

Sometimes Clocks Turn Back for Us to Move Forward: Reflections on Black and Indigenous Geographies

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ABSTRACT

In the 1950s two kinds of dispossession in Jamaica and British Columbia occurred through a transnational mining operation and remain in the shape of tailings ponds and a smelter- co-constituting a 'networked isolation'. A quest to reveal the joint impact anchors this 'contra-histoire' (Million, 2009) in an attempt bridge the divide between Black Studies and Indigenous Studies (Leroy, 2016). Moving counter-clockwise through time, I weave Black Caribbean and Indigenous literature and academic texts with an embodied sense of geography and belonging to undo what I call 'the afterlife of an introduction through white colonial disciplinarity'.



That's our history as we know it that was given, that's what the elders say to us - that he [Creator] grew the mountain from that stone. (STOLŒEL 2017)

Now my granny used to say if yu can get piece a land fi buy, buy it now 'cause God nah mek no more. (Dingwall 2014)

Here where run the wild deer¹ –
the Caribbean caribou – does this
surprise you, deer without snow
not even the possibility
of snow? Here, they are like echoes
of a long story – the brutal
history of *dis place*
which is not to say
they are not their own
stories, but that they know, as we do
the tightness of ships
& how to lose whole continents,
& how to be wary
of white men wielding whips
& how to end up here.
...with us in this strange,
strange land. Will you come now
to the river? Will you teach us
...how to survive
Babylon – how to belong
where we do not belong/ (Miller 1-15, 58-63)

=

In 2015, I left a job to fully pursue independent research about two seemingly disparate events in the Black island geography I came from and the Indigenous geographies bound within the province where I had spent my entire adult life. The leading questions hoped to tie together the complexity of being a Jamaican and my life as an immigrant to British Columbia –a province comprised of land settled without treaties with Indigenous Nations. That year symbolized a contemporary marker of a series of questions I had been wrestling

¹ Based on the true story of smøyəθ/deer that were transported by design or hurricane onto the island of Jamaica.

with for over a decade, triggered by my successful application for Canadian citizenship in the late 1990s. I started to look for strands of stories to see whether they might be useful to engage my Caribbean community of African descent about our presence in Indigenous lands that I had lived on and traveled the longest. To forge research that is legible across space and time, I work towards creating a difficult entwining method rather than one of comparison as the only way to tell the tale of two kinds of welcome and two kinds of education operating simultaneously in Canada. I learned to see a form of settler colonialism that my island history shows was funded in part by the massive transfer of investment capital out of plantation economies fueling the industrial age in British Dominions built on stolen land in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

I had arrived in British Columbia on January 1st of 1991, having “stepped off an Air Canada flight at Vancouver² International Airport and into the first decision... ever made to move to a place sight unseen. The city had received a record level of snow and the sidewalks were buried in banks of it, towering 10 feet in some spots... 15 feet high in others it seemed...It was nothing but snow and a sense of being snowed in though this place...” (Chambers 2016).³ In the years to come, the storm would become a metaphor for stumbling my way through the disorientation of settler colonialism without the knowledge of my own history having a direct connection –linking pieces of land in British Columbia and pieces of land in Jamaica– through a single mining corporation. The colonial construct called Canada, to which racialized people are given or refused forms of status, puts non-Indigenous people in direct conflict with the foundation of laws and protocols of hundreds of Nations and their lands.

The mind boggles at what it means to be accountable, but I take heart in moments such as being allowed to stand on Tseil-Waututh territory to witness protocols that Indigenous peoples exchange with one another. *Whey-ah-Wichen/Cates Park*: a node in the vast network of water-based Indigenous mobility through what is familiarly known as ‘the province of British Columbia’ was a space that gave me an inkling of protocols that demonstrate respect for responsibilities. The 2012 Gathering of Canoes was amplified by the inlet breeze carrying Indigenous languages and their translations in English between sea and land. I listened as Nation after Nation after Nation after Nation followed protocol –presenting requests from their canoes– and were granted permission

² Vancouver and the Lower Mainland exists illegally on multiple Indigenous territories, x^wməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh).

³ “Never Be Late Again” unpublished manuscript by the author on the avoidable Fall 2015 assault of an African woman elder in a Vancouver social justice space.

to land by Tseil-Waututh elders and community. This day of protocols gave a hint of deeper truths, older than the Canadian legal/judiciary system and its concept of *sui generis* rights (Burrows and Trotman 1997) –a surface recognition of the depth to inherent rights and responsibilities held by Indigenous peoples.

In 2015, the final report from the Royal Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada was published to spark a national drive to re-make the relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers. The very first recommendation was for non-Indigenous Canadians to “repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 5). That same year, thousands of kilometres away, Jamaica was in an uproar about the possibility of mining in the North Western region of the island –there was an outcry from people from all walks of life summed up in the statement “Not in Cockpit country!” The location is one of the last untouched bauxite deposits on an island known for high quality ore. However, Jamaicans felt the need to defend its unquantifiable psychic and environmental value to our sense of freedom. Ultimately, the land –precious as itself– is best understood as a key source of water that needs the attention of all Jamaicans to invoke a refusal that outweighed the need for jobs (Witter 2019). What may also have been unspoken was memory of the price of mining: the social upheaval and the outbound migration routes disrupting our fractal family structures. I am inspired by *Nothing’s Mat* (Brodber 2014), which traces a Jamaican family’s British-born child through her return to her family community on the island. I use it as a design for actively re/researching the hidden stories of Jamaicans displaced from land and clear title who migrated off-island due to mining interests, *and* the tiny stories I have received of the impact of the mined ore specifically in Kitimat.

These memories are a few of many that propel me towards holding a kind of accountability that refuses to chafe when asked to ‘come correct’.⁴ In choosing not to adopting a settler colonial history that oppresses complex Indigenous systems of knowledge for the benefit of white settler colonialism, I have also found it necessary to decline narrow focus on Native/White binary studies –I stay in the struggle to recognize how arriving as a Black uninvited guest in unceded lands is part of settlement that interferes with relationships which *existed before* settler colonialism *and persists* even as that system continues to work to destroy those truths with a veneer of lip-service recognition. I chose to focus on

4 A Black diasporic term meaning to present oneself respectfully according to one’s understanding of the expectations of the person approached.

[Mining]infrastructures [that] reach across time, building uneven relations of the past into the future, cementing their persistence...the means of dispossession, and the material force that implants colonial economies and socialities. Infrastructures thus highlight the issue of competing and overlapping jurisdiction –matters of both time and space. (Cowen 2017)

Sometimes Clocks Turn

I was born in the gut of Blackness
from between my mother’s particular thighs
...my head crested round as a clock. (Lorde 1–2, 6)

The heart of my travels is a tiny personal piece of oral family history that roots my research. Decades ago, the first days of my arrival for my family of parents and maternal grandparents was retold by my mother as a touch-and-go start due to bacterial meningitis, contracted at the Jamaican hospital in which I was born. By the intervention of my maternal grandparents’ ‘likkle but tallawah’⁵ lattice of community, I survived, only for my parents to continue to battle for my wellbeing in a nightly vigil against scorpions and insects settling on my cradle’s netting in my first dwelling. My father, a first-generation newly hired British-trained engineer, crushed an example of each creature and sent it to the housing management in a letter demanding better conditions for his newborn.

