

Speculating Abolition:

Alternatives Models of Redress in Black and Indigenous Feminist Speculative Fiction

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
MINNESOTA BY

E. Ornelas

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIERMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Drs. Aren Aizura & Jigna Desai

April 2024

E. Ornelas

© 2024

Dedication

To every being who ever has been, is, and will be held in a cage.

Towards a world in which we all are free.

Table of Contents

Contents

Dedication..... i

Table of Contents..... ii

Introduction..... 1

Prologue..... 1

Introduction 2

Feminist Critiques of Policing, Prisons, & Punishment 12

“Practical Alternatives” 19

The Power of Speculating..... 24

In an “Other” Time and Place 28

Scope, Methods, and Structure 31

Chapter One 38

Introduction 38

Contextual Considerations: Reading *Dawn* through an Abolitionist Lens..... 45

“Stay Human”: Taxonomies of Being in the Prevention of Sexual Assault..... 55

“Conscious and Aware”: Determining Motivation and Punishment in Cases of

Murder 64

Conclusion..... 78

Chapter Two..... 82

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction | 82 |
| The Justice Rituals of “Justice” | 88 |
| “All You Need Is to Listen and to Make Space”: Seeking Resolution as Direct Intervention | 96 |
| Real World Resonances in <i>The Marrow Thieves</i> | 109 |
| “Morphing Her Singular Voice to Many”: Reconnection as Decolonial Redress | 114 |
| Conclusion | 131 |
| Chapter Three: | 137 |
| Introduction | 137 |
| Containment in <i>An Unkindness of Ghosts</i> | 143 |
| “Try to Remember Even That Which Has Been Forgotten”: Study & Fugitivity in Outer Space | 147 |
| Histories of New (Intra- and Inter-Planetary) Worlds | 156 |
| “We Could Dig In”: Generative Refusal on Earth | 164 |
| Conclusion | 175 |
| Conclusion | 181 |
| Bibliography | 189 |

Introduction

Speculating Abolition:

Alternatives Models of Redress in Black and Indigenous Feminist Speculative Fiction

For all of our ability to analyze and critique, the left has become rooted in what *is*. We often forget to envision what *could be*. ...That is why I believe our justice movements desperately need science fiction.

—Walidah Imarisha, “Rewriting the Future”

Prologue

In my late teens, my emotionally, physically, and verbally abusive boyfriend informed me that I was no longer his “Spanish Girl” as he “affectionately” called me, but rather, a “Mexican whore.” The racialized, gendered, and colonial entanglements of this comment are striking: Europeanness (i.e. whiteness) is conflated with worth and adoration as well as the ability to be gendered (i.e. to be a “girl”). My Mediterranean settler heritage was exalted in his mind, made me exotically “olive-skinned,” yet palatable. When he revealed his feelings of disgust about my Chicana and Indigenous lineage,¹ it became clear that, in his mind, to be descended from Aztlán was to be sexually wanton, cheap, pathological, tainted, and incorrectly performing a feminized

¹ Specifically, my family is Chicana, European, and Indigenous—dispossessed of land, lifeways, and tribal identity. My paternal grandfather, Louis Ornelas, was a survivor of the Sherman Institute, a Native boarding school in Riverside, California. He was literally and figuratively orphaned: not only were both of his parents deceased when he was released from Sherman as a teen and hence he had no family to return to, he had also been indoctrinated into white supremacist, settler colonial societal and linguistic norms, and was therefore orphaned from his culture. Institutions like Sherman relied on such erasure of subjugated knowledges in order to assimilate through so-called education. In response to the legacy of trauma my family suffered due to the Sherman Institute, I prioritize Indigenous knowledges in all I do.

gender. I recount his words not to shock, upset, or elicit sympathy, but to demonstrate how interpersonal violence is always gendered *and* racialized for women, girls, and trans people of color (Hu Pegues 14); and how the state and other structures did not protect me from this abuse. Statistically, I am among as many as one in three people of color assigned female at birth who will experience intimate violence in a lifetime, yet have few abolitionist solutions available for addressing this violence. My ex-boyfriend's words were not exceptional, but merely one instance in ongoing patterns of gendered, racialized, and colonial violence within the U.S. settler state and beyond—patterns that have galvanized me into an enduring commitment to abolitionist feminist scholarship and anti-violence community work. This project is informed by my desire to illuminate and interrupt all forms of violence, both interpersonal and institutional. What options do I wish I'd had to redress the harm I experienced due to my ex's painful hands and words? And how could I have ensured that this method of redress did not reproduce carceral logics of retribution?

