself with a friend at a festival, returning to discover both parents dead from cholera. His resulting orphanhood incinerates the upwardly mobile chances his parents had sought out for him, tracking Mohanan back into scavenger work and eventually into labor organizing.

In delineating Dalit precarity, Pillai details the thorny choices the characters face as a result of their economic status. In "Smallpox," Chudalamuttu asks Sundiram whether he has the money to call a doctor to treat Sundiram's wife, before the smallpox spreads across the community:

"Sundiram threw out his hands and looked heavenwards with tears in his eyes. 'Almighty God! I haven't a single paisa!'" (51)

This economic and moral impasse means that Chudalamuttu's solution—to send Sundiram's wife to the hospital, a solution the community hates because it means Sundiram's wife will certainly die and die alone—must be taken up as the more practical one for the collective. While the impasse that flashes up is visibly two-fold—economic and moral—Pillai's

scene also emphasizes that the Dalit characters have not fully internalized the superiority of liberal individualist logic as Chudalamuttu has. Numerous characters voice their concerns that Sundiram's family will be broken up without his wife; Shuppu points out that such epidemics are cyclic, killing off the group anyways; two other men value the integrity of Dalit collectivity over Chudalamuttu's money, likening his proposal to his fracturing of the union; and even Chudalamuttu's wife, Valli, expresses more concern and sympathy for Sundiram's family than for Chudalamuttu's viewpoint. Indeed, the smallpox only spreads, and Pillai highlights the dissipation of Sundiram's family members:

“Those who remained were split up in different parts of the town. The remnants of that broken family could be seen hanging about in front of shops or by the roadside.” (54)

This fracturing will be mirrored in the later cholera chapters, in which Chudalamuttu's own family is decimated from three to one. Initially, Chudalamuttu approaches the cholera epidemic too with economic calculations; and the massive number of deaths, across caste lines, does offer him some labor/caste mobility. He goes from scavenging work to graveyard work—a lifelong ambition of caste escape marginally achieved—and believes this will transfer to his son, from whom he'd long hidden their hereditary labor role:

“In that way Chuadalamuttu gave up the shovel and bucket entrusted to him by his father. He would not take them up again. That was all he wanted. Chudalamuttu was no longer a scavenger. Nor was his son a scavenger's son.” (99)

But the stranglehold of caste—marked as it is by precarity and unfreedom—defeats Chudalamuttu’s economic hopes and creep. The ghost of caste becomes especially legible to Chudalamuttu after his new labor role and before he and Villai die. He worries aloud to her that they too may be stricken by cholera, in which case, as both Dalit scavengers and a small family, what will happen to Mohanan?

“It’s not madness. All those who are dead and brought there. Those ghosts—those ghosts . . . “ (102)

Let us at this juncture take up the synecdochal question in relation to caste. If caste is narrated here by Pillai as simultaneously hereditary labor role and material practice of stigma, and if synecdoche is typically the part that stands in for the whole, then individual Dalit characters stand in to narrate the Dalit predicament at large. That predicament—of stigmatized untouchability facilitating and facilitated by economic duress—is aesthetically signaled by parts/objects such as the shovel, the pail, the mauled Dalit appendage, the curled Dalit nose and lip, the lifeless Dalit body. Thus, both metonymy and its more particular device, synecdoche, are used to represent the larger Dalit predicament. *But* they are used differently. The objects of metonymic association—shovel and pail—signify labor role and im/mobility, and may be ideally discarded by the Dalit when experiencing caste mobility. The objects of synecdoche—Sundiram’s wife dying from the smallpox that eventually decimates the community, Villai’s distended belly before she dies of cholera and leaves Mohanan an orphan, and the waste that moves linearly from Savarna to Dalit subjects daily—signify the thanatopolitical cast/e of Dalit life, the fixedness of Dalit necropolitical status, and curtailed Dalit futurity as not the fantasy of neo/liberal individualism but the predicament of collective material history.

The distinction here—between the mobile and disposable objects of metonymy and the enflashed and difference-pocked objects of synecdoche—is something I’d like to tease out later. Could it be argued that the historical materialities segregating upper and lower caste subjects are synecdochal, that is a part signifying and substantive of the whole, rather than metonymic, that is randomly associative and not necessarily materially attached? Are metonymic maneuvers implicated in representational strategies camouflaging race/caste hierarchies, such as the use of some signifier to substitute for lived experience? Do synecdochal claims sufficiently capture and complicate class schemas within neo/liberal capitalist regimes? Suffice it to say for now that Pillai’s novel presents the Dalit predicament as a synecdochal one—the tropes of caste kinship, bodily fracturing, and hereditary labor arise at multiple points and via vivid imagery—and are narratively emphasized by the inability of three generations of this specific family to either escape the scavenging role or re/produce a futurity closer to Life.

Consanguinity post-1947

At the heart of *Scavenger’s Son*—as the title signals—is the consanguineous father-son relationship. This patrilineal focus delineates the inheritance aspect of caste, how caste works not as malleable costume but fixed inheritance most obviously legible through labor role. But this focus also reveals the complex layers to caste beyond class status—such as material culture of stigma, affective and psychological dimensions of de/gradation, and caste as maintained by disciplinary violence—that are so vividly recorded in Kamble’s legal compilation of caste atrocities in post-independence India. Finally, if the father-son consanguinity were read here as metaphor, then the brutal breaks between fathers and sons across generations speak to the Dalit figure’s tenuous position as legible citizen-subject within the “post”-colonial Indian political

order (Ganguly, 2010). In that order, the Dalit subject may be officially governed as citizen in the Indian body politic but is effectively re-cast(e), in the economic, political, and cultural spheres, as illegitimate and cast(e)trable participant in liberal democratic modernity.

The tenuous lineal and collateral consanguinity articulated by the generational father-son dynamics is acutely expressed at the affective register between Chudalamuttu and Mohanan. In order to protect his son from the knowledge of caste and in a misguided attempt to facilitate caste mobility for his son, Chudalamuttu hides his profession and refuses to touch Mohanan. Mohanan thus learns late who he and his family are, as social subjects, and also suffers from a lack of the kind of parental affection/bond for which he hungers. Throughout the chapters centered on Mohanan's birth and childhood, Chudalamuttu expresses his rationale for withholding both self-knowledge and touch from his son:

“ . . . he was afraid to take the child in his arms. He was a scavenger. How could he take that child with hands that had cleaned out latrines? Yet he had to take it. He stretched out his arms and took the child. Then he immediately gave it back . . . would something bad happen to the child just because he touched it? He must grow up without becoming close to a scavenger.” (71)

“ . . . when the child made the sound ‘ppa’ Chudalamuttu was afraid to answer. He was a scavenger. And the child? What was the child?

It was not because Chudalamuttu did not wish to reply. It was not that he did not wish to establish a claim to this position as the child's father. Chudalamuttu wanted to claim the child as his. But he was afraid! The child must now know that his father was a scavenger; he must not be told. The child must not get a sense of inferiority in that way.” (76-77)

“Mohanan saw his father in the distance when he came back worn-out from his day's toil. He ran indoors. ‘Mother! Put my plate along with Father's when you serve the rice!’

‘You must tell him that yourself. If I tell him, he won’t listen.’

M pulled a long face. ‘I won’t. You must tell him.’ He rubbed his eyes and started to cry.” (80)

The conflation of various withholdings here—self-knowledge, touch, commensality, and heritable labor role—is thus clearly Chudalamuttu’s apprehensive strategy for liberating Mohanan from the shackles of Dalit scavenger caste status. Unbeknownst to either Chudalamuttu or Mohanan, this strategy of withholding replicates Dalit and Savarna subjects’ differentiation, most obviously in the lack of touch and commensality between father and son. This internalization of caste tactics, as material culture of stigma, is meant to sever Mohanan from the deprivations of low-caste life but paradoxically re-creates it at the level of the family; and this performance of caste consciousness, as complex historical phenomenon, articulates both the terrible trenchantness of caste hierarchy and the self-depriving fear its persistence invokes for Dalit subjects.

The moving passage that closes the chapter “Parenthood” offers a literal scene of tenuous lineal and collateral consanguinity in the novel as well as a figurative sense of the tenuous collateral consanguinity Dalits navigate in modern India. Literally, Chudalamuttu affirms his commitment to releasing M from the caste stranglehold, as the next scavenger, by upholding this conflated withholding of self/social-knowledge, touch, commensality, and father-son conviviality. Figuratively, this description of father-son ties registers as a metaphor for the Dalit subject’s aspirational attempts at caste and class mobility within modern India, written and published as the novel is just during and after independence (1947-8). Rather than burdening Mohanan with the stereotypically “pre-modern” role of Dalit scavenger, Chudalamuttu relinquishes his paternal claim to his kin in order to help re-script a new linear and collateral consanguinity in which Mohanan may be re-made as the son of the modern and presumably

casteless Indian nation (Ganguly, 2010; Ed. Abraham and Misrahi-Barak, 2016). Figuring in here the steganographic script of the historical moment, one in which Nehru, Gandhi, Ambedkar, and other key anti-colonial leaders variously espoused the ideal of a secular liberal democracy in which caste terror would lessen and low-caste subjects would be brought into modernity's fold, the text's patrilineal language suggests that Mohanan can escape Dalit life by becoming Son to these emblematic Fathers of modern India instead.

“The child must grow up without knowing he was a scavenger's son, without eating that dirt. The stench of a latrine must make him vomit. He must feel disgust at the sight of a scavenger. He must hold his nose when he goes near his father. He must not address his father as ‘Father.’” (81)

Caste → Class Bildungsroman

If Pillai's novel is a bleak and cyclic bildungsroman of Dalit life, then it is also a semi-optimistic cartography of growing class consciousness. Across the three generations of father-and-son scavengers, there are different levels of both class loyalty and inclination to protest/organize. The first character, Ishukkumuttu, seems resigned to his fate and any maneuver he makes with his employers/the upper-caste characters are intended to ease rather than erase the labor-role transfer that will transact between Ishukkumuttu and his son. Chudalamuttu, who has an astute caste and class critique, who similarly wants caste and class escape/mobility for his son, nevertheless takes a different tack than his father did. Chudalamuttu's individualistic approach and upwardly mobile aspirations lead him to essentially betray the newly formed scavengers' union, by colluding with the overseers and managers and blackmailing his scavenger friends through the recalling of debt. For this, he is judged and distrusted by the other scavengers who, led by Pichandi (one of Chudalamuttu's oldest allies), do form a union. But in one of the

novel's most chilling of many disheartening events, Chudalamuttu manages to break up the union by manipulating an accusation of theft against Pichandi.

Mohanan, however, whose name (*sweet*) elicits so much mockery in the novel, is perhaps Pillai's promise of a sweeter collective future for Dalit and other proletariat figures. He is not only the lone figure among the described generations to join a union but himself becomes a Party leader. Though Mohanan is killed in the end, along with other revolutionaries, Pillai shows him forging bonds with Pichandi's son and the children of earlier scavenger figures in the novel. What emerges in the powerful paragraphs describing this collectivization is the portrayal of class consciousness on a scale cutting across caste lines and beyond the individual consciousness of the previous figures, Ishukkumuttu and Chudalamuttu:

"Pachandi's son and Sundiram's son are now scavengers along with him. The three of them are joined together in kinship, like soldiers fighting against the same enemy . . .

Today's scavenger knows how much he earns; he has also learnt to get change for his money without being cheated. He even has the nerve to want higher wages. In Alleppey, the scavengers have learnt to speak with a united voice." (109)

Kinship is thus reconfigured by this entangled Dalit and proletariat consciousness and collectivization. What was ordered by notions of heteronormativity and blood lineage is queered by these young scavengers—deliberately single men—who retain their caste histories but forego their intra-caste conflicts to form working-class solidarity. Thus Pillai's descriptions of the incendiary relations between lower-caste and upper-caste communities also narrate a Dalit bildungsroman in "post"-colonial India that culminates in class war.

Troping Cast(e)rations in *A Fine Balance*

Published in 1995 and focused largely on the period of India's Emergency (1975-77), *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry is a novel of Dickensian exuberance and social realist sensibility, with a panoply of minor characters and incidents and a few central narrative threads that play themselves out to the end. The one I trace here, as I do with other novels in this chapter, is also about caste. That is, I trace the novel's depiction of a low-caste family's fortunes across three generations, to argue that in *A Fine Balance*, as in Pillai's 1947 novel and Roy's 1998 novel, the synecdochal nature of caste emerges to foreground its historical-material persistence, the foreshortened futurity of its queered bodies, its violence as disciplinary tactic of caste war, and its common overlap but not equivalence to class.

From a family of low-caste Chamars, or leather tanners, the uncle-nephew pair Ishvar and Omprakash appear at the novel's start as two tailors making their way in an unnamed city for work, just before the period of The Emergency. Over the course of the novel, Mistry weaves back and forth in time to indicate a subaltern history of risk, struggle, and mutilation. Ishvar and Om are tailors at all because Ishvar's father, Dukhi, had risked sending the boys to be trained in an occupation other than their hereditary caste one; Om is with Ishvar as his surrogate father because of the brutal caste lynching that kills Narayan, Ishvar's brother and Om's biological father; and both are in the city because the Muslim tailoring shop where they have trained and worked is phased out by manufactured ready-mades. By the end of the novel, and after the attendant horrors of The Emergency such as the vasectomy clinics that disproportionately targeted Muslim, illiterate, and low-caste Indians, Om and Ishvar are still in the city, finally as beggars. Both have been subjected to the sterilizations—as cover for what the novel portrays as actually caste violence in their case—procedures that, taken too far and poorly executed, leave

Om castrated and Ishvar without his legs. Thus the teleology of this particular narrative strand—symbolized by the paralysis of the Chamar family’s fortunes, despite immense generational sacrifices and struggles—remains a stringent critique of the persistence of caste as complex historical-material phenomenon, one marked at the level of both individual and collective body.

Lynching-Immolation as Caste Warfare

The lynching-immolation scene with which I open my reading of caste violence is neither the first nor the last such incident in the Chamar family’s history. Throughout the novel, there are numerous examples of caste violence, from rape to beatings to un/touchable humiliation to labor exploitation—tactics of caste war that I detail later but that, even in skimming, cull up resonances with Kamble’s archival account of caste violence in post-independence India. But I begin with the lynching-immolation scene to emphasize this particular act of caste violence as pivotal to the novel’s structure and thematic cohesion and, certainly, to the caste hierarchy evoked in its title. For it is the lynching-arson scene that is meant, by the upper-castes, to discipline not only Narayan’s transgression (via lynching) but the entire family’s (via arson & immolation) for attempting to cross caste/class lines; and it is the lynching-arson scene that propels Om and Ishvar to seek better fortunes in the unnamed city where, nevertheless, they cannot escape the stigma of caste nor the pull of caste/d village life that, by the novel’s end, cripples their lives further.

“That was the end of the punishment, but not for Narayan’s family. ‘He does not deserve a proper cremation,’ said Thakur Dharamsi. ‘And the father is more to blame than the son. His arrogance went against everything we held sacred.’ What the ages had put together, Dukhi had dared to break asunder; he had turned

cobblers into tailors, distorting society's timeless balance. Crossing the lines of caste had to be punished with the utmost severity, said the Thakur." (147)

As the prototypical upper-caste zamindar or feudal-style landlord, Thakur and his casual enactment of the historical tactics of caste discipline against the lower castes, particularly untouchables, serves as an apt example of caste logic and warfare. His endurance as a character across the generational violence depicted in the novel allegorizes the persistence of caste structures facilitating and facilitated by the caste war. Thakur's trigger—Narayan's attempt to sign and cast(e) his vote—also allegorizes the low-caste subject's false inclusion in India's democratic electoral process, a theme introduced at the start of the novel, by Gandhian supporters advocating the annihilation of untouchability, and reiterated at the novel's end, by Om and Ishvar's bodily mutilation under the Emergency governance, i.e. the state of exception that merely recycles caste violence for low-caste subjects. And the lynching-immolation scene's textual location, in the first quarter of the novel, and temporal effects, wiping out most of the first and second generation of the novel's central Chamar family, is revealed to thus frame the two central Chamar characters as caste survivors and decode their narrative telos as one of foreclosed caste futurity.

Throughout the day, at intervals, they were flogged as they hung naked by their ankles from the branches of a banyan tree. Drifting in and out of consciousness, their screams grew faint . . . his men urinated on the three inverted faces. Semiconscious, the parched mouths were grateful for the moisture, licking the trickle with feeble urgency . . . In the evening, after the ballot boxes were taken away, burning coals were held to the three men's genitals, then stuffed into their mouths. Their screams were heard through the village until their lips and tongues melted away. The still, silent bodies were taken down from the tree. When they began to stir, the ropes were transferred from their ankles to their necks, and the three were hanged. The bodies were displayed in the village square. (146)

I read the spectacle of this lynching scene as one of cast(e)ration. In this particular scene, the men's genitals are literally burned, a tactic that has resonances in Kamble's text, such as the penis-crushing on Independence Day, and with Velutha's brutal murder in *The God of Small Things*. But this scene also gestures to the figurative castration of low-caste subjects' masculinity, dignity, and futurity, via the spectacularization of their humiliation and torture, a figurative cast(e)ration that carries resonances with similar disciplinary tactics of caste war in, again, Kamble's text and *Scavenger's Son*. For it is significant that even the mutilated corpses are not afforded full ritual honors, that the Thakur singles out Narayan's family for further punishment and erasure, and that the Thakur's reasoning is grounded in the restoration of a certain kind of collective memory, i.e. one redistributing "justice" through the restoration of the caste order:

"I want those achhoot jatis to learn a lesson,' he said, distributing liquor to his men before their next assignment. 'I want it to be like the old days, when there was respect and discipline and order in our society. And keep an eye on that Chamaar-tailor's house, make sure no one gets away.'" (146)

The rhetoric of spectacular discipline as tactic of caste war should be familiar by now. That disciplinary violence, whether via language or torture, works as figurative cast(e)ration by reinforcing the very markers of caste hierarchy—ritual humiliation, hereditary labor role, purity/pollution strictures—that have historically worked to lock low-caste peoples into socioeconomic peripheries. It is this figurative cast(e)ration at work when Thakur burns Narayan's remaining family alive, a too-typical scene of immolation and arson branded into the collective memory of low-caste peoples. He thus intentionally seeks to wipe out Om and

Narayan's lineage, one that has experienced unprecedented mobility among the untouchables of the village, and fails to do so only because, out of sheer luck, Ishvar and Om are not present.

“The mutilated body was brought in and set before the captives. The room was dark. Thakur Dharamsi sent for a lamp so the family could see. The light tore away the benevolent cloak of darkness. The naked corpse's face was a burnt and broken blur. Only by the red birthmark on his chest could they recognize Narayan. / A long howl broke from Radha. But the sound of grief soon mingled with the family's death agony; the house was set alight. The first flames licked at the bound flesh. The dry winds, furiously fanning the fire, showed the only spark of mercy during this night. The blaze swiftly enfolded all six of them.” (147)

Cast(e)rated Futures

I take up a New Materialist frame to read these horrific scenes as cast(e)ration and as support for my argument that caste is synecdochal and its appropriation metonymic. Specifically, since New Materialism is still a formative, diverse field of work, I reference Elisabeth Grosz' reading of Charles Darwin, George Williams, and Richard Dawkins in her meditation on biology, evolution, and time in *Nick of Time*. While I won't rehash her fascinating work here, I want to draw upon her critical readings of these various scientific thinkers that measure the meaning of fitness or success. In the debates that Grosz thus weighs, over whether fitness means individual survival or reproductive success, i.e. “whether it is the organism or the gene that is being selected” (79), Grosz sides with Darwin in favoring the enduring individual, particularly the individual who (in a scale shift from individual survival to kin unit survival as understood by Darwin as success) helps the kin unit endure. Leaving aside for now the potential questions this and other points in Grosz's text raises around essentialized notions of gender and the fact of kin abandonment for queer subjects, it is useful to apply this framing of success to the generational

caste teleology plotted in *A Fine Balance*. How would this New Materialist line of thinking understand cast(e)ration and what does this tell us about the synecdoche of caste?

If the end of this particular Chamar family line lies with a castrated Om and amputated Ishvar, both otherwise kinless bachelors unlikely to reproduce, then by the measure of sexual selection, even by Grosz and Darwin's generously adjusted version, the Chamars have failed. Only by a bare minimum reading of success—as natural selection in which the individual, through a combination of phenotypic fitness and sheer luck, survives catastrophe—might Ishvar and Om's terrible plight at the end be understood as evolutionary success. And in an equally grim reading of Darwin's dictum—that the differentiation of labor speaks to a natural evolutionary tendency in which non-reproductive organisms sustain reproductive ones in order to ensure the gene line survival of the "kin" unit—Ishvar and Om may be translated as those low caste remnants whose subjection ensures upper caste futurity. There is thus a perverse sense in *A Fine Balance*, as in *Scavenger's Son*, of consanguinity gone awry. In the body politic of India, in the metaphoric casted body of the *Manusmriti*, low-caste subjects appear, relatively, as shit, as periphery, as feet. As part and parcel of such bodies, low-caste subjects remain crucial, but as components naturalized to ensure the reproduction of literal and figurative (good) life for upper-caste subjects, they must also be cast(e)ratable. Thus it is that Dukhi, Narayan, and the family are killed for exceeding the economic and political bounds of the bodily order; thus it is that Ishvar and Om are physically reduced for the disrespect they dare show the Thakur, during the week of Om's intended marriage; and thus it is that, in *Scavenger's Son*, the thanatopolitical cast(e) of Dalit life makes possible the continued health of Savarna life, and in *God of Small Things*, the over-abundant production of Velutha's hands and back generate joy and goods for Brahmins and other upper-caste subjects, even calling up the life-giving rains. The convergence of Om and

Ishvar's cast(e)ration and amputation during the Malthusian regime of The Emergency makes particularly clear the grotesque viability of this strain of New Materialist thought: to "save" the future of the national body politic, undesirable and quantifiable aspects such as low-castes bodies must be "fixed" to preserve titular (caste) balance.