Rather than feed the anthropocentric, urban couched mind’s sense of horror about tropical environments, *I hear the echoes in current times*, specifically the moment of my mother’s 2007 funeral when my wise cousins drew my attention to the University Chapel pew where an early attendee –the largest grasshopper I have ever seen– was perched. I thanked it for coming and then carried this emissary from my mother’s beloved garden to a safer witness place within my aunt’s handcrafted floral tribute. That moment allows me to see through time and consider these insects on my cradle as emissaries from the land my parents and I were housed in: land disturbed by mining.

*My life began – in a company house.
In the shadow of a mine.*

5 A Jamaican saying meaning ‘small but strong.’

The extraction of bauxite had been presented to Jamaicans as the ticket to fund our quest for decolonization in the post-slavery struggle which peaked in the 1930s as the British –whether State, private company or individuals– abandoned the rum, sugar molasses cane-based earth exhausting plantation economy. Numerous mining corporations arrived to tunnel deeper than the six inches of topsoil; however, I focus on the one that hired my father. Everyday people in Jamaica did not know precisely how local operations served the company on a global scale nor its ability to penetrate other lands through *carte blanche* arrangements between various colonial powers. Jamaicans did not know the next destination for the shipments, nor from whom the cost of production would be extracted.

We did not know the chemically washed ore travelled within one single company's infrastructure to be transformed to ingots in a direct, unbroken link between Jamaica and unceded Haisla territory where Indigenous cradles lay under the shadows of a smelter and a powerline.

I cannot recall the words of my first poem
but I remember a promise
I made my pen
never to leave it
lying
in somebody else's blood. (Lorde 34-39)

I wish to attend to the neo-colonial cost of aluminium in the present by attending to the history of multinational corporations working with various colonial nation-states. It is necessary to understand what produces the conditions for mining in Jamaica (a Taino space called Xamayca now mostly understood singularly as Black geography) to be co-constituted with settler colonialism in Gitimaat and Kitlope geographies understood as Haisla⁶. *I listen for the echoes in current times.*

Space in unceded Haisla territory, reshaped into a smelter and port for receiving and processing Jamaican ore, has now been refashioned. Today, through a series of complex agreements, Kitimat is now the end of the line for a planned liquified gas pipeline –a 670 km conveyer line that troubles unceded Indigenous nations' sovereignty such as Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs and their right *not* to consent (Delgamuukw 1997). This right is complicated by an agreement with Coastal GasLink by a separate band council system enforced by court injunction in favour of TransCanada (Bellerichard 2019). This February, Saik'uz and

6 <https://haisla.ca/community-2/about-the-haisla/>

Stellat'en peoples gained a favorable judgement in the courts (Nielsen 2019) to continue to battle another diversion of the Nechako River. By this legal action, they challenge the legacy of permissions given without their consent to what is *essentially the same company*⁷ for the purpose of hydro-electric power –forming more than a ghost-line of connection to the smelting of Jamaican ore so many years ago. I watch these court decisions that mete out injunctions for and against the construction of pipelines. Simultaneously, I work to keep track of an array of consultations in Jamaica about the various stakeholders in an area burdened by old leases for mining, now activated to begin bauxite extraction in Cockpit Country (Figueroa 2019)

This *Counterclockwise* article is just part of my dissertation work. In publishing it, I take the risk of making public some pieces of the research in order to be legible in a non-academic community. I hope to provide examples and possibilities for constructively working through tensions in Black and Indigenous relations. By leaving independent scholar status for time in the academic world, I travel between the tangled academic fields of decolonial and postcolonial studies while examining my archival research and documentation of how Indigenous 'Canadian' and Black (specifically Jamaican) struggles sometimes share history through different and complex forms of dispossession.⁸

On Valentine's Day 2019, Dr. Katherine McKittrick tweeted: "I am tired of *comparative* black and indigenous geographies. it is a colonial ruse and a disciplining logic. it erases co-relational and uncomfortable black-indigenous struggles against empire and capitalism" (McKittrick 2019). I wonder if, beyond Bonita Lawrence (M'ikmaw) and Zainab Amadahy (Black/Cherokee) or Carl James (Black), Johnny Mack (Nuu-chah-nulth) with Jennifer Simpson, there is no list of published academic and/or community co-writing by Black and Indigenous scribes about these kinds of entanglements specifically in Canada?

All my life
I trying to answer one question:
how to chart a battle without starting a war
long shot some say
to catch that kind of truth
place it where anyone can see

7 Iterations of the company include: ALCOA (founded 1888 in the USA); ALCAN (founded 1950 as part of an anti-trust break up); Rio Tinto Alcan (formed by the Rio Tinto takeover of ALCAN in 2007). For a solid history of bauxite companies in Jamaica see Carlton E. Davis work in the bibliography.

8 I appreciate time carved for me in Toronto by Alissa Trotz on Sept 9, 2016 to briefly discuss Linden and older bauxite operations in Guyana by ALCAN.

one day/clear/as morning
another afternoon
the damn thing black like molasses
often
the body of it is as thick as love
in moments
hard as revolution (Chin 1- 13)

I offered my work at three specific conferences in 2017 (Canada, UK) and 2018 (US); each became crucible spaces that allowed me to feel the heat that can be generated by Black and Indigenous elders. It tempered me as I re-learned the need for clarity around context while attempting to forge something new, be it from one province to the next or one generation of activism sitting beside a different one. I struggle to carve out space overshadowed by multiple academic arenas such as Black Studies and Indigenous/Native Studies, primarily referenced out of the area understood as the United States though keeping in mind an older and more inclusive name: Turtle Island. Furthermore, the nation-state shapes the geographic coordinates of my migrant life, which exist under multiple shadows: one cast on the side of the 49th parallel *north* over Canada; another shadow radiates from the 30th parallel *south* over the Caribbean; a third shadow cast from the *east* over those of us who are in western Canada beyond the Rocky Mountains –specifically British Columbia.

I risk.

Drawing strength from the work of Guyanese academic Shona Jackson on the concept of work and the capitalist definition embedded in ownership-by-labour within settler-colonial systems inherited continued in the post-Independence Caribbean (Jackson 2014).

I risk.

Drawing strength from *Kabethechino: A Correspondence on Arawak*, capturing almost three decades of correspondence from 1965-1992 between close friends Richard Hart (Jamaican) and Canon John Peter Bennett (Lokono, Guyana) across geographic and identity boundaries.⁹

⁹ At a British Library PhD workshop on The Americas Collection (March 2019) the co-participants included a relative of Canon Bennett. I am eternally grateful that she introduced me to the title as I spoke about my work, seeking evidence of alliances between Black and Indigenous peoples in the Caribbean.

I guide my work through “[t]hinking risk demands that we look at blackness across the diaspora and acknowledge not just black subordination but those historical and social moments in which blackness is articulated with and through settler and other forms of colonial power” (Jackson 64).

Sometimes Clocks Turn Back

So to North America came the European
disss-cover the Redman disss-cover him *land*
put him pon a reservation
start a civilization (Dingwall 2014)

In 2011, I wrestled in near solitude as I considered the celebration of ‘Black survival’ stories across Canada. The terminology changes but is signalled and claimed by people of African descent who both claim and are described as homesteader/pioneers/loyalists/settlers in retellings often shadowed by the absence of Indigenous peoples, mentioned briefly in passing. In British Columbia, I am guided by the memory triggered by Marie Stark Wallace’s undated visit to Salt Spring Island to visit her elderly mother:

as through the mists of years... I saw again the race of the big canims (Indian canoes), heard the dip, dip of their ghostly paddles, and the wild chant of the happy potlatch song as the natives raced to their yearly potlatch feast. And I thought of our Pioneer fathers who crossed these troubled waters many years ago, seeking a home in the land of the free; troubled waters for the natives of this country as well as those brave pioneers. For the dark clouds of conquest hung heavily over the land, and the triumph of the conquerors was deeply resented by the natives; they retaliated by slaying the settlers. So the pioneers lived in constant fear of their lives. (Wallace 78)

This extract, published in *Bluesprint*, demands further attention to study how Marie Stark Wallace’s 99-year lifetime, spanning the mid-19th to mid-20th century, defines the journey to what became western Canada as a journey to ‘a land of the free,’ though slavery did exist in the genesis of Canada in the east. She differentiates between settlers (I read as ‘white’), conquerors (I read as ‘white’) and pioneers (I read as ‘Black’). This points to the ongoing complication of ‘Black settler’ and the potential for unchecked and encouraged anti-Black violence by white settlers who resented Wallace and her community for the premium quality of land they owned on Saltspring Island.