Introduction

Feminist academics and activists who address violence solely through formal legal avenues risk ignoring how criminalization and punishment disproportionately impact those at the intersections of marginalized race, class, ethnicity, ability, gender, and sexuality, especially those who identify as women, girls, transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, Two Spirit, and/or queer people of color. Even when working outside of state channels, retribution and punishment as means to ensure safety appear as specters haunting feminist anti-violence work. These punitive models within formal and informal

spheres, even when promoted by supposed feminists, reproduce harm as they fail to address violence through affirming and transformative means. They also reveal the severe limitations to speculating about resistance to gendered, racialized, and colonial interpersonal and institutional violence.² As Walidah Imarisha explicitly demands in the epigraph, movements for social justice must take up literary speculation, because “[i]t allows us to imagine possibilities outside of what exists today” (“Rewriting”). Surely, countless feminists have advocated against disempowering processes for survivors of harm and against punitive measures for those who commit harm. Yet, I argue that pivoting towards literature is a crucial supplement in order to imagine possibilities beyond dominant carceral epistemes. Hence, my dissertation critically examines Black and Indigenous speculative fictions and how they can help to envision alternative futures in which feminist concerns regarding violence can be addressed without the use of retributive, punitive, and statist apparatuses.

One of the questions I’m often asked about this project is “why Black and Indigenous authors?” I’ve tried to answer this in a number of ways, all of which have ended up feeling incomplete or inadequate thus far. I could continue to cite the similarities between the statistically disproportionate (over)representation of Black and

² Although I don’t believe that interpersonal and institutional violence are entirely discrete (see my discussion of Mishuana Goeman below), I imagine the former to be comprised of acts committed between people (family members, partners, or within community, including strangers), such as the threat and/or actual use of sexual violence, child abuse, and direct psychological and physical harm (Husso et al. 1). Institutional violence can be thought of as more closely tied to the structures and systems that “facilitate violence,” often indirectly or protractedly through rules and regulations, through prisons and policing, through colonization, through anti-Blackness, through transphobia, through austerity measures, etc. (Curtin and Litke xiv).

Indigenous peoples in interactions with incarceration and death at the hands of police on Turtle Island, but I don't wish to reduce Black life nor Indigenous life to numbers. I could also reference the many recent and emerging projects that center both Black and Indigenous peoples (such as the scholarship of Chad Infante, Tiffany Lethabo King, Robyn Maynard and Leanne Simpson, or Mark Rifkin, to name a few) as a way to bolster my claims about the urgency of this work. Or I could even admit that the first time I encountered Fred Moten's words about subjection "to have been taken and to have been made to leave," I read the former as a reference to the conditions of Blackness and the latter as a reference to the conditions of Indigeneity; but pondering it a second time led me to interpret it the other way around; and yet with another glance at the phrase, I think it might mean *solely* Blackness or *solely* Indigeneity (199). And I could point to these slippages that gesture toward an ontoepistemological kinship—but not equivalence—that I implore us all to consider.

These present day conditions and their historical precedents are important to acknowledge, however I've realized that I'm drawn to Black and Indigenous speculative fiction for a different reason: futurity. Mvskoke geographer Laura Harjo defines futurity as "the practice of engaging with ways of knowing, performing, and celebrating who we are, valorizing and creating new ways and theories constructed with community knowledge, and creating explicit paths or maps to get us to the place we want to be, so that we choose our future and our future does not choose us" (Harjo 25). Futurity is not that same as future, though; it is an active, hopeful, socially produced, non-linear temporality. Put another way, policing, prisons, and punishment have not always existed,