It should be clear by now that these three novels emphasize, as I have argued in my introduction, caste as historical-material phenomenon legibilized via the synecdochal low-caste body. Persistent cultures of stigma, purity/pollution and endogamy strictures, thanatopolitics, hereditary labor, disciplinary violence and, in one New Materialist take, foreshortened evolutionary life—these caste tropes in the novels articulate why synecdoche appears as the most accurate and encompassing figure for articulating that difference that is caste. These tropes also, perhaps, explain why metonymy as strategy of appropriation and camouflage is so charged and infuriating for historical subjects overburdened by synecdochal difference. The kind of difference that alters life chances and fails measures of fitness is neither costume nor performance nor located only in the uni-generational liberal individual. That kind of difference is, at least in the case of caste as troped by these novels *across generations*, corporeally branded, territorially spatialized, and seems to consistently end in queer failure, at least by one mode of New Materialist thought. So that my use of cast(e)ration, initially to speak to the synecdochal tropes of caste in *A Fine Balance*, is also traceable and generalizable to a range of low-caste figures/bodies encountered here, from Ekalavya's thumb to the crushed penis to Velutha's lynching to the red Communist thread left of Mohanan's "line" to the mutilated but living figures of uncle and nephew—tailors of other people's garments, comfort, and comparative stature.

Class Property, Caste Scar

A Fine Balance, more than *Scavenger's Son* or *God of Small Things*, offers a nuanced portrayal of the vexed relationship between caste and class. Perhaps because the novel takes advantage of the amplitude afforded by its genre conventions—and moves across multiple spacetimes that include both the village and city, both pre-and-post independence India, both feudal and capitalist relations—is it possible to see the entanglement but not equivalence of caste and class in Mistry's India, in ways not legible in empirical studies following uni-spatial/temporal caste subjects. Specifically, though the Chamar family is shown to experience class mobility, it is the muscular armature of caste that literally and figuratively annihilates their hopes, limbs, and lives rather than, in a utopic reversal, capitalist expansion annihilating caste completely.

The Chamar's opening dilemma, in the novel's start, illustrates caste as a mechanism for sustaining an unfree and servile labor force. Dukhi's decision to have his sons trained as trailors rather than as tanners, their hereditary occupation as prescribed by caste, is shown to be incredibly risky because it violates caste/class boundaries. Dukhi anticipates retribution; indeed, the villagers express anxiety and fear, he is blacklisted from several job sources, and the boys must be sent away to learn their new trade, from Dukhi's Muslim friend Ashraf. Nevertheless, this response is less severe than it might have been in the past, for a low-caste subject daring to change work, i.e. transgressing caste lines:

“In the old days, punishment for stepping outside one's caste would have been death. Dukhi was spared his life, but it became a very hard life. He was allowed to move carcasses and had to travel long distances to find work.”

(118)

The original work of tanning is shown to reproduce caste and class relations, including caste slavery: “Sometimes the carcass was given for free . . . during the year.” (95) And the novel’s descriptions of the ways in which the stigmatizing work permeates the Chamar body builds a case for the literal matter of caste, for caste as culture of material stigma. When Dukhi’s mother notes that his smell has changed, it is a familiar if compressed bildungsroman of the initiation of the Dalit subject into adult (caste) socialities: “And as he mastered the skills . . . in the all-cleansing river.” (95) But even the immateriality of caste is a key part of the literal matter of caste and caste as culture of material stigma. For Dukhi is made to understand the proscribed place of Chamars through oral accounts of disciplinary caste violence; in an evocation of the Ekalavya story and the Kamble text, he hears about chopped off fingers and hands for supposed theft, about whipping and sexual humiliation for violating commensality bans or refusing sexual coercion and the segregated residences of the Chamars, who live downstream from the Brahmins and landowners, whose waste float by the Chamar settlements, map caste and class relations onto the village grounds. So that, as part of Dukhi’s social education, the im/material aspects of caste fully encase his understanding of his working-class position, i.e. that caste as bodily and temporal synecdoche remains entangled with the Chamar family’s economic precarity:

“During his childhood years, he mastered a full catalogue of the real and imaginary crimes a low-caste person could commit, and the corresponding punishments were engraved upon his memory. By the time he entered his teens, he had acquired all the knowledge he would need to perceive that invisible line of caste he could never cross, to survive in the village like his ancestors, with humiliation and forbearance as his constant companions.” (97)

In a rare depiction of gendered caste violence as disciplinary caste/class mechanism, *A Fine Balance* early on portrays caste rape. Roopa, Dukhi’s young wife, takes to stealing milk and

fruit at night to feed her firstborn son. Her surreptitious spatial transgression, from Chamar settlement to upper-caste landholdings, signals the vast class gap between the upper-castes and their workers, whose wages cannot adequately feed their children. But the historical memory of caste rape and the vigilante details of the scene mark Roopa's violation, by an unnamed watchman, also a worker, as reproducing a cultural caste script:

Go on, pick a few,' he repeated smiling. 'I have been hired by the owner to watch the grove. But I don't care. He is a rich bastard.' / Roopa retrieved the sack nervously and resumed picking. Her shaking fingers dropped an orange as she tried to slip it past the mouth of the sack. She glanced over her shoulder. His eyes were greedily following her body; it made her uneasy. 'I'm grateful to you,' she said . . . / . . . Roopa decided she had enough fruit, it was time to thank him and leave. Reading her movements, he said, 'One shout from me and they will come running.' / 'What?' She saw his smile disappear suddenly. / 'I only have to shout, and the owner and his sons would be here at once. They would strip you and whip you for stealing.' / She trembled, and the smile returned to his face. 'Don't worry, I won't shout.' She fastened the mouth of the sack, and he continued, 'After whipping you, they would probably show you disrespect, and stain your honour. They would take turns doing shameful things to your lovely soft body. (98)

The resulting humiliation, for both Roopa and Dukhi, are accepted silently because of their double vulnerability as working-class and low-caste subjects, for whom caste rape is a key part of the social education/memory to which the novel earlier alludes. Thus the price, for violating the im/material boundaries of space and commensality set forth not only by class but caste codes, is silent suffering and, in Dukhi's case, a figurative cast(e)ration:

"Dukhi pretended to be asleep as she entered the hut. He heard her muffled sobs several times during the night, and knew, from her smell, what had happened to her while she was gone. He felt the urge to go to her, speak to her, comfort her. But he did not know what words to use, and he also felt afraid of learning too much. He wept silently, venting his shame, anger, humiliation in tears; he wished he would die that night." (99)

And in a later subplot portraying the gendered and reproductive dimensions of caste violence, Roopa gives birth to a second and beautiful son, Narayan. Because his birth and visage

inspire jealousy among the upper-castes who either have no sons or children as handsome, Dukhi takes great pains to avoid coveting his good fortune and to perform more obsequiousness to the upper castes. The rumors that Dukhi's two sons are actually the stolen children of Brahmins confirm Dukhi's fears and compel Dukhi to accept the most servile, unpaid tasks: "Whatever task Dukhi was ordered to do, he did without questioning, without thought of payment, keeping his eyes averted from the high-caste face and fixed safely on the feet. He knew that the least annoyance someone felt towards him could be fanned into flames to devour his family." (100) Again, the historical memory of immolation and arson, as upper caste retribution for caste and class mobility among low-caste subjects, haunts the present and future of low-caste characters. According to the cultural script that is caste (Molina, 2014; Ambedkar, 1969, 1970; Ganguly, 2010; Chakravarty, 2006), the value of Roopa's literal reproductive labor can only be legible if it were reproducing (good) life for upper-caste subjects. Thus the rumors work to appropriate the value of Roopa's labor towards this end and to self-reflexively naturalize the caste script by accusing Dukhi, the rightful parent, of having stolen his own progeny. It is in the intimations of this absurd narrative of labor, value, and ownership that we see the appropriative intimations framing the young Chamars as upper-caste property.

What levels caste resentment is, significantly, bodily mutilation, repeating the trope of disciplinary violence as integral to caste hierarchy and my argument for reading caste as synecdochal in order to foreground its historical materiality. When Dukhi takes seven-year old Ishvar to witness a carcass skinning, Ishvar's face is mauled by the supposedly dead buffalo, paralyzing part of the left side of the boy's face. The resulting upper-caste satisfaction ("the universe . . . as it should be," 103) emphasizes again caste as more than merely labor role or status, especially as the accident happens while Dukhi and Ishvar are executing their caste work without any other disruption. The corporeal marking of Ishvar's face, which is described in suggestive language as only capable now of half-crying and half-smiling, reinstates Ishvar as less beautiful

and not as pure as Brahmin children but, instead, as scarred in the synecdochal manner of the collective low-caste body.

Re-Cast(e)ing Citizenship & Consanguinity

While questions of citizenship and political rights are often legitimately critiqued as being part of the sphere of bourgeois liberal concerns, these questions nevertheless remain salient in legibilizing additional matrices of power subjugating low-caste groups, particularly in enacting their subalternization within the nation-state. It is the political realm, besides the economic, that becomes Narayan's next objective in increasing caste mobility and that ends in his lynching and his family's immolation. Determined to cast a ballot in the parliamentary elections rather than thumbprint a vote that will not be counted, Narayan demands both the exercise of his political right in post-independent India and a materialization of the Dalit presence in its body politic. Leaving aside the question of whether this assertion will in fact change the Dalits' economic fortunes, I focus on the deathly consequences of Narayan's Dalit assertion that legibilizes the stakes of low-caste participation/subalternization in the nation-state.

Dukhi warns that Narayan's one cast vote will not change the outcomes of the rigged elections, describing the attempt as a "gesture [that] will be a bucket falling in a well deeper than centuries. The splash won't be seen or heard." (144) But Narayan's response hones in on the aspect of Dalit assertion that moves beyond economic mobility to encompass immaterial aspects of true equality: "Life without dignity is worthless." (144) The extended banter between father and son reads like a dialectic on the location of true transformation for low-caste subjects. Dukhi's argument that the family has experienced occupational mobility and asset accumulation emphasizes economic measures of Dalit aspiration; whereas Narayan's argument that neither this nor legal

attempts to outlaw untouchability have prevented landlords from treating Dalits as animals makes a case for the persistent hold of culture and specifically caste as material culture of stigma.

“More than twenty years have passed since independence. How much longer? I want to be able to drink from the village well, worship in the temple, walk where I like.’ / Dukhi withdrew his foot from Narayan’s lap and sat up. He was remembering his own defiance of the caste system, when he had sent his little sons to Ashraf. He felt pride at Narayan’s words, but also fear. ‘Son, those are dangerous things to want. You changed from Chamaar to tailor. Be satisfied with that.’ / Narayan shook his head. ‘That was your victory.’” (143)

The generational shift in this dialectic emphasizes the temporal synecdoche of caste and resonates with the fractured consanguinity metaphorizing fragile father-son relations as tenuous Dalit-state relations in *Scavenger’s Son*; and the delicate brown moth Dukhi notices, during this conversation, beating hopelessly against the lamp glass resonates with Pappachi’s furry moth in *God of Small Things*, i.e. Roy’s metaphor for caste as the specter haunting Indian modernity.

To drive home the point that neither economic, spatial, nor legal shifts in the Chamars’ personal fortunes or Indian state governance can successfully redress caste inequity, the novel’s lynching-immolation chapter closes with a scene of upper-caste impunity at the police station. Ishvar and Om leave town to ask for an investigation but the police accuse Ishvar and Om of stirring up low-caste trouble and warn Ashraf to stay out of Hindu affairs. Religion and caste difference are thus explicitly invoked by a representative of the law in reproducing caste violence and hierarchy, troubling the utopic belief that modern state governance might easily override complex millennium-old practices such as caste or even remain “above” the fray of culture at all rather than, in fact, be part of the cultural, political, economic relationalities that together

constitute caste as phenomenon. What else this scene, like several other key scenes, throws up is Mistry's vision of consanguinity in post-independent India. If low-caste and Muslim subjects both face the burden of political and legal violence at the hands of upper-caste, nationalist Hindu hegemony, and if "family" is reconstructed by Mistry through Dalit-Muslim alliances such as Ashraf's "adoption" of the Chamar brothers, then linear and collateral consanguinity appears fragile here too, as in *Scavenger's Son* and *God of Small Things*. Precariously positioned in relation to national belonging, as highlighted by the anti-Muslim, anti-low-caste murders and sterilizations of The Emergency, Dalits, Muslims, and other subaltern figures in modern Indian instead appear to forge more life-affirming, more enduring consanguinity through a kind of queer kinship with each other.

Dukhi claims as much in an early scene, when he fails to win the justice he seeks for his sons, who have been thrashed by an upper-caste teacher for touching upper-caste resources. The reputable Brahmin judge offers him clichéd religious bromides naturalizing caste violence, a tacit moment of disillusionment suggesting Mistry's tacit sympathies for (satiric/covert/armed) resistance as more closely approximating redistributive justice.

"'Went to see that Chit-Pavan Brahmin,' said Dukhi, and narrated his visit in detail. 'Goo-Khavan Brahmin is what he should be called instead.' / They laughed with delight, and Chottu agreed that Shit-Eating Brahmin was indeed a more suitable name." (113)

The Dalit characters' critique of upper-caste violence generates sympathy for other subjects of Hindutva (caste) violence, namely Muslim subalterns within the novel's particular historic sweep. Indeed, one of the novel's most gripping scenes show the Chamar brothers protecting Ashraf's family from death, during the anti-Muslim purges around Partition time.

When a marauding crowd (eerily evoking contemporary “Saffron Squads” in Modi’s India) arrives at Ashraf the tailor’s shop to burn him and his family out, it is the two Dalit boys who have been adopted by Ashraf and his family—as apprentices and sons—who protect the family through subterfuge.

“‘Is it possible that Muslims work in this shop?’ asked the leader. / ‘Business is not good enough to hire anyone,’ said Ishvar. ‘Barely enough work for my brother and me.’ Men shuffled up beside him, trying to look inside the shop. They were breathing hard, and he could smell their sweat. ‘Please, see all you want,’ he said, moving aside. ‘We have nothing to hide.’ / The men glanced around quickly, taking in the Hindu deities on the wall behind the cutting table. One of the saffron-shirted men stepped forward. ‘Listen, smart boy. If you are lying, I will myself skewer you on the three points of my trishul.’” (129)

In addition to summarily echoing the courage of Dalit-Muslim alliance against Hindutva, nationalist, and caste structures, the scene also emphasizes a relation of reciprocity beyond the rhetoric of capital, Mughal conquest, or Hindu hegemony, as the mode of exchange here (Karatani, 2014), dropping instead into a redemptive rendition of what appears as a “tribal” mode in other texts. That is to say, the debt incurred here as basis for reciprocal refuge is one located within a queer consanguinity re-imagined by subalterns rather than the elite:

Mumtaz fell on her knees before the two apprentices. Her dupatta slid from around her neck and draped their feet. ‘Please, Chachi, don’t do that,’ said Ishvar, shuffling backwards. / ‘Forever and ever, my life, my children, my husband’s life, my home—everything, I owe to you!’ she clung to them, weeping. ‘There is no repayment possible!’ . . . / . . . Ishvar finally succeeded in disentangling his ankles from her hands, ‘Chachi, you are like our mother, we have shared your food and home for seven years.’ . . . / . . . Ashraf cleared his throat. ‘I came down to say one thing only.’ Tears were rolling down his cheeks; he paused to wipe them. ‘The day I met your father—the day I told Dukhi to send me his two sons for tailor-training. That day was the luckiest of my life.’” (131)

Troping Caste in *The God of Small Things*

Twenty years after its publication (1997), *The God of Small Things* remains a linguistically acrobatic and socially astute novel that has generated numerous analyses—ranging from the “entrance” of South Asian literatures into the global literature market, the post-colonial politics of its playful idioms, and of course the incendiary depictions of caste/worlds (Ahmed, 2006; Bose, 1998; Froula, 2009; Ganguly, 2010; Jani, 2009; Mirza, 2016; Ed. Abraham and Misrahi-Barak, 2016). However, it is upon the figure of Velutha that my reading pivots, though the novel itself contains figures in multitudes (in keeping with the author’s celebration of smallness and heterogeneity). Velutha, the beautiful Dalit protagonist at the heart of *The God of Small Things*, is a local carpenter who becomes the Brahmin Ammu’s lover for thirteen nights before he is murdered by the police. Both the brutality of his killing, for caste transgression, and the erotic poetics scripted onto his body, his labor, and his land articulate a critical imagining of caste relations that I argue is at once radical and reifying.

Like *Scavenger’s Son*, Arundhati Roy’s novel tracks a Malayali family across three generations, though here the Kochammas are upper-caste Syrian Christians who patronize yet despise Hindus and villagers of the lowest castes, particularly Dalits. The novel’s scrambled chronology—returning again and again to the multiple deaths, immediate and slow, that ground its narrative telos—implicitly investigates why the Anglo-Indian child Sophie Mol drowned, how the talented and generous Velutha was murdered, how the quietly simmering, thirty-one year old Ammu is abandoned to social and literal death, and what caste has to do with it all. By focusing on the events of Velutha’s hopeful life and grotesque death, I not only foreground Dalit experience in the complex social milieu of the novel but the central tropes that structure Roy’s implicit argument. That argument paints caste as the living specter haunting Indian modernity—

something like the late Pappachi's grey furry moth flitting about the twins Estha and Rahel—that, while entangled with the economic, cannot be reduced to class alone. And those tropes I trace as supporting this argument are the enfleshment of caste, the queerness of caste, the tactics of caste war, and caste as steganography to class—which themselves foreground the affective and sensuous dimensions of caste/worlds (Froula, 2009; Ganguly, 2010).

Sensorium of Caste Pain/Pleasure

Of all the bodily sensorium in the novel, the most patterned descriptions are those of Velutha. Described again and again as black and beautiful, Velutha's Dalit body is ascribed an erotic alterity stereotypically grafted, in Western literatures, onto the black male body. What is also grafted, resonantly, onto his body is the sensorium of stigma that enfleshes upper-caste suspicion and contempt of Dalit subjects:

“She saw the ridges of muscle on Velutha's stomach grow taut and rise under his skin like the divisions on a slab of chocolate. She wondered at how his body had changed—so quietly, from a flat-muscled boy's body into a man's body. Contoured and hard. A swimmer's body. A swimmer-carpenter's body. Polished with a high-wax body polish.” (167)

“His skull was fractured in three places. His nose and both his cheekbones were smashed, leaving his face pulpy, undefined. The blow to his mouth had split open his upper lip and broken six teeth, three of which were embedded in his lower lip, hideously inverting his beautiful smile. Four of his ribs were splintered, one had pierced his left lung, which was what made him bleed from his mouth.” (294)

Fluctuating between these sets of readings and treatments—one erotic, another stigmatizing—and himself living by the other-worldly river, Velutha emerges as a liminal figure

deeply marked by caste difference (Froula, 2009). In the resonances that Roy's depictions of his Dalit difference bear with blackness in America—signaled by Roy's repeated use of “black” and early plot forays into working-class American netherworlds (via divorced Rahel) and characterizations of adult Rahel (the child best friend of Velutha) as jazz—in these resonances, Roy seems to make a case for relating casted Indian bodies to racialized American bodies, specifically Dalit masculinity to Black American masculinity. Certainly, the plot trajectory that ends with Velutha's horrific lynching, at the hands of the police, conjure up numerous accounts of such violence for black men in America. But this is a relation Roy mostly hints at in these details; what is explicitly laid out are the entangled materialities of Velutha's world that make a case for caste as more than discursive fantasy or cultural script but caste as corporeal, territorial, enfolded.

Velutha's hands and back, synecdoche for the Dalit laborer, carry mesmerizing power in the novel. His back, marked by a scar shaped like a leaf, is simultaneously captivating and capable of conjuring up the monsoon. His carpenter's hands, constantly making and sharing gifts for Ammu's children, wield an underappreciated talent that wins him remunerative work but not cross-caste acceptance. With this back scar that culls up the rainy season of life/death for Indians, those hands that build the structures that feed and house the upper-caste, that delight Ammu and her children in different ways, Velutha embodies not only the Marxist sensuousness of living labor but, relatedly, the potent, generative vitality of the lowest castes in sustaining the good life for all others. Ammu, on the other hand, flashes between being extra/ordinary, mother/terrorist, un/desirable, and so emerges as an outcaste of a different sort. While Ammu is a Brahmin, and it is the historical fortress of endogamy and un/touchability drawn around her caste status that leads to Velutha's lynching, it is her rebellions against gender/caste/class norms that

mark her as social outcast in her social milieu (Froula, 2009). Without equating Brahminism and patriarchy as systems of power, I nevertheless suggest that some of their repercussions, namely the positioning of both Ammu and Velutha as low-key mavericks, also create the mutual sympathy between them. When Rahel calls out Velutha marching in a Communist rally, and is rebuked by her mother, who senses the risk for Velutha if this were true, Ammu secretly hopes Rahel's observation is fact:

“Suddenly Ammu hoped that it *had* been him that Rahel saw in the march. She hoped it had been him that had raised his flag and knotted arm in anger. She hoped that under his careful cloak of cheerfulness he housed a living, breathing anger against the smug, ordered world that she so raged against. She hoped it had been him.” (167)

Ammu's own anger—variously playing out in her restless roaming, her turns of mood with her family, and the domestic terror that sends her running from the gilded life and marriage title of tea plantation owner's wife in Assam—marks her off as liminal threat (Froula, 2009). As such—home-bound divorcee, at times un/lovely, at times dis/pleasing—Ammu is stigmatized by her threshold localization which, in failing to meet gendered norms of femininity for her particular caste and class strata, strands her in a no-(wo)man's zone of social isolation and emotional desolation.