I struggled with the valorization of Sir James Douglas through the shift that saw the Pacific coastal Hudson Bay colony become the province of British Columbia without agreements with the many Indigenous nations, the misnomer of 'The Douglas Treaties,' and noted to myself

an encroaching white colonial society being forced on unceded Indigenous territories [as a] ... historical location and entry point where Black people running from California¹⁰ to *find* freedom [from white supremacy] meet Indigenous people *accustomed* to freedom [from white supremacy.] 'Open land', ['public land'], 'land for purchase' or 'land for the taking' are all part of dispossession which comes about by ignoring Indians or categorizing them as 'an Indian Problem' [along side the related Native 'Land Question']. (Chambers 2011)

The categorization of Indigenous, Black and Asian people attracts different varieties of white settler-colonial violence in the process of maintaining the past formation¹¹ and present-future of a British Columbia where whiteness is designed as the singular and expanding constant. How do we square the short-lived strategic invitation of a committed British loyalist to a handful of Black people within the larger violent settler-colonial project committed to destruction of

"those designated as racially inferior and therefore marginal ... [These] patterns have history and can be understood as social and political rather than natural phenomena ... [that] have entered into the habits and intuitions of the human sciences, where they have corrupted the workings of government, justice, and communication" (Gilroy 2004).¹²

I think about my excited curiosity as a young naïve person in 2000, wondering: what alliance stories existed on the Atlantic coast to bring about the Dalhousie Indigenous Blacks & Mi'kmaq Initiative at Dalhousie's Law School in K'jipuktuk/Halifax, Nova Scotia?¹³

¹⁰ Black people came from other locations in the US as well as the Caribbean, not only by sea but also by land.

¹¹ #RewriteBC is a brilliant Twitter project by Joanne Hammond who maintains 'The Republic of Archaeology' website, photoshopping Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure signs to reflect a more accurate telling of the settler-colonial history of British Columbia <http://republicofarchaeology.ca/blog/2017/1/4/another-roadside-attraction-that-erases-indigenous-people-and-reinforces-colonial-righteousness>

¹² I wish to thank Sweet Blade for pushing me to pre-emptively overturn any opportunity for my writing to be operationalized with ill-intention against people of African descent.

¹³ I guest edited Kinesis a BC feminist newspaper (1974 – 2001) for the Black History Month special issue (2000) which followed the Indigenous Women's Collective issue. I used the time I had to make a thread between issues by including an interview granted on short notice by the coordina-

I listen for echoes in current times as I read the trace of the joint law Initiative within the Report on Lord Dalhousie's History on Slavery and Race along with my research on the struggles of Mi'kmaq people in the 18th century to understand moments when Blackness was operationalized to expand Nova Scotia's economy, "shaped around its military role... [within Mi'kmaq unceded lands]... and the... West Indian slave colonies" (Cooper et al 42).

I question if a land acknowledgement exists on the plaque for the newest Surrey park in BC, dedicated to the African American settler family of Cloverdale in the early 20th century (Surrey604 2019)? Shall we only speak of African American escapes from enslavement; of what became the US-Canadian border; of arrivals in K'jipuktuk/Halifax from the British-American War; of flights from the Fugitive Act and Jim Crow from the American Deep South? How do we honour those journeys without helping secure the concept of Canada as a space without slavery and a place without genocide and without land theft through the advertisement and sale of stolen Indigenous lands as 'public'? Without acknowledging anti-Indigenous settler colonialism through Turtle Island, those victories of Black survival against the American history of white supremacy cross the US-Canadian border and are put to work securing the idea that Canada is a kinder, gentler, white space.

I listen for echoes in current times of any attempts to prove that Black people hold the same democratic right or regard as those who do not face, without cause justification nor punishment, anti-Black violence. As a person who has lived in British Columbia for most of her life, with the persistent question "Are there Black people in BC?", I read Immigration Acts alongside Indian Acts alongside Mining Acts and Indian Land Policies. I trace the genesis of anti-Blackness in British Columbia to see what kind of Canada has been produced through its treatment of Black people, through anti-Black immigration and discriminatory-to-deadly policing patterns (Maynard, 2017). I read Indigenous histories of Canada that document the particular violence and death faced by Indigenous people and their children in treaty or unceded lands. In the words of Dian Million "[i]t seems inherent in 'doing history' that histories are positioned, and histories that do not understand their own positioning cannot answer to those conditions they perpetuate that require silencing that which by its nature is a contra-histoire" (Million,72). I seek to undo the colonial history education embedded in the Canadian citizenship test by learning both the contra-histoires of Indigenous and Black peoples within the structure of that nation-state. I refuse to keep histories of anti-Indigeneity and anti-Blackness in a twisted knot of competition since doing so only supports white supremacy's intended beneficiaries and racialized followers.

tor of the law program at the time, Carol A. Aylward

the prickly part of being an activist
is being a writer
how do you tell your side of the story
without telling your torturers tale
to make the telling good
to make it true (Chin 36 – 41)

As much as I celebrate Black survival, I always hope to read within proclaimed Black settler accounts of political, social or economic relationships –not just marriage or familial relationships– with Indigenous people. I see one such moment of intimacy and erasure by the Afro-descended Guyanese born Sir James Douglas advising Martha, his Cree-descended daughter during her time in England, “I have no objection to your telling the old stories about ‘Hyass’ but pray do not tell the world they are Mamma’s” (Perry, n.p.).

I seek Black settler diaries and letters which also record parts of the long history of Indigenous protest, petitions and struggles on their traditional territories, upon which homestead claims were made and hard to hold for Black people (Mathieu 2010). These early accounts also need to be analysed to address how diverse communities of Black people in Canada may have conceived of the need to pay attention to the open violence of settler colonialism towards themselves *and* Indigenous people in Indigenous territories, whether treated or unceded. Black Jamaica has produced a constellation of sayings and ‘proverbs’ in the Jamaica National Library, on the 3rd floor reading room: “*When blackman tief, him tief half a bit, when buckra (whiteman) tief, him tek the whole estate.*”¹⁴ I find this saying particularly apt for thinking through land made available through the post-Douglas surge in land theft, engineered by Joseph Trutch (Fisher 1971), via reducing the reserve allocations planned to secure settler’s legal ownership through treaties *which were never negotiated* and forming the province of British Columbia in Indigenous lands that *have never been ceded*.