and I believe in a future in which they will once again be no more—and I also believe that *abolitionists can bring that future into current organizing*. Furthermore, and perhaps most crucially, I believe that it is through bypassing the settler state and decentering whiteness that “Black and Native people need to think with one another about what healing and redress would look like on otherwise or decolonial and abolitionist terms” (King et al. 8). In *Rehearsals for Living*, Robyn Maynard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) discuss at length how “our respective communities—that is, Black and Indigenous communities—are collectively positioned on the very forefront of the unfolding catastrophe” in this world (Maynard and Simpson 9). I appreciate their careful juxtaposition, naming that their “respective communities,” which are unidentical and distinct, are nevertheless “collectively” linked, intertwined, and bound up in one another. Even if “we might understand Black and Indigenous struggles less as incommensurable than as simply nonidentical,” that these histories have distinct “conditions of emergence,” this in no way negates our commitments and responsibilities to cultivating co-liberation for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (Rifkin 4). Following the desire to move beyond “an impasse in which Black and Indigenous futures are portrayed as inherently antagonistic,” Diné scholar Andrew Curley encourages us to “envision futures that account for everyday experiences and desires of Black and Indigenous peoples” (Curley et al. 1045). After all, “we and ours have been building livable worlds” despite the ongoing apocalyptic circumstances of the past 500 years, already “living and organizing on entirely different terms than those laid out by the

monsters” of racial settler capitalism (Maynard and Simpson 25, 28). As a genderqueer mestizo abolitionist feminist, I’m looking for fellow accomplices in this work.

Addressing gendered, racialized, and colonial interpersonal and institutional violences demands understanding their interconnections, which literature deftly illuminates. Mishuana Goeman’s (Seneca) discussion of Chickasaw author Linda Hogan’s novel *Solar Storms* is central to my thinking around this. Goeman establishes that Hogan “asserts a scale [of time and space] based on connection, thus collapsing the settler scale that separates humans, land, animals, and so on” (101). Goeman explains that the colonization of (so-called) Canada and the United States produces relationships that are regarded as discrete and distinct from one another.³ From the settler colonial perspective, the scales of these relationships mark them as wholly different. In opposition to this, Goeman urges that “we examine spatial injustice and Native feminist practices...that enable us to delve more deeply into the ways that *gendered and sexualized violence has multiple connections that spread out on vertical and horizontal scales*” (100, emphasis added). In this way, violence reaches across temporal and spatial planes, touching multiple generations and scales of being. Spatial injustice, as Goeman instructs, is a “settler model of redistribution,” in which, at these multiple scales, Indigenous “land, resources, and ways of life are infringed on,” while the people of “mainstream” settler states “continue to receive capital and electricity”—not to mention other tangible and intangible resources—as benefits of this infringement (106). As

³ For example, the relationship between an individual and their community is seen as wholly different from the relationship between, say, an individual and land or the social body of Native peoples and state body of settler governments.

Goeman avers, the pain of colonization is not merely experienced by individuals alone, but in fact, “Native women’s bodies also become the conduit of possible violence that reinforces settler structures of violence” against *all* human and more-than-human bodies, at all levels (100). Thinking with this Indigenous feminist theorization helps to elucidate that violences are not separate, but all part of the interconnected processes of colonization, white supremacy, ecological destruction, and cisheteropatriarchal domination. Or, as Goeman would have it, seeing these scales and connections of spatial injustice requires “a consideration of all bodies: the human, the land, the water” (107). Using this expansive literary-inspired ideation, my dissertation focuses on Black and Indigenous speculations that speak to the prospect of addressing these interconnected violences through alternative iterations of redress, without the punishing arm of carcerality.⁴

With its roots meaning to redirect or rearrange, redress refers to taking steps to address and/or relieve a wrong in an open-ended way, with outcomes determined by the participants (Llewellyn and Ng-A-Fook 3). When thinking beyond the carceral state and its logics of punishment, I choose to focus on alternative forms of *redress* rather than achieving *justice*. Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) organizers have reclaimed the term justice in movements for restorative and transformative justice (discussed below), and “thus increasingly refuse to cede the term *justice* to the criminal justice system” (Thuma and Haley 137, emphasis in original). In the context of the lands

