

The Outer Space Future of Blackness and Indigeneity in *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares*

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Abstract

This thesis explores ways in which Afrofuturist and Indigenous Futurist works complicate and trouble what constitutes Indigeneity in the Americas and specifically how that Indigeneity is posed in relation to Blackness and the Black diaspora. Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber* and Zainab Amadahy's *The Moons of Palmares* are two texts that represent Blackness and Indigeneity in outer space settings creatively constructed from earthly histories of settler colonialism and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. By demonstrating the complex ways in which these violent processes have created the material, social and political reality of the Americas, both texts represent peoples' attempts to create belonging far from their ancestral lands and/or in tension with other peoples. I pose sovereignty and labour as two of the modalities through which these attempts at belonging are made, noting the limitations of both these discourses and how they have been mobilized. Overall, this thesis contributes to a discussion between and across the disciplines of Black and Indigenous studies in order to better understand global systems of oppression and imagine future space-times free from the constricting categorizations imposed under settler colonialism and slavery.

Preface

This thesis is the original work of one author, myself, and no part of this thesis has been previously published.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Preface.....	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Dedication	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 A note on terms.....	4
1.2 A note on geography.....	5
1.3 Chapter two outline.....	7
1.4 Chapter three outline.....	9
1.5 Conclusion outline	10
Chapter 2: The "New World" in New Worlds: Outer Space Entanglements of Settler Colonialism and the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.....	11
2.1 Contact zone.....	16
2.2 Naming practices	25
2.3 Carnival.....	31
2.4 Gender, dispossession, and enslavement	34
2.5 Conclusion	28
Chapter 3: Sovereignty, Labour, and Belonging in Indigenous Diasporas.....	42
3.1 Diaspora and belonging	47
3.2 Labour and property.....	53

3.3	Sovereignty	58
3.4	Decolonization and relationships of dynamic tension	59
3.5	Conclusion	61
Chapter 4: Conclusion.....		64
Bibliography		72

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Dedication

To my mother

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2012, I first heard about Indigenous Futurism on the internet. It seemed at that time, a catch-all phrase for speculations on what an Indigenous future would look like, often inflected through science fiction images and discourse. On social media platforms such as Twitter and Tumblr, I shared and circulated tidbits of speculative fiction and imaginings of what a high-tech, post-apocalyptic world would look like for Indigenous peoples. That same year a collection of Indigenous science fiction (sf) came out edited by Grace Dillon and titled *Walking the Clouds*. Dillon's introduction, "Imagining Indigenous Futurisms," gives a brief overview of how writers of Indigenous futurisms "sometimes intentionally experiment with, sometimes intentionally dislodge, sometimes merely accompany, but invariably change the perimeters of sf" (3). The volume is divided into different sf elements: native slipstream; contact; Indigenous scientific literacies and environmental sustainability; native apocalypse; and "Biskaabiiyang, an Anishnaabe word for "returning to ourselves" (3). Over the course of her introduction, Dillon also directly connects Indigenous Futurism to Afrofuturism, a movement that spans literary, musical, and other artistic media and depicts themes of technology and future times from the perspective of the African diaspora. It was understood that Indigenous Futurism as a phrase and emerging cultural genre had developed from the idea of Afrofuturism. Dillon references the work of Mark Bould, who popularized the term Afrofuturism in the 1990s, and his assertion that Afrofuturism is not simply a subgenre of sf but is an exchange between sf theory and Afrofuturist ideas (Dillon 2). Dillon adopts this approach for *Walking the Clouds*, which she calls an "homage" to what is already "an established topic of study for sf scholars" (2). It was through this collection that I first made the connection between Indigenous speculations about the future and the art of the African diaspora. These futurisms are "mindscapes," modes of inquiry and

terrains that engage with colonial power that bind together the struggles of those living through the afterlife of slavery in the African diaspora with Indigenous peoples fighting genocide and ongoing colonialism in their homelands.

Walking the Clouds introduced me to the two key texts for this thesis: Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber* and Zainab Amadahy's *The Moons of Palmares*. Hopkinson is associated with Afrofuturism for her use of Caribbean creole languages and traditional stories in futuristic, sf contexts. Zainab Amadahy also comes from the Afrofuturist tradition as a mixed-race woman of African, Cherokee and European ancestry who writes narratives of the future based on what she calls a "relationship framework" (qtd. in Dillon 172). As works that span Indigenous and Afrofuturism, *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* provide a productive space for exploring interconnected forms of Indigeneity specific to the African diaspora and Americas. Both novels represent diasporic Indigenous subjects in outer space and map the colonial frontier and the trans-Atlantic slave trade in overlapping ways. I use the image of entanglement to understand and probe the relationship between Indigeneity and diaspora and specifically the Black diaspora initiated through the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This thesis argues that Hopkinson and Amadahy provide models for understanding Indigeneity in ways that account for diaspora of diverse Indigenous peoples and the dynamic relationships between different forms of belonging to land and nation. Key to this argument is an understanding of the interconnections of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and settler colonialism as two ongoing historical processes that have shaped the material and social reality of the Americas and in fact installed how we understand the categories of Blackness and Indigeneity.

One of the central images and figures that animated my interest in diaspora and Indigeneity is what I call the "space Indian." The space Indian is exactly what it sounds like, an

Indian (a term I ascribe to peoples descendent from the pre-colonial inhabitants of Turtle Island¹) who travels to or inhabits outer space. This figure can be found described as an exotic alien in many classic sf narratives, but is also represented as a more rounded central character in works by Indigenous authors such as Amadahy, Gerry Williams, and Robert Sullivan and in artwork by Wendy RedStar and Elizabeth LaPensée. This diasporic Indigenous figure evokes similarities with other diasporic figures and specifically for me the Black diasporic figure, because of the overlaps between Indigenous and Afrofuturism. Writing on the Black diaspora, Rinaldo Walcott states that the “invention of Black people troubles understandings of land, place, Indigeneity, and belonging” (95). By creating narratives of the space Indian, Indigenous authors also participate in complicating our notions of home, Indigenous identity, and shifting relationships to land and belonging. In order to further understand unpack what the troubles are that Walcott speaks of, I put Black studies scholars into conversation with writers spanning the Indigenous and Afrofuturist category and who represent the tensions of mobile forms of Indigeneity in outer space settings. I am by no means equating the lives of the Space Indian and the Black subject but instead trying to create a connection across two different experiences, developed through related but also divergent processes of history, in order to better understand how Blackness and Indigeneity are co-constituted.

Describing the inter-related structures of settler colonialism and slavery is a process I envision not unlike “hacking,” a subversive act of breaking into and breaking out hidden forms of knowledge in order to better engage with them. Hacking is constituted in *Midnight Robber*

¹ The term “Indian” is for some an offensive term that is loaded with stereotypical and inaccurate images of Indigenous peoples in North America. I find the phrase “Space Indian” a pithy way of contrasting and deconstructing those stereotypes of backwards Indians with an image of a futuristic landscape associated with advanced technology. Space Indian may arouse discomfort for some but that tension is in many ways an intentional result of juxtaposing assumptions and sign systems.

and *The Moons of Palmares* as acts of resistance. There is a power in describing the systems which in part structure Black and Native lives. Hortense Spillers's "American Grammar" attempts to describe the symbolic order created when the Atlantic Slave Trade "interrupted hundreds of years of Black African culture" and what the outcome of this was on "African-American life in the United States" (68). Similarly, while also acknowledging the complexities and limits of translating Spillers' project across different spatial and temporal contexts, this project aims to trace how the slave trade and settler colonialism affected relationships between Indigenous peoples of the Caribbean and Turtle Island with African-descended peoples. I argue that the coupled structure of settler colonialism and slavery calls for new understandings of Indigeneity that can account for diaspora of Indigenous peoples and alternative forms of belonging not dependent on sovereignty over an ancestral territory. Outer space is the imaginative terrain where these investigations into Blackness, Indigeneity, and forms of belonging are taken up in *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* because this space puts everyone into the position of alien and forces us to reconsider and deconstruct our notions of the human and the basis for our contact with other life forms and lands.

1.1 A note on terms

Of the many things I have learned while writing this thesis is the messiness and frequent inadequacy of the language we use around Indigeneity, Blackness, nation, sovereignty, and decolonization, all key words for this project. I have attempted to bridge the difference between Blackness and Indigeneity by avoiding describing Black and Indigenous people as discrete, mutually exclusive categories, because I argue that there is significant overlap between these groupings that is not articulated enough. I sometimes use the term "Black and Native" to denote peoples with African heritage and those who have ancestors Indigenous to the Americas and as a

kind of index of ongoing political and academic conversations that address Black and Native relations in North America. “Black and Native” is meant to also acknowledge the ways racial logics of slavery and settler colonialism foreclose the nuance of people's lives in the Americas². These organizing logics can erase mixed-race peoples with Indigenous ancestry from Africa and the Americas. I often employ the more long-winded terms “Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island”, “Indigenous peoples of the Americas”, and “African-descended peoples.” My aim is to re-orient a view of African-descended peoples as displaced and dispossessed Indigenous peoples brought to a territory to co-exist with the Indigenous peoples of that new land.

1.2 A note on geography

Midnight Robber creates an outer space planet system that is largely based on the Caribbean (a complex heterogeneous region of different national contexts) with allusions as well to American history and places. Hopkinson herself wrote the novel in Canada, creating a connection not as regularly addressed between Canada and the Black diaspora. *The Moons of Palmares* draws more globally for its geographical influences on the outer space system of Palmares and our own solar system, referencing locations from Africa, the Caribbean, South America, and North America. In order to investigate how global histories, and specifically the intertwined historical and ongoing processes of settler colonialism and slavery, have influenced these texts, I turn to scholars writing on the Caribbean and the Americas. The following footnote from an article on

² I am thinking here of the divergent logics that determined racial and ethnic background in the United States: the “one drop” rule and policies of blood quantum. The former attempts to multiple Black presence as a commodity, while also over-signifying Blackness to crowd out other intersecting identities, while the latter attempts to disappear the Native into whiteness. The fact that the logic of blood quantum aims to make the Indian white while the one drop rule seeks to hyper-assert Blackness speaks to the hierarchy of racial difference imposed by the settler. This may be in part why Frank Wilderson sees the struggle of the “Savage” as a conflict with white civil society while the struggle of the “Slave” is a nonnegotiable antagonism. The savage in some ways can be aligned with whiteness while blackness is always Other.

Black and Indigenous relationships in Canada succinctly captures the difficulties in addressing the different ways these relationships have formed and evolved in different contexts:

While the myriad complexities of Black–Native identities and alliances in the Caribbean, as well as parts of Central and South America have taken a very different turn from the polarized and contradictory situation in some regions of the United States, the hegemony of the United States not only in influencing how Black–Native relations are perceived, but also in shaping how “race” is understood in Canada has required us to focus primarily on the American context in order to begin to delineate the Canadian situation at all (Lawrence and Amadahy 132).

I find myself in a similar situation to these authors in my own work, which engages with a lot of scholarly work on race relations/antagonisms in the American context because of the overbearing role of the United States in how we understand “Black” and “Native”. I also draw from Caribbean studies scholars and Indigenous studies scholars, all writing from diverse locations and subject positions. While I think it is crucial to understand how Black-Native identities and alliances share similarities across geo-political boundaries, I also strive to make clear the specificity of different contexts when citing scholars whose work pertains to a particular region or nation-state. It is also interesting in doing so to note how Amadahy and Hopkinson blend and overlap these contexts in creating new hybridized worlds in outer space—the intersections of geography and history become quite tangled and generative in ways both interesting and arduous to trace.

1.3 Chapter two outline

This chapter engages with the geographies and cultures described in the outer space settings of Hopkinson and Amadahy in order to unpack the entanglements created through the trans-Atlantic slave trade and settler colonialism in the Caribbean and Americas. Rather than using the model of Frederick Turner's frontier, these texts create settings much closer to a "contact zone," which Mary Louise Pratt describes "in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power" (7). Pratt rightly acknowledges the tendency toward asymmetrical power relations in moments of contact, especially true in interactions between former inhabitants and newcomers, while also highlighting the multi-directionality of influences in the contact zone. This dynamic model is helpful for understanding the multiple forms of interaction and contact presented in *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares*, which represent encounters in new worlds drawn from histories and geographies of contact zones on Earth and framed beyond the white explorer/settler and native binary.

This chapter also turns to the role of gender and sexual violence in the settling of land and the enslavement of African-descended peoples. Tiffany King's work on how the symbolic positioning of the bodies of Black women allow for making land and bodies into property is a key analysis for understanding how slavery and settler colonialism operate together to enact violence on Black and Native peoples, specifically women. She argues that the Black female body in America represents a "terra nullius" that evokes for the settler master "unfettered access to property, and the unending reproduction of bodies and land" (56). This notion in turn influences ideas of Manifest Destiny that have motivated the genocide of peoples indigenous to Turtle Island. While King's work is specifically situated in America, I found her analysis of

gender violence against Black women as part and parcel of settler colonialism an important piece of understanding how gender, land, race and indigeneity are tangled together often in violence ways throughout all of the Americas. The act of making people landless has been mobilized against both Black and Native populations since the landing of Europeans in the Western Hemisphere. In a special online series on settler colonialism and anti-Blackness, scholars Eve Tuck, Allison Guess and Hannah Sultan connect the structure of chattel slavery to dispossession not only of Native peoples but descendants of Black slaves as well. They argue, “To be made into property, according to settler colonialism, Black people must be kept landless” (Tuck, Guess and Sultan 3). While Tan-Tan's situation in *Midnight Robber* is not exactly like what King, Tuck, Guess and Sultan describe in the Americas, her displacement from home is directly linked to the sexual abuse she suffers in exile where she feels she is “lost for true, so far away from herself that she didn't know how to come back” (279). It is not just the homeland she is distanced from but her own body. Zaria is also subjected to the derogatory attitudes of Terran security men who attempt to diminish her people's self-determination by not allowing them complete home-rule and also by degrading her body as a racialized woman. As both these novels focus on the struggles of women, I found it crucial to address how settler colonialism and chattel slavery have specifically affected the feminized bodies of African-descended peoples and peoples Indigenous to North America.

While this chapter devotes most of its space to describing how the entangled structures of settler colonialism and the trans-Atlantic slave trade have captured Indigenous peoples in histories of displacement and genocide, it also touches upon the moments of hope and the possibility for collaboration that these entangled histories engender.

1.4 Chapter three outline

In this chapter I turn to theorizing an Indigenous identity that is fluid and in motion—in short, an Indigenous identity of the diasporic subject. In works of Afrofuturism there is the persistent claim to forms of knowledge and lifeways that place the African-descendent diasporic subject in rooted relationship with Indigenous African and Caribbean cultural forms. The relationship to an Indigenous African identity comes to the Americas, shifting and adapting despite the harrowing journeys of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and continuing colonial practices. The literature that describes these forms of Indigeneity in the African diaspora compels me to reconsider notions of decolonization and resurgence to account for relationships of belonging that are not predicated on territorial sovereignty and how these different relationships of belonging might be held in dynamic tension. As Sophie McCall argues, a “diasporic-Indigenous perspective potentially foregrounds the experiences of migrant Indigenous peoples whose routes and roots, whose losses and persistent connections, have not been well documented, understood or even noticed” (29). This chapter extends the diasporic-Indigenous perspective to conceptualize an Indigeneity that is not solely based on sovereignty over bounded territories but is, instead, predicated on forms of belonging and relationality.