Investigating the frontier space that became known as British Columbia, I think of Jamaicans such as James Barnswell (b.1829) and the younger John Robert Giscombe (Giscombe in Compton 2001), who surely arrived in response to Sir James Douglas’ invitation and the various ‘prospects’ that drew a flood of migration between 1858 and 1863. The Commodore arrived on April 25, 1858, yet certainly Black people also arrived

¹⁴ This saying comes directly out of enslavement times and roughly translates that when an enslaved Black person steals it is pilfering of small amounts, whereas when a white person steals, the theft is massive.

by other means available to them such as over land by horse and cart, even perhaps at earlier dates. I see the Black homestead ‘bit’ assigned by a colonial government in treaty or unceded lands as not large but remind myself that these lands are ‘*where [Indigenous/First Nations] nabel string bury*’¹⁵ or like *ćəsna?əm* (Tailfeathers 2017) –very sacred places of priceless value to the Nation tied to them. These early accounts also need to be analysed to address how diverse communities of Black people in Canada may have conceived of the need to pay attention to the open violence of settler colonialism towards Indigenous people. Raising these ideas and differences to think about Black people moving from one geography of settler colonialism to others demands a price to be paid in moments of sharing work in the public and academic realms during times and spaces reverberating with calls for reconciliation (Daigle 2019).¹⁶

How to handle gifts of engagement or pointed silences extended across the thick lines drawn by descendants claiming Black settler/pioneer status as separate from more recent Black immigrants? What to make of lines cut between those of us unwillingly placed in the Americas vs those from the Continent with different histories of migration, enslavement, settler colonialism and definitions of identity? Lines etched in community between those born in Canada and those who were not?

tell only what is necessary to propel the action forward
dust your petty coats off
stand firm in your platform of integrity
when all is said and done
let it not be whispered
that you were murky in your trust
one question should guide your
intention or honor
glory or gain
love or revolution
the options are all the same
in name or deed
the creed must be outside the realm of reproach

¹⁵ To speak of a place where one’s umbilical cord is buried within Jamaica is to locate one’s self, one’s familial/community geographic coordinates, which in past times was often marked by the planting of a tree.

¹⁶ This piece is instructive as a guide to thinking through psychic cost found in the ‘mechanics’ of reconciliation via an academic framework.

and if you fuck up
you pen your apologies
publicize them (Chin 60-75)

These unsettled scores segment Black identities marked by slavery, the slave trade or other forces in myriad ways, as we collectively face various levels of exclusion by the State and by those who are historical recipients of the profits of white supremacy, as well as, on smaller yet intimate levels, episodes of anti-Blackness from other racialized people, including Indigenous peoples, while situated in *Indigenous lands*. I listen for echoes in the *current times* as I remember a few Indigenous Papua New Guineans with whom I shared social justice training space in the Summer of 2006. The risk of their journey outside of their territories and the terrible levels of their isolation as Indigenous people facing ongoing state violence was something carefully shared. I am still haunted by witnessing how they respectfully stood with elements of their traditional clothing yet went completely unrecognized and therefore unacknowledged by an Indigenous host on a visit to the local reservation (east of the Rockies).

That moment informs my differently situated position as I strive to understand how those of us who are living descendants of survivors of the transatlantic slave trade become entangled in status¹⁷ created by a nation-state built on anti-Indigeneity. I refuse to ignore the need to reduce the hard encounter moments of the clash of armour¹⁸ which both Black and Indigenous people have had to develop due to a system built by, for and about white supremacy.

Sometimes Clocks Turn Back For Us

Each time I travel, I take the counter-clockwise route England-Jamaica-BC to spaces that hold some of the archived information that I require. I found the poetic frame for this piece in the serendipitous fortune of attending *A Love Affair with Literature 8*, an event held on March 3, 2019 and organized by The Department of Literatures in English at The

17 By this I mean all immigration categories, including those related to International convention agreements for people displaced by war and environmental disasters. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/immigration-category-confirmation-permanent-residence-copr.html>

18 Eula, a character in the wonderful film *Daughters of the Dust* (1991), says, “We wear our scars like armour for protection, thick hard...scars that *no one* can pass through to ever hurt us again” (Dash 1991, emphasis mine).

University of the West Indies (Mona), Jamaica. Unlike the videotaped Bristol reading, I was at home, listening to a Jamaican audience’s request –then the call and response interaction– in Richard ‘Dingo’ Dingwall’s poem ‘Land’ detailing the ways in which the creation story found in Judeo-Christian text is reshaped by settler colonialism and its death-dealing drive.

Them say god mek man from	<i>land</i>
Man come see	<i>land</i>
Tame	<i>land</i>
fight man over	<i>land</i>
get killed just fi get buried inna	<i>land</i>

(Dingwall 2014)

I travel digital pathways to recordings of Indigenous people from Vancouver Island, which on the surface was known as the colonial headquarters of the Guyanese-born, Bajan-mothered Sir James Douglas. Occasions like the *First Nations, Land, and James Douglas: Indigenous and Treaty Rights in the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, 1849-1864* Conference detail how Indigenous language and worldview are foundational to nationhood. The W̱SÁNEĆ creation stories intimately reveal that the centre of Indigenous sovereignty (in general) is a relationship with –and responsibility for– the land (a word imbued with multiple meanings) know as traditional territory, as well as the waters.

So if you interpret the word for mountain which is sḡánet ... it comes from the word sḡánet which is ‘a gift’ –and not ... it’s mine sḡánet but that means it’s my gift. So, who’s gift is it really, but the gift of the Creator to our people in the making of that– creating those mountains. (STOLØEŁ 2017)

If the choices are different concepts of ownership either by the practice of commerce and conquest or based on moving forward respecting a more ancient and grounded understanding of land as relationship and responsibilities: which one should be followed? If we understand these unceded lands as never having been taken over in conquest, nor sold, nor given freely as a gift, nor taken in war,¹⁹ then these intangibles continue to exist in language and limit, agreeing to systems of destruction through exploitation. Is there

19 Herb Varley/Gwin Ga’adihl Amma Goot (Nisga’a and Nuuchahnulth) has opened many presentations with this explanation as well identifying as an Indigenous guest in xʷməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) lands.

really a question as to which ‘treaty’ interpretation should be honoured? These moments are steps to facilitating a profound shift in how the geography of colonial British Columbia is understood by heeding the statement about “things that are ancient in our country. Long before treaty” (STOLØEL 2017).

Whether land I travel is distinguished as ‘treaty’ or ‘unceded’ I realized a co-related (Fraser and Todd 2016) sovereign Indigenous worldview anchors it, deposited (or not) into the BC Archives and the provincial Land Registry.

I listen for the echoes in current times.

I strive to create a geographic introduction to my work on the mines in Jamaica and the smelter in Kitimat; more specific to unceded territories through a different timeframe as I work with material located in paper archives (Farmer 2019) and ghosted digital material (Persaud 2018) as it is no longer available on line. I happen to have a copy I downloaded. I grapple with a multi-layered decolonial approach to analysing word for word the Black settler accounts in manuscripts by Wayde Compton and Crawford Killian, both painstaking recovery efforts of Black people’s struggles in unceded territories known collectively as British Columbia.