Yet if this resonance draws Ammu and Velutha together, it cannot overcome the Love Laws meant to cast(e) their bodies as distinct. Even Roy, in a comical scene depicting a stereotypical feminine ritual of measuring bodily perkiness, cannot seem to escape in/advertently reifying Ammu's body as Brahmin flesh. Ammu lazily places pencils under her breasts and butt to reassure herself of her sexual youth and desirability, her Brahmin body literally holding (and dropping) markers of knowledge. And in a scripting of both Ammu and Velutha's eroticized

qualities, stereotypical caste traits figure in significantly: both as forbidden fruit. Ammu is the former mistress-fatale who seeks out Velutha and leads him to his own destruction; Velutha is the former servant who cannot resist what he is not allowed. Roy's eroticization of each figure does read as a reification of caste traits and class relations (Ahmed, 2006), but what salvages the characterization from its clichés is the textual and political placement of the affair (at the novel's end), the inventive language that bares the bravery of the characters' smallest actions, and the many shades and synecdoches she allows each character outside the romance plot: Velutha's socialist commitments, Ammu's escape from domestic violence, their love and patience with the naughty twins, their plagued histories within the insular town and outside it.

But I turn to the entangled, pleasurable materialities of the Dalit lifeworld to foreground the agential personhood Roy thus insists through the figure of Velutha belongs to Dalit subjects and pulses vibrantly apart from oft-centered Savarna subjectivity. I also turn to such entangled, pleasurable materialities to argue that the sensorium of the small that is celebrated in the novel, along with Velutha's beauty, entangles both gazed-upon objects/insects as agents of resistance to Savarna ontoepistemologies—which would otherwise relegate Dalit life to reductive and humiliating deathworlds. In this sense, women of color, black feminist, and Third World feminist theorizations on the subversive power of pleasure politics traverses spatio-temporal difference to ground my threading through of stigma, resistance, and the personal/pleasure as political (Bose, 1998; Jani, 2009; Lorde, 1984; Crosley and Morgan, 2013). And in this sense, I argue that Roy animates, in a politically charged posthumanist turn, the otherwise segregated-as-polluted Dalit matter of the river, the bank, the body in an entangled manifestation of pleasure, labor, beauty.

I return to the final chapter, "The Cost of Living," to make my argument. The chapter's placement at the novel's end signals its importance in making the novel's meaning on the

cultural as well as political economy of caste, on the pleasure of inter-caste relations as a risky politics of caste annihilation (Ambedkar, 2014). A chapter in which the reader finally bears witness to Ammu and Velutha's coupling—that is to the un/tethering of Love and Law from among the Love Laws to enacting caste annihilation by violating the rules of endogamy—in such a chapter, the reader also finally understands that the price Ammu and Velutha will pay will lead not only to loss of consanguinity or employment but to social and literal death. But that cost has already been pre-figured in prior chapters detailing the grotesque mutilation of Velutha's beautiful body, the tacit abandonment of Ammu to a lonely, slow death. Here, what is emphasized by the sheer sensation/al of Ammu and Velutha's coupling is the titular living via the wondrous erotic (Bose, 1998; Lorde, 1984). In a sub-scene of un/touchable cunnilingus, all sorts of matter figure as metaphor for dangerous yet desirable roads:

“He kissed her eyes. Her ears. Her breasts. Her belly. Her seven silver stretchmarks from her twins. The line of down that led from her navel to her dark triangle, that told him where she wanted him to go. The inside of her legs, where her skin was softest. Then carpenter's hands lifted her hips and an untouchable tongue touched the innermost part of her. Drank long and deep from the bowl of her. / She danced for him. On that boat-shaped piece of earth. She lived.” (319)

It may be easy for readers unfamiliar with South Asian caste strictures to miss the historical subtext in which Dalit tongues were polluting, in which erotic caste relations were forbidden. But it should be possible for North American readers versed in the anti-miscegenation, anti-blackness history of American race relations to trace transnational resonances with the risky sensorium of caste transgression. In this sense, the “boat-shaped piece of earth” on which Ammu climaxes signifies not only her journeying across caste lines but the

access granted by the passage, and Ammu's performance of upper-caste violation of caste lines within it, to Anglophone readers of the Global North, themselves upper-caste in relation to the Global South and, like Ammu, traveling textually/emotionally to Velutha's vibrant lifeworld.

It follows then that, if the cost of Ammu and Velutha's "living" is their lives and the twins' innocence, if the surplus value of Velutha's erotic labor accrues in Ammu and the reader's pleasure and recognition, that this scene of transgression encompasses an ontoepistemology of both class and caste dimensions. Certainly, Ammu and Velutha come from distinct classes, one property-holding and another "landless." Ammu, the divorced wife of a tea-plantation owner, idles in her misery in Kerala, whereas Velutha over-produces as once-estate hand, local carpenter, and factory worker. Yet the sub-scene's opening passage, in which Velutha's materiality is shown to literally and figuratively be immersed in the materialities of the river, the stone, the wood with which he works, suggests an entangled post-human materiality in which too caste is steganography:

"As he rose from the dark river and walked up the stone steps, she saw that the world they stood in was his. That he belonged to it. That it belonged to him. The water. The mud. The trees. The fish. The stars. He moved so easily through it. As she watched him she understood the quality of his beauty. How his labor had shaped him. How the wood he fashioned had fashioned him. Each plank he planed, each nail had molded him. Had left its stamp on him. Had given him his strength, his supple grace." (315-316)

For the pleasure of Velutha's smile, "his only luggage" from boyhood to manhood, that will initiate the novel's closing scene of pleasurable caste annihilation, Ammu and Velutha will pay with "smashed smiles," i.e. their foreshortened joy and lives. The violence of class war is pre-figured in the language of property/lessness, the siphoning of the worker's vital energy into

the commodity; and the persistence of caste war is decipherable in the foreshadowed lynching, the hunger-inducing commensality codes historically used to discipline and reify caste bodies and hierarchies. Velutha's fear articulates both: "His heart hammered . . . this was a trap. There were people in the bushes. Watching. She was the delectable bait." (316) What is not articulated here or anywhere explicitly in the chapter is how it is Velutha, as both working-class and low-caste figure, who enables not only the material comforts of Ammu's upper-class life but the erotic freedoms towards which her confined, upper-caste self runs:

"She didn't know what it was that made her hurry through the undergrowth. That turned her walk into a run. That made her arrive on the banks of the Meenachal breathless. Sobbing. As though she was late for something. As though her life depended on getting there in time." (314)

Caste annihilation, as enacted by erotic inter-caste relations (and as coined by Dr. Ambedkar), is liberating for the bourgeois upper-caste woman not only at the level of liberal individualism but in a synecdochal sense. Ammu and Velutha's coupling, upon the boat-shaped clearing made by the wayward play of her two egg twins, signals also an ill-fated attempt to right consanguinity gone awry, as scripted by the complex historical phenomenon that is caste.

Queering & Worlding Caste Annihilation

There is something queer about the desire Roy elevates above others considered more normative. Under the umbrella of acceptable desire, Roy mischievously places: Mammachi's tasty pickles and jams (whose popularity get her thrashed nightly), Baby Kochamma's obsession with the (too holy to be attainable) Roman Catholic Father Mulligan, and the formal (caste-directed) interactions and affections among villagers she calls Touchable gestures. Whereas

within the cyclic structure of the novel, Roy places those queer desires deemed Untouchable and punishable: the “present” prodigal son narrative that opens the novel and culminates in the twins’ incest and the “past” romance that closes the novel with Ammu and Velutha’s taboo affair. The refrain that encapsulates these queering tendencies in the novel also intimates that the “normative” is perhaps fatal for what crosses outside its purview:

“Little events, ordinary things, smashed and reconstituted. Imbued with new meaning. Suddenly they become the bleached bones of a story . . . it really began in the days when the Love Laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. / And how much.” (32-33)

The circumference of the Love Laws—underlaid by caste, class, and colonial histories—thus dictate what is permissible, what is queer. And key characters’ violations of these Laws—the twins’ intimate love for each other, their jealousy of the Anglo-Indian Sophie Mol that leads to her death, their trusting affection for before their manipulated betrayal of Velutha—lead to exile, torture, death. Thus in contrast to Leila Neti’s intriguing critique that Roy’s politics of love as plotted in the novel reifies queer desire as deviant, I argue that Roy’s portrayal of queerness’ punitive treatment and re-valorization of the queer vs. the normative reveals a sympathetic alliance with transgressive desire that the novel broadly frames as queer desire (Neti, 2016; King, 2016).

The desire that most obviously transgresses the Love Laws, and seems to hold the novel’s greatest sympathies (from the attention and placement given to it in the text), is of course the river-crossing passion between Ammu and Velutha. The novel gradually builds towards the consummation scene, which takes up the entirety of the final chapter “The Cost of Living,” but

references the passion and its dis/empowering effects throughout. That passion, unwritten in the news obituaries, constitute the central puzzle for the twins, even as adults:

“It took the twins years to understand Ammu’s part in what had happened. At Sophie Mol’s funeral and in the days before Estha was Returned, they saw her swollen eyes, and with the self-centeredness of children, held themselves wholly culpable for her grief.” (307)

And the moment of recognition, between Ammu and Velutha, of this passion happens across a distance, as does its fulfillment. It is a recognition that the small, in duration and romantic impact, carries the weight of what Roy posits as Big throughout the novel. That is, Ammu and Velutha’s small glimpse of erotic truth carries the weight of transgressing the Love Laws and the historical repercussions well known to them for doing so:

The man standing in the shade of the rubber trees with coins of sunshine dancing on his body, holding her daughter in his arms, glanced up and caught Ammu’s gaze. Centuries telescoped into one evanescent moment. History was wrong-footed, caught off guard. Sloughed off like an old snakeskin. Its marks, its scars, its wounds from old wards and the walking-backwards days all fell away. . . . Velutha looked up and saw things that he hadn’t seen before. Things that had been out of bounds so far, obscured by history’s blinkers. / Simple things. / For instance, he saw that Rahel’s mother was a woman . . . Ammu saw that he saw. She looked away. He did too. History’s fiends returned to claim them. To re-wrap them in its old, scarred pelt and drag them back to where they really lived. Where the Love Laws lay down who should be loved. And how. And how much. (167-168)

When the novel finally arrives at the final chapter, and the lovers’ first and subsequent trysts, the trope of smallness floats up to sustain the lovers’ fragile future. With heavy irony, smallness-as-trope signals the Big transgressions, the Big penalties of their queer desires. For breaking a fundamental caste code—un/touchability and endogamy—both will die prematurely, spectacularly, and invisibly. Thus the foreclosed futurity of their passion and their lives frame their desire as queer in the sense that temporalities of queerness are so often marked by

foreclosed, non-reproductive futurity. That sense of the fragility of their queer passion is distilled through the strange, living love token of a bee they name, with caste inflections, Chappu Tamburan or Lord Rubbish:

“They chose him because they knew they had to put their faith in fragility. Stick to Smallness. . . . They knew that things could change in a day. They were right about that. / They were wrong about *Chappu Tamburan*, though. He outlived Velutha. He fathered future generations. / He died of natural causes.” (321)

For this reason, the closing lines of the scene and the novel carry a sharp political thrust. Each night, before the lovers part, they promise to see each other with one word: *naaley/tomorrow*. If read as a movement against foreclosed futurity, propelled by the prescience of foreclosed futurity for inter-caste relations, *naaley/tomorrow* also becomes the novel’s emphatic and empathetic protest against the annihilation of “living” that has already descended upon the lovers in the timeline of the novel but not upon caste as historical phenomenon in either the fictional or real world of the characters and author.

The other death centering the novel’s scrambled chronology is Sophie Mol’s. Loved more than her twin cousins, Estha and Rahel, Sophie Mol functions in the novel as a symbol of that colonial, racial, transnational privilege also very much in keeping with the Love Laws. Roy’s emphasis on Sophie Mol’s (lighter) coloring, (taller) stature, and (British) bearing and passport—and the fascination and care they elicit in Allepey—outline historical and transnational networks of power that, in their own way, gesture at a global caste order:

“Kochu Maria moved the cake tray out of the way of her adoring downwards smile as Sophie Mol squatted down in the well-squelch . . . Kochu Maria watched with her cake crumbs. / The Fond Smiles watched Fondly. /

Little Girls Playing. . . . One Loved. / One Loved a Little Less. . . . The Fond Smile stayed on Sophie Mol like a spotlight, thinking, perhaps, that the sweetcousins were playing hide-and-seek, like sweetcousins often do.” (177)

As the primary Global North figure in a novel written in the fresh aftermath of Indian (90s) liberalization, Sophie Mol’s visit articulates a new global order predicated on various determinations of value that Roy narrates as tiering subjects across spacetimes (Bonnor, 2013). As one such paradigm, the Love Laws are worlded to tier the characters transnationally as well as locally, into hierarchies underwritten by not only caste and religious difference but global histories of race, nationality, coloniality/modernity, and various kinds of capital. It is this worlding of love—i.e. grievability, legibility, and the neo/liberal scaling of value—that is transacted through categories of difference, which segregates a figure like the British Anglo-Indian Sophie Mol from one like the Malayali Dalit Velutha, in death as well as in life. While both deaths anchor the novel’s scattered temporalities, their deaths are treated differently. Sophie Mol, whose brief visit is welcomed in town with a play called *Welcome, Sophie Mol*, is dressed preciously and laid out in the chaise like a doll. Velutha’s brutal murder goes unreported, mostly unseen in a police holding cell, just another Dalit lynching in the historical motif of caste war. But what I read here as newly significant in these counterpointed deaths is their sharp if subdued commentary on the neo/liberal scaling of human value, written as Roy’s novel is in the wake of not only Indian but global liberalization of markets (Bonnor, 2013). Specifically, I read the differences emphasized by these counterpointed deaths—one grievable and accidental (for a Global North subject), another illegible and coordinated (for a Global South subject)—that materializes the North-South value gap definitive of the emerging global caste order.

On the one hand, there is Sophie Mol, the emblematic figure of Global North consumption, cleanliness, and evolutionary superiority; these are detailed by her brand items, her hygienic habits and goodness in comparison to those of her wayward cousins, and by her unusual

beauty among the townspeople. On the other hand, there is Velutha, the subject/ed of Global South (over)production, untouchability, and demeaning local strictures, whose startling beauty and talent are the objects of caste envy and wrath. Somewhere in the middle fall the surviving twins, Estha and Rahel who, though they be upper-caste in Kerala, are nevertheless not as loveable or valuable as the Anglo-Indian Sophie Mol. I read these valuations as signaling a new caste hierarchy ordered by neoliberal capitalism, itself undergirded by coloniality/modernity and persistent webs of global economies, im/migrant transits, and white supremacy.

Sophie Mol's life, legibilized as precarious Global North life in that she must be medicated and protected from the dangers of the Global South, embodies that value-generating individual who circulates in the symbolic economy as exemplar of (good) Life. And though Roy's ironic take is that, as a bratty, myopic child, Sophie Mol unwittingly consumes more labor than she can actively yield, she is nevertheless understood as extending metonymic value because she enfleshes the historical capital of colonial (British) privilege, white supremacy, and (double upper-caste) exogamy-as-endogamy. Velutha's life, however, is as invisible in some aspects as is his death. His Communist loyalties must stay hidden but, when made legible through the loving eyes of Ammu and Rahel, articulate his class and caste position in the market economy and village culture; and his brutalization at the hands of police in the History House reveals not only the complicity of the law in his subalternity (Ganguly, 2010) but the miserable failure of neoliberal promises in actualizing, for the historically most marginalized subjects, Enlightenment ideals of freedom, equality, and fraternity.

Caste as Consanguinity Gone Awry

The theme of consanguinity returns in *God of Small Things*, as it did in *Scavenger's Son* and *A Fine Balance*, where lineal consanguinity appears tenuous for low-caste characters and collateral consanguinity illusory, in a trope metaphorizing the Dalit subject's subaltern political position within the Indian nation-state. In *God of Small Things*, caste is additionally configured as consanguinity gone awry. While fragile lineal consanguinity emerges when Vellya Paapen reveals his son Velutha's affair to Mammachi, broken lineal consanguinity is traced mythologically to the Karna-Pandava story, and the twins' incestuous act simultaneously enact to an extreme the caste strictures preserving endogamy and metaphorize caste annihilation as the possible outcome of queer desire between (two egg) kin.

The twins' incest is presented so casually, without the aesthetic or structural drama of Ammu and Velutha's affair, that in its own quiet way, the scene feels explosive. The irony of this casualness is, of course, that the incest, committed between upper-caste subjects, between twins, is less reprehensible in the context of the novel than their mother's inter-caste affair. And the point about consanguinity it makes, as troped through the repeated characterizations of the twins as two-egg twins, is about caste endogamy as consanguinity gone awry. For if Dalits are considered integral to the Hindu body politic—a paradoxical positioning that relies on their simultaneous inclusion and exclusion—then they are kin to the upper caste. Certainly, the *Manusmriti* origin story for caste posits Untouchables as the feet of the divine body. Thus Dalits are synecdoche, and caste exogamy registers as punishable queer desire—two conditions the incest of Rahel and Estha, those two-egg twins who are both like and unlike, implicitly throw up to reader critique through their incest act as metaphor for consanguinity gone awry.

The final metaphor for caste as consanguinity gone awry is the Karna-Pandava story dramatized as a classical Kathakali dance performance. In this story Kunti abandons her firstborn son Karna, who is raised by a low-caste charioteer, and performs the mothering role only later, to the famed five Pandava brothers. Kunti finally returns to Karna to extract a promise from him, that he will not harm the brothers he now knows are also *his* brothers—and she evokes the Love Laws to do so:

“Karna the Warrior could not make that promise, for if he did, he would have to revoke another one. Tomorrow he would go to war, and his enemies would be the Pandavas. They were the ones, Arjuna in particular, who had publicly reviled him for being a lowly charioteer’s son. And it was Duryodhana, the eldest of the one hundred Kaurava brothers, that came to his rescue by gifting him a kingdom of his own. Karna, in return, had pledged eternal fealty.” (222)

Besides the obvious parallels to the Ekalavya story (Ekalavya, who was also up against Arjuna, the most gifted of the Pandava brothers!), this tale introduces new elements that make the strange consanguinity inherent to the caste phenomenon more pronounced. It is Karna’s own mother rather than any teacher who makes a demand that essentially reproduces caste hierarchy, to not hurt this mother he has never known by not harming her sons/his brothers: fragile lineal consanguinity. It is his double abandonment as-child-then-warrior by Kunti, though he is the son of the sun god Surya (the fundamental source of Life), that also reproduces caste hierarchy: broken collateral consanguinity. And it is his ultimate loyalty to the villain of the Mahabharata, Duryodhana who alone befriended Karna, over his biological brother Arjuna, whom he vows to Kunti he will fight to the death, that emphasizes both the queerness of caste as consanguinity

gone awry and the historical caste war. Karna has had to reconstitute kin for himself and that has been drawn not along blood lines but caste affinities:

“I promise you this, Karna said to Kunti. You will always have five sons. Yuddhishtra I will not harm. Bhima will not die by my hand. The twins—Nakula and Sahadeva—will go untouched by me. But Arjuna—him I will make no promises about. I will kill him, or he will kill me. One of us will die.” (222)

Steganography of Caste War

Last but not least, I read Roy’s thinking through of caste to argue that caste emerges as steganography to more visible terrains of conflict such as History and class. Certainly, the novel provides numerous details to allow for a straightforward reading of the text in terms of History and class. There is the imposing, gothic architecture of History House, whose haunted and bloody backstory, whose conversion into postcolonial tourist pastiche signals the edifice’s symbolic work:

“White-walled once. Red-roofed. But painted in weather-colors now. With brushes dipped in nature’s palette. . . . Making it look older than it really was. Like sunken treasure dredged up from the ocean bed. . . . Rotting beams supported on once-white pillars had buckled at the center, leaving a yawning, gaping hole. A History-hole. A History-shaped Hole in the Universe through which, at twilight, dense clouds of silent bats billowed like factory smoke and drifted into the night. / They returned at dawn with news of the world . . . through the History-hole like smoke in a film running backwards.” (291)

There are the numerous narrative strands tying the Kochamma family genealogy back to neo/imperial rule, such as Chacko’s failed etymological enterprise because of racial/colonial prejudice and the preferential valuing of British and American cultural imports and persons over

Indian lives and goods. And of course, the novel's stark division between the haves and have-nots is emphasized spatially by the segregated living quarters of the village as well as between nations and politically by the labor unions, Communist rallies, and police violence. But these terrains of conflict are undergirded by caste, an argument I make from both obvious and subtle cues Roy weaves into these terrains.