⁴ Ritchie explains, “carcerality is an abstraction of the word *carceral*,” and “refers to all things punishment” (“Carcerality” 41). I see this as a mindset and mode of operating that springs forth from yet extends beyond the carceral state itself.

of the Dakhóta Oyáte in which I currently research and write, “reparative justice” is deemed “essential to creating a moral and just society in which Dakota and non-Dakota people can peacefully co-exist and respectfully share this place we call *Minisota Makoce*” (Waziyatawin 9, emphasis in original). Nevertheless, I find “justice” to be too steeped in settler state governance and retribution for my liking. During the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition’s 2nd Annual Virtual Summit, Candi Brings Plenty (Oglala Lakota Sioux) expressed many of my concerns with the idea of justice for Indigenous communities:

So when it comes to the word justice, you know, it is very complex. ...It comes with a context of colonialism. ...So justice the term itself comes with an entity of governing around having this institutionalized, preset determination of what it looks like. And so, ...when I go back to my Lakota worldview, for me, “justice” is equated to having... balance and having our needs met emotionally, physically, spiritually—and pulling it back and separating it back from that colonial violence through a whole spectrum of what has been done to our land. ...When we start to also pull in tribal politics, ...that is part of us enabling our sovereignty to create these constructs of what justice would look like under tribal law, under creating resolutions and implementing some of these clauses that have been put in place and haven’t been utilized. ...So there is a component of what justice lens are we going to look through?

Brings Plenty names the challenges and complications of seeing through a settler lens that requires an “institutionalized, preset determination” of justice, and names the need

for other lenses. In their talk, Brings Plenty also highlights that rather than the so-called justice of the settler state, real change emerges from “lived experiences” that ultimately restores balance, networks, stories, and worldviews. So as not to rely on the models and language of *justice* that the settler state delimits, I seek what else exists within the more expansive realm of *redress*, based on past, present, and future visions.

Speculation is an ideal site for examining alternative models for addressing multi-scalar violences because it, in and of itself, is a way of thinking differently. Mark Rifkin deems the speculative to be more than just limited to a literary genre—it is also “a mode of relation” that enables an imaginative openness to a myriad of perspectives (8). Rifkin contends that while they might contain references to our known world, speculative fictions take seriously the possibility for other “not-known” modes of thinking and being in the world, and thereby challenge, even rupture, “the real” (61–2). This rupture makes a critical intervention, in that it “dislodges” dominant, taken-for-granted epistememes that “normalize” monolithic possibilities for “what counts as real in the present” (Rifkin 61–2). Therefore, Black and Indigenous speculative works similarly have the potential to offer “not-known”—or, perhaps, “not *yet* known”—models for addressing violence and harm that “dislodge” the present conceptions rooted in retributive, white supremacist, settler colonial, statist ideologies. What is more, the speculative is decidedly *not* tied to conventions of realism and rationality. Utilizing speculation interrupts the privileging of

more realistic⁵ genres as a way to tell stories that are “our own”⁶ and also interrupts a narrative form that is often overly-attributed to a white, Western canon.⁷

My work expands on intersectional, extra-legal responses to address the needs of individuals and groups who survive violence and harm. There is a wide variety of work on decolonial, anti-racist, and prison abolitionist feminisms that I’m drawing from and speaking to, scholars and activists who have outlined the ways in which state-based and retributive solutions to violence and harm actually perpetuate violence and harm themselves. Key questions within feminist projects against the carceral state, carcerality, and their supposed justice often center on what exists beyond the state as a means of addressing violence and harm (Ritchie, “Carcerality” 40). For example, how do we not replicate the same kinds of harmful punishment and carceral violence when grappling with, say, sexual assault? There’s been a plethora of writing and organizing around crafting such alternative forms of redress for interpersonal violence in the real world, such as grassroots rape crisis lines; community-based, transformative justice practices such as accountability processes; campaigns for divestment in jails and prisons; and contesting the professionalization and state collusion of domestic violence shelter work, to name a few.

There is also a great deal of theory that considers macro-level, institutional, or structural violence as well as potentially liberatory, strengthening, and transformative direct action resistances to such violence (Améry 16; Coulthard 110; Fanon 35; Samudzi

⁵ Dillon 3; Schalk 20–2.