In considering what creates belonging in the Americas many scholars such as Wynter, Tiffany King and Shona Jackson have turned to and troubled the concept of labour, an issue that underlies both *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares*. In particular these scholars and novels ponder what kind of relationship to land is forged throughout the history of forced labour in the Americas, an issue taken up in the context of outer space by Hopkinson and Amadahy. Palmares, for instance, is a terraformed nation created through years of labour by an underclass brought in to do dangerous work in the lunar mines. In *Midnight Robber*, the people of Toussaint

are in conflict over whether labour, called “breakback”, defines or denies humanity. These mentions of labour evoke in challenging ways the work of John Locke and his political theories of labour as the prerequisite for private ownership—theories crucial to the political legitimization of the settler colonial state. I argue that these representations of labour are one of the ways Hopkinson and Amadahy acknowledge the inter-relationality of land, humans, other-than-humans, and machines as well as the struggle to find non-coercive or destructive means of co-existing in the contact zone.

1.5 Conclusion outline

The thesis concludes with an overview of some of the contentious debates I came across while reading scholarly work on what is commonly referred to as Black-Native relations. These works come out of a North American context and are often framed as opposing arguments between Native American and Indigenous studies and Black studies. I end by addressing how literary scholarship on science fiction, speculative and futurist works by Black and Native authors can illuminate paths forward from these scholarly and political disagreements. And further, I question how research along the lines of collaboration and uncomfortable remembering can aid in the material and political struggles of Indigenous peoples globally.

Chapter 2: The “New World” in New Worlds: Outer Space Entanglements of Settler Colonialism and the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

I want to begin with entanglements³. Instead of thinking of Indigenous and Black as separate categories and concepts, I want to think of them as entangled and often inseparable. Black Indigeneity, that is the Indigeneity of African-descended peoples in the Americas, upsets the network of settler-defined relationships and cannot be properly understood in the binaristic frame of settler colonial racial and political logics. *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* both disrupt and deconstruct the discrete categories of Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island and African-descended peoples by especially emphasizing the messiness of relationships between peoples in the Americas. The persistent replication of the Black/Indigenous split not only denies an Indigenous African heritage to African-descended peoples but also fails to read Indigeneity on Black bodies born with Indigenous North American and African heritage. This chapter explores in part the processes by which the Indigeneity of African-descended peoples is displaced through the forced migration and labour of the slave trade and the related process by which the Indigeneity of Native North Americans is targeted via military genocide campaigns and ongoing dispossession. I connect these interrelated processes of slavery and settlement through a reading of Hopkinson and Amadahy's Earth-inspired outer space settings. Both authors use historical referents on Earth to shape futuristic planetary systems that evoke and complicate the histories of migration and conflict in the Caribbean as well as North and South America. Just as I argue that the violence of the settling of the Americas is woven into these authors literary representations of

³ While there may be other scholars who also envision the relationship between the Black diaspora and Indigeneity as entangled, this image was introduced to me through the work of Elizabeth Deloughrey who describes the “shifting entanglement between sea and land, diaspora and indigeneity, and routes and roots” in her reading of the poetry of Kamau Brathwaite (2). The image of entanglements appeals to me because it contains the ambiguities of relationships made in the contact zone—not always intentional, sometimes constraining, often complicated, and always interconnected.

new worlds, I also read narratives of survival, creation and liberation in the landscapes of their futuristic outer space.

Hopkinson and Amadahy's outer space settings reflect how the movements and intimacies created through the trans-Atlantic slave trade and settler colonialism have created deep interrelationships between Indigenous North Americans and African-descended peoples. The connections between chattel slavery and genocide of Indigenous peoples is especially apparent in the Caribbean, an earthly location that inspires much of both Hopkinson and Amadahy's speculative worlds. The Caribbean is an intense space of historic memory; it is the region where Columbus first encountered and enslaved Indigenous peoples of the Americas and the initial location for the Atlantic Slave trade. Rinaldo Walcott has described the Caribbean as “as space of unique invention in the colonial and modern world” where he argues genres of being human, such as fully human, not-quite-human and non-human, were created through European domination. He is reading the Caribbean, the subsequent slave trade, and the conquest and settling of the Americas by foreign forces created a new conception of the world and concepts of the “human” according to racial logics degrading Blackness and praising any proximity to whiteness. Wynter calls for a new world view and new models of the human created both through an understanding of the global reality linking suffering peoples and a movement to re-structure that reality.

The dual thrust of Wynter's argument contains an ambiguity reflected in the worlds of Hopkinson and Amadahy, worlds created through suffering but animated with the possibilities of a new kind of life. The multi-facetedness of the settings created by Hopkinson and Amadahy cannot be emphasized enough. In Hopkinson's novel, the narrative structure and style itself captures the complex intertwined threads of different peoples and histories. One of the text's

narrators, an eshu or artificial intelligence being named after a Yoruba trickster figure, describes his storytelling process as a weaving: “I twist warp 'cross weft, I move my shuttle in and out, and smooth smooth...And when I done, I shake it out and turn it over *swips!* And maybe you see it have a next side to the tale” (3). The eshu's story is one made through movement of twisting and a subsequent disavowal of a single, simple conclusion when he “shakes it out” to reveal “a next side.” The eshu’s image of weaving a story resonates with the idea of entanglements: the strands of lives and histories in the Americas are here cleverly tied together into a multi-faceted narrative. In many ways, I want to replicate this fluid style of exposition that the eshu employs by finding the next side to the tales we tell about Black and Indigenous relations in the Americas. I am not always seeking to clarify what structures these settings and the regions on Earth they are based on, but rather what complicates them and makes them difficult to describe in their totality. Amadahy's novel captures the complex and contradicting political situation on Palmares, and the earthly locations it is based on by switching between perspectives from both sides of the Palmaran/Consortium conflict. Each chapter alternates between a focus on Major Eaglefeather and focus on Zaria, allowing the reader to get a sense of each characters' actions, motives, and feelings. This is a novel that like *Midnight Robber* rejects the simple narratives, in this case by slipping between “main” characters and blurring the lines of a straightforward antagonist-protagonist conflict.

Hopkinson and Amadahy’s explorations of nuanced and multi-layered relationships are well suited for science fiction, the literature of “demanding the impossible” (Moylan). This genre gives Hopkinson and Amadahy the literary tools to build worlds with intricate and rich mappings of Earthly histories. These authors use generic features of science fiction, such as multiple dimensions and contact between different planets, in ways that illuminate the complexities of

interwoven times, overlapping geographies, and interrelated peoples. These worlds reflect back on ours as models of our horrific pasts and possible futures. Outer space is a fitting setting for the projection of the Americas and the Caribbean in particular as both outer space and the Western hemisphere are commonly associated with the phenomenon of contact. Since at least the seventeenth century, European thinkers have linked the “new world” of the Americas with the new worlds of outer space. Galileo and Columbus were two key figures in animating the European plan of colonial world expansion. While Wynter emphasizes Columbus's voyages as the creation of a new world view, Galileo's astronomical discoveries of an earth-like moon also contributed greatly to European conceptions of exploration, colonialism and even genres of the human, a phrase used by Wynter to denote the categories assigned to peoples such as race and gender to mark their distance or proximity from Man as rational white male subject. It is not surprising then that the first science fiction work in English, notably William Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*, appeared shortly after Galileo's two publications and references as well Portuguese and Spanish expeditions across the Atlantic. In the genre's long obsession with contact, it is most commonly contact between the white male explorer and the swarthy savage or the dusky maiden. Five-hundred years later however authors such as Hopkinson and Amadahy are writing fictional accounts about a different kind of contact, contact that occurs on the margins of the violent settling of the Americas between the Native peoples there and the displaced Indigenous Africans stolen and brought to new lands as enslaved peoples.

Their writings in the genre of science fiction follows from the work of Octavia Butler who has created one of the vastest literary explorations of power dynamics and contact relations between humans and the alien. Butler is an important figure to note here not only for her groundbreaking career as a Black woman writing in a genre dominated by white men but also for

her unique contributions to imagining the future of humanity, This thesis is animated and inspired by the complex negotiations of personhood and the dynamics of oppressive and symbiotic relationships written about by Butler. Hopkinson and Amadahy are also clearly influenced by Butler's work. Hopkinson in fact alludes to Butler when she writes about her rejection of utopia in *Midnight Robber*. Citing the adage coined by Butler's character Lauren Olamina in *Parable of the Sower*, "God is change," Hopkinson adds to this idea of constant flux with her own pithy phrasing: "Utopia is dead; dynamic tension reigns." Hopkinson is again pointing to the messiness of the worlds she has created—while Toussaint may be free from widespread social inequalities and the need for hard labour, it is still a deeply flawed place with numerous conflicts waiting to arise and shift the planet's reality. One of these conflicts, key for the purposes of this chapter, is between Toussaint's human exiles and the Indigenous "fauna" of New Half Way Tree, the douen. A similar sense of tension permeates *The Moons of Palmares* not only between the political groups fighting for control of Palmares but also between individuals' own sense of identities and loyalties. The idea of dynamic tension promoted by Hopkinson will be the lens through which I theorize the relationships between African-descended peoples and Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, specifically in the Caribbean and the Caribbean-inspired outer space settings of Amadahy and Hopkinson. Dynamic tension evokes the entanglements that this chapter began with—a series of connections, some taut, some loose, some unspooling and dangling, that bring African-descended peoples and Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island into proximity with each other sometimes in painful ways.

As both these texts draw on geographical locations extending from North America through the Caribbean and Brazil, these are the locations I will focus on in my theoretical considerations of how settler colonialism and slavery operate together to create flawed

dichotomies between Afro-Indigenous peoples and North American Indians. Ingrid Thaler has argued that Hopkinson's location in Toronto while writing *Midnight Robber* is evident in her themes of migration, exile and alienation. In extending the African diaspora from the Caribbean through North America, Hopkinson adds Canada as a node in this network of settler colonialism and slavery. Hopkinson's network of historical connections and geographical locations is similarly extensive. She cites the Brazilian place name of Palmares as well as locations on the coast of Africa, and then in the outer space setting, connects the mining operations on Palmaran moons to the asteroid belts between Mars and Jupiter and various other planetary systems. This chapter will attempt to trace the connections between disparate spaces and times described and referenced in both novels to uncover shared histories between African-descended peoples and Indigenous peoples from the Americas. I argue that these literary chronographies illustrate the inextricable structures of slavery and settler colonialism and the ensuing logics of race, Indigeneity and gender created by these dual processes.

2.1 Contact zone

Both texts create speculative maps based on historical experiences of oppression and resistance that link the routes of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the space of the colonial frontier. Rather than using the model of Frederick Turner's frontier, these texts create settings much closer to a "contact zone," which Mary Louise Pratt describes "in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power" (7). Both novels are thus set in worlds full of complex associations between peoples, geographies and histories determined by processes of dispossession and diaspora. I do not want to shy away from the messy entanglements and shifting power dynamics that these text represent. Instead I want to embrace the ambiguities, contradictions, and breaks that are inherent

to representing the network of relationships that shapes the social reality of Black and Native peoples. There is no simple way to sum up how settler colonialism and slavery have operated together to create the categories of Indigeneity and Blackness just as there is no single way to characterize the relationship between Black and Native peoples in the Americas. However, in attempting to trace the outlines of these shared historical relationships, my hope is to move toward a more clear sense of the possibility of a shared future world between Black and Native peoples beyond white supremacy.

This is a wish also expressed in the works of Hopkinson and Amadahy. One of the central arcs in the plot of *The Moons of Palmares* is whether Major Eaglefeather can be convinced to abandon his loyalties to the Consortium and Terran interests and help the Palmaran resistance group, the Kituhwa, to stop harmful mining practices on their moons. In their attempts to persuade the Major, both Zaria and Kituhwa member Sixto Masika evoke the history of Indigenous North American resistance to European expansion and conquest. In describing the decision-making processes of the Kituhwa, Masika brings up the Iroquois Confederation's principle of consensus "far more democratic than anything we know today" (101), hoping to draw a connection to Eaglefeather's Indigenous heritage as a shared commitment against non-consensual rule. Later Zaria in attempting to explain the situation of resistance to Terran forces on Palmares compels Eaglefeather to compare it to a Terran historical situation saying, "Your ancestors were Indigenous North Americans. You must have read your history" (140). These allusions to First Nations and Native American history not only indicate the persistence of traditional values on Palmares but also an identification with Indigenous practices by a diasporic group of labourers, specifically the Black resistance members Masika and Zaria. Eventually, Major Eaglefeather comes to the aid of the Kituhwa, going so far as to help them launch an

armed attack on the Consortium compound and releasing damning information on harmful mining practices to Terran journalists.

These possibilities for solidarity or at the least an understanding and mutual recognition comes through interactions less mediated by the settler colonial state. As Shona Jackson writes, in regards to the colonial plantation system in the Caribbean, Black and Indigenous peoples had no “real power or control over their engagement with each other” in part because of the displacement of Native peoples (28). However, speculative works by Black and Indigenous authors provide a space in which they do have the power and control to engage with each other. Outer space becomes the place for authors to create the worlds they want to represent. Outer space is a place where contact or discovery can be reimagined not strictly without the weight of violence that arrived with European contact with the Other but with the possibilities of transcending that violence through a new view of what a new world can mean.

An Indigenous futurist contribution to Pratt's contact zone would be an added emphasis on the ways in which not only do spaces and people overlap here but also different conceptions and operations of time. In *Midnight Robber* these overlapping space-times are represented as multiple dimensions existing alongside each other. Antonio and Tan Tan travel through “the dimensional shift” past “more Toussaints than they could count” and each of these dimensions are “existing simultaneously, but each one a little bit different” (72). The differences of these other Toussaints exceeds the cognition of Antonio and Tan-Tan evoking the common inability of humans to comprehend the alternatives to the world they currently inhabit. One attempt to understand the simultaneous existence of disparate locations occurs through collapsing geographical and chronological difference through naming. Through their place naming practices, both *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* bring spatially and temporally

distant pasts into the future. And in both places, there is a tension between different groups' conflicting temporal orientations. This brings to mind Nixon's formulation of "Indigenous resource rebellions across the globe" which he argues "resulted largely from a clash of temporal perspectives between the shorttermers [sic] who arrive... to extract, despoil, and depart and the long-termers who must live inside the ecological aftermath and must therefore weigh wealth differently in time's scales" (17). The humans on New Half Way Tree have little conception of the long-term view of habitation and co-existence the douen have adapted, though they are in fact destined to become long-termers because return to Toussaint is impossible. Indeed, one of the outcomes of *Midnight Robber* is Tan-Tan's willingness to orient herself and fellow humans as long-term inhabitants of New Halfway Tree. In a similar split, the Consortium views Palmares only in terms of efficiency in the immediate present and future while the Palmarans project historical, even ancient, understandings into their plans for a long term future.