After 28 years in British Columbia, I solemnly reflect on the lack of academic literature that critically engages or wrestles with the question of how to attend to when and where Black geographies and Indigenous geographies meet in unceded territories written by Black or Indigenous scholars. I have had to rethink my engagement with academic work that speaks about migration of racialized people’s without lifting the settler-colonial blanket. I re-orient my thinking to the fact that I was born in Xamayca, entered the Indigenous place of Tiotia:ke in Kanien’kehá:ka territory and the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit via treaties made with those sovereign nations. At this point in time, I have lived for almost 30 years in unceded x^wməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selilwiltulh (Tseil-Waututh) territories. What propels this risk of writing is the hope to produce something to challenge the concept that Black knowledge production never occurs west of the Rockies and only occurs with the nation-state as the single reference point. My courage to write has been girded by simple, honest and very quiet but powerful and sustaining undocumented exchanges: being held with a pierced understanding of the importance of generations by an Indigenous community member as I struggled to cope with the shattering loss of my beloved 110 year old great-grandmother MaLou; the warm generous glances and smiles of Indigenous youth on the night of Obama’s first victory that countered the worried, grim looks of white adults passing me on the streets of Vancouver; Indigenous women who told me ‘my children’s father is Jamaican’ and the privilege of

private, personal relationships . These are what allow me a small, never-to-be-taken-for-granted sense of Indigenous and Black relationship rather than the distance of comparison on a search for glimpses of complex Jamaican and Indigenous encounters in the Canadian historical record. This essay is based on my standpoint and it is neither an attempt to be an authority on Indigeneity nor an authority on Black and Indigenous relationships. I offer what I have witnessed using histories and language beyond certain white-dominated fields in academia as an encouragement to other Black long-term residents in ‘British Columbia’ to find ways to speak for ourselves as we grapple with this settler-colonial dilemma and our oft-denied human desire for home while in unceded territories on the Pacific coast.

Settler colonialism is a logic of Indigenous erasure that has developed and sustained itself through anti-blackness...these mutually constitutive origins are lost in recent claims that indigenous dispossession or racial slavery must vie for exceptional status as the foundational violence of modernity. Such claims are a form of colonial unknowing; the refusal to see the full scope of slavery and settlement’s interconnected history abets a colonial ontology. Turning to history is not an attempt to recover hidden pasts; rather, it offers a body of evidence that we can marshal against ways of unknowing that are actively and aggressively produced. (Leroy 8)

Within my work in academia I refer to these ways of unknowing as the *afterlife of introduction by white colonial disciplinarity*. I create this phrase to position work on social death in the afterlife of slavery (Hartman 2008), placing how I understand it *in conversation* with settler-colonial possession of land and cradle-to-grave assault on Indigenous identities. In this phrase, ‘disciplinarity’ has a double meaning: first, as the colonial rules, military past and present narratives that are the histories of the social position of Black Caribbean migrants and Indigenous peoples within the current Canadian settler-state apparatus. Secondly, I think of ‘disciplinarity’ as a method of thinking through how academic white colonial practices discipline the racialized researcher:²⁰ in access to primary sources; in multigenerational citation capital; in the requirement to be recognized as the first relationship with racialized peoples through consuming us as solely objects of study; in shallow citation of our academic production; but especially through white co-authorship with racialized peoples. In this regard, white coloniality demands that we who are identified

²⁰ I have written about problematic citation practices in an unpublished letter I composed and sent to the editorial Board of the online journal *Decolonization*, dated April 26, 2016. That journal project has since been fettered; the issues raised in the letter -which received no response- remain unbridled.

as ‘others’ abandon one another. It hides its academic disciplinary dis-ease with Blackness or Indigeneity with over-citation coupled with silence about either one or the other but never both. The absolute discomfort of encountering *actual* Black and Indigenous people within academic spheres who are not flat on paper is coupled with a lack of accountability beyond gestures of reflexivity in any medium. It has been necessary for me to consider my own discomfort in open public academic settings and journal issues where Black and Indigenous relations are discussed when we do not have lead nor equal representation in the forum at hand. As a Black reader, I encounter current decolonizing efforts, yet need to remain watchful where the term ‘non-indigenous’ is deployed mainly to cite white scholars. I think of the politics of Black scholarship, its decisive opt-outs and deliberate exclusions from certain contexts, fields (and their ‘critical’ extensions) in academia.

Above all, white colonial disciplinarity works to limit relationships outside of its influence; prioritizing relationships strictly according to how it ranks survival in its system. In moments described as ‘playful’ or ‘personal preference,’ white coloniality often orders racialized bodies (which are then haunted by ‘Blackness’ as skin colour or cultural identity) to the subjugated bottom, where it leaves them to languish. I refuse hierarchies in claims of innocence regarding racialized peoples’ entanglements in settler-colonial constructions, but I am also acutely aware of –and refuse– claims rooted in denigrating Blackness and unwillingness to acknowledge that Black skin and Indigeneity have ever or currently co-exist beyond North, Central and South America.²¹ I try to be attentive to how this can shape the production of logic; predatory, hierarchical citation (or de-citation) and the echo of the lessons of supremacy in scholarship when *racialized* scholars over-write²² and un-write one another and/or various communities²³ both unintentionally *and* intentionally.

I am concerned about scholars who are neither Black nor Indigenous writing about ‘Blackness’ and ‘Indigeneity’ in the Americas while silent and unaccountable about their communities’ race and class journeys. I am particularly attuned to communities whose collective migratory paths are complicit by choice or necessity with European coloniality through Black geographies of continental Africa. The lack of accountability, in effect, skims

21 I am grateful for the writing of Cara-Lyn Morgan (Metis/Trinidadian), Tasha Spillet (Nehiyaw/Trinidadian) and Tereisa Teawia (I-Kiribati/African-American). I give thanks for the powerful work of Maile Arvin (Kanaka Maoli) and Marcus Briggs-Cloud (Maskoke) that I witnessed at Otherwise Worlds (UC Riverside).

22 I acknowledge as I move forward in my work that I take lessons from being so ‘collected’ and aim for accountability if justifiably questioned.

23 I am grateful for the generosity of spirit in ‘Decolonial Geographies’ Michelle Daigle and Margaret M. Ramirez located in *Keywords in Geography: Antipode* at 50.

the academic social capital but leaves Black people with the brunt of the struggle around entanglement within the settler-colonial histories in the Americas. I resist citing writing that has been produced without us in co-authorship or citational practice –risking appearing unread.²⁴

In order to combat the difficulty of how anti-Blackness can arrive disguised as social justice work and/or academic scholarship, I observed well-celebrated publications that put to work world-renowned Black anti-colonial thought in title but absent actual engagement with Black lives beyond Black text. I query articles discussing decolonization while disappearing Black people by sleight of hand –hiding our absence by the disingenuous trick that is the multicultural phrase ‘people of colour.’ I work to provide an antidote for the sting of Black people brought out briefly in one such text only to be buried in the plantation-qua-prison known as Angola.

In contrast, I am excited to engage Jessica A. Krug’s *Fugitive Modernities: Kisama and the Politics of Freedom* (2018) on Kisama (modern day Angola) as a study of maroonage-without-treaty in war against bodily or spiritual capture through strategy that traversed oceans. In this text, one can imagine defying boundaries created by the toponymy of various local states tangled by various divisive European imperial projections on continents marked as Africa or the Indigenous Americas. It inspires me to navigate the hairpin curves in the uphill battle moving through boundaried academic areas –to refuse the erasure of Black people in various discussions and events *and* the quick perfunctory gestures towards the Turtle Island’s Indigenous land and life in some Black Canadian texts and academic events.

My foundation is based in tensions born of a long, partially documented, struggle for decolonization by Jamaican academic elders whose work is evidence of anti-colonial and decolonial efforts that challenge the term ‘post-colonial.’ They documented their recognition of neo-colonialism as a surface marker to name the continuation of colonial extraction of not just ore but also quality of life and capacity for sovereignty beyond a symbolic Independence date. *I listen for echoes in current times* and believe it possible to fashion my work as an extension of that older Caribbean international solidarity work,²⁵ utilizing its

24 My forthcoming publication *De Zi Contre Menti Kaba: When Two Eyes Meet the Lie Ends* (2020) more fully cites the work of Norman Girvan, extending his acknowledgement of Kitimat and the clear connection between mining in Jamaica and the building of the smelter in Haisla territory.