It is in History House, after all, that Velutha is lynched. Throughout the fragmented, nightmarish return to this event, Roy intersperses language referencing caste as persistent historical phenomenon. The working-class policemen are explicitly Touchables in contrast to the working-class Dalit whom they kill; the working-class policemen are solicitous to the upper-class twins because they too are Touchables:

“There was nothing accidental about what happened that morning. Nothing *incidental* . . . This was an era imprinting itself on those who lived in it . . . / that morning in the Heart of Darkness the posse of Touchable Policemen acted with economy, not frenzy. Efficiency, not anarchy. Responsibility, not hysteria. They didn't tear out his hair or burn him alive. They didn't hack off his genitals and stuff them in his mouth. They didn't rape him. Or behead him. / After all they were not battling an epidemic. They were merely inoculating a community against an outbreak.” (293)

“Someone was speaking to them. A kind Touchable Policeman. Kind to his kind. / ‘Mon, Mol, are you all right? Did he hurt you? . . . Don't worry. You're safe with us now.’ . . . The watch they all forgot. It stayed behind in the History House. In the back verandah. A faulty record of the time. Ten to two.” (295)

What is temporally and materially re-animated in this scene, of Velutha's lynching in History House, is the historical phenomenon of caste with its attendant markers of un/touchability, ritual violence, strictures around purity/pollution, and tenuous consanguinity.

The spectrum of torture (*not* enacted) also appears repeatedly throughout Kamble's text on caste atrocities in post-colonial India and ironically emphasizes, through the absence of full caste brutality, the sinister depths of such atrocities. Alongside Velutha's criminalization by the police is the deliberate protection of the twins, whose things are clearly incriminating clues in Sophie Mol's drowning. The police take most of the runaways' items for their own family, enacting structural impunity for the twins as upper-caste subjects. The fact of tenuous consanguinity between all these subjects—whether via biological, class, or cultural/regional/national forces—nevertheless remains vulnerable to the ordering imperative of caste hierarchy. This imperative hinges on disciplinary violence as apparatus in maintaining caste hierarchy, a practice Roy clearly names and locates as ancient and ongoing:

“If they hurt Velutha more than they intended to, it was only because any kinship, any connection between themselves and him, any implication that if nothing else, at least biologically he was a fellow creature—had been severed long ago.” (293)

Finally, I trace resonances between the penis-crushing in the scene of Velutha's lynching with the frequent versions of what I call cast(e)trations in the literatures examined here. This includes the numerous gendered and sexualized humiliations and mutilations that appear in Kamble (penis-crushing, rape), *A Fine Balance* (sterilization), *Scavenger's Son* (lynching, immolation), and *God of Small Things* (Velutha's older brother's paralyzed legs). These resonances point not only to what I've called a synecdochal troping of caste—that is, the casted figure as part of a collective whole, generationally, materially, and affectively—but points also to a likeness if not equivalence to racial violence in the Americas. As I've mentioned earlier, noting Roy's explicit rendering of Velutha's Dalitness as blackness, there are certainly resonances

between the forms of disciplinary violence, across contexts, that simultaneously articulate and reify local hierarchies that coincide with but are not subsumed under other relations of power, such as the economic, national-historical, and patriarchy. Other registers of caste also resonate across contexts—im/purity, un/cleanliness, im/mobility, and a culture of stigma—that I will examine more closely as we transition to other literatures of stigmatized difference, i.e. *casta/cor* in Brazil.

Even among working-class subjects, Velutha bears caste stigma specific to Dalits. This caste prejudice, which cannot be erased by the rhetoric of class solidarity but is in fact cleverly manipulated by rhetoric on both the Left and Right into effectively sustaining caste hierarchy, is an important, recurring point in a novel that in fact puts forth prior, popular critiques among an Indian Left thinking liberation not only across class relations but those of gender, caste, and religion (Jani). In resonance with this body of progressive thought, Roy scatters across the text details historicizing the persistence of caste, despite not only Communist intervention but religious conversion, the post-colonial moment, and the advent of liberal democratic modernity.

“The real secret was that communism crept into Kerala insidiously. As a reformist movement that never overtly questioned the traditional values of a caste-ridden, extremely traditional community. The Marxists worked from *within* the communal divides, never challenging them, never appearing not to. They offered a cocktail revolution. A heady mix of Eastern Marxism and orthodox Hinduism, spiked with a shot of democracy.” (64)

When the British came to Malabar, a number of Paravans, Pelayas and Pulayas (among them Velutha’s grandfather, Kelan) converted to Christianity and joined the Anglican Church to escape the scourge of Untouchability. As added incentive they were given a little food and money. They were known as the Rice Christians. It didn’t take them long to realize that they had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. They were made to have separate churches, with separate services, and separate priests. As a special favor they were even given their own separate Pariah Bishop. After Independence they found they were not entitled to any government benefits like job reservations or bank loans at low interest rates, because officially, on paper, they were Christians,

and therefore casteless. It was a little like having to sweep away your footprints without a broom. Or worse, not being *allowed* to leave footprints at all. (71)

“The only snag in Comrade K.N.M. Pillai’s plans was Velutha. Of all the workers at Paradise Pickles, he was the only Card-holding member of the Party, and that gave Comrade Pillao an ally he would rather have done without. He knew that all the other Touchable workers in the factory resented Velutha for ancient reasons of their own. Comrade Pillai stepped carefully around this wrinkle, waiting for a suitable opportunity to iron it out.” (115)

These quotes, separately narrating the persistence of caste despite socialist reform, Christian conversion, labor solidarity, and post-colonial democratic promises, collectively suggest these “reforms” often function as seductive camouflage for caste hierarchy by remedying “difference.” And as Jani points out, Roy draws her especially acerbic critique of the orthodox Left’s camouflaging of caste not only from prior Indian Left debates about frictive caste-class relations but also from documented atrocities:

“Indeed, the contradiction between the CPI(M)’s interests as a ruling party and those of lower class militants often came to a head; in the most extreme case in West Bengal (where the CPI[M] has ruled longest), Mallick contends that ‘hundreds of untouchables and tribal peoples have been killed by Communist policemen trying to control the radical movements.’” (Mallicki qtd. Jani, 61)

Thus my longer-running point about the strategic manipulation of (caste) difference and its postponed redress—a claim I put forth in my introduction where I named contemporary neoliberal multiculturalism as one but not the sole mode of handling difference to in fact keep inequity intact—is historically-attuned in Roy’s novel to the complex difference that is the persistent stigma of caste in India. Velutha, after all, is the figure of the exceptional Dalit who, having caught Mammachi’s eye, is allowed the means to advance—only so far—without

dismantling caste as hierarchy. And given that Roy's work is published in the recent moment following market liberalization in India, I read her rendering of caste camouflage, through the liberatory promises of the state, the Church, and the Party, as a subtle linking of such camouflage to the camouflaging tactics of neoliberal tactics globally, in which difference is recognized and selectively incorporated so as to contain its threat, profit from its marked labor, and prevent any further structural dismantling that would entail, first, historicizing difference, and last, altering its de/valuation.

This naming of difference is at least done, however spitefully, by the tradition-bound Mammachi; Comrade Pillai, in contrast, waxes endlessly about Party unity without addressing the caste backlash he knows to be motivating Velutha's dismissal as employee. Like some unleashed demon, Mammachi spits on Velutha and threatens cast(e)tration:

“Out! . . . If I find you on my property tomorrow I'll have you castrated like the pariah dog that you are! I'll have you killed!” (269)

In a scene immediately following this one, Comrade Pillai listens and responds to Velutha from “behind a wall of glass,” that metaphoric figure of caste that exists as barrier even if it is largely rendered invisible:

“Once again Velutha heard himself say something which made no difference to the man he spoke to. His own voice coiled around him like a snake. / ‘Maybe,’ Comrade Pillai said. ‘But comrade, you should know that Party was not constituted to support workers’ indiscipline in their private life.’” (271)

The difference which makes no difference, i.e. caste as complex and camouflaged historical phenomenon, arises as threatening steganography in Pillai's response, in which proper

Party behavior encodes adherence to rules of caste hierarchy. The artificial (and strategic) division between private and public life denies the fact that this boundary has already been blurred, as public opinion around Velutha's private life has directly affected his employment. Pillai's admission to his wife acknowledges as much, while also implicitly arguing that this rendering of disposability, via the apparatus of caste, is nevertheless better than the historical rendering of disposability, i.e. lynching:

“‘They’ve found out. Someone must have told them. They’ve sacked him.’ / ‘Is that all? He’s lucky they haven’t had him strung up from the nearest tree.’” (272)

But even beyond the sphere of the economic, in which caste discipline might be read as in fact class war, caste hierarchy rears its head in the niceties of the social domain. Velutha's father, Vellya Pappen, who is the unwitting instigator of his son's demise when he fearfully reports the affair to Mammachi, has had a sense early on that Velutha was not obedient enough to caste strictures. It is telling that Vellya cannot locate anything so concrete as the violation of caste endogamy to articulate his fear for Velutha, emphasizing caste as a complex set of social cues and relations encoded in the domain of culture: “It was nothing that he had said. Or done. It was not *what* he said, but the *way* he did it.” (73)

Caste thus remains an apparatus of de/valuation and disposability in the economic sphere, a difference troubling too easy universalizations of a Marxian notion of a consistent and abstract average in socially necessary labor time. (Thus in contrast to Aijaz Ahmed's rather ungenerous and somewhat misread commentary on the novel's Party critiques—which Ahmed generalizes as anti-Communist—and Roy's frank insight into caste erotics—which he admits is accurate but says is used to locate emancipation solely in the personal, a Job Bose characterizes as sexist—I

emphasize what the novel already articulates, the steganography binding but not false equivalence conflating caste and class.) Caste in Velutha's case, regardless of his obvious and efficient skills and partly due to "resentment among the other Touchable factory workers," is a key factor in the social calculus of the exchange value of his labor, for which Velutha is paid less than the other factory carpenters. Mammachi's reasoning, that at least he is being paid more than a Paravan, that he wouldn't be employable anywhere else as a carpenter, reframes her capitalist exploitation of Velutha's labor as caste charity, a logic at once self-serving and revealing. This logic re-asserts caste as heritable labor role within contemporary capitalism, a cultural interpretation of the individual that simply takes on a new face within neoliberal capitalism and liberal democratic modernity, *appearing* to recognize and include difference via the language of individual exceptionalism and progress without fundamentally altering the old and new forms of disposability endemic to caste as material and temporal synecdochal phenomenon. For Baby Kochamma's recurring question—about how Ammu could have withstood Velutha's smell—re-articulates caste as material culture of stigma marking the synecdochal Dalit body: "How could she stand the smell? Haven't you noticed, they have a particular smell, these Paravans?" (75) In contrast, the interracial coupling with the white priest, which Baby Kochamma fantasizes about, seems preferable "By far. By Far." (75) Other than the subtle signaling of a complex relation between caste, race, coloniality, and endogamy, this comparison again marks articulations of caste as synecdochal articulations, in which an aspect of the individual stands in for collective stigmatization.

Works Cited

- Ahmed, Aijaz. "Reading Arundhati Roy *Politically*." *Arundhati Roy: Critical Perspectives*. Ed. Prasad, Murari. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2006.
- Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. "Annihilation of Caste." *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol. 1*. Ed. Moon, Vasant. New Delhi: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, 2014. pp25-96.
- Bonnor, Cecilia. "Rhetorical Analysis of Globalization in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*." *Plaza: Dialogues in Language and Literature*. 4(1): Fall 2013. pp49-63.
- Bose, Brinda. "In Desire and in Death: Eroticism as Politics in Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things.'" *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*. 29(2): April 1998. pp59-72.
- Chakraborty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Chakravarty, Uma. *Gendering Caste: Through a Feminist Lens*. Kolkata: Stree, 2006.
- Chatterjee, Indrani. *Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Chatterjee, Indrani. *Slavery and South Asian History*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007.
- Crosley, Hillary and Morgan, Joan. "Joan Morgan on Black Sex, Identity, and the Politics of Pleasure." *Parlour*. 27 Feb. 2013. <http://parlourmagazine.com/2013/02/joan-morgan-on-black-sex-identity-and-the-politics-of-pleasure/3/> Accessed Summer 2017.
- Froula, Anna. "In-Between and Elsewhere: Liminality in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*." *Globalizing Dissent*. Ed. Ghosh, Ranjan and Navarro-Tejero, Antonia. New York and London: Routledge, 2009. pp39-46.
- Ganguly, Debjani. *Caste and Dalit Lifeworlds: Postcolonial Perspectives*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Jani, Pranav. "Beyond 'Anticommunism': The Progressive Politics of *The God of Small Things*." *Globalizing Dissent*. Ed. Ghosh, Ranjan and Navarro-Tejero, Antonia. New York and London: Routledge, 2009. pp47-68.
- Karatani, Kojin. *The Structure of World History: From Modes of Production to Modes of Exchange*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014.

- King, Akhil. "Queering Dalit." *Tanqueed: A Magazine of Politics and Culture*. Oct. 2016. <http://www.tanqueed.org/2016/10/queering-dalit-tq-salon/> Accessed Summer 2017.
- Lorde, Audre. "The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power." *Sister Outsider*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1984.
- Mirza, Maryam. "Intimacy Across Caste and Class Boundaries in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*." *Dalit Literatures in India*. Ed. Abraham, Joshil K. and Misrahi-Marak, Judith. New Delhi and London and New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Mistry, Rohinton. *A Fine Balance*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.
- Molina, Natalia. *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014.
- Ed. Moon, Vasant. *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol. 1*. New Delhi: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, 2014.
- Neti, Leila. "'The Love Laws': Section 377 and the Politics of Queerness in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*." *Law and Literature*. 29(2): 2016. pp223-246.
- Pillai, T. Sivasankara. *The Scavenger's Son*. Great Britain: Heinemann Educational, 1993.
- Roy, Arundhati. *God of Small Things*. New York: Random House, 1997.
- Ed. Guha, Ranajit and Spivak, Gayatri C. *Selected Subaltern Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Bibliography

- Ed. Abraham, Joshil K. and Misrahi-Barak, Judith. *Dalit Literatures in India*. New Delhi and London and New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. *The Untouchables*. U.P.: Bharatiya Baudhha Shiksha Parishad, 1969.
- Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. *Who Were the Shudras? How They Came to be the Fourth Varna in Indo-Aryan Society*. Bombay: Thackers, 1970.
- Brueck, Laura. *Writing Resistance: The Rhetorical Imagination of Hindi Dalit Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
- Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ). *Hidden Apartheid: Caste Discrimination Against India's "Untouchables": Shadow Report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*. India: CHRGJ, 2007.

- Dirks, Nicholas B. *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Ed. Natrajan, Balmurli and and Greenough, Paul R. *Against Stigma: Studies in Caste, Race, and Justice Since Durban*. Haiderabad: Orient Blackswan Press, 2009.
- Rao, Anupama. *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India*. Berkeley and Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2009.
- Rawat, Hemant. *Dalit and Backward Women*. New Delhi: Lakshay Publication, 2011.
- Singh, Hira. *Recasting Caste: From the Sacred to the Profane*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2014.
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. Nelson, Cary and Grossberg, Lawrence. London: Macmillan, 1988.
- Spivak, Gayatri. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Ed. Srinivas, M.N. *Caste: Its Twentieth Century Avatar*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1997.
- Viswanath, Rupa. *The Pariah Problem: Caste, Religion, and the Social in Modern India*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
- Visweswaran, Kamala. *Un/Common Cultures: Racism and the Rearticulation of Cultural Difference*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010.

SECTION iii

DiffRACTive Methodology

“ . . . Dalit thinkers and activists have consistently connected with other antiracist movements globally not in order to *conflate* caste with race, but to highlight their plight, to indicate the overlap between these forms of oppression, and to draw attention to their situation globally. When they raised the questions of *comparison*, the dominant academic and governmental response was to construct their argument as one predicated upon a claim of *identity*. Thus, neither critiqued the colonial “science” that had in fact frequently employed the comparison of caste and race, even as they deployed the categories of this very science to lock both race and caste into discrete compartments.” (217, Loomba)

The comparison of caste and race, or that of older forms of racism with contemporary variants, I have suggested, allows us to track the *politics* of comparison, and the politics of the *denial* of comparison. What is evident in both the cases I have discussed is the persistence of the conflation of race with color that has been especially pernicious in constructing an artificial divide between “scientific”/“biological” and “cultural”/“religious” discrimination. It is this division that has erected an unsustainable divide between historical periods—premodern versus modern—and between different geographical locations. The histories of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and caste prejudice cannot then be fully connected to those of slavery, bonded labor, plantation labor, and color prejudice. Thinking across periods, and across regions, allows us to understand better *why* colonial race ideologies took the form they did, and how they drew from other forms of oppression globally. (218)

My method in the final section of this last chapter, as with preceding sections and chapters, emphasizes mixed-genre readings. This move seems important overall for a chapter thinking through genres of difference, particularly given the history of mesticagem and regional variation in an incredibly heterogeneous country like Brazil. Not only are Brazilian demographics marked by racial “mixture” but by significant internal variations within the much-touted (mythic) racial democracy. These variations include, of course, the vast class division that makes Brazil one of the world’s most economically unequal countries, with income inequality highly racialized in the synecdochal mode I’ve argued is a legacy of racial chattel slavery and branqueamento ideology (UNESCO, 2016). But that racialized inequality can also be mapped,

according to this synecdochal mode, by region, with the rural Northeast interior being the poorest and blackest and the industrial urban South/east being the wealthiest and whitest (Ed. Campos and Brandão, 2016). Notably, Brazilian diversity includes Asian immigration, indigenous presence, and the majority of mesticos who identify neither as *branco* or *negro/preto* but somewhere along the 136-color spectrum that marks Brazil's dizzying lexicon of raciality (Institute of Geography and Statistics, 1976). For this reason, and accommodating the constraints of this dissertation, I read three select texts for the final Brazilian literature portion of my relational race/caste chapter V. These three texts fall into distinct genres—television science-fiction, (semi-epistolary) historical novel, and (polyphonic) regional novel—and encompass the heterogeneity crucial to understanding Brazilian realities of race/caste and in/equity and their aesthetic modes. That is, the 2017 dystopic TV series *3%* envisions a future (neoliberal) Brazilian society divided into extreme classes literally named *O Nosso Lado/Our Side* and *O Lado de Lá/The Other Side*. The Japanese/Brazilian novel *Haru e Natsu: As Cartas Que Nao Chegaram/Haru and Natsu: The Letters That Never Came* tracks the early 20th c. period of Japanese immigration to Brazil and the later reunion of sisters thus separated. And the Northeastern *sertanejo* novel *As Vidas Secas/Barren Lives*, also one of the most read novels in Brazil, follows the mis/fortunes of an indigenous-Black mestico family in the notoriously difficult *sertao/drylands* region.

Alongside these literary genres, I reference legal and theoretical texts addressing *limpeza de sangue/purity of blood* in Brazil. I argue that this discourse, which traveled from early modern Iberia to Lusophone colonies in India (Goa) as well as Latin America (Brazil), established the basis of notions of raciality, stigma, and un/belonging that persist in Brazil. I reiterate that this discourse took on chameleon forms through the colonial period, even after legislation banning its

linguistic/legal use (Tucci Carneiro, 1983). And I temporally extend this idea of camouflaged *limpeza de sangue* to argue that its new chameleon form after 1888 abolition would be the *branqueamento/whitening* ideologies expressed via immigration quotas vs. subsidies and sustained in eugenicist natureculture. The archival materials which I draw upon to delineate what I call a (Occidental) racial caste order in Brazil include 16th and 17th c. legal manuscripts from court cases, Critical Race Studies work on *branqueamento* and de/valued phenotypic difference, and Slavery Studies scholarship documenting the enduring legacies of 300 odd years of racial chattel slavery. As I've summarily argued in an introductory section, "Bloody Reproduction in Religion/Caste/Race," discursive-material "blood" in tandem with patriarchal exploitation would be central to the re/production of hierarchies of difference across contexts. In Brazil, this apparatus of re/production would be deeply racialized as well as gendered so that, when relationally read with post-1947 caste literatures in India, enduring hierarchy in Brazil also reads as (Occidental) racial caste hierarchy.