Toussaint and Palmares are two of the central planets in these texts and both reference earthly contact zones in the Caribbean and North and South America, where colonialism and slavery created complex race-relations between white colonizers, enslaved African peoples, and Indigenous Americans. These relations are evoked and reflected in *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* while being simultaneously subverted and deconstructed. For instance, the presence of white people is greatly diminished as both these worlds are societies seem to consist of a large majority of African-descended peoples, Indigenous North Americans, and Asian peoples.

Hopkinson's worlds are places where individual white people may live but whiteness itself no longer dominates. As Jilliana Enteen describes it, this is a novel that "renders the complexities of multiple cultures in contact, the cross-fertilizations of histories, languages and

cultures, and diasporic locations” (263). The entanglements of various histories, cultures and locations are manifested in the language of Toussaint where characters speak a mix of Trinidadian and Jamaican creoles as well as English. In the complexities of the contact zone, the dominant force of Eurocentric whiteness dies out and is replaced by the “cross-fertilizations” of different Afro-Indigenous cultures as well as the cultures of Indigenous North Americans and other diasporic peoples. These entangled histories, cultures, locations become even more complexly layered when people from Toussaint are sent to New Half Way Tree and thrust into relationship with the douen who have their own languages and histories. These sorts of complex interactions across space and time, distilled into congruent contact zones, can describe the Caribbean, North and South America as well as the outer space locations of Toussaint and Palmares. Amadahy's descriptions of the people on Palmares emphasize racial diversity, and while again there are a few individual white people, Palmares is defined by being a mix of different Indigenous traditional cultures. The complex set of different relationships and interdependencies woven into the settings of *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* provide one of the fundamental re-workings of the frontier model, usually describing one-way interactions between white settlers and Indigenous peoples, by centering the dispossessed, enslaved, and genocided. The contact zone with its emphasis on peoples usually made to disappear as peoples, in this case African-descended peoples and Indigenous peoples of the Americas, and reciprocal relations is thus a more realistic and inclusive view of contact, but one that does not erase the power dynamics and potential oppressive processes even in a universe that is no longer Eurocentric.

Hopkinson deconstructs the colonial frontier through the cross-dimensional, cross-planetary movements and relationships made possible by Tan-Tan and her child. The novel

represents the complexities of the contact zone by acknowledging and critiquing Indigenous dispossession in the Caribbean while also celebrating the intersections and entanglements of Black and Indigenous peoples. Here contact between the douen and the humans is not a one-way encounter. Rather Chichibud, the first douen Antonio and Tan-Tan meet, emphasizes over and over the reciprocity, framed as “trail debt”, that he expects from finding and helping the newcomers to New Half Way Tree. Trail debt implies a relationship of movement, for it is an exchange established on the passage between two places and it is by definition a lopsided relationship with one party offering what another does not have. While Antonio is skeptical of Chichibud's offering of knowledge and dismisses it as “bush nonsense,” Tan-Tan represents a different attitude toward alternative relationships on a new world with her willingness to learn from Chichibud. Her journey throughout the novel will be that of a traumatized human who finds sanctuary and the possibility of a new life with the douen free from the violence of her home. Her first home in New Half Way Tree is where Antonio sexually abuses her before she kills him and thus sets her evil stepmother on the path of vengeance. However, while the novel ends with happiness for Tan-Tan, she also reveals the douen's home, called the daddy tree, to the humans exiled on New Half Way Tree, which “cause harm to the whole community, cause the daddy tree to dead” (281). Hopkinson thus demonstrates the messy ethics of contact. Tan-Tan attempts to do right by the douen, who have shown her hospitality, but instead puts their lives in peril because of the destructive and prejudiced ways of her fellow humans. As a reflection of interactions between displaced Indigenous peoples on another Indigenous people's territory, *Midnight Robber* upholds a model of ethical interaction that is at the same time consistently deferred by the imperfections of human behaviours. The novel ends on a hopeful note of liberation but reaches that point after disaster, trauma, and destruction.

In the *Moons of Palmares*, interaction between groups of people in the outer space colonies is still in many ways plagued by the inequalities of the plantation system as acknowledged with the reference to quilombos, settlements of runaway slaves often joined by Indigenous peoples. Quilombos, while they are enclaves of resistance, arise because of the colonial plantation system and the Palmaran adaptation of this word also captures senses of oppression, struggle, collaboration, survival, and creation. The conflict at the heart of the novel, between the Kituhwa and the Consortium, is written by Amadahy with an obvious moral and political investment in the Kituhwa's victory but she disavows a binaristic or easily-understandable sense of right and wrong in the group's struggle against foreign rule and harmful resource extraction. Masika is the uncertain leader of the rebels and he struggles throughout the text with the choice between armed uprising and non-violent appeals to third parties. In a conversation with Major Eaglefeather, Masika admits “sometimes it's hard to know the correct course of action, and even when you know you've done the right thing, you have to wonder whether it will make any difference in the end” (102). Later as he says goodbye to his commander Maglay who has consistently challenged him throughout the novel to abandon his pacifist ways, Masika again evokes a sense of ambiguity: “You and I have some provided some balance to the Kituhwa. Our differences have made it simple to find the middle ground. You are the Yang to my Yin.” (153). He does not reject the difference Maglay brings to the group, just as he does not pretend he always has a clear-eyed view of the “right thing” to do. Instead, he evokes the ideas of balance as well as uncertainty, a perspective of politics and interaction that brings to mind Hopkinson's “dynamic tension.” The middle ground is presented as a space of contact between differences that find a way to work through their own specificity to find alliance.

Another helpful theory related to contact zone and also provided by Pratt is the notion of “planetary consciousness” which Robert Nixon writes “connects forms of apprehension to forms of imperial violence” (15). Similar to Wynter's notion of the “new world view” created by the joining of Europe, Africa and the Americas under a purview of colonial expansion and slavery, Pratt develops planetary consciousness to describe European understandings of themselves in a “construction of global-scale meaning” (15). However, via Nixon's reworking of the concept to describe how writers and activists might represent the scale of environmental processes of “slow violence,” I would like to broaden the notion of planetary consciousness to include Indigenous conceptions of far-reaching networks of relationships and thus to think of planetary consciousness as being reclaimed by the peoples who have been oppressed under European understandings of global systems. In *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares*, the representations allowed by planetary consciousness are extended to a cosmic consciousness. This involves a holistic view of earth systems, connecting peoples and non-human life forms across different continents and seas, then expanding the vast scales of these perspectives into outer space. This kind of perspective is made possible in *Midnight Robber* where the “thing [the planet] and the shadow of that thing” are almost in the same place together but just on “the next side of the dimension veil” (2). As the eshu emphasizes in their narrative technique, there is always at least a “next side” to a tale or a dimension and these realities can exist side by side. In *The Moons of Palmares* there is a narrative of politics not just on a geoscale but a multi-galaxy scale where “terrorists” can be sent “to prison camps on the asteroid belt near Jupiter” and the Consortium mines “Mars and the asteroid belt for strategic minerals, Basilea for thyanite, Palmares for quilidon” (145). Indeed, the Consortium's hold over the galaxy's resources is

referred to as a “New Galactic Order” echoing not just the new world view described by Wynter and Pratt but the new world order of neoliberalism as well.

Amadahy's universe and the hegemonic control over it by the Consortium/Terran alliance is strikingly parallel to the “three pillars of white supremacy” outlined by theorist Andrea Smith. Smith identifies these three pillars, separate but interconnected, as Slavery/Capitalism, Genocide/Capitalism, and Orientalism/War (67). The first pillar of coupled terms represents the ways in which Black people have been rendered as “inherently slaveable—as nothing more than property”; the second represents how Indigenous peoples are made to disappear and thus are rendered as already-dead; and the third represents how some nations/peoples, usually from the East, are considered inferior and also a direct threat to European and American nations (67-69). While these are categorized as separate motivations, Smith emphasizes that these logics work together and sometimes cannot be unstuck from each other. Amadahy's novel evokes these three pillars through the attitudes of the Consortium security forces who consider Palmares an inferior world to Terran and their peoples, many Black and Indigenous, as low-level labourers and terrorists. Smith creates this model in part to explain and demonstrate how people of colour are both victims of white supremacy while also often complicit in it (69).

This large scale system of political control is also reflected in the techno-world of Toussaint. On this planet, the “tools, the machines, the buildings, even the earth itself of Toussaint and the Nation Worlds were one enormous data-gathering system that exchanged information constantly through the Grande Nanotech Sentient Interface: Granny Nansi's Web” (10). This sound suspiciously like a feminized version of the Big Brother, and like the Orwellian logic of that oppressive surveillance system, it is agreed on Toussaint that Granny Nanny “kept the Nation Worlds protected, guided and guarded its people” (10). The contact zone described in

Midnight Robber is thus imagined also as a network, one that can be hacked by savvy Caribbean cyberpunks who can replicate Granny Nanny's coding language in order to manipulate its surveillance programming. Thaler cites Granny Nanny, whose name is a reference to a legendary leader of the Jamaican Maroons⁴ as another example of the ambiguities, or two-sided facets, permeating *Midnight Robber*. Thaler argues that technology on Toussaint is both “an agent of Black Atlantic resistance and liberation and, ambiguously, also involved in a colonial system” (107). Thaler's use of ambiguity is another helpful lens for understanding the cluster of connected histories, migrations, and power struggles over life and land that have occurred since the trans-Atlantic slave trade was connected to the colonial project of the Americas. The possibility of two or more sides to every story, situation, and relationship is captured in Pratt's conception of the “contact zone,” Wynter's formulation of a “new world order” and in the narrative structure for Hopkinson and Amadahy's respective novels. As the eshu demonstrates there is always a “next side” to consider, not just the place hidden in the shadow but the possibility waiting to be shown when the tale is turned over like a double-sided weaving.

2.2 Naming practices

The place names used in the novels create a speculative cartography that maps locations very far from Earth, yet deeply connected to earth history and places. The construction of worlds by these authors bring into sharp focus the overlapping spheres of the colonial frontier and the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Hopkinson's world is replete with historical references and almost every proper noun in the novel alludes to a historical figure from Africa or the Caribbean, starting of course with the

⁴ The Jamaican Maroons were groups of runaway formerly-enslaved peoples descendent from Africa who established their own alternative societies on the peripheries of plantations. Granny Nanny is a reference to Queen Nanny who was military leader of the Windward Maroons, one of the most famous Maroon groups involved in Maroon Wars in the late 1700's.

planet the novel begins on, Toussaint. Thaler describes Toussaint L'Ouverture, the leader of the Haitian slave revolt in 1791, as representative both of slave resistance but also a complicit agent of violence and military dictatorship. Toussaint's two-sided nature as both liberator and eventual oppressor is a fitting description for a planet which provides its citizens a world of relative social equality where nobody has to perform hard labour. Toussaint as a location is home to Cockpit County, where Antonio is mayor. Cockpit County is a slight variation from Cockpit Country, a region in Jamaica and the legendary home of the Windward Maroons, who were led by Queen Nanny (transformed into Granny Nanny in the novel). The region is known for having a pockmarked topography well-suited for hiding during the Maroon revolts (Price 5). The association with Jamaican Maroons creates another historical layer to Hopkinson's pan-Caribbean outer space that alludes to a history of revolt and alternative forms of society. As Richard Price writes, Maroon societies such as those in Cockpit Country "struck directly at the foundations of the plantation system, presenting military and economic threats that often taxed the colonists to their very limits" (3). Thus, Hopkinson, in the ambiguity or double-sidedness described by Thaler, turns these anti-colonial references into the colonial figure of Granny Nanny, less a military leader of revolt here and more overseeing matriarchal surveillance system.

The dark side, or "dub side" of Toussaint's near utopia is New Half Way Tree a world lacking in AI technology where humans are exiled as punishment. The place name New Half Way Tree is in part explained by one of the four stories interspersed throughout the main plot of the novel. The first of these tales, set in a bold text apart from the rest of the text and told as an oral story, "How Tan-Tan Learn to Thief" tells how Tan-Tan, described as "queen of the Taino people" who lives "on the moon with she father, the king Antonio", came to be in "exile on New Half-Way Tree, this prison planet" (78). Tan-Tan decides she wants to travel to Earth to rescue it

from its “foul” and “barren” state, but once there with Antonio they can no longer call back their chariot. In order to help them survive on their new planet, Kabo Tano “the Ancient One who give to them light and dark and all good things” causes some of the grass on Earth to “grow into a magic tree to sustain them” (83) and because “he plant the tree half way between the mountain them did climb and the river where them did drink” it was called half-way tree (84). Half Way Tree is also the name of a central neighborhood in Kingston, Jamaica, giving the place name earthly, mythical and outer space referents that evoke and interact with each other in the text to reveal their connection to both an Indigenous and diasporic cosmology. The New Half Way Tree that Tan-Tan and Antonio end up on in the main plot of the narrative is a place divided between human settlements and the bush where the douen live in giant life-giving trees, not unlike that one created by Kabo Tano in “How Tan-Tan Learns to Thief.” New Half-Way Tree as a place name brings together the histories of diasporic African-descended peoples, the traditions of the Taino, Indigenous to the Caribbean and the Indigenous douen, once again blurring the lines of distinction between Blackness and Indigeneity by highlighting the entangled histories and movements of peoples Indigenous to different homelands co-existing in close proximity.

The first human settlement, where Tan-Tan and Antonio live until Tan-Tan's sixteenth birthday, is called Junjuh town. The town is named after “the parasitic fungus that grew wherever it was moist” (98). While Antonio says this is a “nasty name” Chichibud casts the place name in the light of resilience saying it can grow where “no soil not there” and “no matter what you do, it does grow back” (98). The persistent quality of this fungus describes a troubling pioneer spirit in which settlers continue to propagate their own harmful colonies even in inhospitable ground. And indeed Junjuh town has many of the markings of a frontier town: it is ruled by a sheriff whose sense of justice requires throwing people into a small metal box in a

public square, the humans who live there have low opinions of the surrounding Indigenous douen, and it is small, somewhat isolated. This frontier town, full of diasporic subjects and posed in tension with Indigenous peoples, is another node connecting references to the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the atmosphere of the American settler colonial frontier.

Hopkinson however introduces an intriguing counterpoint to these tropes of the frontier town and the colonial settlement through the queer, polyamorous relationships common between men and women. This queerness is perhaps a commentary on how personal relationships could explore different models and possibilities outside the heteronormativity and patriarchy, models however which remain unrealized in the wake of other hierarchical forms of violence.

Other textual names also bespeak an alternative to histories of bondage. Tubman features as a name in both novels, as the name of a character in *Midnight Robber* and of a quilombo in *The Moons of Palmares*. After Tan-Tan names her child Tubman, the eshu remarks that the name represents “the human bridge between slavery and freedom” (329). The Eshu then says “a seer woman” might have chosen that name, implying the name holds some kind of prophecy. Who will this Tubman be leading from slavery? And where, in this case, is freedom? The child's capacity to be a link between the two dimensions implies that freedom will come from expanded understanding of the relationship between Toussaint and New Half Way Tree.