25 My forthcoming publication *De Zi Contre Menti Kaba: When Two Eyes Meet the Lie Ends* (2019) more fully cites the work of Norman Girvan, extending his single line of acknowledgement of Kitimat to make the clear connection between mining in Jamaica and the building of the smelter in Haisla territory.

ethos as direction to attend to Indigeneity and decolonization at home in the Caribbean (Jackson 2014; Newton, 2013) and in Canada. I look for work that counters the ‘settler-arrivant banner’ which “leav[es] no room to think about how politics which fall outside of it –such as black internationalism and anti-colonialism– relate to indigenous struggles” (Leroy 3).

I believe my work on this mining connection between Jamaica and Kitimat is one such intersection.

I embrace much of that knowledge produced as the best of my elders’ definition of the term ‘decolonization’ and work to hold true to it. I simultaneously respect Indigenous people championing their specific struggles entrusted to them by their elders also defined by the term ‘decolonization.’ I contemplate the fine-lined risk of discussing the presence of ‘Jamaica’ in unceded Indigenous lands while sitting at the kitchen tables of elders who lived the start of that red dirt mining: elders who keep my spirit safe from anti-Blackness just beyond their front door. I hope to recover the possibility of Black –and specifically Jamaican– individual or tiny collective projects of solidarity of the past for the future by combatting how settler colonial projections continue to influence how the terms ‘Black’ and ‘Indigenous’ are engaged or dis-engaged. I find it necessary to challenge how Blackness is operationalized or (insecurely) stapled into settler-colonial projects of the Canadian state specifically in unceded territories. I work to create a counter-framework beyond white/Black or white/Indigenous binaries that ultimately keep colonization legitimized by its control of our gaze.²⁶

From the layer of Black and Indigenous geographies known as Xamayca/Jamaica under the shadow of a mine, I work to have something other than just the words “*I don’t know*” or “*Settler colonialism in British Columbia: what does that have to do with me?*” Simply put, the stories of various Nations, their lands and waters, with key parts shadowed by a smelter, shadowed by a powerline or shadowed by the threat of tailings ponds²⁷ matter to

²⁶ Unpublished notes of author, March 1, 2011. Two months later, Tiffany Lethabo King and I met at *Our Legacy: Indigenous-African Relations Across the Americas* (Toronto). I am looking forward to her first book: *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* this fall. I am grateful for her acknowledgements as we separately wrestle with doing reparative work in different ways and geographies.

²⁷ The fight to protect Teztan Biny/ Fish Lake in Tsilquot’in territory and the ongoing effects of the 2014 disaster in the neighbouring Secwepemc territory of the Mt. Polley spill with a billion litres of waste pouring into a pristine deep water system including the sacred Yuct Ne Senxiymetkwe. *Yuct: the breaking of women’s water at birth. Senxiymetkwe: the greatest and highest of all lakes. Where things are born. Devastated. Beg for forgiveness from all the water and 4 legged beings. Fight for justice* (October 7, 2014 Facebook memory).

me, as does the ongoing danger to the foundation of land-based traditional knowledge and ongoing Indigenous stewardship in British Columbia.

Sometimes Clocks Turn Back For Us To(o)

You must not think of the damaged library.

You have brought your own books with you.

English Maritime criminals

No disaster imaginable could equal the harm they did (Montserrat 2019)

My academic beginning on this project was located at Langara, which was a small Vancouver community college, in the fall of 2001. I had no idea how to begin to unpack Jamaica’s socio-political economic history related to mining. Most importantly, I had no clue of how settler colonialism worked in British Columbia.

By the spring of 2002, I had switched from an Arts and Science major to being listed as a major in Aboriginal Studies and some classes were joint at the Institute for Indigenous Government, the educational arm of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs. In those pre-Truth and Reconciliation days, I witnessed the Indigenous and Metis instructors and program leads struggle to have enough numbers to run classes as I spent time as a student/guest in these new academic spaces carved out by, for and about Indigenous peoples.

In community events, I listened to Art Manuel speak of his work through the Indigenous Network on Economies and Trade (INET) (Manuel and Schabus 2005), which I interpreted through my understanding of the small, short-lived alliance work of post-Independence Jamaica’s fight to increase bauxite levies for bauxite producing countries and the exclusion of the WTO agreements steeped in capitalism born of coloniality. In those days I wondered: was there anything to offer from Jamaica’s victory to Nations wrestling with the British Columbia?

It was not until the fall term in classes such as ‘The Canadian Constitution and Aboriginal Peoples’ and ‘Canadian Indian Policy,’ that I started to think through the politics of where I was as a Black Jamaican immigrant moving outside of the enclosure of ‘multiculturalism.’²⁸ Moments of anti-Blackness and, separately, the collective discomfort, avoidance or

²⁸ For a brilliant piece on this, see Verna St. Denis. “Silencing Aboriginal Curricular Content and Perspectives through Multiculturalism: ‘There are other children here.’” *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, vol. 33, no 4, 2011, pp. 306-317.

adoption of anti-Indigeneity towards Indigenous peoples by racialized immigrants; the overwhelm of whiteness and anti-Blackness in feminist and/or queer alternative spaces officially listed as challenging the state but unable or unwilling to grapple with absolute violence of anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity where Black music exists without Black lives and Indigenous name places without Indigenous peoples.

Thinking Black freedom demands a critical engagement with what ‘care’ might look like in a world in which Black life is valued. To imagine revolutionary practices of care that foster and ensure the flourishing of Black life means to abandon, refuse, and destroy the ‘world.’ Could we imagine practices of care that do not centre on repair, but on initiating ‘an epistemological break with the hegemonic common sense of both civil society and the left?’ (Martina 2015)

For myself, I twin this with Indigenous life and freedom as a key to my sense of remaking the world.

2002 was the start of my comprehension that there were specific Indigenous geographies, names and peoples hidden under ‘Vancouver.’ At precisely the same time, there appeared a political procedure weaponized to create an ominous localized threat. When it arrived, I made a choice to set aside my own reference points about injustice to pay deep attention to what was happening for Indigenous peoples in British Columbia. By serendipity and necessity, the start of my Indigenous-led classes offered me the ability to understand the history behind the attack being mounted by the Gordon Campbell-led Provincial Liberal government. It remains one of the most pointed examples I have from the days before today’s nearly automatic and often tokenized land acknowledgements: the BC Treaty referendum of 2002.

Now sometime when whole heap a people do a thing
 It different from when one man do a ting.
 For example, whole heap a people come see *land*
 claim *land*
 draw line pon *land*
 call it boundary call land country
 Kill whole heap a people over time fighting over line.
 What you call that? (Dingwall 2014)

Let me explain. In 1871, British Columbia agreed to the terms of its acceptance into Canadian Confederation. It did so without treaties with Indigenous peoples, with the

exception of fourteen agreements made on Vancouver Island. A key demand granted to the province was the right to administer minerals, an exception to the rule of control by what constituted the federal government at that time. I remember my introduction to the unique Nisga’a self-governance agreement and the moment of shock realizing that Nisga’a control was restricted to a depth of 5.999 inches beneath the surface of their traditional lands.²⁹

Denying Nisga’a autonomy over resources in precisely the same moment that their management of mineral resources appeared self-governing?

This, I could understand as a Jamaican.