The diffractive reading method I have drawn upon in this dissertation, as a key method in interdisciplinarily reading literatures across place, period, and genre, was formulated by Karen Barad. Barad explains diffraction, first, as a physical phenomenon based in the superimpositions of different waves that produce the diffractive patterns of wave behavior and, second, as the basis of a methodology that is anti-representational and attentive to relational differences. It is thus a method that diverges from dominant representationalist modes across the sciences as well as humanities that are deeply inculcated with reflexive lenses, i.e. a method that emphasizes *not mirroring and analogies* across separate entities *but their material entanglements and dynamic relationality* (Barad, 2007):

“That is, my method is to engage aspects of each in *dynamic* relationality to the other, being attentive to the iterative production of boundaries, the material-discursive nature of boundary-drawing practices, the constitutive exclusions that are enacted, and questions of accountability and responsibility for the reconfigurings of which we are a part. That is, the diffractive methodology that I use in thinking insights from different disciplines (and interdisciplinary approaches) through one another is attentive to the relational ontology that is at the core of agential realism.” (Barad, 54-55)

For this particular chapter section focused on four 20th-21st c texts, my use of Barad’s diffractive methodology might be understood as thinking through a few things relationally. First, it thinks through the ways in which these texts, explicitly addressing inequities of cor, caste, and region, complicate the Brazilian myth of racial democracy; specifically, what boundary-making practices do they narrativize as marking the stigmatized figures of the Japanese-Brazilian, the Afro-Brazilian, and the working-class sertanejo? Second, it thinks through the resonances and dissonances within and among genres—dystopic science fiction, poetry collection, (semi-epistolary) historical novel, and [polyphonic] regional novel—that elucidate the entanglement between generic conventions (and their im/possibilities) and Brazilian mesticagem (and its im/possibilities)? Third, it holds in its memory the three post-1947 Indian caste novels and Kamble’s legal compilation of caste violence, in order to configure an ontoepistemology of casta/cor as it appears in these 20th – 21st c. Brazilian texts. This is not only to repeat that caste as complex historical phenomenon relates Iberia, India, and Latin America because it has existed in all three contexts (a reflexive lens)—but to emphasize that caste as it materialized in each place was reliant on its iteration in the “other” places (a diffractive lens). The Europe-India, Europe-Brazil relations in this regard seem most obvious; the diffractive work of this chapter is to make the India-Brazil relation clearer, though earlier scholarship might suggest the expansion of global

capitalism, liberal racial governmentality, and the colonial matrix of power as relational links (Ed. Palumbo-Liu, 2011; Lowe, 2015; Mignolo, 2012). I propose as logic for this chapter (in contrast to the preceding chapter that drew upon relational race/caste slaveries as logic) my opening definition of caste as ontoepistemology and culture of im/material stigma, particularly in its treatment within global capital and coloniality/modernity. I propose this not only as an Indian-American who, at 19, translated her first perceptions of Brazil (on Bahian permacultural farms) through her familial and historical experiences, but because, at 19, 22, 32, and 36, my various stays in Brazil (mostly in its rural and coastal Northeast) invited rich conversations with Brazilians who themselves weighed these relationalities. Whether these chats involved back-bus interrogations about caste in India or wildly disparate kitchen lectures on race in Brazil, whether they were light-hearted shop talk about one of Brazil's most popular telenovelas (*O Caminho das Índias/The Way of the Indies*, 2009, a year after the popular India-based film *Slumdog Millionaire*) imagining the forbidden love story between a wealthy Brahmin girl and a poor Dalit boy who seeks his fortunes in Brazil—I continue these relational conversations here.

Of Casta & Chameleons, *in Brazil*

Although its histories there are distinct and can hardly be conflated with those on the South Asian subcontinent, there is a striking resonance between their relation to race *as a conceptual problem*. Writing in relation to early colonial Peru, Irene Silverblatt points out that in Latin America as well, “caste is understood to be a legal or social (as opposed to biological) construct at heart” whereas “race emerged as a dominant account of social differentiation in the West’s ‘modern,’ liberal age.” She goes on to suggest that we deploy the concept of “race thinking” to cut across this divide, not in order to assert an identity between them but to grasp “what the race-caste division hides: that race and caste were not separate systems but interpenetrating. Race thinking helps us understand how race and caste might, chameleon-like, slip in and out of one another. (Loomba, 220)

Why is it that we cannot even imagine reversing the terms and comparing race to caste? The irreversibility of comparative terms is itself shaped by a Eurocentric view of history, and of what we regard as universal and what as particular. To push the comparison in this way is to challenge such a view and make available more complete

intersections than have hitherto been visible. The analytical priorities of that comparison will open up a different set of global intersections altogether—such as those between South Asia and Latin America—and thus productively interrupt, reorder, and fill gaps in our understanding of histories of race. (221)

The *Cor* of Caste & Class

The relational link this dissertation chapter draws between *cor*/race and *casta*/caste in Brazil lies with what I call the chameleon trick of *casta* through periods demarcated by settlement, colonialism, abolition, *branqueamento* and eugenicist quotas, and of course the expansion of capitalism. That is, *casta* as culture of im/material stigma, historically traceable in Brazil to the Iberian caste war that targeted Jews and Moors and *Cristao-Novos*, re-coded itself in other names and forms, including as 19th c. race as biology and Orientalist *antiniponismo* (Novinsky, 2002; Tucci Carneiro, 1983; Dezem, 2005). The law would become an important apparatus for this re-coding, first through the Carta-Lei that made it illegal to explicitly reference *limpeza de sangue* and second through the eugenicist and *branqueamento* ideology that gave rise to im/migration quotas adjusting Brazilian demographics post-1888 abolition (Telles, 2006, 2014). While I do not draw up a false equivalency between 17th c. practices of *casta* and 20th c. practices of race/caste—especially given the significant legacies of racial chattel slavery, anti-blackness/*branqueamento*, and settler/extractive colonialism that have been foundational to Brazilian nationhood—I do trace the genealogy of race/caste in Brazil that I argue has sustained caste as (an evolving) culture of im/material stigma entangled with Brazilian inequity. And I privilege the qualitative, affective terrain of literature to additionally expand the ways in which caste as culture of im/material stigma is manifested and recorded. In the three specific texts read for this dissertation chapter, caste is registered through *the present prior* of unfree labor, particularly racial chattel slavery, disciplinary violence versus impunity, the affective impact of

hunger-inducing strictures around commensality, tenuous consanguinity, and once again the figure of synecdoche. In these senses, race/caste in these Brazilian texts resonate with tropes traced in the three post-1947 Indian texts, despite cultural dissonances around the extent of endogamy, the stage/type of capitalism and other mode(s) of exchange, and the specific religious blueprint of the out/caste.

Ania Loomba has argued for more scholarship in the rich but understudied arena of this genealogy, in a provocative essay delineating the imbrications of religion/pre-modern race/caste within early modern European discourses correlating *limpieza de sangre* and color/the body and moral status and, crucially also, within modern discourses still slow to acknowledge religious difference as *present prior* in modern formations of race/caste. (Loomba, 2013). The relational race/caste project of this chapter takes up this gauntlet but, specifically for these 20th c. Brazilian literatures, focuses on that subconscious of caste as culture of im/material stigma that haunts the text, particularly in relation to neo/liberal capitalism and the biopolitics of difference. How does *cor/casta* as stigma legibilize race/caste as steganography to class in Brazilian narrative? How do modern configurations of race/caste determine state-sanctioned eugenicist practices and culturally shaped tiers of value? While this project has not yet reached the stage of historically surveying the ways in which Atlantic formulations of race were inevitably in dialogue with South Asian formulations of caste, it does attempt to read, through a selective genealogical tracking of *casta* and focused analysis of Brazilian subaltern literatures, for caste as ontoepistemology; and it does so through the frames of synecdoche, racial chattel slavery, racial capital and *cor*, and a culture of im/material stigma anchored in discursive-material “blood,” religious difference, and patriarchy.

Recent and extensive scholarship from Black Studies, Critical Race Studies, and Slavery Studies scholars have emphasized *cor* and other phenotypic difference as racial stigma in Brazil, particularly in association with blackness (Telles, 2006, 2014; Bonilla-Silva, 2016; Hordge-Freedman, 2015; Toste-Daflon, 2017; Hofbauer, 2015; Roth-Gordon, 2017). The paradoxical treatment of raciality in Brazil—by which color and other phenotypic difference is carefully interpreted and yet its racial signification disavowed—accompanies the racialization of local space, region, and opportunity (Telles, 2006, 2014; Hordge-Freedman, 2015; Roth-Gordon, 2017). For example, in Roth-Gordon’s account of the quotidian in raciality in Brazil, public perceptions of stigmatized phenotypic difference influence insider/outsider treatment across (racialized) space; and Hordge-Freedman calls raciality and color forms of corporeal capital that give subjects differentiated access to affective as well as material resources, such as attention, love, and re/productive value. In such studies, *cor* and phenotypic difference suggest Black heritage is stigmatized, across lifespan and key cultural rites, a condition I argue suitably translates *cor* into my hypothesis of caste as culture of im/material stigma. Resonantly though not analogously, Orientalized difference—variably applied to racialized tribal peoples, Jewish immigration, and Japanese and other Asian workers—would also be melded into this culture of im/material stigma. While the readings scripted onto these bodies varied, the 19th c. Brazilian discourse around Chinese workers correlated closely with 19th c. U.S. racialization of Chinese immigration as part of a “yellow peril,” i.e. *fracos/weak*, *indolente/indolent*, and *depravado/depraved* workers who would have difficulty assimilating into national culture and would bring “*decadencia fisica e degradacao moral*”/“physical decadence and moral degradation” to the Brazilian people (Dezem, 2005). These Orientalist perceptions of the Chinese in the 19th c. would be gridded onto the Japanese in the early 20th, conflating both as

amarelos/yellows, but additionally fluctuating towards an exotic, heroic Japan after the Russian-Japan War (1903-4) (Dezem, 2005). What also remained constant, however, was the belief that Japanese migrants could not assimilate, in great part due to religious difference (Dezem, 2005)—a claim I suggest carries traces of earlier *casta* stigma locatable in religious as well as racial difference. Contextualizing this discourse, particularly in the Vargas era, in 19th -20th c. eugenicist discourse, racial quotas, and the subsidized recruitment of European *mao-de-obra*/manual labor once again emphasizes the need to think race, in both contemporary and early modern forms, alongside class in accurately characterizing Brazilian inequity.

Roth-Gordon's recent and provocative study of Brazil's "comfortable racial contradiction" makes a case for acknowledging the *cor de pobreza*/color of poverty. That is, she argues that Brazilian inequity, as she studies it in Rio de Janeiro as ethnographic site, is highly racialized, despite the national tendency to downplay racial difference for class difference and to validate this through cherry-picked examples of subjects complicating a stark black/white race/class binary and interpreting as racial democracy, of course, Brazil's fluid racial categories. However, Roth-Gordon uses the racialization of space—both those divided by class, such as the mall versus the favelas, and those famously integrating classes, such as the beach—to reveal the repeated and historical link between race and class, i.e. what I have called the steganography of race/caste within capitalist coloniality/modernity. She also historicizes the *cor de pobreza* not only in the legacies of racial chattel slavery but in in/direct state attempts to eugenically engineer Brazilian demographics and to *apagar*/put out (as Brazilians say) scholarship/intervention on these histories:

But racism was not to be discussed and critiques of racial democracy (considered "acts of subversion") would not be tolerated (Nobles 2000:111). To make sure that quantitative studies that could measure racial inequality were not conducted, questions about race and racial identification

were omitted from the 1970 census. Leading scholars who had participated in the earlier UNESCO studies and were active in what would later be called the São Paulo School of Race Relations were forced out of their university positions. These included sociologists Florestan Fernandes, Octávio Ianni, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who went into exile but later returned to become president of Brazil from 1995 to 2003. Black activist Abdias do Nascimento also went into “voluntary” exile in the United States, and black organizations, such as Nascimento’s TEN, Teatro Experimental do Negro (Black Experimental Theater), were disbanded. The Commission of Military Inquiry confiscated books from Brazilian universities that addressed the theme of racial inequality (J. Dávila 2013:34). (22)

My own variable experience in racialization as a scholar of color, of South Asian descent, has depended to a great extent on timing and sites of my visits. Most frequently, I have been read as *morena/brown*, that most ambiguous of popular Brazilian classifications that often obscures more than it reveals—though it clarified that I was read neither as *branca/white*, regardless of my education or citizenship or work status, or as *negra/black*. Sometimes, I was mistakenly called *Japonesa/Japanese* or *Turca/Arab*, themselves blanket generalizations for the relatively small but heterogeneous numbers of Asian-descended Brazilians. And more commonly, I was read as having mixed/black heritage locatable in the North/east, with specific mention of my darker tones, my hair texture, and my size and, humorously, was occasionally accused of being a Brazilian pretending to be a *gringa/North American*. What was less humorous but revealing were the numerous times, on this final archival trip to the *Biblioteca Nacional* in Rio de Janeiro, that I was asked to show the same documentation proving that I was, in fact, a researcher, a university student, and an American. After repeated and over-close surveillance by a few staff members, I made the point of politely mentioning that I did not see other researchers (usually white/passing, also middle-class presenting) treated in the same way—and while this prompted embarrassment from the helpful, mostly white/passing staff, it did little to alter the hyper-interest/vigilance I experienced most frequently, and ironically, from staff that might be read as Afro-descendants. Which is to say, in this loosely ethnographic anecdote, that it was hard not to notice playing out around/with me the politics/steganography of race/caste as

(internalized) culture of im/material stigma—all as I requested related texts whose themes discomfited some of the staff and as vocal marches occurred nightly in the adjacent *Praça*, usually by leftist parties, demanding socioeconomic reforms.

Neoliberal “Posts” in 3%

The Brazilian television series *3%*, popular enough among American audiences that it was recently appraised by *The New Yorker* (Fan, April 2017), depicts a dystopian world of (3%) haves and (97%) have-nots. The show’s plot anchor is *O Processo* or *The Process*, a battery of brutal tests that weed out those subjects (all young, racially and economically diverse, though not all able-bodied) considered unfit for the gilded life of *O Lado de Lá* or *The Other Side*. Ezequiel is a central character, the complex and increasingly sympathetic architect of the brutal testing system, whose surprising backstory gradually unfolds through the first season. His character trajectory as well as frenetic subplots in the series form part of the show’s general critique: can merit or utopia be assessed fairly? How is future inequity rooted in a racial/caste capitalist endgame? And, as I argue, what do these have to do with the neoliberal rhetoric on repeat? For *The Process*’ justification for the fairness of its tests is Ezequiel’s suspiciously neoliberal dictum to the candidates: *voce e o criador do seu proprio merito / you are the creator of your own merit*. An institutional logic that places the burden of “passing” or “failing” entirely upon the individual’s efforts while simultaneously camouflaging the heterogenous dis/advantages that continue to structure and track the candidates’ chances, Ezequiel’s dictum couches a free market logic of value-generation and naturalizes the resulting “winners” and “losers” in a supposedly meritocratic society.

It is in this sense that I also argue that *3%* depicts a contemporary caste logic. This logic manifests in symptoms of hierarchy I have examined throughout this dissertation but appear here via disturbingly apt filmic idiom for a “post” social order. Those caste markers include fragile consanguinity, hereditary labor, notions of im/purity, ritual violence, and the synecdochally caste/d body. Given the show’s evocation of Brazil’s 300 plus years of racial chattel slavery, its myth of racial democracy, and severe scale of inequity, the diverse candidate characters appear as symbolic figures through which to read the relationship between the prior of Brazilian history and the tantalizing if elusive post promised by *The Process*. That is, I read the histories embodied by select characters as evocations of the structural prior of raciality, labor, and eugenically-minded im/migration which register a persistent caste order. Thus the “prior” determines and differentiates access to neoliberal citizenship in the symbolic locale of futurity, i.e. *The Other Side* where only the very upper-caste may live (Ong, 2007; Riedner, 2015; Hong, 2016).

In particular, I look at the figures of two visibly Afro-Brazilian characters (Joana, Fernando), two covert Resistance candidates who are working-class, white mesticos (Michele, Rafael), one white, Old Money figure, Marco Alvares and the figure of Ezequiel’s dead ex-wife, Julia, and her son. While the range of political and class affiliations among these characters falls in line with the popular Latin American lens privileging class over all other difference, I argue that the complexities of these character depictions inadvertently reveal the trick of “racial” difference in over-determining Brazilian inequity, i.e. the prior of racially inflected histories becomes legible via these characterizations and trajectories. Thus, the show’s critique of neoliberal rhetoric—the enterprising individual as the meritorious winner, the fairness of the *Process* system as analogue for a Darwinian free market society, and the excavation of winners’ backstories to affirm the “post” prejudice moment—performs two tasks. First, it critiques the

illusory resolution of economic inequity via a new neoliberal multicultural elite (comprising the community of O Lado de La). But it *also* critiques the disavowal of those differences distinguishing most other candidates' Process life/chances from start to finish (Hong).

Visualizing Ghosts

As a visual genre, television offers a grammar that might, in fruitful moments of friction, belie the neoliberal racial democracy rhetoric offered through *3%*'s character dialogue and even plot. For example, Brazil's complex racial schema, in which multiple histories of un/belonging and arrival are tethered together via a national ideology of *mesticagem*, throws up an odd dilemma visually, at least for American audiences. Should obvious phenotypic differences be read or not as explanatory corollary to diverse character trajectories? Or is class the true in/visible motor to character trajectory and *The Process* results? My suggestion here is that the series, while still wedded to a typically Latin American favoring of the 97% class difference over racial difference as base logic for in/equity, nevertheless fails to truly disappear the "prior" of raciality or the disparate ways in which historically heterogenous characters are interpellated via the prior and post of this moment in Brazilian society. Instead, the show often wrestles with the way in which the "prior" in general erupts into the smooth workings of *The Process*—secrets disrupt social relations, discoveries drive some to suicide, and ghosts haunt the living even after death or some other seemingly "post" endpoint. In this sense, and in line with Rachel Riedner's argument about the need to read for crises of feeling and figures of haunting within neoliberal narratives of progress, inclusion, and freedom, I read the eruption of the "prior" in *3%* as part of the show's most salient critique of neoliberal rhetoric, including its disavowal of difference.

While I read Ezequiel's surprising trajectory, informed as it is by the "prior" of his dead ex-wife's son, along these lines, I also read the subplot as an example of the fragile consanguinity characterizing old and new caste orders. The ex-wife's descent into grief and depression has to do with a return of the "prior" of her son, whom she had abandoned upon her initiation into O Lado de La and who she discovers by chance is alive. Her desperate and self-destructive attempts to locate and reconnect with her son, at the cost of choosing the turmoil of the real world over the privileged life of The Other Side is at heart an attempt to re-suture lineal consanguinity despite the fact that doing so violates cardinal rules of The Other Side. Only at the end, we learn that part of the utopic strategy of The Other Side is to end individual biological reproduction, as a way to manage overpopulation and its attendant problems but also to ensure a constant influx of truly meritorious inhabitants in utopia. But even without the disclosure of this Malthusian logic, it is clear that severing kinship bonds with those in the real world is both burden and blessing of admission into The Other Side. This condition registers, in the context of the neoliberal critique made by *3%*, as a typical condition of the capitalism Marx and Engels had long ago described: the alienation of the worker, the fracturing of the family, the subjugation of all relations to the privatized relations of the market.

Except that, Julia doesn't begin as part of the elite. She, like most of the desperate candidates, was one of the destitute. This condition of severed consanguinity between Julia and her son is arguably, then, not a dictate of the market alone but *required* for mobility through the ranks of caste hierarchy. As I've discussed in reading caste in three post-independence Indian novels, fragile lineal and collateral consanguinity emerges as a definitive feature haunting caste hierarchy. And other features distinguishing the real world from The Other Side in *3%*—such as im/purity, ritual violence, culture of im/material stigma—seem remarkably suited for the

hierarchy laid out here, which includes but is not limited to consanguinity gone awry. Thus Ezequiel's surprising efforts to sustain and train Julia's son, up through the boy's hopefully successful passage through The Process, is not merely some nostalgic tribute to Ezequiel's dead wife but a radical breach of the rules of caste hierarchy. As architect of a testing apparatus implementing that hierarchy, Ezequiel's actions are traitorous and paradoxical. They disrupt his own neoliberal dictum (one he broadcasts to the candidates to guarantee The Process' "impartial" fairness) through favoritism; and they show Ezequiel aligning in spirit with Julia's breach of caste strictures around commensality, fragile consanguinity, and un/touchability. It is at this fascinating juncture that it seems worthwhile to consider the relationship between raciality and this caste order, as encoded in Ezequiel's actions and in a key episode, for a particularly Brazilian imaginary of neoliberal hunger, disavowed difference, and the persistence of the prior.

Legacies of Racial Chattel Slavery

It is in Episode Four, halfway through the only season so far of 3%, that the racial prior of Brazilian society most clearly rises to the surface. In one of the most harrowing tests given across the entirety of the series—a test trapping the candidates underground in a Social Darwinian experiment driven by limited resources—the candidates' desperation leads to fatal violence. I focus on a few figures in the ensuing chaos, to think through questions of neoliberal hunger, disavowed difference, and the seductions of neoliberal multiculturalist rhetoric that, in either its Right or Left avatar, fails to liberate most workers from interlocked class and race inequity. One is Marco Alvares, the spoiled son of an elite family who, in this episode, leads a rogue gang on a murderous rampage to steal food and assert dominance; another is Joana, the Afro-Brazilian orphan who alone has the saavy to climb through the tunnel releasing the food,

and who returns to lead the resistance decimating Marco's rogue gang; the third is Michele, the petite rebel who early on organizes the candidates to maximize labor cooperation and resource distribution and who guards the defense built against Marco's gang; the fourth is the other Afro-Brazilian, Fernando, the paralyzed son of a single father and preacher who believed fervently in The Process and his son's chances; and the final is Julia, the white/passing wife of Ezequiel, whose radical depression and decisions propel one of the show's most salient narrativizations of neoliberalism's violences.