If *Midnight Robber's* futuristic universescape is structured around double-meanings *The Moons of Palmares* is structured around plurality. An informational video Eaglefeather watches on his arrival to Palmares describes the planet as a kind of multicultural collective where “traditional cultures from around the Earth had made Palmares an amalgam as rare as the mineral its citizens mined” (5). Like *Midnight Robber*, white people are distinctly in the minority here and the place names given to the terraformed planet by the migrant work force evoke the history

of resisting European domination. In this way both *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* create outer space settings reflective of the world created by European colonization and settlement of the Western hemisphere while largely removing the physical European presence in their sf world. Such settings are reminiscent of the post-colonial nations in South America and the Caribbean. Jackson's work on Guyana is especially relevant here. She writes that the colonial map of Guyana was drawn first and the “the post-colonial one has been redrawn as a reflection of settler-Creole social being and material right” (2).

The overlapping nature of place names referencing slavery, slave resistance, European colonialism, frontiers of genocide, and Indigenous stories, create a literary representation of how the processes of settler colonialism and slavery overlapped on Earth. Wynter cites Columbus' 1482 exploration of the west coast of Africa as evidence that it is the European expeditions in that continent that inspired the journeys further west to the Americas. She writes “the inhabitability of that torrid zone against the then learned premise of its uninhabitability was to lie at the origin of his [Columbus's] 'grand design'” (9). This sense of a “grand design” again captures the ways in which the colonization of Africa and the stealing away of people to be made into property on stolen lands is one piece of a complex puzzle. Tiffany King describes Wynter's theory of the new world order as a “merging of two spatial and subject/ontology producing formations [that] creates a discursive moment where we can think about the plantation as having a relationship to the space of Native genocide, exploitation and settlement” (38). The connection between the plantation and the frontier is especially apparent on Palmares, whose name references a village of Africans, Indigenous South Americans and poor whites who fought against the plantation system of Brazil.

The place names of both novels thus utilize cosmic consciousness to encapsulate the universe of relationships created through slavery and settler colonialism in the Western Hemisphere. While this view is one of violence, genocide, displacement and trauma, it is also one shot through with hope, resistance, and at times, playful subversion. In *The Moons of Palmares*, Masika takes Chief Eaglefeather to a place near the quilombo of Tubman called Goree, named after “an island off the coast of Senegal where captured Africans were held before being shipped to the New World as slaves” (143). This is one of many instances in the novel when a Palmaran evokes a dual identification with Indigeneity to Palmares as well as a diasporic African identity: there is the sense that as they battle resource extraction in their homes, they are also battling the legacy of slavery. Masika describes the Earthly Goree and his relationship to it: “After the end of slavery...many Africans in diaspora traveled there. Even now, some of them—some of us—go to the site. I did, many years ago. It was amazing. I thought I could hear the crack of the whip, the crying of mothers and children. I cried myself... (143). Masika then goes on to explain the monument built at Goree to commemorate those who died, including his own father, in a suspicious plane crash that spared the Consortium pilot but released “ethramine gas⁵” on a group of Terran journalists meeting with Palmaran scientists (144). Goree is both a testament to the suffering that Masika's people faced on Earth as well as what Palmarans have suffered at the hands of forces bent on land control, resource extraction and the processes which make that possible. However the monument not only serves as a reminder of the long history of suffering connecting Palmaran and Terran history but also as a catalyst for resistance and a standing reminder of the ancestors the Palmarans seek to honour and fight for.

⁵ Ethramine gas is described in the text as a substance used in the processing of quilidon, the fuel that is extracted from the mines of Palmaran moons. The gas is lethal when inhaled by humans.

A similar kind of resistance is performed by Hopkinson in the subversion of images associated with the horrors of the middle passage. During Tan-Tan's last carnival on Toussaint she is given a hat that represents both the slave ships that took her ancestors to the Western Hemisphere and in a more positive connotation the spaceship that brought her people to Toussaint. This is one of the few historical subversions that occur around Tan-Tan's time at Carnival, which I will focus on more closely in the next section.

2.3 Carnival

Hopkinson's language, her interplay of Jamaican and Trinidadian Creoles, the shifting narrative voices, and the overlaps of mythic and contemporary times perform a literary language of entanglement between both peoples and histories. Such a multilayered literary location, set as well in multiple dimensions, certainly brings to mind an overall impression of “cacophony” (Byrd). It is also an explicitly carnivalesque universe. The book begins and ends with Tan-Tan at carnival, one on Toussaint the day before she leaves the planet forever and the last on New Half Way Tree the day she defeats her stepmother and gives birth to the child Tubman. The carnival as Mikhail Bakhtin has described it, evokes symbols in order to transgress and often reverse them. The “nation ship hat” that Tan-Tan receives during the first carnival scene evokes both a slave ship and a space ship. It is adorned with six candles, “[c]andles for remembrance,” Ione says (22). The ship that carried their Black ancestors into bondage is transformed into a symbol of their nation world's founding. Tan-Tan's transformation into Midnight Robber is also a transgression of typical gender roles as the role was usually reserved for men. Tan-Tan's eshu compares her to Belle Star the woman to first play Midnight Robber who was named after a cowgirl performer from America (29). This bundle of association is typical of what I have

already discussed in regards to the place names: a rich layering of historical allusions capturing and dwelling in surprising juxtapositions.

Mardi Gras Indians, shown in the carnival scene on New Half Way Tree in *Midnight Robber*, reveal another history of cross-culture exchange. In a study of the Mardi Grad Indians in New Orleans, the authors state that the “the Black tribes are a *spiritual* tradition in which the Indian persona is more than symbolism” (199). The Mardi Gras Indians evoke the numerous interactions and relationships between Black slaves and Indian tribes. These convergences are also full of conflict and contradiction. In 1730, people escaping from slavery hid with a Chickasaw community in Louisiana before starting a slave rebellion. That same year, the French army recruited Black and Native forces to combat an allied force of Natchez Indians and Black slaves and 500 Natchez Indians were sent as slaves to Saint Domingue (Berry, Foose and Jones 200). These histories are not often re-told and “carnival thus becomes the stage for a ritual enacting of historical memory” (204). This enactment also evokes the memories of shared resistance. It is telling that Tan-Tan remarks on the Mardi Gras Indians, she “revelled” in their finery (315), after a showdown with her violent step mother in which she fails to protect the douen from exposure. While her time with the douen thus ends disastrously for her adopted family, who must move to a new home safe from human prying and attacks, there remain these flashes of what alternative social orders might bring. The Mardi Gras Indians, born from the occasionally hostile, sometimes collaborative relationships between Southeastern Indian tribes and African-descended slaves, and the multiple, divergent relationships between humans and the douen on New Half Way Tree exemplify the plurality and complexities *Midnight Robber* is constantly representing and grappling with.

While there are no scenes in *The Moons of Palmares* described as carnivalesque, the repeated descriptions of Afro-Indigenous dance brings up similar themes. When Major Eaglefeather first visits the Aristide, a nightclub presumably named after Haiti's first democratically-elected president, he notes that the dances are "African in origin" and the "dancers and drummers conversed with each other in the classic call-and-response of African music" (12). The association with Haiti, one of the first contact points between African-descended peoples and Indigenous peoples of the Americas, is central to the Aristide's function in the text as a place where Terran and Palmarans interact, eat together, and watch traditional African dances performed by a Black Cherokee woman. As with the symbols of interaction, comingling and historical relationship evoked in the Mardi Gras Indians, the Aristide is one of the sites in *The Moons of Palmares* that illustrates the convergences and intimacies of the contact zone created in the Americas by the overlap of settler colonialism and slavery. The nightclub, a place associated with social revelry and abandon in ways similar to a carnival, references a country that holds the memory of conquest, genocide, a slave revolt and the ensuing history of the nation created by that uprising. It does not seem coincidental in a place of such convergences that the literal spotlight is on a woman of mixed African and Cherokee heritage who expresses herself through dance. The Aristide and the nature of the performances/performers there is one of the several ways in which the use of place names and scenes of "new world" tradition, an amalgamation of African and Indigenous American customs, works in *The Moons of Palmares* to create an intensified reflection of the historical entanglements between African-descended and Indigenous American peoples that have existed on Earth and which Amadahy extends to a futuristic outer space. Because Tan-Tan and Zaria are such central figures in these contact zones,

the next section will engage with the significance of Afro-Indigenous women and their sexuality to both Hopkinson and Amadahy's novels.

2.4 Gender, dispossession, and enslavement

Tiffany King puts in poetic and imploring tones the complicated and precarious location of African-descended women in North America.:

Are my feet planted when the land becomes property and the settlement plot or am I being dragged through the soil face down chained to a mule? What are my spatial coordinates? When conquest, ongoing genocide and settlement are studied within the context of what we know as North America, how do we map the presence and understand the significance of Black female bodies on these landscapes? (2).

I hear these questions reverberating through the contact zone worlds of Toussaint, New Half-Way Tree and Palmares where spatial coordinates are often obscured by the inter-connected processes of conquest, genocide, and settlement. Both Tan-Tan and Zaria must grapple with identities split in two and scattered across different locations, histories. Tan-Tan is from Toussaint but comes of age on New Half Way Tree, a place she can never leave. Zaria has lived her whole life on Palmares but her connections to her Terran father are often alluded to as something that sets her apart from others. We must recognize that many of these Black bodies that King refers to are also Indian bodies. Zaria is of both African and Cherokee heritage. Tan-Tan is referred to as “queen of the Taino people” in the folk tale *Tan-Tan Learn to Thief* thus positioning her as an Indigenous Caribbean woman—those first called “Indians” by Columbus.

However, the racial logics of settler colonialism necessitate an over-signification of Blackness such that both these women are read predominately as Black women. The Black

Cherokee body of Zaria, a Palmaran with a Terran father, in *The Moons of Palmares* is conspicuously sexualized by the military officials who come to watch her dance at the nightclub Aristide. In fact Major Stoic, an antagonistic trigger-happy official, claims Palmaran women are “inherently more seductive, more erotic, than their Terran counterparts” (13). It is no coincidence that the Palmaran women are also associated with Afro-Indigenous traditions and heritage. This racial logic is however cloaked by the prejudices of the world Amadahy has created, in which people assign degrading sexual stereotypes based supposedly not on race but planetary origin. The intentions and aims of these attitudes are however very similar. In this case, Amadahy is drawing the connection between sexualization of Palmaran women and the protection of destructive resource extraction processes on Palmaran moons by a foreign ruling power. In order to bring out the contrast in the Palmaran and Terran's perspectives of Palmaran culture, specifically that practiced by women, Zaria notes when performing in her home quilombo that “While Palmarans were more appreciative of and knowledgeable about the dances and music, they also had higher expectations” (107). The “bright colours, erotic movements, and loud drumming” are only appreciated if accompanied by “grace, precision, and respect for form” (107). What Stoic and other Terrans like him fail to connect to in their objectification is that these dances are an assertion of identification with earthly traditions. Major Eaglefeather is the exception and when Stoic describes Zaria's dance as a gyrating sexual display, Eaglefeather counters that the dance is an expression of “sexual freedom and joy” (13).

As an Afro-Indigenous, Black Cherokee and a Palmaran, Zaria places herself in dynamic relationship to Major Eaglefeather who is a Cherokee Terran. While he seems to have distanced himself from identifying with his ancestors, Zaria has obviously incorporated an understanding of her ancestor's historical past into her current political location. While arguing with

Eaglefeather about the Kituhwa's tactics she is the one to say, “Your ancestors were Indigenous North Americans. You must have read your history” (140). Zaria's connection to that Indigenous North American history is bound up with her identity as someone of the African/Terran diaspora, which she enacts through her dancing and belonging to Palmaran communities named after places of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Both women are sexually objectified and alluded to as property by the male figures in their lives. King argues that the settlement of North America was dependent on the metaphor of the Black feminine body in the New World as “terra nullius, the plantation (or the planting of settlements), unfettered access to property, and the unending reproduction of bodies and land” (56). Hortense Spillers and Andrea Smith also write about the conflation of woman's bodies with land and in the case of Black women the conflation with settler property. King articulates this as the basis of settler colonial power which “is fundamentally about the making of property out of land and bodies, specifically Black bodies.” (56).

For Spillers, the trans-Atlantic journey is where the Black woman is first robbed of her humanity and status as a woman. As she states, the “diasporic plight marked a theft of body” and the ensuing loss of gender difference (Spillers 67). In her telling, this theft marks the difference between “body” vs “flesh” as a categorical difference between “captive and liberated subject-positions” (67) where flesh is marked by the violent ripped-apartness in the theft of the body. This difference between flesh and body can be noted in the difference between Major Stoic's and Major Eaglefeather's perspective on Zaria's dance. The aspect of “gender loss” is also an interesting way to interpret Tan-Tan's transformation into the Midnight Robber, a role typically coded as male. This transformation is completed after she has been kidnapped from her home planet by her father to live in exile on New Half Way Tree. Once there, Tan-Tan is sexually

abused by her father, an act related to Marrayshow's corporation insemination of Toussaint, described by the Eshu as the act of “impregnating the planet with the seed of Granny Nanny” (Hopkinson 2). Bill Clemente writes that the connection between these two acts means Tan-Tan's journey throughout the novel is an attempt to “come to terms with her father's evil, so she must accept and overcome both her own violence and that of her fellow humans” (12). Thus the settlement of the planet Toussaint, their colonization of a previously inhabited planet, is directly linked to Tan-Tan's exile and forced migration to this previously-inhabited version of her home world. This narrative of sexual abuse in *Midnight Robber* both relates to and complicates the theories of Spiller and King who discuss predominately the making of Black women into property by the white settler master. However, in *Midnight Robber* it is Tan-Tan's own father who is the captor and abuser and Clemente connects this not just to the violence of white colonizer masters but to the human species as a whole. As Antonio attempts to make his home on Toussaint, not through reciprocal relationships with the douen or respect for their home, he uses Tan-Tan's body to give him a sense of belonging. Without a true uprooting of the systems of settler colonialism and the hierarchy of genres of human, black women are still symbolized as the means by which men can find freedom. In a universe seemingly without white supremacy and Eurocentric systems of governance, the same hierarchies that allow patriarchal control and sexual abuse of women persists. It is only by learning new relationships to land, history and other-than-human peoples that Tan-Tan begins to undo the trauma and abuse she has suffered at the hands of Antonio.