Today, I think about this as an example of how a new awareness can bring colonial assumptions to light –but at a surface level. Through the legalisation of sovereign control to a particular soil depth and the idea of land as resources, Western colonialism exercises its power relentlessly on Nisga’a geography. In 2002, I put aside my Jamaican understanding of independence and autonomy to deeply learn how to pay a different kind of attention to things framed as ‘the past’; to learn “the powerful use of exhaustion as a tool ... [in the shape of] an apology...made more important than actions to demonstrate accountability” (Chambers 2016).

The BC referendum took us back into the time before 1871, before British Columbia as we know it today existed, as parts of the Hudson Bay Corporation’s holdings. After Confederation, many expected Indigenous peoples to simply disappear physically through decline in numbers or to be extinguished culturally through enfranchisement,³⁰ the banning of language and ‘voluntary’ abandonment of traditional practices (Mathias and Yabsley, 1991).

Now one man come see	<i>land</i>
claim	<i>land</i>
draw line pon	<i>land</i>

²⁹ I remain grateful for my instructor Barbara Buckman for channelling my outrage and redirecting my attention to the powerful long history of Nisga’a struggle for land rights as well as the areas of control key to sovereignty that were explicitly withheld from every treaty-making table by Federal and Provincial governments.

³⁰ Enfranchisement included outlawing hiring lawyers for land claims and the loss of status if an Indigenous person pursued a university degree. This directly affected the Nisga’a and other Nations’ long struggle for sovereignty. As I work towards my degree, I can never forget about this pernicious kind of enfranchisement that specifically targeted Indigenous people as yet another form of damage in their relationship to universities and creates an additional level of awareness about what holding a degree represents (Mathias and Yabsley).

call it fence call land yard put up residence
 what you call that? Squatting.
 So man a capture *land*
 man a buy *land*
 man a get land in a will.
 I'd a like know who sell the first piece a *land* (Dingwall 2014)

Squatting. Capture. Sale. Inheritance. British Columbia had been established and the business of land had been done illegally without treaty despite Sir James Douglas' petitions to England to get more funds to make treaties.

In 2002, whether Black people had been living in British Columbia for a few years or settled since the sailing of the Commodore in 1858, we, and other non-Indigenous racialized peoples, were given the illusion by the Provincial government of the day that just like white settlers we could exercise a 'democratic right' and in exchange empower them to manage Indigenous rights in unceded lands. The questions of that BC Referendum were instructive concerning the goals of settler colonialism within the construct of Canada and the drive to subsume Aboriginal rights and title under BC Crown control. I hear Stark as she uses her version of the term,³¹ for the "double bind of settler colonialism' to refer to the ways in which the settler state's own legitimacy is conditioned and predetermined by the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty, and thus stands alongside settler state juridical and popular narratives that perceive settler-state stability requires the domestication of Indigenous sovereignty, making elimination of the native an impossibility" (Stark 14). The supremacy of private property was immediately presented as the poll's first item of business:

Private property should not be expropriated for treaty settlements. [Yes/No]
(Elections BC 2)

The eight-part referendum was a poisonous invitation to give the Provincial government the 'legitimacy' of 'the people's will' to ignore Indigenous people's hard-won victories through interventions at Constitutional Accord proceedings and Supreme Court rulings. The BC Union of Indian Chiefs and allies mounted a huge counter to this attack campaign. I remember Trick or Treaty flyers. I remember marching from Water Street to Granville and West Georgia. I remember the risk of 'non-participation' through the strategy of collecting

31 In this article Stark specifically recognizes Jean M. O'Brien's use of the same term in *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England*, Indigenous Americas (University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

and destroying ballots as one of the tactics to defeat the sure participation of property holders accepting the invitation for the protection of settler-colonial capital obtained without legal treaties.

In the end, the final report on that modern settler-colonial effort extended to all non-Indigenous residents to draw us into an unmistakable complicity towards extinguishment of Indigenous rights in British Columbia, which *failed* with ballots representing only 35.84% of total registered voters. However, in almost all ridings, approximately 80% of those who voted on that question were in favour (*Elections BC* 31-32).

I think on those British Columbians who one might imagine as perhaps urban; perhaps property-owing or property-hopeful;³² perhaps holding persistent myths about tax-free/ tuition-free status of Indigenous peoples; perhaps unbothered that national development and national security provisions allow extraction industries to trample the *sui generis* rights of Aboriginal title in unceded rural geographies. These same federal provisions will allow pipelines and supertankers through cities, university enclaves and coastal waters regardless of non-Indigenous citizens' NIMBY³³ opinion.

I learned to deeply understand what I had been taught in Indigenous centred post-secondary spaces between 2002 and 2006 while driving through North America, most importantly within British Columbia. Asphalt infrastructure both allows one to see beyond urban Vancouver into the rural,³⁴ to witness the movement of mining equipment, man-camps, the effect of industries' operations and plans, such as how a forestry company claim can extend beyond tree roots through a 'sibling' corporation mineral's extraction interests. Beyond the well-studied history of the building of the railway; the highways as well as the vast lattice of unpaved forestry³⁵ and mining roads extend the claws of settler-colonial violence against Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit folks, lands, waters and non-human beings.

Yellowhead Highway.
 BC Highway 113

32 Touched on in an 2018 interview by Nickita Longman (Saulteaux) with Ontario-born Philip Dwight Morgan (Jamaican descent) <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/distinct-histories-shared-solidarity>

33 Not In My Backyard

34 Kei Miller's latest book title *In Nearby Bushes* (Carcenet Press, 2019) gives space to meditate on how 'bush' in Jamaica can signal rural/freedom/healing tea/bath is transformed into spaces seen as dangerous and violent. This may be a possible entry point for Jamaicans to think about what harms travel off BC highways into rural Indigenous communities.

35 I am grateful for the conversations with Mariko Molander.

Highway 1

Highway 7B. A darkness steeped in something else. The radio's love songs and 70s hits cannot cover. I pull over and sleep on the side of the highway. Until a woman crying and leaning on my dragon masquerading as a truck wakes me. Lying in the front seat pitched back. I listen to the sound of another woman who thinks she's alone in the dark. How she too draws warmth from the body of my beloved beast. My first hitch hiker and i do not apologize for the half hour i listened nor my negotiations through the crack in the window. I do not shine a light in her face nor ask her name as i turn the key and ask Kaida to take us out of there. Closer to light and living people. Because we are not alone on that highway. You can only lock out what needs a body to break in. Knowing this does not make it easier but perhaps just so extends companionship to the missing. The deeply missed. "I know you're out there. I don't know where exactly you are but I know you are," This place she says. Is not good. I should never have left Whistler. I don't ask why it's not or what she does. I just know that sometimes driving i pull over and risk rest knowing anything is possible in certain places because the psychic aftermath is evident in a way i cannot explain to you either by the sound. The sound of a woman crying in the dark. The roar of Kaida's engine (Dec 3, 2014 Facebook memory).

Highway 5

Highway 20

Highway 17

Highway 97

You understand your settler privilege when you drive this highway. Full tank of gas. Hotel bookings. This summer right around the time this young mother went missing I picked up a woman I know from the DTES who was hitchhiking from Prince George.³⁶ She'd spent her last \$25 on a knife. She'd made it 1 hour down the road in 7 hours. I took her the 5 hours back to Vancouver. In the last month they have found 3 women dead³⁷ in that end of August time frame. What i know only is this. As I picked her up there was no question if I would. The question was if it's not safe in Prince George. If it's not safe in Vancouver. If it's not safe on the highway what does my lift do actually? No answer here (Sept 25, 2018 Facebook memory).