The racial symbolism should be obvious. Marco, shown in early domestic scenes with a Black maid showering adulation upon him, is part of the elite, as he himself claims. This is his synecdochal rationale for his turn towards gang brutality in Episode Four: he *deserves* to be part of the 3% of The Other Side because he and his kin have *always* been part of Brazil's 3%. And in both character and filmic nod to the lighter-skinned wealth produced by darker-skinned slavery, the affectionate bond between the young white master Alvares and his older [nameless] black servant is reminiscent of the terribly romanticized relations, both maternal and erotic, described in Freyre's account of Brazilian slavery, *A Casa Grande e A Senzala*. It follows then that the genealogy Alvares announces to the other candidates underground and that the filmic flashbacks reveal across the episode, a genealogy Alvares bloodily asserts in order to reproduce elite status in The Other Side, is not only grounded in capitalist logic but white supremacy. As should be clear from my readings in Chapter IV on relational literatures of abolition, Brazilian slavery was *racial*, the most numerically significant trade of enslaved Africans in The New World that critically formed early modern capitalism, a covert anti-blackness within a national ideology of *mesticagem*, and a national caste order named as such by Brazilian abolitionists across the color spectrum and class divide (Nabuco, Alves, and Gama). *At last, in 3%, we see*

the steganography of raciality/caste beneath homogenized in/equity. Specifically, we see a hierarchy rooted in racial chattel slavery and eugenicist im/migration quotas spiriting its way between the too-neatly divided eras of prior and post; we unmask a racial hierarchy protected by a white conservative such as Alvares first through performative likeability, then through vigilante violence whose first victim is a black woman; we see hierarchy *as reconfigured hierarchy* disappointingly preserved by a white/passing liberal such as Ezequiel whose seemingly Leftist sympathies nevertheless buttress neoliberal investments; and we see a sci-fi rendering of hierarchy repackaged as neoliberal utopia, i.e. a generic take on the increasingly global narrative that tells the universal Post-Enlightenment subject they must “earn” their ticket from Our Side to The Other Side within neoliberal meritocracy.

The same argument about the steganography of raciality/caste can be arguably traced beneath Joana’s subplot. Joana leads the revolt stopping and killing Marco’s gang, after Ezequiel’s speech in which he likens her misery as well as her resilience to that of the Founding Couple of The Other Side. The large-and-small scale historical referents here—to the numerous slave rebellions in Brazil’s long history of slavery, to Joana’s symbolic status as descendant of the African enslaved, to her likeness with the presumably poor Black founders of The Other Side—make palpable the interlocked realities of economic and racial inequity through Joana’s especially difficult past even among the largely destitute candidates. As Ezequiel says to her when she escapes the trap (significantly conjectured to be the mythic Underground Railroad by the candidates), she is an orphan (natal alienation), abandoned (disposable), treated like garbage (un/touchable). In this same scene, Ezequiel offers Joana a choice between eating the glistening beef dish before her or returning to help the other candidates. Thus, those tropes that I’ve linked to caste in three post-independence Indian novels seem eerily suited to this description and

treatment of Joana—tenuous consanguinity, strictures around im/purity and commensality, un/touchability, and ritual violence—and to features characterizing neoliberalism. That is, Joana's past figures as the present for subjects crushed by neoliberalism's parsing of the un/deserving, the value/d/less, the il/legible, but a determination whose calculus relies on persistent inequities rooted in racial/caste capitalism that, in Brazil at least, marks Afro-descendants' life/chances as particularly precarious. Thus Joana is written, in this episode of *3%*, as doubly casted—synecdochally by the legacies of racial chattel slavery, contemporaneously by the illusory promises of neoliberal techniques. Whereas she was once unregistered, with a name we never learn, she becomes hypervisible under the surveilling eye of Ezequiel, who seems to know more than he lets on as he likens her potential to The Founding Couple of The Other Side. An earlier genealogical comment in the episode suggests they too were Black, and so Ezequiel and The Other Side become, in one of many strange, liminal moments in only the first episode of the Brazilian show, not just haven for a neoliberal multicultural elite but quilombo-like analogues for coalitional subversives to the real world order, one undergirded by racial chattel slavery and its persistent legacies.

Synecdochal Frames and Cast(e) Im/mobilities

Rather than trace synecdoche as trope in this Brazilian series, a method I used to claim its relationship to caste in three post-independence Indian novels, I apply this rhetorical figure as epistemological frame in *3%*. What can synecdoche as reading apparatus reveal about the ontology of caste? I argue here that synecdoche as frame reveals transtemporal inequities marked by disavowed difference, particularly the complex role of raciality in Brazilian society. That is, those tropes of caste observed in post-1947 Indian novels are rendered legible in this 2017

Brazilian series via synecdoche as frame: limited mobility, fragile lineal and collateral consanguinity, and notions of im/purity. These caste tropes, when read through synecdoche as frame, suggest the distinct backstories and trajectories of three sets of characters to be marked by both race and class, in a caste hierarchy in which Afro-Brazilians are at the bottom, white working-class mestizos move forward further, though both groups cannot advance as far as those less stigmatized by un/assimilated difference in Brazil's mythic racial democracy, in both its prior and post neoliberal forms. That final marker of assimilation—the cut-out star on the candidates' arm sleeves which finalizes their successful sterilization—in effect produces a new racializing assemblage (Weheliye, 2014). Not only are the candidates biologically (through removed reproductive capacity, and in a strange approximation of 19th c. race as biology) distinct from Brazilians of the real world, they are visually legible as such to others and to each other. In their case, and in the vein of racialization's self-defining effects, they are thus transformed by a state-like entity's eugenicist practices into a protected group, whose life chances will be predictably rosier than those of the failed, unsterilized candidates of the real world. This is another way to say, if synecdoche as frame is used to read for the ontology of caste, then tenuous consanguinity as caste marker appears here too—i.e. consanguinity potentially reconfigured, emphasizing again its always tenuous nature and detrimental effects for low-caste subjects especially. In the case of the “winners,” they sever ties with their biological prior as well as potential post to become, as Ezequiel puts it jubilantly, the children of the residents of The Other Side.

In the case of the final “losers”— Fernando and Joana, significantly also both Afro-Brazilian—their exclusion is partly due to their unwillingness to accept a reconfigured consanguinity that means abandoning the most vulnerable. Fernando abdicates his position in

The Other Side to be with Michele, who he believes has been expelled but who is actually being tortured for information on The Causa. Joana, who ultimately rejects the opportunity to torture her rapist from the real world, a deplorable white/passing mestico gang leader, is expelled by Ezequiel, but not before she repeats what his wife Julia had also declared: “you think you can change everyone’s mind but you can’t.” Their insistence on empathy, as a praxis towards preserving consanguinity even in its most troubled form, render Fernando and Joana as having failed the final test, i.e. demonstrating “authentic” commitment to desiring and thus belonging on The Other Side, an authenticity seemingly gauged by a willingness to abandon low-caste subjects. But if understood through synecdoche as frame, Fernando and Joana’s refusal to sever, through physical or emotional harm, the most basic ties to fellow denizens of the real world enacts a resistance to the neo/liberal possessive individualism that motors caste mobility in 3%. And in a final frame, in which Joana pushes Fernando in his wheelchair back to the real world, their new comradeship visibilizes the steganography of race/caste that continually lurks under capitalism’s supposedly abstract dealings. It is difficult to ignore, regardless of what interpretations may be made, that it is the the two resistant Afro-Brazilians alone who have been excluded; it is even harder to ignore, and with less room for interpretation, that Fernando remains in that overt metaphor for immobility, the wheelchair. Despite what must have been a deeply tempting promise of a cure on The Other Side, and despite the religious fervor with which he was raised to believe in The Process, Fernando has chosen to stay paralyzed in order to preserve his friendship and blossoming romance with Michele, the tiny, working-class Causa rebel.

In contrast, Michele and Rafael, the two white/passing, working-class mesticos, who are also Causa insurgents, make it through to The Other Side. While their class status and political affiliations distinguish them from the neoliberal multicultural elite of The Other Side, I argue

that the series' strange, contradictory subconscious of race/caste also makes a case for whiteness as racial capital facilitating mobility (Telles, 2006, 2014; Bonilla-Silva, 2016; Hordge-Freedman, 2015). Rafael, easily the series' most disliked candidate, who has shown no remorse about competing ruthlessly, is revealed in later episodes to be a Causa rebel, like the even-keeled, sympathetic Michele. Yet unlike Michele, Rafael's motivations aren't entirely clear, even to Causa leaders. Even in the end episode, when he must decide on accepting/not sterilization in order to be inducted into The Other Side, Rafael's overwhelming drive to have children collides with his Causa commitments. After all, the Causa's end goal is to destroy The Other Side for the benefit of all, a kind of anarcho-socialist credo that homogenizes the race/caste differences that purportedly do not exist, prior to or post the segregated hierarchy depicted in a world starkly divided by class. Yet Rafael's dilemma throws up the everyday fact of reproductive work and its relationship to value-generation—not only in the relationship between reproduction and status (via sterilization in this case, for those who will not engage in the reproductive work definitive of late capitalism) but also in the reproduction of Brazilian hierarchy, i.e. the heteronormative upper-caste, white/passing family.

In the racial schema of Brazilian history, the ideal family has consisted of mestizo subjects moving “progressively” along a branqueamento scale away from blackness and indigeneity (Nascimento, 2008; Hordge-Freeman, 2015; Telles, 2006, 2014; Bonilla-Silva, 2016). Recent empirical studies assert that this racial tendency is true across class divides, in contrast to the popular dictum that *money whitens*; in fact, data suggests that *education darkens*, a finding that troubles the lone primacy of class and supports the steganography of race/caste that awaits legibility (Telles, 2006, 2014). Let us dial back to a scene most clearly laying out Rafael's underlying motivations for having children, when he argues with his mother, who urges him to

take the money offered in a final test in order to support her and their growing family. Two kinds of capital are juxtaposed in this scene—which is more valuable and why? One kind entails a ticket to caste and class mobility that is tied in Rafael’s mind to pleasurable heteronormative reproduction; another kind is monetary, to be circulated in support of Rafael’s white/passing, working-class family. Rafael chooses the first, arguing that he will be able to better care for his future children on The Other Side, even as his mother denounces him for abandoning his past/present family in the real world. Under a Marxist lens, this decision renders Rafael a willing tool of the (new) bourgeoisie, abandoning his white/passing, working-class family to reproduce wealth and (the good) life for the neoliberal multicultural class of The Other Side. Under a Critical Race lens, this decision renders Rafael a race traitor, a white subject willing to relinquish the privileges of whiteness as property in order to achieve redistributive justice as a rebel for all Brazilians, most of whom do not look like his family (Lipsitz, 2006; Harris, 1993). If read through the synecdochal frame I am claiming should be part of Caste Studies, Rafael’s decision integrates these insights and throws up the *something else* I’ve called a culture of im/material stigma and im/mobility defining caste. In other words, Rafael does desire class mobility in order to access the (good) life of the neoliberal multicultural elite, a future he fantasizes will be possible in the “post”; but his end-episode dilemma deciding between heteronormative reproduction in the real world versus sterilization for the anarcho-socialist Cause also throws into relief the option he has as a white/passing mestizo male, not accessible to those whose overlapping race-class status is more visibly stigmatized and less integrated into the founding narrative of the Brazilian nation (white father, black and indigenous mother), to rescript his life chances at all (Telles, 2006, 2014; Hordge-Freedman, 2015).

The scene reveals Rafael's relish in caste as much as class mobility. The ticket he values more cannot bear the same exchange value as the cash booby (at least for his mother) but it does grant him access to the elite life of the neoliberal multicultural class of The Other Side. He regards his mother with that special combination of contempt and judgment reserved for the working poor, with language that stigmatizes her as dirty and unfit. Thus she embodies the part that is the whole, i.e. a synecodocal figure of the caste that is the white/passing working-class, whose shiftless greed will stymie Rafael's desired mobility into the more responsible, less burdensome, cleaner life of The Other Side. But in their representative dialectic about Rafael's mobility and betrayal, there is never any question that he is capable or deserving of that mobility, that he may reproduce family who will resemble his family in all except status, that this is his *second* (unrecognized and unpunished) attempt at moving through The Process in order to access The Other Side. If Rafael does not begin with money, then what capital does he bear that enables his successful, second-attempt access at joining and reproducing capital? Rafael's whiteness as property functions as racial capital facilitating his trajectory in a reproduction of the idealized Brazilian narrative of nation and family. While shared class status with an Afro-Brazilian like Joana is materially marked on their bodies—via the botched chip surgeries each recognizes in the other behind their ears—he is not expelled as Joana is nor is he confined to a wheelchair as Fernando is. Instead, Rafael *chooses twice* to play The Process and his anguish about sterilization at the end highlights his dilemma in choosing between working-class solidarity across race/caste difference versus racial property preservation among the unevenly racinated neoliberal elite that defines the particular middle caste position of the white/passing working-class; when legibilized via a synecdochal frame, this particular node of the steganography of race/caste in Brazilian narratives of nation understands Rafael to be a synecdochal figure of the white/passing mestizo

male who moves liminally between the rogue hero, frontier-crossing bandeirante, and reproductive master of the Brazilian bildungsroman.

On the other hand, Ezequiel's attempts to succor aid to Julia's son, an orphan in the real world, reveals synecdoche as powerfully clarifying reading apparatus for the reproduction of racial dis/advantage. If the son is understood as the part that stands in for the whole—that is, Julia and her past, Julia and her bond with Ezequiel—then Ezequiel's attempts to help the son render the child an adoptive part of himself, the family unit he and Julia once co-constituted. There is *something* then, if a synecdochal reading is taken seriously, that transcends class division—the *something* that sent a bereaved Julia across the Lado divides and ultimately killed her. In an earlier reading, I called the end effects of this phenomenon a tenuous consanguinity definitive of an existing caste hierarchy; but in reading for that something as *cause* and substantive *middle* of this phenomenon disrupting class segregation, I name a possessive investment in whiteness legibilized in Julia's son, whom Ezequiel unfairly, going against his own Process rules, seeks to train and guide through The Process into The Other Side. Of course, Ezequiel's favors for Julia's son are read as traitorous by The Council of The Other Side because they transgress those neoliberal rules of merit designed to protect class privilege; nevertheless, these favors *happen* because, by a synecdochal reading, Julia's son embodies a part of Julia/Julia-Ezequiel/*something* larger that obligates Ezequiel to him. Recent scholarship in Critical Race and Caste Studies have called this *something* the color of love and corporeal capital (Hordge-Freedman, 2015), the lock-in model and ladders of referral as social/racial capital (Roithmayr, 2014), the myth of racial democracy (Fernandes qtd. Telles, 2014) and the significance/sorcery of (skin) color (Telles, 2006, 2014; Nascimento, 2008). For instance, it is no small thing that the emblematic orphan of the real world, who receives favors from Ezequiel in

order to eventually access The Other Side, should be a white boy; whereas the other emblematic orphan, the Afro-Brazilian Joana, is expelled from The Process (and The Other Side), though she has legitimately “won.” In caste hierarchy, fragile consanguinity punishes most palpably those at the bottom, whereas synecdochal favors in terms of racial or caste social capital and networks work to remedy this, despite class status. This is, in worlds in which steganography is race, the color of love; this is, in worlds in which steganography is caste, the tenuous consanguinity of the outcaste.

***Vidas Secas* & The Aesthetics of Hunger**

Graciliano Ramos’ elegiac historical novel, *Vidas Secas/Barren Lives*, is not only one of the most canonical works in 20th c. Brazilian literature but also one of the more widely read in a country where about half of all citizens read (Fernanda Rodrigues, 2016). A story of a sertanejo family’s struggles to survive in the notoriously bleak conditions of Northeastern Brazil’s arid interior, *Vidas Secas* has broadly been designated a regional novel, a signal work of the modernist period, and a leftist portrait of Brazil’s mestizo working class. Nelson Perreira dos Santos famously adapted a black-and-white film version of the novel (1964), in the Brazilian wave of the Cinema Novo movement (1960s) that sought to define, following the contemporaneous model of leftist film movements in other Latin American countries, a uniquely Brazilian aesthetic (Machadao Sirino, 2017). While the film could not replicate some of the novel’s original textual maneuvers—Ramos’ multiple narrators, the resulting introspection of inner and outer landscape, and the politicized interplay between speech and silence (Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., 2014)—it did make concrete the spare poetics of the *sertao/drylands* and the long-lived brutality of its feudal structure. The resulting imagery, of deprivation and desolation,

helped generate the Aesthetics of Hunger, as coined by Glauber Rocha, for which Cinema Novo was, for better or worse, known. While I don't focus on this Aesthetics, I do read for the boundary-marking practices through which the novel's central characters are marked as "other." That alterity might lie in their status as sertanejos within the Brazilian imaginary of a backwards Northeast or as a nomadic working-class family within the Northeast itself. I also read for the limit/lessness of this particular generic rendering in delineating Brazilian *mesticagem* within (the myth of) racial democracy, arguing that the novel's preoccupied fluctuation between points of view and silence/sound delineate hierarchies of un/belonging and grievability that are also hierarchies of difference beneath the stark class divide. And I trace an ontoepistemology of *casta/cor* that, finally, I relate to caste as complex historical phenomenon in this chapter's examined Indian novels—by noting resonances in caste markers such as hereditary labor and ritual violence vs. impunity and dissonances in fragile consanguinity and strictures around endogamy.

Hunger and stigmatization are those boundary-marking practices setting apart the nomadic family at the heart of Ramos' novel, and has been commonly read through the novel's frequent animal analogies, the subalternization of the family, and the attention to the often meaning-imbued water. However, I read how, within the swift plot turns and poetic refrains of the novel, hunger and stigmatization take on macro-figurative as well as micro-literal force, at once distinguishing the family from other sertanejos, the Northeast from the Southeast, and elucidating that race/caste cultural script within region/nation cultural script assigning value along a hierarchy of (deadly) disposability. In one sense, these two tropes in Ramos' novel reify the popular conception of the necropolitical Northeast, particularly the drought-stricken *sertao*, in the Brazilian imagination—but in another sense, these tropes are entryways into a fuller

aesthetic exploration of what hunger and stigmatization as boundary-marking practices might mean, nuancing their mistaken applicability to all Brazilians in a neo/liberal variation of Enlightenment universalism. Thus I open with three refrains less obviously depicting hunger and stigmatization but that legitimize their reach into multiple aspects of the family's life, through the apparatuses of capital, law enforcement, and racial stigma. And I do so assuming Rochas' declaration about the relationship between art and the social, when articulating the Aesthetics of Hunger—that is, art in the service of an emancipatory “politics of hunger” (Rochas, 1965).

Cast(ed) Beds, Cast(e)ing Laws

“All Vitória needed for life to be good was a bed like Tomás the miller's. She sighed thinking of the bed of tree branches on which she slept, and squatted there smoking, her eyes and ears wide open so as to lose nothing of the festivities.” (81-82)

“Seeing him thus humble and orderly, the policeman pricked up courage and advanced, stepping firmly, to ask directions. Fabiano took off his leather hat, bowed, and showed him the way. / ‘The law is the law.’” (116)

“Some day, though, he would come out of his hiding place and walk with his head up, his own boss.

‘Your own boss, Fabiano.’