Hopkinson disrupts traditional understandings of gender by introducing the other-than-human genders of the douen. The role of the douen women in the society of New Half-Way Tree is both complex and mysterious. At first it seems there are no women in douen society and in

fact Tan-Tan is surprised when Chichibud mentions his wife and children. She thinks to herself “A dead douen baby could have a wife?” (96), because the name of douen comes from oral stories about “children who died before they had their naming ceremonies” (93). Perceiving the douen as dead spirits, not truly alive and not fully human because of their suspension in babyhood, Tan-Tan cannot believe there would also be women and children douen. Once Chichibud rescues you from the scene of her father's final lethal act of sexual abuse, Tan-Tan is introduced to his family and discovers the tall bird-like creature she assumed was like a horse for the douen is actually Chichibud's wife. Chichibud explains that Benta his wife that she could always talk, “all the hinte, douen women, speak” but “not among tallpeople, is all” because they “want to keep them secrets” (182). The douen women disguise themselves as pack animals, a status the tallpeople or humans can expect from douen, while hiding their powerful selves, capable of song-language, flying, and forms of magic. It takes Tan-Tan some to time to adjust to this radically different manifestation of womanhood and at first she continues to associate Benta with a less-than-human status as a beast of burden. “Tan-Tan remembered this was a woman, not a pack animal. Her ears burning with embarrassment, she pulled away” (183). Tan-Tan's prolonged contact with the douen while she lives in “Papa Bois” leads to many new discoveries for her but it is telling that her transformed sense of the world begins with accepting douen women as women and not pack animals.

2.5 Conclusion

Toussaint and New Half Way Tree are described in the first pages of *Midnight Robber* as two sides of the same reality. The eshu narrator calls New Half Way Tree, “the planet of the lost people” and the “mirror planet” and “dub version” of Toussaint (2). It is described thus as a place of darkness and disorder: it is rough as compared to the civilization of Toussaint. However, even

though the eshu paints these differences and explains that New Half Way Tree is what Toussaint looked like before it was inseminated by the Marryshow Corporation, he also binds them together. Amadahy's *Palmares* is also bound together with *Terra* while also positioned as its opposite. On *Palmares*, the process of resource extraction is inextricable from the oppression of diasporic labourers. The military is present to enforce a simple mission: “keep the quilidon flowing.” (6). Quilidon becomes a sf stand-in for all kinds of Earthly referents such as uranium, mined on Dine and Pueblo lands in SW United States and Northern Canada, as well as tar sands oil mining which is currently creating dystopic deathscapes on First Nations territories. The dedication to *The Moons of Palmares* reads “To all communities who resist settler colonialism and wanton resource extraction” (iii). The connection Amadahy brings between resource extraction and labour speaks to the settler colonial drive described by King, the making of endless property from land and racialized bodies.

These texts in many ways are grappling with the legacy of racial logics and the settings in which these logics have been tested—the Caribbean being an earthly referent for their imagined outer space settings. Science fiction itself has been a genre for exploring and sometimes reifying racial logics [Rieder, John. Kerslake, Patricia], fitting as these logics are indeed in part scientific fictions. While Amadahy and Hopkinson engage the tropes of contact, the Other, etc. they seek to completely re-structure the fundamentals of the white supremacist models of certain mainstream sf narratives. They do so by focusing on the interactions of intimacies between non-white peoples on the frontier and places marked by the legacy of slavery.

The connected histories of settler colonialism and slavery indicates the interrelated nature of Blackness and Indigeneity. In uncovering the ways these processes generated racial logics that prize proximity to whiteness as a marker of humanity, my hope has been in part to complicate

the often-replicated split between Indigenous North Americans and African-descended peoples. These complications structure both *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* whose characters carry a variety of Indigenous connections shaped and sometimes distorted through diaspora. The stories of shared subjugation between African-descended peoples and Indigenous North Americans are closely followed by signs of resistance and liberation struggles in both these texts. While the worlds Hopkinson and Amadahy craft share a cartographic memory of suffering, they are also worlds of hope. Wynter argues that we have to understand the historical connections of slavery and genocide to understand the “ecosystemic and global systemic 'interrelatedness' of our contemporary situation” (8). An understanding of the co-construction of Indigeneity and Blackness through settler colonialism and slavery in the Americas creates a networked view of the Americas that compels us to undo the violence of this networks origins while embracing our “interaltruistic co-identification as a species” (Wynter 8). This is the goal of Zaria and Masika as they seek to convince Eaglefeather of the moral necessity of his collaboration with the Kituhwa. *Midnight Robber* extends Wynter's end-goal by stressing the importance of co-identification across species. Indeed, Hopkinson's description of cyborg humans on Toussaint and the Indigenous “fauna” of New Half-Way Tree challenges Tan-Tan and the reader to re-consider terms of solidarity based on traditional notions of who or what is human.

I have attempted to map the interconnections between slavery and settler colonialism, and the ensuing relationships this created between African-descended peoples and Indigenous peoples of the Americas, in part to better understand what the process of decolonization might entail. If we are seeking to undo or reverse or severely diminish the effects of settler colonialism, then we must also work toward abolishing the socio-political continuations of slavery (and vice

versa). Just as Patrick Wolfe has famously said of settler colonialism, slavery too is not merely a historical event, it is a structure. That structure is bound up in many ways with settler colonialism, with the making of land into property along with the making of bodies into property, as King would put it.

The following chapter will also propose an expanded and nuanced conception of decolonization. While many Native peoples view decolonization as the assertion of sovereignty over their ancestral territories, I argue that just as there are alternative models of Indigeneity not dependent on a physical sovereignty over ancestral territory, so too are there alternative models of decolonization. Again, my aim will be to deconstruct binaristic modes of understanding and co-existence between peoples of differing Indigeneities in favor of nuanced relationship through and in difference. The relationship framework of Amadahy's writing and the “dynamic tension” of multiple dimensions in Hopkinson are literary representations that provide speculative models of what liberation for Indigenous peoples from Africa and the Americas might look like or how it might come about.

Chapter 3: Sovereignty, Labour, and Belonging in Indigenous Diasporas

The celebrated jazz musician, composer and writer Sun Ra crafted a motto for his vision of black liberation: “Space is the place.” Outer space is a place of possibility where, for Sun Ra, black people could form their own self-determined communities free from the toxic influences of white culture. While space is here the “place” it is also the time, a distinctly futuristic time where traditions of the past survive through dynamic innovation, evident in Sun Ra's use of Egyptian signs and symbols in outer space contexts. Outer space is a place apart from white supremacy that exists in a kind of dialectical tension between heritage and futurity. While Sun Ra's thinking on outer space predates Afrofuturism as a term, he has been retroactively included as one of the movement's ancestors. Since the adaptation of the term Afrofuturism, several other minority groups have also turned to outer space as the cosmic grounds for reformulating relationships outside white supremacy. I am interested in particular in how outer space is taken up in Indigenous Futurism imaginings, especially because outer space exploration means traveling great distances away from traditional Indigenous territories. This chapter focuses on how *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* represent Indigeneity in motion and how Indigeneity is compromised, negotiated or broken when peoples are taken far from their ancestral lands. Specifically I am interested how and why the categories of Indigenous and diasporic are framed as competing forms of belonging, whether to a place, nation, and/or peoples.

While Native American and Indigenous studies have not in the past engaged very much with the study of diaspora, Black studies is in many ways centered around understanding how the diaspora initiated by the trans-Atlantic slave trade has created the category of Blackness and affected the lives of African-descended peoples to the modern day. One of the foundational texts on the Black diaspora is Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, a text that has defined modernity in

terms of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the subsequent movement of African-descended peoples back and forth across waters and lands. Gilroy writes that, “The history of the black Atlantic yields a course of lessons as to the instability and mutability of identities, which are always unfinished, always being remade” (4). Because of his emphasis on fluidity and mutability of identities in the Black diaspora, Gilroy argues against the more fixed focus of discrete national dynamics, a position which might be at odds with Native American studies scholars, such as Craig Womack, Jace Weaver, and Robert Warrior, who write from the position of literary nationalism and argue for national sovereignty as the basis for Native political struggles for self-determination in settler colonial contexts. Part of this chapter will be unpacking the framework, or what Frank Wilderson calls the modality, of sovereignty as it is employed in the works of *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares*—what work does sovereignty do for those who claim it and what are its shortcomings? Not necessarily in opposition to a territorial sovereignty framework, Indigenous studies scholars have also begun to investigate how diaspora as a framework could describe the experiences of peoples native to Turtle Island. In a Canadian context, Sophie McCall and Christine Kim have navigated how the discourse of diaspora might apply to Indigenous studies. McCall and Kim draw together important perspectives that illuminate the ways in which Indigenous peoples, often perceived as statically rooted, are in fact often living diasporic experiences.

In this chapter, I describe connections between in order to find the points or lines of tension. The national sovereignty ideal of some Native studies scholars, as well as Native communities in North America, and the more fluid, unstable category of identity described by Gilroy and further discussed by Afropessimist and Black Studies thinkers (not to be collapsed as one category of scholar) such as Rinaldo Walcott, Frank Wilderson, Jared Sexton, Hortense

Spillers, Tiffany King and Sylvia Wynter. I am interested in how these experiences might relate or juxtapose to the Black diaspora as described by scholars of the Caribbean. Additionally, I trace these connections and diversions through the works of Hopkinson and Amadahy who draw from multiple diasporic experiences to create complex worlds of relationship between peoples of different origins and ancestries. One of the guiding questions in this interrogation of diaspora, nation, and indigeneity is this: what is the significance of diaspora to Indigenous people's relationships to land, community and culture? And more broadly I might ask: what are the limits and possibilities of thinking through indigeneity and diaspora as connected phenomena? (This latter question is closely tied to how I considered the interrelated structures of settler colonialism and slavery in the previous chapter.)

In his essay, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", Stuart Hall discusses how Caribbean people in the Black diaspora have "an overwhelming nostalgia for lost origins" that "can neither be fulfilled nor requited, and hence is the beginning of . . . the infinitely renewable source of desire, memory, myth, search, discovery" (236). The violent displacement from Africa and journey to the Americas is linked to Gilroy's statement about identities that are always being remade. Hall sees black diaspora as the catalyst for new kind of cultural production that is both future-oriented and drawn from a collective sense of history that has undergone traumatic transformation. This relationship between future and past, imaginings of new worlds and so-called lost origins, is modeled in *Midnight Robber* through the constant evoking of African and Caribbean histories. In this way, the people of Toussaint and New Half Way Tree seem to be the kind of subjects Gilroy describes, always remaking their sense of self in a place connected to the past but decidedly different. Also engaged with Caribbean representations of diaspora, Elizabeth Deloughrey uses Barbadian poet Kamau Braithwaite's theory of "tidelectics" as a framework

framework “for exploring the complex and shifting entanglement between sea and land, diaspora and indigeneity, and routes and roots” (2). Tidelectics can be shifted into a science fiction frame if we consider the “shifting entanglements” between sea and land reflected in the network of movement between the vast emptiness of space and the moons and planets, often described as island-like. In fact, there are several visual and discursive connections between representations of outer space and the Caribbean specifically.

Midnight Robber and *The Moons of Palmares*, as Futurist and sf narratives about outer space, confront the category of Indigeneity by creating settings beyond this planet and considering what remains of characters' identities when they are taken from the place of its origin. *Midnight Robber* draws on experiences of the Black diaspora, and *The Moons of Palmares* draws on similar histories as well as drawing more largely from North and South American histories of Native Indigenous resistance. In the previous chapter, I analyzed some of the ways in which the outer space inhabitants of Toussaint, New Half Way Tree, and Palmares create meaning on land through place names bearing historical and collective significance. These extraterrestrial territories are significant to the futuristic subjects of *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* though for the humans on these worlds, these territories stretch back for only a few generations. And in both novels it is territory and belonging that animate the central conflicts of the story. Thus, these novels dwell in the difficult process by which diasporic subjects make a home in outer space and the tensions inherent in creating a relationship to place that has prior inhabitants or is simply not an ancestral territory.

In *Midnight Robber*, Tan-Tan is forced to come of age in exile on the “dub side” planet of her birthplace, Toussaint. On New Half Way Tree, she is thrust into relationship with radically different beings who resist the newcomer's encroachment on their way of life while also

engaging these newcomers in a relationship of hospitality. Her story, a narrative of becoming the carnival bandit figure of the Midnight Robber, is a journey to reconcile her origins with her exile, and the future created by traveling from one to the other. On New Half Way Tree she is further exiled, driven from the human settlement after killing Antonio who sexually abuses her, into the douen community. Her adaptation to douen life and reciprocal relationship with her douen family signify her attempts at relationship with what she considers non-human beings. This relationship also represents the contact between a displaced indigeneity and more rooted, yet still fugitive, indigeneity. Hopkinson evokes the fluid overlaps between Afro-Indigenous traditions and Indigenous Caribbean cosmologies and then places this already complex identity into tension with a different, but in some ways similar, “alien” Indigeneity. Her novel probes the ways in which humans and other-than-humans can co-exist while maintaining different yet entangled relationships to land. Amadahy's novel presents what at first might seem a more simplified narrative of conflict: the Palmarans who want “home rule” and the Terran-backed Consortium that wants only to keep the quilion flowing. The labouring classes who terraformed the planet of Palmares thus making it capable of sustaining human settlement stand in for Indigenous peoples, reflected in the placenames made in honour of various historical moments of Indigenous resistance. And the Consortium is a foreign neoliberal power using an army ironically called The Peacekeepers to ensure maximum efficiency in resource extraction.

Sophie McCall states, “A diasporic-Indigenous perspective potentially foregrounds the experiences of migrant Indigenous peoples whose routes and roots, whose losses and persistent connections, have not been well documented, understood or even noticed” (29). McCall positions the diasporic-Indigenous perspective around contrasts, losses/connection, routes/roots (a pair also utilized in Deloughrey's work on Caribbean and Pacific writing). These word

pairings are not opposing sides of a binary but twinned aspects of a complex reality. In a similar way, *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* depict Indigenous diasporas entangled with another in ways that complicate binaristic views of settler/native and call for expanded notions of belonging and sovereignty to account for the realities of diaspora and slavery. The tensions between different modes of belonging and relationships to homelands are not entirely resolved in the texts and provide a model of living in and through difference. The two guiding words for creating and interpreting these models are specificity and relationship. These two texts explore the myriad of ways relationships are formed between humans and their environments. In this chapter I will look at relationships of labour, specifically the practice and afterlife of forced labour in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and relationships of sovereignty.

3.1 Diaspora and belonging

Indigeneity as it is commonly articulated does not fully account for the Indigeneity of African-descended peoples. African-descended peoples were stolen from their lands into the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The afterlife of slavery in the Caribbean and North America has meant continued attacks on the relationship between African-descended peoples and land. There is a dispossession on the same scale as the dispossession of the Indian that occurs under settler colonialism in North America. King draws this comparison when she writes that the “process of making space for the Settler and Master requires that certain bodies become non-human and placeless” (53). These bodies are those of slaves brought from Africa and the bodies of Indigenous North Americans killed in order to clear the land for settlement. The designation of these bodies as non-human reinforces the notion of placelessness (and vice versa) in the eyes of the European settler. These ideas can be traced to the work of John Locke who defines the worthy civil subject as the property-owning man. The view of placeless and non-human beings permits the genocide of Indians and the enslavement of African-descended peoples as if these peoples were not humans but objects or resources to be used for the settler master's gain.