Highway 16

Highway 37

³⁶ Just beyond T'exelc (also known as Sugarcane) Williams Lake Indian Reservation no. 1

³⁷ These specific reported deaths occurred that summer along the highways of British Columbia. I raise my hands to signal respect to the women in the 20-block community of the Downtown East side of Vancouver.

BC 1

Over 5000 kilometres away on the island I was born: I also drive the pocked asphalt infrastructure of Jamaican highways which take me through ore-rich areas, the eternal red mark of the iron oxide on the roadside. Yet the red dirt is also the grounds of our food³⁸ lifeline; the hands of our ancestors in the soil; I hold the memory of one of my grandfather's treasured Manchester cousins –my granduncle Cleve King's steady feet and welcoming eyes as he came down out of the steep land of his provision grounds with his freshly dug yam on his shoulder; perhaps planted and watered high enough from the arsenic and cadmium of the Battersea tailings pond (Persaud 2018) seeping into the water-table for decades.

I wonder what he would tell residents of Cockpit Country and Trelawny about to be impacted by bauxite mining and I wonder: what he would tell me about my research into the other price of bauxite mining in Manchester travelled far away to be smelted in Kitimat?

Sometimes Clocks Turn Back For Us To Move

At any given moment, my body holds 4 time zones, including the one it is standing in. February 28th, 2019, I was suspended miles above the ground moving counterclockwise traveling from England to Jamaica by way of Tkaronto/Toronto. I scanned a newspaper report of stunning testimony from the day previous which a Trinidadian sistren living in British Columbia witnessed by declaring it "a masterclass of truth to power." On that flight, I abandoned all foreign close-quarters etiquette and in Jamaican travel style spoke at length to my row –a Canadian wife and her stiff husband, helplessly wedged between my aisle seat and the window. It is possible I delayed their wedding anniversary celebrations coincidentally time-stamped by the White Paper of 1969³⁹ as I chased their rum and cokes with retells of a video from my early classroom days. I chuckled and commented, aware the captive section of travellers was there to vacate snowy Canada for Jamaican sun and surf. The clock turned back as I read them the news unfolded; remembering class time at Langara watching the 1987 NFB film 'Dancing Around The Table, Part One'(Bulbulian

³⁸ In Jamaican parlance 'food' is the word for ground provisions: yam, coco, cassava and dasheen. For example, you may order fish and rice, or fish and food. Ground provisions are coded as central to what Jamaicans identify as core sustenance.

³⁹ The White Paper of 1969 was an utterly rejected Canadian federal proposal paper on Indigenous policy put forward by then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, father of the current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

1987) and the sea as backdrop for a Kwakwaka'wakw son and his powerhouse mother speaking of their collective rights and their traditional territory *in situ* on Vancouver Island.

As the plane prepared for arrival to the island of my birth, I held that newspaper grateful for the inkling I have learned in ancient and unceded territories through the blink of 28 revolutions with the earth around the sun. The Mother's Day Pow Wows at Trout Lake. The air of the PNE Agrodome resounding with shout after shout after shout of "*Hobiyee!*" in honour of Nisga'a New Year. The garden sanctuary tended by the steady hands and eyes of T'uy't'tanat⁴⁰ and family in the Skwxwu7mesh community under the shadow of Lion's Gate Bridge. The Annual February 14th Memorial Day Marches. The power of a T'silquot'in speaker holding a precious jar of pristine Tetzan Biny water; inexorably drawing the eyes of every police officer, reminding them of our human frailty as they stood guarding the corporation's door.

Most of all, I am grateful for being allowed to witness through the public entry the West Coast nights at the Vancouver Friendship Centre where for many winters over the last decade I learned what lay beneath the snow and whiteness of Vancouver. Children from many territories in British Columbia growing into their dances. The solemn blanket rounds. The amazing oratory and singing of Urban Kwakwaka'wakw. Men softly singing, blending their vocalizations into a low single voice to represent the years when the songs were almost lost due to colonial violence. Precious the memory of a venerable, respected chief with arms outstretched and feet stepping... stepping...stepping; his dance held by the circling spiral of women holding up the sky with their palms and keeping time and ground with their feet. The witness, the respect accorded to this elder as he slowly danced; moving past the destruction of language, destroyed regalia, stolen mortuary poles, residential schools, the banning of potlatch –his unexpected extra round. The moments of honour signalled by precious eagle down rising up to the rafters of the gym on the warm breath of the people and the vibration of the hand drumming men. The Haida Reparations Committee stopover en route to Haida Gwaii with ancestors. Beautiful powerful singing as women dance and keep the gyre of life turning. The system of dances and songs that represent Indigenous laws beyond systems of settler paper.

I listen for the echoes in current times

I give thanks for all the First Nations, Indigenous and Métis teachers and students at Langara as well as the Institute for Indigenous Government who took the time to genuinely

⁴⁰ Cease Wyss (Skwxwu7mesh/Sto:Lo/ Hawaiian/Swiss) whose tea blends have been a part of the wellbeing of my women kinfolk in the east <https://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/play/2819/Indigenous-Plant-Diva>

include me as a learner and sharer in their classrooms. I write in repayment for what capacity I have to comprehend the magnitude of this struggle while traveling highways or reading a conservative paper. The SNC Lavalin scandal of 2019 highlighted a settler son representing two generations of one family in the role of Prime Minister of a settler state and an Indigenous daughter in the role of the most powerful lawyer of the land representing two generations of an Indigenous family –trained in settler law and the endurance of traditional laws and protocols.

Puglaas⁴¹ –the former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada– brought forward the long line of her matriarchs, elders, and the ethics of accountability anchoring their Big House laws and placed them on the table in a question period on the scandal. The obdurate quality of "things that are ancient in our country... Long before treaty" (STOLŒEŁ 2017) manifests in the words of the grand-daughter of Puugladee, the self-same powerhouse Kwakwaka'wakw matriarch in the Dancing Around the Table documentary (Bulbulian gilo1987). On that day, as the Attorney General, Puglaas invoked laws from her island home in the west as the foundation of her testimony ... and deftly touched off a long overdue multi-layered political earthquake that unsettled the colonial stronghold known as the House of Commons in the east.

The plane flew low over the tailings ponds and the red scars of mining roads; taxied to touchdown with the sound of Jamaican passengers clapping our thankfulness for a late but safe arrival. "It's tradition," I said encouragingly as my last words to the couple. Unbothered by their lack of response, I grabbed my hand-luggage of research and left them behind in order to continue to move forward; disembarking with my work and my people, in love and struggle onto the beloved Rock.

I had the most powerful dream ever. I mean the land steward women from one side of my family met with the land steward women on the other side of my family and held council in the deepest love place back home the farm of my Other Mother where I used to pray and opened a door beyond my imagination. The lawn of the farm had transformed and was also the Vancouver Aboriginal Centre gym throbbing with the drumming, singing and dancing of West Coast Night. The sound shook the dream, shook my still body. My elder women's instruction to put the land love for Jamaica into the struggle for land love here was never clearer. It's not even possible to describe the dimensions of it, waking except to say what I knew when I stood on the shores of Elmina Castle. We have been changed. In some definitions we are landless, but not without land love. I will continue to hold all that horror and loss

⁴¹ Jodi Wilson-Raybould (Puglaas), grand-daughter of Ethel Wilson (Puugladee)

of the Middle Passage and Jahaji and Gorta Mór the tremendous force all those 3 hells generate...transform it in my/our collective psychic work of supporting the Indigenous will to never surrender this land I currently am a guest on.⁴²

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