He scratched the stubble of beard on his chin, stopped, and relit his cigarette. No, he would probably never be his own boss. He would always be just what he was now, a half-breed, ordered around by gentry, little more than a piece of livestock on another man's ranch.” (21)

The first two sorts of confines the central sertanejo family navigates (other than the literal jail scenes) are produced by economic need as well as arbitrary law enforcement. The first, economic need, is most obviously asserted through the novel's obsessive rendering of hunger:

the mother kills, early in the first chapter, the pet parrot for food and the family flees drought, in the closing chapter, in the common diasporic movement of many sertanejos to the city for better working and living conditions. At the level of plot then, hunger is a powerful propeller, and the affective life of hunger bristles up the emotional and psychic landscape of the novel. Fabiano, the father, is constantly counting his herd and his wife's girth; Vitoria, the mother, is a careful mathematician of food and accounts; and the children, named only Older and Younger Boy in the novel, are shown fainting in exhaustion. The second prison, literal and figurative, is also depicted early on, when Fabiano is arbitrarily locked up with other subjects he describes as social outcasts:

“Fabiano wanted to cry out, to tell that they were no good. He heard a thin voice. Someone in the women's cell was crying and cursing the fleas. Some whore probably, the kind that would take on anybody. She was no good either. Fabiano wanted to yell to the whole town, to the judge, the chief of police, the priest, and the tax collector, that nobody in there was worth a damn. He, the men squatting around the fire, the drunk, the woman with the fleas—they were all completely worthless, fit only to be hanged.” (33)

The correlation Fabiano makes between value and un/free status (as symbolized by their location in the jail) is arguably also a cast(e)ing of these subjects through stigmatization. While the cause of that stigmatization might vary—licentiousness, poverty, im/purity of some sort—their collective location in the jail literally and figuratively cast(e)s them together in Fabiano's mind, via a biopolitical articulation of value. And the cultural script which Fabiano cannot seem to elude is the one that landed him in that cell in the first place, although he had not committed a crime: “What had they done to him? He couldn't figure it out. He was a well-behaved citizen, yes sir! He had never been arrested. And here, before he knew it, he was mixed up in a brawl for no reason at all. He was so upset he

couldn't believe it was true." (28) Beneath the clichéd narration of arbitrary police abuse is this underlying tow of mundane precarity. Fabiano has done nothing to break the law and yet, by his own admission, it is some prior calculus of value/lessness that has routed him with other out/castes into the space of the prison. Subtly but tellingly, Fabiano reaffirms that, after all, he is nothing but a lowly half-breed and that this entails a susceptibility to de/grading violence:

"The boss's accounts were different, drawn up in ink, against the herdsmen, but Fabiano knew that they were wrong and that the boss was trying to cheat him. He did cheat him. But what could he do about it? Fabiano, a luckless half-breed, slept in jail and was beaten. Could he react? He could not. He was just a half-breed." (116)

This late (third) refrain of Fabiano's appears throughout the novel, and emphasizes his stigmatized raciality—especially the heavily African and indigenous influenced *mesticagem* characteristic of the Northeast—alongside his working-class status as ranch hand. Thus it is not merely class that determines Fabiano's powerlessness but a Brazilian configuration of raciality that I think through in terms of *casta*—a reading apparatus that Fabiano himself arguably advances with his "half-breed" refrain, its syntactical and plot placement legibilizing an ontology of caste defined by subaltern speech, ritual violence, and im/mobility. Even Fabiano's interior narration in the chapter titled "Jail" codes stigmatized race/caste as steganography to his arbitrary jailing. In that chapter, he obsessively considers the cause of his unclear imprisonment, pinning it on his lack of education and subsequently elocution, a synecdochal legacy of the racial chattel slavery that was centrally sited in the Northeast; he describes his own mind as mixed up and his brief lapse into drinking and gambling as bad habits, traits associated through 19th c. racial discourse with the "degenerating" effects of mixture as it specifically appeared in the black-and-brown Northeast; and his allusions to literal and figurative skin (the cloth he tries to

sell, the policeman in khaki, his getting “wrapped up in” the speculative capital of cards, and the policeman’s losing his shirt to this same game) are allusions to racializing assemblages that mark power not only through *cor* of heritage but *cor* of illiteracy, capital accumulation, and state power. Thus the ways in which race/caste as steganography emerges in this chapter is complex, in line with numerous scholarly accounts of Brazilian difference thinking race and class together (Telles, 2006, 2014; Bonilla-Silva, 2016; Toste Daflon, 2017). While Fabiano’s literal *cor* is inflected with European phenotypes, his landless status and hereditary occupation synecdochally place him near the bottom of a racial caste order within the legacies of racial chattel slavery, branqueamento ideology, and labor/capital feudal structures in the Northeast:

“He was red-skinned and sunburned, had blue eyes and a ruddy beard and hair, but as he lived on other people’s land and looked after other people’s cattle, he considered himself a half-breed, taking off his hat and feeling ill at ease in the presence of white gentry.” (15)

Class thus mediates raciality in the novel—though this is not to simplistically say that class fantastically erases race/*casta* in Brazil—an airbrushing tendency that I’ve called ostrich consciousness at best and that, given the often erased and romanticized history of slavery and blackness in Brazil, enables a neo/liberal re/production of race/*casta* hierarchy at worst. Instead, when caste as ontoepistemology is considered here with an acknowledgement of caste as im/material culture of stigma, the quandary of thinking race vs. class may be mediated through the synecdochal reading apparatus of caste that legibilizes *casta* ontology in (racial/religious) stigma, hereditary labor, im/mobility, and disciplinary violence vs. impunity. For Fabiano in this chapter, and for his family throughout the novel, this *casta* ontology is what emerges through hunger and stigmatization as boundary-marking practices of race/*casta* frames—marking them

not only as impoverished *sertanejos* from the blackest part of the Brazilian nation but as particularly nomadic Northeastern subjects whom he likens to that earliest (religious) target of *casta* stigmatization in colonial Brazil:

“Sadness overtook him. What a mistake to think of himself as rooted in another man’s land! His fate was to roam aimlessly up and down the world, like the Wandering Jew. He was a vagrant, driven by drought.” (16)

The “othering” that occurs in the novel at various registers is a literary microcosm of a Brazilian imaginary of the Northeast, particularly its death-associated drylands interior, and Ramos’ oblique reference to Jewish otherness to elaborate on *sertanejo* stigma references the troubling history of *limpeza de sangue* and the profiling of *gente da nacao* in Brazil, particularly the Northeast (Sobreira, 2010). Historically, Jewish presence in colonial Brazil was especially strong in the Northeast, as was the Inquisition’s reach into colonial Brazil, and remained thus even after post-colonial immigration that would be concentrated largely in the Southeast (Sobreira, 2010). In various accounts of *casta* persecution in colonial Brazil, Jewish subjects were more vulnerable than most to suspicion, interrogation, strictures around labor and endogamy, and dispossession, even in comparison to *mouriscos*/Moors or *hereges*/heretics (Novinsky, 2002, 2016; Sobreira, 2010; Tucci Carneiro, 1983). Which is to say, the alterity of the Northeast and its paradigmatic out/caste, the impoverished *sertanejo*, appear racialized at moments in the novel in terms of religious/*casta* alterity despite class variations, with this profile genealogically rooted in medieval/early modern Iberian caste wars (Sobreira, 2010). Additionally, as Muniz de Albuquerque Jr. argues about a Brazilian imaginary of a subalternized Northeast, the region was distinguished relatively recently within the 500-year arc of “Brazil” as colony/nation, and originally within the North-South divide that distinguished spatial difference

longer within Brazil. But even that older binary was entangled with binaries enunciated through colonial and eugenicist discourse on related climactic and racial difference. The North was backwards, indolent, and racially degenerate whereas the South was modern, vital, and more European/acceptable (Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., 2014; Roth-Gordon, 2017). Ramos' novel, while deeply sympathetic to the poverty and injustice of *sertanejo* life, nevertheless reifies some stereotypical notions of regional alterity that are rooted in these binaries as well as in a caste imaginary. That is, Ramos' Northeast replicates a caste imaginary of im/possible regional progress, against which only the toughest *sertanejos* "win" simply by surviving and migrating, usually Southward in the national evolutionary telos outlined by key eugenicist ideologue Oliveira Vianna.

Perhaps the recurrent detail that most empathically marks caste boundaries between workers in the novel is Vitoria's oft-repeated desire for a bed made of leather rather than branches. The overt materiality of this desire—a surface on which the subjects spend a significant fraction of their day, a surface that separates them from the earth that they work, a surface that is less comfortable and bourgeois when made of branches than made of leather—is a literal and figurative boundary. It apportioned out the family's day, their elevation from the ground, their status in relation to another worker like the miller. This detail thus configures the family, even among the difficult social milieu of the Northeastern interior, as especially abjected "others" within this novelistic imagining of the *sertao*. The bed also, as material vessel for these working class subjects' leisure time (and dreams), signifies capital/ism's vampiric appetite for workers' time (and reproductive desires) in order to accrue surplus value. Thus Vitoria's desire for a more comfortable bed becomes low-key symbol for the worker's struggle with the capitalist over the work day and over reproductive costs; and it becomes affective site of tension between

husband-wife, boss-worker, caste-class as the struggle over wages (in order to recover capital towards a bed of leather) moves metonymically from Vitoria's reproductive desires to Fabiano's labor protests to the boss's feudal-style reprimands. The bed of branches that will never turn into leather thus demarcates the bad faith contract between capital/labor and class/caste, as it materially embodies the worker's stolen time, wages, and dreams and figuratively signifies the incapacitated reproductive im/mobility of the out/cast(e) *sertanejo* family even among the other working-class subjects, such as Tomás the miller, populating the text.

The Sound of Caste Resonances/Dissonances

The rotating perspectives that structure *Vidas Secas*, while told primarily through close third person, nevertheless introduces an element of Bakhtinian polyphony that links Ramos' novel to a democratic impulse towards subaltern representation. The opening three chapters most closely follow Fabiano's perspective, but the central chapters make space for the perspective of Vitória, each boy, and even the dog. A few central chapters and particularly the closing chapters treat the family as a perspectival unit, with the last chapter "Flight" arguably representing the family's migration in a synecdochal move gesturing towards historical *sertanejo* migration from Northeast towards Southeast. Ramos thus represents Brazilian subalternity in the Northeast region, the *sertanejo* family, and especially precarious subjects such as the children and dog through his polyphonic narrative move, working within the representational nation/al anxieties of novelistic narration (Bakhtin, 2009). Indeed, the novel is driven by the national-popular discursive impulse of one among a few *regionalismo* moments in Brazilian literature (Albuquerque de Muniz Jr., 2014), when critics as well as artists foregrounded the region as unit exuding some sort of national essence. The hardscrabble Northeast as space emerged in the

1920s-30s of *regionalismo* as “authentic” counter to the stereotypical luso-tropical image-concept of a verdant Brazil (Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., 2014)—so that the polyphonic moves of Ramos’ regional novel also generate a sonically-laden imaginary of an “authentic” Brazilian subaltern. That is, the working-class *sertanejo* subjects of Ramos’ novel speak with great difficulty and, when they speak at all, connote the distinct and stigmatized speech pattern revealing the *sertao* as place of their origin and alterity (Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., 2014).

Status, human/ness, and power/lessness are thus linked to articulating moves in *Vidas Secas*. Repeatedly throughout the novel, Fabiano describes his difficulty in wielding the right words in an effective way. Whether it is in arguing with his boss or the police, whether it is in conversing with his peers or wife, Fabiano is characterized as a man who, unable to perform clear communication much less bourgeois eloquence, resorts to fundamental sounds or silences that reify his status as subservient and hunger-driven *sertanejo*:

“What he wanted—he forgot what he wanted. His thoughts now were turning to the journey he had made across the backland, ready to drop from hunger. The boys’ legs were as thin as rails; Vitoria stumbled repeatedly under the weight of the trunk with their belongings. On the riverbank, from necessity, they had eaten the parrot that didn’t know how to talk. / Fabiano didn’t know how to talk either. Sometimes he came out with a big word, but it was all a fake. He knew perfectly well it was foolish. He didn’t know how to set his thoughts in order. If he did, he would go out and fight policemen in khaki uniforms who beat up harmless people.” (32-33)

The family at large is also characterized as inarticulate, from the wife to the dog to the parrot that cannot speak—a sweeping brushstroke on their sonic life that places them collectively along the primitive/civilized, animal/human spectrum. In fact, it is significant that the novel opens with the wife killing the parrot that cannot speak, in order for the starving family to eat.

Immediately, it seems the prerequisite for life is normatively-performed speech that conforms to an ascribed role. While the parrot does make sounds, these are too random or too much like a dog's. Thus immediately too, that lauded figure of human-like speech is queered—and disposed of as a result—much like educated Tomas the miller, whom Fabiano explicitly calls queer for his inability to translate his learning into linguistic prowess:

“Her eye fell upon the parrot, which was spreading its claws in a fit of ridiculous fury, and without further ado she decided to make a meal of it. She justified the act by telling herself the bird was quite useless—it didn't even talk. That wasn't its fault. The family was normally one of few words, and with the coming of disaster all had fallen silent, only the briefest of utterances passing their lips.” (6)

“Tomas the miller talked properly. He wore his eyes out over books and newspapers, but he didn't know how to order people to do things. He asked them instead. There was something queer about so much politeness from a man who was well-to-do. People even criticized such ways. But they all obeyed Tomas. Who said they didn't?” (19)

It is a hierarchy of disposability that most saliently emerges through this rendering of sound/silence and human/animal status. While Fabiano does, at the start of the novel and before Vitoria kills the parrot for food, consider leaving the fallen older son to die, he eventually helps the son up. In contrast, in one of the most poignant chapters of the novel, “Dog” details Fabiano's slow killing through maiming of the suddenly ill family dog who, in that early moment of duress, had caught a cavie to sustain the family. Thus, the dog that assists in reproducing family life, in contrast to the older son, is disposed of *as animal*, though the family considers her a member. She is left to die slowly and alone, clinging to a protective loyalty to a family that has judged her a threat to the family's health as a whole:

“She was like a member of the family. There was hardly any difference to speak of between her and the boys. The three of them played together, rolling in the sand of the riverbed or in the loose manure, which, as it piled up, threatened to cover the goat pen.” (87)

“She couldn’t bite Fabiano; she had been born near him, in a bedroom, under a bed of tree branches, and her whole life had been spent in submission to him, barking to round up the cattle when the herdsman clapped his hands . . . / . . . the dog leaned her weary head on a stone. The stone was cold; Vitoria must have let the fire go out very early.” (90-91 / 92)

If synecdoche is applied as reading apparatus in legibilizing the ontology of caste, then the sick dog appears as that Non-Life figure cast(e)rated to ensure Life commensality for a family that, though distressed, nevertheless enjoys relative caste privilege. Entangled with this human/animal spectrum evaluating un/grievable Non/Life status is the race/*casta* hierarchy that also determines propensity to disposability of life and labor. It is with a very clear consciousness of that vulnerability—generated by the entanglement of hierarchies of human/animal, caste/class, and labor/capital—that compels Fabiano to retract his initial dispute with the boss over stolen wages. Initially emboldened by Vitoria’s careful account-checking that differs from the boss’, Fabiano lays out proto-Marxist rhetoric likening the robbery of his wages to the injustice of slavery: “Was he to take a beating like that his whole life long, giving up what belonged to him for nothing?” When the boss threatens to let Fabiano go, Fabiano apologizes and displaces the blame onto his wife, who he privately acknowledges is the smart one but publicly subalternizes through an un/gendering inherent to a patriarchal exchange over value. Tellingly, he also frames his apology in the self-denigrating language of degenerate mesticagem vs. (white-implied) wealth, once

again emphasizing the entanglement of race/*casta* with value that suggests race/*casta* as steganography to class:

“At this point Fabiano got cold feet and began to back down. All right, all right. There was no need for a fuss. If he had said something wrong, he was sorry. He was ignorant; he had never had any learning. He knew his place; he wasn’t the cheeky kind. He was just a half-breed. He wasn’t going to get into any arguments with rich people. He wasn’t bright, but he knew how to show people proper respect. His wife must just be mistaken, that was all. In fact her figuring had seemed strange to him. But since he didn’t know how to read (he was just plain ignorant) he had believed his old lady. He was sorry and he wouldn’t make a blunder like this again.” (95)

Lusophone Wor(l)ds in a Japanese/Brazilian Novel

What is intriguing about the final text for this final chapter is the transnational liminality that locates *Haru e Natsu* as a Japanese/Brazilian text representative of another kind of World Literature. That is, how exactly does *Haru e Natsu* Latin Americanize World Literature (Hoyos, 2017) and what does it do to Lusophonize Latin American Literature? Although written by a Japanese writer in Japan, and made into a popular TV serial that ran locally in Japanese (2005, NHK), Sugako Hashida’s text focuses on the early 20th c. immigration of Japanese *mao de obra*/manual labor to Brazilian coffee plantations and was translated in 2005 into Portuguese rather than English. I read the Portuguese version here, acquired on an early spring archival trip to São Paulo’s Museu Histórico da Imigração Japonesa in the Japanese-Brazilian neighborhood of Liberdade, to not only de-center Anglophone texts in the canon of World Literature but to assert the rich histories that are legibilized by Lusophone literatures, in this case the understudied but provocative connection between Japan and Brazil. The queerness of this relation—in the stereotypical differences between the two national personalities (one exuberant, another reserved), the switchback trajectory that drew laboring subjects “West” before drawing them

“East” (during Brazil’s economic downturn in the 80s), and the liminal dislocation of the Japanese-Brazilian immigrant not quite securing belonging anywhere—offers especially fruitful insights for my questions on indigeneities at the cusp of the millenium, caste, and their global articulations. Specifically, how do the non-normative qualities of this Japanese/Brazilian text, written as it is in Japanese then translated into Portuguese, imagined in Japan with a focus on migration to Brazil, narratively moving between place/period separated by 70 years and at least one ocean, usefully queer World Literature through these and its Lusophone wor(l)ds? I argue that this queerness emphasizes the elisions of linguistic and national canons predicated on geospatial and im/purity-bound hierarchies of culture, un/belonging, and race/caste; and this queerness excavates subaltern articulations of un/belonging, race/caste, and (in this novel’s case) gendered labor in the 20th-21st c. That is, as we see in *Haru e Natsu: As Cartas Que Nao Chegaram/Haru and Natsu: The Letters That Never Came*, the generative queerness of this indeterminately Japanese/Brazilian historical novel elucidates, through the multiply translated experiences of 20th c. working-class Japanese migrants to Brazil, “other” Brazilian narratives of nation and “other” (Lusophone) wor(l)ds in World Literature.

Structured around the failed correspondence between two Japanese sisters, Haru and Natsu, whose letters over 70 years never reached their respective destinations of Japan and Brazil, Hashida’s novel enshrines that classic epistolary device that inaugurated the novel as genre in 18th c British Literature. The earliest such novels, *Pamela* and *Tristram Shandy*, were also studies in class relations and their impact on heteronormative domesticity, and later novels that drew upon the epistolary device, such as *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*, would use the letter as a revelatory window into character and consanguinity otherwise mis/judged. *Haru e Natsu* arguably exploits all these precursory uses of the epistolary device, thus linking the

Lusophone wor(l)ds of the historical Japanese/Brazilian novel to Anglophone Wor(l)ds. The separated sisters write the letters at all in order to stay connected as kin and to relay details of the family's economic ventures in Brazil and the younger sister's situation in Japan with relatives. The economic context and transactions thus recorded in the act of letter-writing and through the repeated labor themes gesture back to the epistolary novel's preoccupation with class relations. And the letters as plot engine—because they never reach either sister and because, upon their discovery 70 years later, they heal the sisters' understanding and breach—also replay the function of the epistolary device in re/calibrating epiphany and social order. However, Hashida's use of the epistolary device, especially given the novel's Lusophone wor(l)ds, also links the work to the earliest known genre of Brazilian literature, i.e. the *cartas* written by Pero Vaz de Caminha to the king in 1500. Within this foundational literary genre, the novel queers the Anglo-male bildungsroman that serves as origin story of the Brazilian nation, and subversively re-writes the triumphant narrative of Portuguese "discovery" and Christian salvation in Brazil as a gendered subaltern account of Japanese indentureship forged through Brazilian labor and race imperatives and across the global colonial matrix of power (Mignolo, 2012).

The novel narrates, through interwoven chronologies, the Brazil-bound indentureship of the Takakura family. Because the sisters Haru and Natsu are separated at the outset of this journey and because the present of the novel revolves around their reunion in Japan, the sisters' resuscitated relationship hinges upon a revelation of their histories in that gap through the epistolary device. In addition to the letter as (forgotten) archive, Hashida uses close third person point of view, ample dialogue, and historical exposition to recuperate and manage these chronologies, plots, and revelations. Thus as readers, we are afforded a multi-perspectival view of a representative Japanese family's experience as indentured labor in early 20th c. Brazil—

across distinct national spaces and historical periods, through which we also see different moments of capitalist modernity's expansion and interpellation of racialized and gendered subjects. While Haru weathers the harsh deprivations of what resembles debt bondage, Natsu runs away to learn a *vaqueiro* livelihood that later serves as a business template. Their reunion in the present chronology of the novel, after they have both experienced class mobility, also showcases definitive experiences of the neoliberal subject within global capitalism: the atomization of the family, segregated capacities for im/mobility spatially and socially, the evacuated understanding of how difference (race, caste, gender) structures class hierarchy:

And the transnational liminality of both their separation and reunion—each sister framed as “other” within their respective locales, Haru as potential traitor in WW II Brazil and Natsu as abandoned child in rural Japan—emphasizes the work of (the forgotten epistolary) gen(r)e in this liminal Japanese/Brazilian novel in articulating race/caste for this specific set of Asian Latinos. On one side, the gen(r)e of the Asian out/caste in this liminal Japanese/Brazilian novel scripts the racialized (coolie) figure as one ensnared by false liberal promises of national un/belonging and economic freedom (Apter, 2013; Lowe, 2015), at once placed outside the bounds of the national body/politic and fissured within the domestic sphere. So that the forgotten letters stand in as that neglected archive of the Asian presence in Brazil, as well as the coolie figure's complex relationship to categories of un/freedom, race/caste, and (mythic) racial democracy. On another side, the liminality of the (forgotten) epistolary/historical literary gen(r)e articulates Asian Latinidade as marked by *some* caste traits associated with the synecdochal figure of the Dalit/African enslaved in other texts: fragile consanguinity, disciplinary violence versus impunity, im/material stigma. What else that liminality encodes, however, is a narrative and personal mobility and closure that rounds out the epistolary gen(r)e moves, so that the possibility

of return, reunion, and remuneration are extended across the symbolic locales of the sisters, Brazil and Japan.

Cast(e)ing Wage(r)s

Hashida spends a good deal of the middle chapters drawing subtle comparisons between racial chattel slavery and Asian indentureship in Brazil. From scenes of disciplinary violence to exploitative usury rates to brutal work conditions, Hashida maps out a treatment of labor that, given the post-abolition context of Japanese recruitment to Brazil, evidently remained invested in maximizing profit at the expense of workers' lives and futures. While this analogy is not explicitly spelled out, Hashida's accumulation of defining details of bondage, as memorialized within slave narratives and histories of the Black Atlantic Trade, puts forth the implicit claim that there exist resonant if not equivalent aspects of these un/free diasporic mo(ve)ments. For example, it is the combination of Shigeru's death by untreated malaria as well as the family's realization that they are essentially bonded to the coffee plantation by debt that compels them to flee for a different farm. In these scenes—of armed disciplinary surveillance, of disposability of life and labor, of the slow but searing realization that they can never accrue enough capital to return home—Hashida traces both an outline of the paradigmatic post/19th c. “coolie” and the figure's vexed relationship to the “prior” of racial chattel slavery (Patterson, 1982; Lesser, 2003; Lowe, 2015; Lye, 2009). Without answering immediately whether the Black slave/Asian indentured worker analogy is sustainable across a geographically dispersed timeline of Western post/colonial capitalism, I do focus on those descriptions of disciplinary violence, race/caste steganography, and resistant pleasure that arguably cast(e) Hashida's Japanese migrants within a social order that places them between the Black enslaved figure and white indentured worker of early 20th c. Brazil.