In *Midnight Robber*, Tan-Tan and Antonio's exile to New Half Way Tree is meant to evoke the trauma of the African diaspora in which people were forced from their homelands into

slavery on distant territories. While going through dimensional shifts, Tan-Tan is reminded of her ancestor's forced migration to lands far away: "They were trapped in a confining space, being taken away from home like the long time ago Africans. Tan-Tan's nightmare had come to life." (74-75) While Tan-Tan is not being enslaved, her journey still evokes the nightmare of the middle passage because she is being taken against her will far from her home. The fact that she has knowledge and association with the journey of "long time ago Africans" speaks to the ways in which slavery has been preserved as a historical memory even for Tan-Tan who lives in a futuristic outer space.

When the eshu re-tells the story of how Tan-Tan came to New Half Way Tree in the oral story, *How Tan-Tan Learn to Thief* he says she doesn't like the story because it "always make she mind run on how she daddy steal she away from her home" (90). Being stolen away from home is marked as a trauma, a trauma here connected to the actions of Antonio who kidnaps and later sexually abuses Tan-Tan. This sexual abuse is one sign of how her displacement destroys and perverts previous relationships. As a result of the trauma of her sexual abuse, Tan-Tan splits her personality between good Tan-Tan and bad Tan-Tan, who manifests as a judgmental and self-loathing voice in her head that tells her she deserves the terrible things that have happened to her. This split is reminiscent of the "double consciousness" scholars such as Paul Gilroy, W.E.B. DuBois and Frantz Fanon have named as the particular mental state of Black peoples living under systems of white supremacy. In the worlds of Tan-Tan, there are not a considerable amount of white people and yet the process of displacement is linked to the historical processes of enslavement based in white supremacy.

On New Half Way Tree, the humans from Toussaint are split between their home planet and their new planet. Antonio tells Tan-Tan when they arrive, "This is the half-way tree, this is exile! When you go through the shift, we is new people, not Marryshevites no more. We never going to belong in Toussaint again" (75). Antonio describes exile as a loss of identity and a decisive cut from territorial belonging. As "new people" he and Tan-Tan are landless and stripped of citizenship. Hortense Spillers writes about this kind of loss as "a metaphor for the

displacement for other human and cultural features and relations” (73). This refers not only to the loss of cultural identification with a homeland (Toussaint in this case) but also the displacement of relations speaks to the trauma to sexuality and desire in the African diaspora, which is manifest in Antonio's sexual abuse of his daughter. However, despite these losses and outcomes, Spillers also asserts that one of the “supreme social achievements of African-Americans under conditions of enslavement” is the maintenance of powerful ties of sympathy that bind blood-relations in a network of feeling, of continuity.” (74) This maintenance that Spillers speaks of is represented in *Midnight Robber* most prominently through the celebration of carnival on Toussaint and New Half Way Tree. And in *The Moons of Palmares* the descendants of the labouring class maintain “powerful ties of sympathy” to those African-descended peoples enslaved in the Americas whom they view as their familial, spiritual and political ancestors. It is important to consider however whether Spiller’s argument about African-Americans is applicable to the literary contexts of these texts, neither of which takes place in America through both allude to the historical experiences of African-Americans.

Those in the African diaspora are of course not the only people to be systematically removed from their homelands and severed from the network of relations formed there (though it should be noted, that the particular process of chattel slavery which instigated this removal and severing is unique). Indigeneity as it is commonly articulated also does not fully account for the diasporic Indigeneity of Indigenous North Americans. In explaining why accounting for a diasporic-Indigenous perspective is important, Sophie McCall writes, “Diaspora may also help address experiences of mixed-race, urban, or off-reserve Native peoples, who may or may not maintain strong ties to a sovereigntist nation based on a defined territory. We might garner a better understanding of sovereignties-in-motion, or confederacies, and develop new ways of conceptualizing Native nationalism that address the wide range of relationships that Aboriginal peoples have to their ancestral territories” (22). In *Midnight Robber*, Chichibud and his community have sentimental and material ties to the tree they live in but they are also a community capable of and often forced into migration. When Tan-Tan unintentionally brings human attention to the douen's home in a “daddy tree”, they are compelled to destroy their home and go in search of another. Because of this outcome, Chichibud comes to a somewhat cynical and sad conclusion when he tells Tan-Tan, “Maybe your people and mine not meant to walk together, oui” (283). However, this statement is contradicted shortly after when Chichibud insists

that his daughter Abitefa, “exiled from her people” for leading to the douen's exposure, stay with Tan-Tan until she finds “a next daddy tree” to take her in (282, 283). While Abitefa is separated from her family, her possibility of retaining a connection to douen relations and the home of a daddy tree is preserved. And her journey to being reincorporated is quite literally through walking together with Tan-Tan through the bush.

The split between worlds in *Midnight Robber* is similar to the views regarding planetary origin in *The Moons of Palmares*. There is a prevailing antagonism in Amadahy's universe between those who are Terran, from Earth, and those who now claim Palmares as their homeland. However, as a human species, all the peoples on Palmares trace their roots back to Earth. When a military officer Major Stoic refers to a group of protestors as “those people,” Major Eaglefeather replies, “You say that as though you think they're different than us. Their ancestors were born on Earth, just like ours” (5). The common connection to Earth, whether ancestral or more immediate is evoked to create a sense of empathy. Eaglefeather here is evoking common origins over divisions created through the diaspora of a labour force sent far from their homes. There is no denying that the Terran-based Consortium and its Peacekeeper forces have very different interests than the Palmaran peoples. Eaglefeather, as Chief of Security, is very aware of these differences, and yet he is keen to find the common ground of a shared ancestry, one related to location but not statically dependent on it.

Eaglefeather's shift over the course of the novel—from security chief loyal to Terran and Consortium interests to a supporter of Palmaran resistance—relies in part on his consideration of his Cherokee ancestry. In one conversation with rebel leader Masika, Eaglefeather speaks very negatively about his ancestors saying “My ancestors' indecision, superstitions, and inability to join forces were their downfall. We were our own worst enemy. That's why we were conquered, why we spent centuries fighting extinction” (101). From his statement, it is clear Eaglefeather believes that Cherokee people and their ways of relating to the world are responsible for their dispossession and genocide. Eaglefeather's eventual willingness to reconsider the validity of his ancestor's decisions comes from listening to the Kituhwa who have found a way to adapt different Indigenous knowledge and governance systems to life on a new planet. Masika cites specifically the Iroquois confederation and the political praxis of consensus as a democratic system of governance. Amadahy here assumes a kind of pan-Indigenous commitment to democratic systems of governance, which does conflate and overgeneralize different traditions

but also speaks to the ways in which these tribal and national ideas are transformed and remade in an outer space society.

Midnight Robber depicts Afro-Caribbean traditions and rituals in a future outer space context, showing both the flexibility and relevance of these Indigenous traditions in diaspora. Hopkinson's outer space worlds also grapple with how people use these traditions to find sense of their location in a homeland that is far from their own and previously inhabited by beings with a long-standing knowledge and practice of living on their ancestral territory.

Hopkinson demonstrates the dynamism of Afro-Indigenous and Indigenous Caribbean cultures by creating a high-tech society named after and based on different aspects of these Indigenous histories and knowledge systems. The pedi-cab runners who can evade Granny Nanny's perception do so by learning and manipulating the network's language. These pedicab runners are actually descended from Granny Nanny programmers. One of these runners is Maka, who helps Antonio escape from jail through the use of manipulated Granny Nanny code. Interestingly, Maka is also teaching himself “herb science....an ancient skill” (53). Maka thus plays with the colonial logic that considers ancient skills and traditions in opposition to advanced technological knowledge. Hopkinson creates a world where a super computer brain connecting the citizens of Toussaint into networked cyborgs exists alongside and as a complement to traditional land-based knowledges. The implicit critique of a tradition/technology binary is also present in Hopkinson's descriptions of New Half Way Tree. While Antonio perceives the planet as backwards, Tan-Tan almost immediately benefits from douen technology in the form of a “magic cloth” Chichibud's wife made by “weaving a magic to give warmth” (96). While the douen cloth is described as a magic craft, the previous allusions in the text to weaving and AI made by the eshu allow the reader to view the blanket not only as a home craft but a form of technology—that is, applied knowledge for a particular use. Indeed, the contrasts often associated with crafts and advanced technology are thrown into question here as the cyborg-like Toussaint citizens are ill-equipped for surviving the bush. In the estrangement typical of science fiction, *Midnight Robber* compels us to consider the AI technology of Granny Nanny as a kind of magic (especially with its associations with otherworldly beings) and the douen magic as a kind of technology. In addition, the douen language is related to Toussaint technology by nature of its sing-song quality, which is difficult for the humans of Toussaint to understand without study.

On a podcast entitled “Black Tracking through Afrofuturism”, the founder of The Black Land Project, Mistinguette Smith discusses the relationship Black peoples in North America have formed to land. According to the website, The Black Land Project “identifies and amplifies conversations happening inside black communities about the relationship between black people, land, and place in order to share their powerful traditions of resourcefulness, resilience and regeneration.” While discussing this project, Smith's words reflect a decolonizing perspective to land, specifically when she states that the Black Land Project is not about owning land but theorizing “relationships of hospitality” which engender freedom. In this regard, Smith cites the West African conception that people cannot own land, land is “something that owns them.” This is something alluded to during Tan-Tan and Antonio’s introduction to the bush of New Half Way Tree. Chichibud offers his help by establishing a relationship of “trail debt” (96). In exchange for Chichibud guiding the two newcomers to a tallpeople settlement where they will be among their own kind, Chichibud asks for some kind of payment in return. However, as the trip progresses it is obviously not just material exchanges that constitute trail debt but also a certain willingness to learn about and be in relationship to the land that will now host these newcomers.

While both these texts show examples of Afro-Indigenous knowledge, traditions, stories, and lifeways persisting despite and alongside the horrific movements of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, they also highlight the ways in which these practices can further dispossession of other Indigenous peoples. As Bill Clemente writes, “The glorification of the Marrayshow Corporation's achievement hides the violence and destruction behind the planet's transformation, and disguises the link to the horrors of the past the colonists have left behind” (15). Shona Jackson introduces the idea of creole Indigeneity to discuss the ways in which the construction of “creolized” indigenous identities has historically and currently furthered the dispossession and purposeful “othering” of Indigenous tribes of the Americas. Carnival is a time on Toussaint when the many different Afro-Caribbean expressions of creole culture are celebrated. During the first carnival scene in the novel, Tan-Tan encounters a Robber King, a bandit-like figure that solicits money through the artfulness of his speech-making. In this case, the Robber King's speech “mirrored the autobiography of Olaudah Equiano, an African noble's son stolen into slavery on seventeenth-century Earth.” This story, the narrator explains, is common to the genre of Robber King's speeches which “always told of escaping the horrors of slavery and making their way into brigandy as a way of surviving in the new and terrible white devils' land in which they'd found

themselves” (57). The phrase “white devil's land” obscures that the land itself does not actually belong to the European colonizers while also evoking the sense of overwhelming white or Eurocentric control over structuring the reality of the Americas. With no possibility of returning to the land where he was a noble, the Robber King seeks to survive on another's lands while maintaining some sense of the home he cannot return to. While this moment in the speech reproduces the displacement of Indigenous peoples by acknowledging the Americas as only belonging to the “white devil”, it also reflects the reality constructed for African-descended peoples through the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This speech outlines the ways in which the settler has created a world where it seems as if no Indigenous peoples remain. Though this myth of extinction is false, the structures of settler colonialism and slavery often prevent the Indigenous peoples of the Americas from being seen by the African-descended peoples forced to work the stolen land. In turn, the status of being enslaved and dehumanized prevents the lifeways and practices of African-descended peoples from being seen as practices of a displaced and dispossessed Indigenous peoples.

3.2 Labour and property

In the entangled processes of settler colonialism and chattel slavery, Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island and Africa are respectively figured as property-less and as property. The settler colonial project is to clear the land of Indigenous peoples and force another displaced Indigenous peoples, taken from their ancestral territories and made into property, to do the work of creating wealth for the white settler master. Tiffany King writes that labour in particular has become a discourse and framework “as scholars undertake the difficult work of understanding and naming how racialized people are situated within White settler colonial states” (*Labour's Aphasia*). Labour is a framework connected to a larger discussion about what kind of relationships humans form between their bodies, land, and other humans as well as other-than-humans. *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* raise issues of labour and property as their carious characters struggle to understand how labour situates them in the world and in the hierarchies of human and other-than-human.

On Toussaint, the pedicab drivers are the one group of “luddites” who insist on using their bodies for labour, and not coincidentally it is this group that has found a system for conveying messages hidden from the vast surveillance system of Granny Nanny. Antonio tells a pedicab driver, “You know how it does bother citizens to see allyou doing manual labour so.

Back-break ain't for people.” The pedicab responds that, “Honest work is for people. Work you could see, could measure” (8). The distinction made here by the pedicab driver is between “back-break” and “honest work”. The former implies hard, manual labour that is breaks a person's back, while honest work has a more positive connotation of achievement. It also implies less of a degree of alienation between the body and the labour it performs as the pedicab driver notes you can “see” and “measure” honest work. In another instance, labour is defended as something that can be a sacred engagement between the body and the world. Tan-Tan's nurse tells her, “Don't mind people tell you labour nasty. Some kind is a blessing for true, a sacrament” (35). Because Nursie is specifically about her labour as a dancer, perhaps it is artistic or expressive forms of labour she considers sacred.

These complex and contradictory attitudes toward labour on Toussaint pose an interesting counterpoint to Jackson's explanation of how labour functions in the Caribbean. Jackson writes a history of the post-colonial Caribbean in which African-descended peoples “argued that, through their labor, they had not only transformed the land to produce contemporary societies, economies and cultures but they had transformed themselves into the rightful owners of the colony.” If as Jackson argues that by “affirming work as the basis for their humanity, blacks have affirmed European political and social structures” how do we compare the situation on outer space Toussaint to the Earthly Caribbean it is connected to? Partly in response to Jackson's article, King offered the critique that Black labour has its limits as a framework for understanding anti-blackness's role in settler colonialism. King writes, “I am particularly concerned about the ways that Black labor may crowd out Black fungibility as a conceptual frame for thinking about Blackness within settler colonial discourses” (*Labour's Aphasia*). King is arguing that the labour performed by Black bodies in the settler colonial state is not sufficient for affirming their status as human and that the Black body's status is never labourer but fungible flesh. Similar to Wilderson, she is asserting the object status of the Black body. Interestingly on Toussaint, we can see the aversion to labour as perhaps a resistance to the idea that labour can make Black people seen as human in a colonial order. Having established a post-colonial planet, the people of Toussaint strive to become something other or more than human by embracing a cyborg relation to an artificial intelligence interface that allows them to live free of back-break.

During Jonkanoo Season on Toussaint, all of the people would “celebrate the landing of the Marryshow Corporation nation ships that had brought their ancestors to this planet two

centuries before” (18). This scene is one of the several instances in which Hopkinson evokes and recasts the middle passage as a long journey from a homeland to a supposedly-new world. In this description, the space ship is a “nation ship” that is subsumed under a corporation. In this speculative future citizens of Toussaint the nation planet are also corporate members called Marryshevites. While the particular structure of this corporate political entity is not described in detail, the name evokes T.A. Marryshow, a twentieth-century journalist and statesman from Grenada, and his life's work in creating a unified West Indian Federation. The re-imagining of this political federation as a corporation seems as ambiguous as are many of her other narrative choices. Is this meant to reflect an Earth taken over by capitalism so completely that unity of a people's is only possible through corporate sponsorship? Like the unclear position of the Marryshow Corporation, responsible as well for the clearing of the douen and the complete transformation of the land, Granny Nanny is another morally ambiguous part of Toussaint. During Jonkanoo when people celebrate the Marryshow Corporation it is also a “time to give thanks to Granny Nanny for the Leaving Times, for her care, for life in this land, free from downpression and botheration” (18). The journey to Toussaint, a diaspora named “Leaving Times” is symbolized as a liberation during Jonkanoo with little mention of the controlled, constantly-surveilled society Granny Nanny initiated and no recognition of the violent clearing of Toussaint's original inhabitants that made Toussaint “safe” for the newcomers.

The narrator of *Midnight Robber* then turns to the role of the individuals of Toussaint and their ancestors in making the planet possible—interestingly labour plays a central role in the mythology of Toussaint's founding. Jonkanoo or carnival time is also when Toussaint citizens “remember the way their forefathers had toiled and sweated together: Taino Carib and Arawak; African; Asian; Indian; even the Euro, though some wasn't too happy to acknowledge that there bloodline. All the bloods flowing into one river, making a new home on a new planet” (18). Here labour is configured as a unifying struggle though the exact nature of that labour is unclear. “Toiled” implies physical labour and the mention of blood seems to evoke sexual relations. The sweat and blood of Toussaint's ancestors create one river and it is from that source that the new home on the new planet arises. It is implied that the citizens are celebrating what their labour led to: the use of a new planet for a near-utopic society where labour is no longer necessary because of the cyborg-like connection humans have to an AI interface. While the narrator mentions many of the different peoples whose histories have collided in the Caribbean, where we can assume

from the language and place names of Toussaint is the place of origin from which the Marryshow nation ships departed, she flattens the difference between these Indigenous Caribbean, Afro-Caribbean, Asian and Indian and the different ways in which the sweat and blood of these peoples was used and shed for different purposes.

Black labour and forced labour while enslaved are not the same as other kinds of labour, which are legitimized in white civil society. John Locke writes that when a man “takes something from the state that nature has provided and left it in, he mixes his labour with it, thus joining to it something that is his own; and in that way he makes it his property” (Locke 11). Locke here states that the process of property ownership begins with mixing your labour (if you’re a man). Yet this is not true for the enslaved person. King argues, “Black laboring bodies have even been used to build the settler nation. However, Black labor is just one kind of use within an open, violent and infinite repertoire of practices of making Black flesh fungible” (*Labours Aphasia*). Black labour, according to King does not make the Black body more human or grant the body access to property but instead is another way by which the settler master transforms Black flesh into another aspect of his own property. As many Black studies scholars have argued, the unique nature of chattel slavery is that it transformed African peoples into property devoid of a human self according to the Western European conception of a human. Wilderson writes that the “violence that turns the African into a thing is without analog” (38). He demonstrates the inability to find comparison by juxtaposing the Holocaust to chattel slavery: “Jews went into Auschwitz and came out as Jews. Africans went into the ships and came out as Blacks” (38). This is the loss of an Indigenous identity but also the loss of any identity beyond “Black” the position by which humanness or non-slave would then be measured. Similarly, Jared Sexton argues “Slavery is not a loss that the self experiences – of language, lineage, land, or labor – but rather the loss of any self that could experience such loss” (9). It is this kind of loss, which Sexton and Wilderson argue is not experienced by Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island or other people of colour drawn into the settler slave state that strips from the descendent of Black slaves the possibility of integrating into the nation through their forced labour. In *Midnight Robber*, it is curious then that the Caribbean subjects of Toussaint, clearly conscious of their common history of enslavement, do not come to their new planet to become human but more than human through their cyborg connection to Granny Nanny. This is perhaps a response to the total loss of self that is mandated by chattel slavery and the accumulation of Black flesh as

property of the settler master. The disavowal of labour is an attempt to form a different kind of relationship to the idea of human, one mediated through technology. Ingrid Thaler rightfully points out the irony in Toussaint's deconstruction of the human/machine binary while still upholding the human/animal binary, which is used to other the douen of New Half Way Tree. The complex negotiations with a shared history of forced labour under chattel slavery and an ambiguous turn to technological evolution on Toussaint speak to how difficult it is to form a sense of identity and belonging outside the hierarchies created through settler colonialism and chattel slavery.

Palmares has a very different attitude to labour, one disturbingly similar to the theories of Locke briefly described above. On Palmares the citizens continue to express pride over their labour, not just in the work of the mines but in the work of making the planet habitable. On Palmares the people were brought to work the lunar mines and were housed in a large compound. The labourers were all originally humans, brought from Earth, Mars colonies, stations around Venus and the moons of Jupiter and Saturn. Amadahy describes the original recruits as the “poorest of the poor” who then formed the founding population of a settlement and eventual company town. The Palmarans are proud of what they have accomplished through their terraforming efforts: they have essentially created a territory and then argued for sovereignty over their creation. However, how does the Palmaran model of sovereignty reinforce settler colonial notions of land use and labour as constitutive of humanity and belonging? I am thinking here of how the fact that Indians did not practice European techniques of working the land. As John Locke states, “A man owns whatever land he tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the products of. By his labour he as it were fences off that land from all that is held in common” (12). In the Americas, the process of making the land into property, as understood in European terms, went hand in hand with making people into property: this making people into property cannot be separated from how the settler-master works the land. Indeed, slavery becomes one of the ways in which the settler understands his position as a rightful inheritor and owner of stolen land. While Palmarans clearly identify with the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, evident through their place names and politics, their actual history does not reflect enforced labour or chattel status on the level of the history their reference and incorporate into their identity. Instead, the Palmarans seem to support the Lockean view of improving and cultivating the land as a method of attainment. It is rather ironic to see this model employed by a

populous that is also positioned as peoples fighting colonization. The outer space context of terraforming raises some provocative questions about the ethics of settlement of any kind, even when it seems the land is empty and uninhabited (an attitude of European settlers as well it should be noted).

3.3 Sovereignty

I will now turn to sovereignty as another practice of claiming belonging and ownership over land and a practice taken up by Indigenous scholars and nations in political struggles against settler colonialism. Amadahy explicitly frames the political conflict between the Palmarans and the Terran-based Consortium and its military Peacekeepers as an issue of sovereignty. In the promotional copy for the novel it is described as an “unfortunate but timeless story” of “the struggle for sovereignty against colonization” (back cover). The Palmarans want full home rule without the intervention and militarized oversight of the Consortium who are positioned here as colonizers.

Sovereignty is not as clearly addressed in *Midnight Robber* though the novel grapples throughout with what it means for a people to belong to and claim a location. There are multiple spaces in *Midnight Robber*, the bush and “daddy tress” that are autonomous zones for the douen and towns where sovereign authority is claimed by the humans. The douen do not live in the sovereign spaces of the human settlements, where someone like the Sheriff maintains authority and order through brutal corporal punishment, and the humans do not live in the douen settlements or even know where they are. The view of sovereignty and belonging is complicated in the novel by a hierarchy of humanity. As Thaler points out, the people of Toussaint have overcome the human/machine binary considering themselves human beings despite their cyborg-like implants that keep them continuously linked up to the Anansi Interface. However on Toussaint, they use the human/animal binary as a boundary of personhood. Because they do not view the douen as human or “compere”, they do not seek to learn about them or reciprocate the relation of hospitality extended by the douen. Belonging for Chichibud is not about how humans or “tallpeople” as he calls them work the land but how they learn to co-exist with it. What would Chichibud and his fellow douen think of a concept like sovereignty? The douen consider themselves in kinship with the land and other beings of New Half Way Tree. They are also sometimes a people in motion who relocate from one daddy tree to another. This willingness to move and maintain the same system of relationships in new locations aligns with Gerald

Vizenor's theory of transmotion, which “is survivance, a reciprocal use of nature, not a monotheistic, territorial sovereignty” (15). Instead of territorial sovereignty, Vizenor argues for “sui generis sovereignty” or a unique sovereignty where the rights of motion are “personal, totemic, and reciprocal; not base line surveys, futurity or possessory” (16-17). Sui generis sovereignty and transmotion are ideas that float and travel between the always being remade quality of the black diaspora identity as described by Gilroy and Hall and the more rigid ideals of national sovereignty upheld by Weaver, Warrior, and Womack. It is a categorization of sovereignty that recognizes the messiness of peoples’ motions across Earth and oceans and the fluid ways in which identity and belonging can be formed relationally and with attention to particularity. This notion of sovereignty is compelling in the context of *Midnight Robber* because it captures the ideal of reciprocity and relationship in motion that seems at the heart of Tan-Tan's journey in exile to make up for the violence against her body and the larger violence of human settlement on Toussaint and New Half Way Tree.

3.4 Decolonization and relationships of dynamic tension

How can we imagine our entanglements? Both Hopkinson's and Amadahy's novels deal with how different peoples might be able to hold different understandings of relation to land at the same time and on the same space. In engaging with the messy and complicated worlds and relationships in *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares*, I am seeking how these authors imagine and represent the possibilities for more collective liberation on both their outer space locations and the location on Earth from which they write. These texts highlight what is argued by McCall and Kim: that “the broader project of decolonization requires multiple kinds of tools and strategies, including re-imagining nation and community” (6). The ambiguous endings of both novels, neither completely joyful nor hopeless point to the ways in which any kind of decolonizing or liberatory project is impossible to accomplish all at once. In lieu of concrete solutions to the problems the characters face as a result of their displacement, dispossession or oppression, the authors both end on hopeful notes of future relationship-building.

Christine Kim proposes “diasporic relationality” as an enabling critical tool to imagine new kinds of identifications and this is the kind of relationality that is the hope of both *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares*. In the same volume Cho reads Stuart Hall's work as a call “for a way of living with specificity through relation” (15). Specificity through relation means an attendance to difference through empathetic rather than conflicting connections. I read Hall as

imagining different ways to perceive contact, a pervasive and deconstructed trope in both Hopkinson and Amadahy's work. *Midnight Robber* narrates Tan-Tan's search for a way of living with specificity through relation when she becomes part of Chichibud's douen community, while at the same time is also somewhat separated from the douen social life because she does not experience the same bodily relationship to the daddy tree and bush. She prefers different food and on a more significant level does not experience the process of puberty that is central to her adopted-sister's identity as a douen woman. Chichibud offers hospitality when he comes across the scene of Tan-Tan's lethal act of self-defense against Antonio. Reciprocity and responsibility are summed up for Chichibud by the adage "When you take one life, you must give back two." This becomes a guiding phrase for Tan-Tan as she lives in exile with the douen after killing Antonio. It is re-iterated again in the *Midnight Robber* folktale told about Tan-Tan as a song: "It ain't have no magic in do-for-do, /If you take one, you must give back two." (290). How can we apply this concept of debt and reciprocal action to the larger themes of diaspora and indigeneity? As someone who is indebted to the douen, not only for her rescue from persecution after the murder of Antonio but also for the ability to survive on alien land, Tan-Tan feels compelled to give back more than she has taken. Can this provide a model for how to establish relationships between differently positioned peoples? Indeed, considering my stated embrace of messiness in the prior chapter, perhaps model is not the right word as it implies a type of codified and rigid schematic, when in fact the relationships of contact might require a much more dynamic and shifting understanding.

The end of *Midnight Robber* is also not entirely a happy one. Tan-Tan's actions exposes the douen's home to the humans and put the douen community in grave danger of harassment and violence. In this case, the douen and the human continue to fail to live together, in part because the douen live in fear of the human tendency for violence and the human inability to accept the douen as "compere" or equals. However, there is also a sense of balance and the semblance of a hopeful future. Tan-Tan's child, Tubman, is proclaimed by the eshu to symbolize "a human bridge between bondage and freedom" (329). Tubman is of course named after Harriet Tubman, a hero of the Black community in America who helped hundreds of enslaved peoples to escape bondage in the American South by guiding them through the Underground Railroad to location in the North of America or Canada. The eshu proclaims this a good name, saying to the child "a seer woman might have name you that" (329). The eshu's blessing of the name gives

Tubman's birth the sense of a vision: this is the child that will foster liberatory connections. Though Hopkinson does not explicitly remark who it is that will be bridged from bondage to freedom, the unique nature of Tubman's cyborg body gives some indication. Tubman is a cyborg in a more extreme sense than Tan-Tan, Antonio and all the other born on Toussaint who have earbugs implanted in them. As the eshu explains, Tubman's "whole body is one living connection with the Grande Anansi Nanotech Interface" because Granny Nanny was able to instruct the communicating "nanomite" devices to grow into the child's tissue (328). Because of the similarity between the musical language of Granny Nanny and the sing-song language of the douen, there is also the possibility that Tubman will help bridge relationships within New Half Way Tree as well. Just as Tubman's "little bodystring will sing to Nanny tune," perhaps he will also be uniquely capable, even more so than his mother, to form empathetic connections to the douen because of his understanding of other-than-human languages. Tubman's unique physiognomy also gives him a communicative bridge back to his ancestral homeland despite his birth on the dubsided planet of New Half Way Tree. What this will mean for his sense of identity is unclear as the novel ends at his birth, but the visionary aspects of his naming point to a special role he will have in bridging distances both geographic and inter-personal.

3.5 Conclusion

In their investigations into how relations of solidarity might exist between the Indigenous people of Turtle Island and the African-descended peoples thrust into diaspora through the trans-Atlantic slave trade, Wilderson and Walcott conclude more with questions than solid conclusions. Both of these scholars' inquiries strike me as distinctly futurist, in their forward-looking drive. Walcott asks the more open-ended question of "What kind of new vistas can we imagine for living with intensified and constantly shifting forms of difference?" (189). Wilderson with greater specificity asks, "What...inhabits this analytic and political dream of a "Savage"/Slave encounter?" (182). In other words, what could come about from a moment of contact between the Native person and the African-descended person—a question hanging over the cosmic skies of Hopkinson's and Amadahy's work. For Wilderson the ideal moment of recognition at this point of contact involves the "Savage" empathizing with "the absolute object status of the Slave" from the modality of genocide rather than sovereignty. (182) In other words, Wilderson is asking Native peoples in North America to abandon the appeal for sovereignty which only reinforces the same hierarchy of human/object that keeps the Black person always prefigured as a slave.