A pivotal scene, in which the *capataz/overseer* points a gun at the Japanese workers, becomes a symbolic touchstone through which the workers perceive the plantation as a kind of surveilled labor camp. This gridding of plantation power weighs upon Chûji as he contemplates how his family will flee:

Fugir da fazenda enquanto o contrato ainda estava em vigor . . . Chûji pensava no perigo que correriam, lembrando-se do episódio em que a arma tinha sido apontado para eles pelo capataz de plantão. / Além do mais, a fuga noturna poderia causar um confronto entre o fazendeiro e os colonos, levando a um derramamento de sangue. Dentro da fazenda, havia um guarda noturno munido de arma, fazendo ronda a noite toda. Tratava-se de uma precaução contra a fuga. Sem dúvida alguma, haveria risco de vida. /

To flee from the farm while the contract was still in force . . . Chûji thought on the dangers they would run, remembering the episode in which a gun had been pointed at them by the plantation overseer. / Furthermore, a night escape could cause a confrontation between the owner and the tenant farmers, bringing bloodshed. Within the farm, there was an armed night watch making rounds all night. It acted as a precaution against escape. Without a doubt, they would be risking their lives. (176-177)

This calculus of risk is not only couched in terms of class but race/caste. I read the more subtle intimations of race/caste, i.e. its steganography for the particularly ambivalent racialization that attends Asian-Americans, within mundane matter. Obviously, in the cited quote, that cast(e)ing appears among workers tiered by their orientation towards disciplinary violence as materialized in the gun (Ahmed), a caste trope I identified in Kamble's text on caste atrocities in post/colonial India. Less obviously, this cast(e)ing happens through the resonances between "coolie" labor and "chattel" labor, as when Hashida compares the hail that destroys the family's hard-won crop to grains of sugar:

Quando a chuva de granizo parou, Haru saiu correndo para a horta. O arroz de sequeiro e também as verduras estavam todas destruídas pelo granizo, que se acumulava sobre as plantas. Estavam completamente dizimadas. / Durante quase um ano, aproveitara os intervalos de trabalho da fazenda, economizando as horas de refeições, e em poucos minutos, todo o esforço de Haru com a horta fora destruído. / No cafezal, Chûji e os demais também estavam atônitos observando os granizos caídos, que mais pareciam pedacos de açúcar cristalizado. O céu tinha dado uma reviravolta e agora estava límpido.

When the hailstorm stopped, Haru ran out for the garden. The non-irrigated areas of rice as well as vegetables had all been destroyed by the hail, which had accumulated upon the plants. They were completely decimated. / For almost one year, they had made the most of work breaks on the farm, had economized the (snack) break hours, and in a few minutes, all of Haru's energy with the garden had been destroyed. / On the coffee plantation, Chuji and the others were also amazed watching the falling hail, which seemed more like pieces of crystallized sugar. The sky had given a turn of events and was now clear. (174-5)

Within the mundane matter of the hail, described in simile by Chuji and other Japanese workers as crystallized sugar, I read the “prior” of cane cultivation that produced one of the prime consumer commodities—sugar—of enslaved Black labor in Brazil. This “prior” decimates the literal and figurative material of the Japanese workers' dreams, i.e. the contracted crop production and surplus garden production upon which their hopes for social and spatial mobility hinge. Through an NAIS rendering of alternative temporalities, this *reviravolta/turn of events* might be read as the haunting return of Brazil's enslaved Black past and, through a New Materialist rendering of agential matter, as the vulnerability of workers' futures to the literal matter/measure of sky/time. Through a Caste Studies lens translated from South Asia, the binarizing effects—between the clear, clean sky and the crushed, sullied ground—sounds the resonant status of the Japanese workers to Shudras and Dalits in India, marked as these out/caste subjects were as workers of agriculture and un/clean labor by economic-political alliances and cultural scripts. And through the perspective of the Japanese workers in the novel, who themselves coin the eery simile of hailstorm like crystallized sugar, we might read the disillusioned consciousness that their predicament is “grounded” in the agential present past of racial chattel slavery. Closely sequenced as this moment is among scenes of Shigero's death within a year of arrival, Haru's rare outcry (that they will be too indebted to return home), and the family's escape to another farm with more organized Japanese labor, the moment of *reviravolta/turn of events* also potentially alludes to those broader trans/national turns that recruited the Asian “coolie” as “free” labor to replace Black enslaved labor and allay Black

revolt post-abolition. The intimation of course, through the precipitated “sugar” that annihilates the Japanese workers’ crop and compels the family’s running away, is that revolt is still in the air, so to speak.

Scholarship on the liminal position and schizophrenic racialization of the “coolie” has relied on thinking through 19th c. liberalism’s necessary entanglement with colonial racial governmentality (Lowe, 2015), the romantic anti-capitalism that worked in tandem with settler colonial logic to configure the Asian American in terms of abstract capital, perverse temporality, and volatile exclusion (Day, 2016), and the role of (19th c. naturalism as) genre in formulating the coolie figure as simultaneously servile, hostile, and interchangeable within the homogenous Asian mass (Lye, 2009). My reading of the epistolary form couched in Hashida’s historical novel—a subaltern history 2 that resolves the quandaries of the novel’s plot as History 1—argues that the novel’s layered generic moves crucially articulate the liminal race/caste status of the conditionally employable, precariously excludable, and contiguously enslaveable coolie of the Japanese/Brazilian novel. On the most obvious level, the letters between the sisters, discovered after 70 years and resolving the questions that had solidified their breach, offer an alternative history that not only maps capitalism’s corralling of transnational coolie labor but gendered, racialized subaltern strategies of endurance against dispiriting odds. That endurance relies on the brief pleasures of music, camaraderie, and news; it also relies on furtive attempts to maintain cultural practices and pride, despite the mid-century internment and assimilative pressures for Japanese Brazilians that read as analogous to Japanese persecution in WW II U.S. Thus, the revelatory letters couched within the historical novel form relay the second-class citizenship status always threatening the Japanese workers’ conditional stay in Brazil, as was the case for various diachronic Asian exclusions across North America (Day, 2016). Finally, the liminal

im/mobility of these letters, and the epistolary form more generally as genre, gestures to the particular racial predicament of Asian/Americanness—which is as indeterminate and heterogenous racial category that is less easily represented as formation than as form (Lye, 2009). So that within the peculiar liminal form of the epistle—marked as it is by un/masked (subaltern) speech, its reliance as genre on im/mobility across space-time, its corollary but not parallel circulation alongside the commodified labor of its authors—the race/caste form of Hashida’s coolie body emerges as marked by hyper-feminizing Orientalist tropes, by a queer temporality disrupting capitalist imperatives and white settler anxieties, by a trans/national liminality particularly entangled with the im/mobility of poly-oceanic capital and labor, and by deceptive liberal bromides of Enlightenment universalisms that enabled the post-abolition bondage of the coolie figure.

Hungry Girls & Untranslatable *Saudade*

The resonant caste/casta detail that separates Natsu from her family at the turning point of the Japan-Brazil migration are her eyes, afflicted with *tracoma/trachoma*. Diagnosed with this infectious bacterial condition, Natsu cannot pass the health requirements sifting would-be migrants from those barred passage into early 20th c. Brazil. This turning point plot detail, which might justifiably be labelled symptomatic of the biopolitics of immigration, the depiction of Natsu’s eyes also resonates with descriptions I’ve argued locate caste hierarchization in the South Asian context: notions of im/purity and un/cleanliness, tenuous consanguinity, and hereditary labor. Natsu is not only left behind to orphan status and related economic precarity but is herself thus re-cast(e) within Japanese society, eventually as farm worker and then again as prosperous business owner. Noting here the existence of caste in the Japanese context—to

demarcate the *burakin* or leather-workers and stigmatized Japanese-Brazilians returning to Japan for work—I reference caste not only assuming its contextual applicability but thinking through its elucidation of relational power in this Japanese/Brazilian novel. It is thus that I read the re-cast(e)ing of family relations as an analogy for the re-cast(e)ing of family members as differentiated workers through transnational grids of capital, coloniality, gender, and nationalism. That is, the girls’ separation and consequent cast(e)ing within trans/national economies, as indentured worker and *vaqueiro*, also analogizes their status as exploitable, exportable Asian workers within post-abolition societies; the father’s imprisonment as suspected traitor in WWII Brazil highlights not only the xenophobic racialization and assimilative pressures attending Asian subjects as a result of heightened nationalist discourse but also the fragile consanguinity I’ve noted as metaphor across post-1947 Indian literatures tracing Dalit-state relations; and the endogamous pressures around a suitable marriage partner which Haru and Natsu navigate, differently across national contexts, resemble those features of caste re/production I’ve argued is both central to caste as culture of im/material stigma and as centrally hinging on women’s reproductive labor.

My reading—using caste as ontoepistemology—departs somewhat from Ernani Oda’s reading of the text as TV series in Japan and resonates with Rachel Lee’s relevant reading of another significant Japanese/Brazilian (Anglophone) novel, Karen Tei Yamashita’s *Through the Arc of the Rainforest*. Oda argues that the text makes an idealist case for the preservation of an “authentic” Japanese ethos, as exemplified by the pre-capitalist, agrarian lifestyle of Haru and her family, and a critique of its corruption by American and capitalist influences, as represented by Naru’s entrepreneurial ascendance alongside her emotionally unfulfilling first (American) marriage and affluent family life (Oda, 2011). While Oda reads this binarization against the

characters' negotiation of various nationalist sentiments and the text's reception within Japan's own neo-nationalist moment, my reading relies on the trans/national clarification provided by caste as ontoepistemology. That is, caste as epistemology clarifies the family's fragmentation not only as a result of local economic crisis, Brazil's new (racialized) labor needs post-abolition, or the extractive, near-impossible demands of trans/nationalist sentiments; it also locates this fragmentation in the stigmatization of Naru's ailing eyes and her disfavor with an aunt (who hid Haru's letters while stealing the money), with the family's despised and tenuous status as indentured workers moving across a few farms, and with the gradual integration of the Takakura family through exogamous marriage with longer-residing Brazilians. While Oda gives attention to the Japanese-Brazilian marriage, Oda reads the family's eventual acceptance of the marriage as affirming the text's preoccupation with preserving "authentic" Japanese culture; whereas through a caste lens, Haru's son's marriage with a Brazilian woman who happens to speak Japanese signals the re/production of that *mesticagem* that not only defines national belonging within Brazilian imaginaries but tiers Haru's grandchildren in the emerging race/caste global order. In contrast, Natsu's first marriage with an American man and a second marriage with a business colleague signals, within matrices of post-WWII U.S. imperialism, expanding circuits of trade, and Japan's own historical status in the Asia-Pacific region, a strategic move towards caste ascendance marked by more than just class power. It is this caste division that is steganography to the sisters' antagonistic first meeting despite shared racial and class markers; the language of status difference, severed consanguinity, national un/belonging, and (Japanese) stigmatization of returning *decasseguis* are all resonantly caste rhetoric.

Rachel Lee has argued that a central Japanese/Brazilian figure in Yamashita's *Through The Arc of The Rainforest* offers a different paradigm for navigating globalization. A figure that

renovates the archetypal figure of the dispossessed railroad worker in Asian-American literature, Kazumasa works for the Brazilian railways, shares his wealth with the Brazilian poor, and marries an Afro-Brazilian woman, despite the expectations attached to his transnational professional status. Lee has argued that Kazumasa's atypical behavior in relation to capital and labor, in contrast to that of his cousin Hiroshi who is very invested in wealth accumulation, offers a paradigm for navigating globalization that emphasizes community, redistribution, and alliance (through exogamous marriage). The idealistic aspects of this redress aside, I draw on Lee's reading of Kazumasa, and her reading of the feminization of labor depicted via other characters in Yamashita's novel, to argue that Hashida's novel and her central sister characters also complicate standard tropes in both Asian-American and World literatures. While still replicating the figure of the 19th c. "coolie" who acquires social mobility through hard work and innovation, Hashida explicitly locates the sisters within an entangled history of labor migration into Brazil; in other words, the novel's subtle relational descriptions of race/caste within that History 1 grapples with the legacies and imperatives of racial chattel slavery, *mesticagem*, and *anti-niponismo* in ways unavailable to or differently configured in other Asian-Americas and their literature. As such—a rare early 20th c. Japanese/Brazilian novel—Hashida's work also maps different oceanic pathways than those charted by an Asian-American literature focused on North America or the Pacific transit alone. And it is this "other" history (2) of Asian-American migration that makes a case for reconfiguring what constitutes Asian-American literature, whether that be geospatial sites, genre forms, or Lusophone wor(l)ds.

To return and close with my opening questions for this final chapter section: how does Hashida's novel Latin Americanize World Literature and what is the value of Lusophonizing Latin American Literature? To a great extent, Hashida performs legibilizing work that Hoyos

argues is crucial for so-called peripheries, i.e. the Latin Americanization of a World Literary canon that, despite its moniker, is heavily Anglophone and reflective of consumable narrative/value in Global North sites such as the U.S. and Europe. And if the worlding of World Literature is, as Hoyos argues, intimately connected with the un/desirable effects of globalization, then surely Latin America as significant site of globalization's effects—"interconnectedness . . . cosmopolitanism . . . impositions of a common market, new forms of inequality"—has relevant and complex narratives to bear (Hoyos, 2017). Brazil in particular, one of the world's largest democracies, about half of the continental *America do Sur*, and with a significant history of enslavement, movement organizing, and aesthetic inventiveness has much to offer multiple arenas of scholarship that include but are not entirely encompassed by Race/Caste Studies, Slavery Studies, Third and Fourth World Feminisms, and World Literature. Finally, I might re-frame my question of the value of Lusophonizing Latin American Literature to Lusophonizing at all? The obvious answer points to the early Portuguese presence in colonial ventures—across Africa and Asia as well as the Americas—an understudied presence that would round out histories of navigation, chattel slavery, and post/colonial wor(l)ds and offer a different cartography of World Literature. That cartography would ideally not re/produce the nation-bound narrative terrains World Literature purportedly complicates but excavate more surprising relations that are no less real: what *is* the Portuguese influence that resonates or not between Goa and Brazil and Antigua and Macao? What *is* the relationship between early modern Portuguese notions of *cor/casta* and the commencing (15th c.) trade in African enslavement? What *is* the *saudade/deep longing* that Hashida traces as resonant affect between Brazil and Japan, a queer relation upsetting the more typical Lusophone-Hispanophone readings organized by shared markers of continent as “place,” Iberian colonization, and U.S. imperial legacies. My implicit

stance here is that some things are not translatable, even between sister languages or gen(r)es, i.e. what I have asserted as the value of difference across this dissertation. In Brazil's cultural lexicon, one blue-toned version of this untranslatable something is frequently called *saudade*, with varying, semi-satisfying definitions even within the Portuguese. And in World Literature, this could be called an incommensurability of wor(1)ds that Subalternists have argued, for historiographic erasures in both South Asia and Latin America, have always been articulated if only we knew how to dis/orient ourselves, how to read anew, how to listen.

WORKS CITED

- 3%. Dir. César Charlone. Boutique Films, 2016. Netflix series.
- Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Apter, Emily. *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*. London and New York: Verso Books, 2013.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.
- Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.
- Chakravarty, Uma. *Gendering Caste: Through a Feminist Lens*. Kolkata: Stree, 2006.
- Ed. Chaturvedi, Vinayak. *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*. London: Verso, 2012.
- Day, Iyko. *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logics of Settler Colonial Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
- Dezem, Rogério. *Matizes do "Amarelo": A Gênese dos Discursos Sobre os Orientais no Brasil (1878-1908)*. São Paulo: Associação Editorial Humanitas, 2005.
- Ed. Campos, Pedro Henrique Pedreira and Brandão, Rafael Vaz Da Matta. *Os Donos do Capital: A Trajetória Das Principais Famílias Empresariais do Capitalismo Brasileiro*. []: Autografia, 2016.
- Fan, Jiayang. "A Brazilian Thriller That Exposes the Sinister Side of Meritocracy." *The New Yorker*. 21 April 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/a-brazilian-thriller-that-exposes-the-sinister-side-of-meritocracy> Accessed. Spring 2017.
- Harris, Cheryl. "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review*. 106(8): June 1993. pp1707-1791.
- Hashida, Sugako. *Haru e Natsu: As Cartas Que Não Chegaram*. Japan and São Paulo: Kaleidos Primus, 2005.
- Hofbauer, Andreas. *Uma história de branqueamento ou o negro em questão*. São Paulo: UNESP, 2006.

- Hofbauer, Andreas. "Racismo na Índia? Cor, raça e casta em contexto." *Revista Brasileira de Ciência Política*, no.16, Jan/April 2015.
http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0103-33522015000200153
 Accessed July 2017.
- Hong, Grace. *The Ruptures of American Capital: Women of Color Feminism and the Culture of Immigrant Labor*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Ed. Hong, Grace and Ferguson, Roderick A. *Strange Affinities: the Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Hong, Grace. *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016.
- Hordge-Freeman, Elizabeth. *The Color of Love: Racial Features, Stigma, and Socialization in Black Brazilian Families*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015.
- Hoyos, Hector. *Beyond Bolaño: The Global Latin American Novel*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017.
- International Social Science Council. "World Social Science Report 2016. Income Inequality in Brazil: new evidence from combined tax and survey data." *en.unesco.org*, 2016.
http://en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab/sites/default/files/analytics/document/2017/2/chap_21_05.pdf Accessed Summer 2017.
- Lee, Rachel. "Global Local Discourse and Gendered Screen Fictions in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*." *The Americas of Asian American Literature, Gendered Fictions of Nation and Transnation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Lesser, Jeffrey. *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Lesser, Jeffrey. *Searching for Home Abroad: Japanese-Brazilians and Transnationalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Lipsitz, George. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006.
- Loomba, Ania. "Race and the Possibilities of Comparative Critique." *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses*. Ed. Felski & Friedman. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. 199-228.
- Lowe, Lisa. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015.

- Lye, Colleen. *America's Asia Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Machadao Sirino, Salette Paulina. "Vidas Secas: Da Literatura Ao Cinema Uma Reflexão Sobre Suas Possibilidades Educativas." *Revista Científica, fap.pr.gov.br*, <http://www.fap.pr.gov.br/arquivos/File/RevistaCientifica2/saletesirino.pdf>. Accessed Summer 2017.
- Mignolo, Walter. *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., Durval, et. al. *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Nascimento, Elisa L. *The Sorcery of Color: Identity, Race, and Gender in Brazil*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008.
- Novinsky, Anita W. *Inquisição: Prisioneiros do Brasil, Seculos XVI a XIX*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Expressão e Cultura, 2002.
- Novinsky, Anita W, et. al. *Os Judeus Que Construíram O Brasil: Fontes Inéditas Para Uma Nova Visão da História*. São Paulo: Planeta, 2016.
- Oda, Ernani. "Interpretações sobre a memória da imigração japonesa: uma análise da série de televisão Haru e Natsu." *Cadernos do CEOM*. 24(32): 2011. pp119-139.
- Ong, Aihwa. *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Ed. Palumbo-Liu, et. al. *Immanuel Wallerstein and the Problem of the World: System, Scale, Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Ramos, Alcida Rita. *Indigenism: Ethnic Politics in Brazil*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.
- Riedner, Rachel. *Writing Neoliberal Values: Rhetoric Connectivities and Globalised Capitalism*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Rochas, Glauber. "The Aesthetics of Hunger." Retrospective survey of Latin American Cinema, Genoa: 1965.
- Rodrigues, Maria Fernanda. "44% da população brasileira não lê e 30% nunca comprou um

livro, aponta pesquisa Retratos da Leitura.” *Estadão. cultura.estadao.com.br.*, 18 May 2016. <http://cultura.estadao.com.br/blogs/babel/44-da-populacao-brasileira-nao-le-e-30-nunca-comprou-um-livro-aponta-pesquisa-retratos-da-leitura/> Accessed July 2017.

Roithmayr, Daria. *Reproducing Racism: How Everyday Choices Lock in White Advantage*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2014.

Roth-Gordon, Jennifer. *Race and the Brazilian Body: Blackness, Whiteness, and Everyday Language in Rio de Janeiro*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017.

Sobreira, Caesar. *Nordeste Semita: Ensaio Sobre um Certo Nordeste que em Gilberto Freyre Também é Semita*. São Paulo: Global, 2010.

Telles, Edward. *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Telles, Edward. *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

Toste-Daflon, Verônica. *Tão Longe, Tão Perto: Identidades, Discriminação e Estereótipos de Pretos e Pardos no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X, 2017.

Tucci Carneiro, Maria Luiza. *Preconceito Raçal no Brasil-Colônia: Os Cristãos-Novos*. São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1983.

Weheliye, Alex. *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014.