Instead, he argues that Indigenous peoples in North America realize that this hierarchy also tries to make them objects to be cleared from the land just as it made Black bodies into objects for the settler master's wealth. Indigenous studies scholar Taiaiake Alfred might agree with Wilderson that the discourse of sovereignty is inadequate for political liberation under white supremacy. Alfred argues that sovereignty “has limited the ways we are able to think, suggesting always a conceptual and definitional problem centered on the accommodation of indigenous peoples within a 'legitimate' framework of settler state governance” (Alfred 35). I wonder if the novels of Hopkinson and Amadahy provide alternative models of empathizing and connection that seek, if possible, to identify not through what the settler master has done to “Savage” and “Slave” bodies but through a new vision of common humanity. This is a possibility also suggested in the works of Sylvia Wynter and the collectively-authored essay “Not Nowhere: Collaborating on Selfsame Land” by Eve Tuck, Allison Guess and Hannah Sultan. In the latter essay, the authors draw from Fanon's conception of the “new human” who possesses an emergent kind of relating to the world and each other that Fanon views as the end of decolonization. Tuck, Guess and Sultan imagine this future as “the time and space in which we can tumble into something that will be arranged differently, coded differently, so that our locations and labors are more than just who we are to the settler” (Guess, Sultan and Tuck 9). This time and space is not a place yet found in *Midnight Robber* or *The Moons of Palmares*. As discussed, there are outer space locations laden with the frameworks and practices of settler colonialism and its attendant hierarchies of human-ness. While describing the structures that have maintained suffering and harm among and between different groups in the Americas, these novels both point toward pathways that might lead to the decolonial future described via Fanon above.

There are glimpses of this world in the efforts of the Palmarans to draw from their mutual suffering as labourers and create a self-sustaining autonomous collective of diverse cultures and ancestries. A society borne from mutual suffering with dedication to a new model of society bears a resemblance to the world of Toussaint, in which peoples of Caribbean ancestry make a new home free from the oppressive legacy of their homelands. In *The Moons of Palmares* however, Amadahy describes the Palmaran model as much more democratic than Toussaint's world, which is adjudicated almost entirely by Granny Nanny. In their terraforming and society-building efforts, the Palmarans are self-aware in their desire to make a world apart from Terra. One Palmaran in describing the layout of the quilombo tells Major Eaglefeather to “contrast it

with the way many Terran cities were designed, especially following the invention of the automobile: a tic-tac-toe arrangement of filing cabinets, with cars given priority access to every building. Here, we put our roads around plazas. That way, groundskips don't intrude on our daily activities. Each plaza is a small self-contained community” (118). While it is a brief and passing mention of infrastructure, this explanation illuminates some of the ideals around community and interdependency that Palmarans have used to build their planet's culture. Despite their current oppressive existence, the people on Palmares have still managed to start creating a world outside the frameworks and interests of the Terran world imposed on them through the Consortium.

This however does not take away from the question of whether the Palmarans are themselves a colonizing force. Unlike on Toussaint, there is not mention of a previous Indigenous community on Palmares. While Hopkinson and Amadahy's novels provide alternative models to contact, they also represent the constant replication of othering, exclusion, and harm that can arise when people of differing origins meet on contested lands. With these author's admirable reluctance to simplify or erase these conflicting interests, one of the conclusions from their novels may be that there is never one single way to ensure a lack of harm or power differential between different peoples coming into contact. There is only the hope and practice of naming the specificity of difference in order to better understand and coexist with each other.

I return now to some of the central motivating questions for this chapter and project at large: How can we create belonging for each other on contested and stolen lands? How do the racial logics of Indigeneity and blackness, and the subsequent frameworks of labour and sovereignty, affect our capabilities to form bonds of collaboration and solidarity? It seems that both labour and sovereignty are both insufficient frameworks for deciding belonging. That is not to say that labour and sovereignty cannot be meaningful and profound and rightfully-defended frameworks for identity and belonging but that these cannot be our only measure for who is included in the “genre” of human or even rightful inhabitant. As Wynter and Fanon suggest, and I think *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* explore, the space of the future is a time when we can begin to see ourselves beyond the world that colonialism and slavery have created. The work of even seeing let alone building that world might very well rest on the transformation or turning-away-from exclusionary categories of political legitimacy such as labour and sovereignty.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

“I do battle for the creation of a human world—that is a world of reciprocal recognitions.”

-Frantz Fanon (*Black Skin, White Masks* 218)

This project began with an interest in the intersections, narratively and historically, between Indigenous futurism and Afrofuturism. *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* are two texts that span these literary movements and evoke the entangled stories of Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island and the Caribbean and African-descended peoples in diaspora. These entanglements were formed by the movements of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the patterns of dispossession and genocide against peoples in the Americas. Hopkinson and Amadahy reflect these histories onto distant stars and planets, using the vast possibilities of open space to explore more broadly issues around land, belonging and identity in diaspora. I want to turn now to larger conversations on what is commonly referred to as Black and Native relations. The scholarly discussions of these relations has informed much of my work on Hopkinson and Amadahy, and thus I want to end on considering how Black studies and Indigenous studies can collaborate on discussions around our shared suffering and possible futures.

The double thrust of shared suffering and possible future connecting disparate peoples points to the ways in which Black and Native relations are always shot through with complex ambiguities, or multiplicities of meaning and affect. In my discussion of *Midnight Robber*, I focused on some of the ambiguous aspects of the novel, a framework borrowed from Ingrid Thaler who uses ambiguity to mean double-sidedness. For instance Thaler remarks that in the novel “Black Atlantic liberation becomes a replay of the colonization of the Caribbean by Europeans” (120). Liberation for one group of people is on its other side the colonization of

another. This creates a kind of cyclical pattern with the history of Earth being reproduced and shifted on an extraterrestrial plane, true as well for *The Moons of Palmares* which tells the “timeless” story of colonialism, resource extraction, and a political movement for sovereignty. These patterns of domination do not only shift between European subjects and those they colonized and enslaved—the patterns of domination operate so that those who were colonized and enslaved also participate in their own and other's oppression. Tiya Miles argues that this uncomfortable position of colonizer/colonized, oppressor/oppressed often overwhelms and forecloses the project of understanding Black and Native relations. “For black and Indian peoples in the United States, this imperative to 'disremember' is even more pressing, because memory contains not only the suffering we have endured in the vise of colonial expansion, genocide, and slavery but also the suffering we have endured at the hands of one another in this context of brutal oppression” (Miles xiv). It should be noted that *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares* depict the network of crisscrossing and overlapping oppressions in a larger context than the United States. Mile's work on the slave-holding Cherokee man Shoe Boots and his mixed-race family is just one story in a larger web of interlocking stories of relationships in a post-Columbus world. Even though my interest is in futurist works, I find it imperative to recover and discuss these histories in all their painful messiness. As Miles writes these remembering bring out the uncomfortable truth of the suffering we have endured at the hands of our shared oppressors as well as the suffering we have done to each other. Despite the discomfort and pain that comes with speaking of the multiple ways our histories have been entangled, bound, and also severed, it is only by remembering that we can find paths of collaboration and support. We cannot untie the knots, but we can find strength rather than

restraint in them. As Miles continues, “the very stories that pain us so are the maps to our inner worlds, and to the better worlds that we envision for our children” (xv).

In recent years, it seems that Native and Indigenous Studies have come into conflict with Black studies, and similarly political organizing around Native and Indigenous issues has been put in opposition to Black political movements. These debates have hovered in the background and subtext of the proceeding chapters and I want to directly engage here with some of the work around these relationships in order to search for the paths to common ground. I want to focus on one particular discussion, between Jared Sexton on the one hand and Bonita Lawrence and Amadahy on the other. This is particularly relevant for this project because Amadahy's scholarly work can provide insights into the political and intellectual motivations behind her novel *The Moons of Palmares*. This discussion centers on North America with Lawrence and Amadahy writing their article in a Canadian context and Sexton from an American context. However, as both articles engage with histories of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and settlement in the Americas, their discussion bears importance for the shared histories across the Western hemisphere in the wake of slavery and settler colonialism, the same histories I traced in the outer space place names of *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares*.

The investigation for Lawrence and Amadahy is stated succinctly in their title, “Indigenous Peoples and Black People in Canada: Settlers or Allies?”. From this title, I identify some initial shortcomings in the authors' approach, most significantly the split between Indigenous Peoples and Black people. Indigenous peoples is prefigured as a group of multitudes separate from Black peoples, though Amadahy herself writes that she considers her heritage to be a mixed Indigenous identity—of both African and Cherokee Indigenous ancestry (108). While I do not think the authors should conflate all of Indigenous peoples with Black people, the clear

separation of Indigenous and Black is already neatly dividing Blackness and Indigeneity rather than exploring the nuanced overlaps these discourses might share. The subtitle demonstrates the authors' interest in interrogating whether Black people are settlers or allies to Indigenous peoples in Canada. The authors write that Black people are not the “quintessential settlers” because of the process of being “forcibly transplanted from their own lands” and in the afterlife of slavery being continuously dispossessed and denied access to land as free people. The authors eventually conclude, “What seems more important than the semantics about whether or not individuals should be called settlers is the question of the relationships that Black “settlers” have, by virtue of their marginality, with those whose lands have been taken, and what relationships they wish to develop, *at present*, with Indigenous peoples” [emphasis in original] (107). The authors describe slaves escaping to Canada via the Underground Railroad as people “clearing the land” and displacing “Indigenous presence” while also overlooking a serious engagement with historical work on eighteenth-century slave-owning Mohawk families because these accounts “normalize colonization” (120). In this articulation, the authors want to implicate Black people for their participation in claiming land illegitimately claimed by the European settler while also acknowledging that “because of slavery, in this context there was little choice” and that because of racist policies in Canada, colonial programs were not open to the descendants of those previously enslaved (20). While I appreciate the author's attempts to trace the complexities of Black presence in Canada, I am disappointed by their focus on Black peoples' failure to acknowledge Indigenous presence. This can be re-articulated not as a failure of people fleeing chattel slavery to survive but as the successful completion of a North American landscape dictated by European conquest in which the genocided and the enslaved cannot see each other.

Lawrence and Amadahy then turn to countering the notion, prevalent in Black studies, that slavery is “the defining moment creating the (North) American experience” (123). At this point, I want to bring in Sexton's work as it engages specifically with Native studies' and Settler Colonial Studies' understanding, or in his view misunderstanding, of slavery. Sexton engages with Lawrence and Amadahy's article, as well as other work by Native studies scholars such as Andrea Smith, Glen Coulthard, Waziyatawin and others, in order to study the relationship between decolonialism and anti-racism. His overall argument is that decolonization movements for Indigenous sovereignty avoid or fail to comprehend the unique nature of chattel slavery and the ways in which anti-Blackness has positioned the descendants of those enslaved as perpetually landless and selfless. However, I find it most interesting that Sexton's argument also operates by finding common ground between Black and Native peoples. He cites Lawrence and Amadahy's claim that the tragedy of slavery was the robbing of African Indigeneity from those enslaved and taken from their homelands. Sexton points out that while this was a unique form of de-culturalization, it also bears a striking resemblance to the same processes of genocide and attempted assimilation suffered by Indigenous peoples in North America. He thus concludes, “de-culturalization, or loss of indigeneity, is a general condition of black and native peoples, not one that native people can restrict to black people in order to offer (or withhold) sympathies” (6). He is referring to what he perceives in Lawrence and Amadahy's article as a burden of solidarity being placed on Black peoples instead of used as a common ground. Beyond this “general condition” of de-culturalization, due to dispossession and genocide, are there alternative sympathies or shared conditions that might bond Native and Black people? Lawrence and Amadahy offer the following: “Probably the most fundamental principle of many Indigenous cultures is human interdependence with other life-forms in nonhierarchical ways” (116). While

slightly essentialist, it is admirable to attempt an articulation of what binds together Indigenous communities globally in terms other than a shared and similar history of suffering under colonialism. However, as Sexton I think rightly points out is that this fundamental principal is also an aspirational one in the current context of ongoing colonial practices in the afterlife of slavery and the continuation of dispossession and genocide of Native peoples.

I have focused on the conversation between these two pieces here in order to reveal how difficult it can be for scholars to engage across Indigenous and Black studies. I also wanted to introduce my criticism that conversations around Black and Native relations need to focus on how the interlocking structures of slavery and settler colonialism have implicated both Indigenous peoples of the Americas and African-descended peoples into systems of oppression and suffering. It is by turning our attention to those larger structures of European domination that I believe Black and Native peoples and scholars can begin to heal from the hurt we have caused each other and forge common ground for the future. The larger research interest for this thesis is how scholars and writers can work across these disciplinary lines to understand our entangled relationships with each other and determine the common basis for abolishing the structures of settler colonialism and slavery that have constituted us.

This question has also been asked in another manner by Afropessimist scholar Frank Wilderson. He writes, “What...inhabits this analytic and dream political dream of a “Savage”/Slave encounter?” Wilderson is writing about contact mediated under the structures of slavery and settler colonialism. As discussed in chapter two, Wilderson differentiates between the modality of sovereignty and genocide as two divergent frameworks for Native thought and politics. It is only the “absolute dereliction of genocide” that for Wilderson is a theoretical space from which the Savage can truly empathize with “the absolute object status of the Slave” (182).

Interestingly Lawrence and Amadahy describe “colonialist genocide” as the context from which Aboriginal people in Canada address racism. They describe genocide as the “ceaseless targeting of Aboriginal people for destruction *as peoples*” [emphasis in original] (119). However, instead of drawing the comparisons between this and the object status of the slave, who Sexton and Wilderson argue are people who have been robbed of the possibility of full personhood, the authors instead turn to how Black presence on stolen land is always dangerously close to settlement. They write that in order to avoid becoming “complicit in the extermination of those whose lands they occupy” Black people in the Americas must “negotiate a mutually supportive relationship” (120). I propose a third way that would work between and across the suggested models of solidarity.

This can perhaps in part be accomplished by Wilderson's assertion that the Savage relate to the Slave from the space of genocide. This would mean acknowledging the twisted logics of dehumanization that allow chattel slavery, the making of landless bodies unable to , and clearing the land, the making of people into a natural feature to be destroyed or tamed. However, I think a more powerful ground for solidarity would be through a mutual recognition of a different type of humanity not mired in these Euro-centric “genres of the human” as Sylvia Wynter and Rinaldo Walcott call them. These mutually supportive relationship sounds like a shared responsibility between both those who identify as Indigenous to the Americas, those who identify as Black, and all those who identities cannot be contained to either side of the Black and Native binary. It is this kind of reciprocity that I find is the at the center of both *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares*, not as something that has already been obtained but as something that must be fought for through a long, unsettling processes of establishing and understanding relationships of specificity and difference.

I prefaced this conclusion with the words of anti-colonial Martinican scholar Frantz Fanon whose struggle to destroy the structures of white supremacy evokes for me the framework of futurism. I think Fanon is one of the unsung ancestors of Afrofuturism, as he writes for the creation of new worlds and for a new humanity similar to the discourses of outer space, technology, and cyborgs found in works like *Midnight Robber* and *The Moons of Palmares*. In Hopkinson and Amadahy's novels, the authors have created an outer space future where the reader might glimpse the "world of reciprocal recognitions" Fanon is striving for. Futurism is a genre well-suited for working through the complexities of these issues because of the vast openness of outer space and the call for speculation inherent in the genre. Outer space is both a void that provokes questions of belonging and also an infinite act of creation. In these novels, it becomes the exploratory ground for peoples of different origins to come into contact relationally with each other and thus able to see our aims for liberation not as mutually exclusive but bound together.

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