⁶ Justice 2.

⁷ Dillon 2.

and Anderson 51; L. Simpson 236). Often the questions that come up within this literature grapple with violent versus non-violent responses to oppressions inflicted from institutional and state levels: How do movements avoid reinscribing violent and harmful practices when countering and/or replacing existing oppressive state apparatuses? At the same time, the frameworks of these discussions foreground tangible strategies and tactics and have rarely looked at speculative fiction as a meaningful site of exploration, save for a few author-activists, like Imarisha cited in the epigraph. Why ignore or foreclose alternative means of investigating the shortcomings of what responding to violence *does* look like in the real world? Why not inject a component of critical curiosity into the present moment? And, if we take seriously that another world is possible, why not use fiction to envision what that world might look like? Speculation through fiction thus supplements social movement organizing by representing forms of resistance that might otherwise be overlooked, yet exist within reach to bring into being.

Therefore, my research is guided by the following questions: *How do Black or Indigenous feminist speculative fictions envision forms of redress that act as alternatives to the criminal punishment system—a system that has failed BIPOC communities again and again? What do literary texts imagine as possible options for and limits to resistance in the face of gendered, racialized, and colonial interpersonal and institutional violence? And how can these speculations transform broader debates about models of redress within and for marginalized communities?*

Feminist Critiques of Policing, Prisons, & Punishment

There is already a wide array of feminist discussion around alternative practices of justice and redress (Chen et al. xxiv; Dixon and Piepzna-Samarasinha 8; Smith et al. 3). Like many (but not all) feminists, I too am invested in finding strategies for addressing violence at the interpersonal and institutional levels that don't reproduce the existing punitive statist structures that inflict so much harm. While still believing in a purportedly feminist agenda, purveyors of "saving" individuals from "perpetrators" with the help of the state enact what Elizabeth Bernstein has dubbed *carceral feminism*, or "a drift from the welfare state to the carceral state as the enforcement apparatus for feminist goals" (143). That is to say, "a law and order agenda" within feminist activist, legal, social service, and advocacy circles summons the carceral state as the most viable option of redress for violence and harm (Bernstein 143). Carceral feminism is especially pervasive because it is difficult to pinpoint singular activists or academics advocating for it explicitly.⁸ The "incremental and often *imperceptible* advance of carceral forces" within feminist agendas is the process that Mimi Kim refers to as "carceral creep" (254, emphasis added). Regardless of its imperceptibility, carceral feminism is an unquestioned assumption that can pervade feminism more broadly, an assumption that in order to enact

⁸ Much like the term Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist (TERF), it is unlikely that many people would actually call themselves carceral feminists. Author and abolitionist feminist Victoria Law affirms that although "*its adherents would likely reject the descriptor*, carceral feminism describes an approach that sees increased policing, prosecution, and imprisonment as the primary solution to violence against women" ("Against Carceral Feminism," emphasis added).

justice on behalf of survivors of gendered, racialized, colonial violence, there must be punitive and/or state-based deterrents in place against those who commit violence.

Advocates for gender-based rights and protections have sought shelter in the arms of the U.S. state for decades if not centuries.⁹ When focusing on the concerns related to gendered, racialized, colonial violence at interpersonal and institutional levels, the latter half of the 20th century marks a period of state-based advancements in such “protections.” Feminists, among others, campaigned for local and federal laws against violences like marital rape and rampant sterilization of people of color and people with disabilities as well as championed things like the right to privacy when accessing reproductive healthcare. Alongside these statist efforts, there also existed extra-legal projects and grassroots campaigns, like Chicago’s Jane Collective and the emergence of community-based rape crisis lines. These efforts in and outside of formal legal channels have undoubtedly been part of a long history of resistance to gendered, racialized, and colonial violence on Turtle Island. Yet the difference between this historical moment and previous points in time is the simultaneous emergence and growth of mass incarceration. Certainly, feminists sidling up to state power in the 1970s, ‘80s, ‘90s, and after the millennium may have had good intentions to reduce the harms done to people who

⁹ See Davis, *Women* 98–9 for discussion of U.S.-based feminists advocating for women’s suffrage in the 19th and early 20th centuries as one such example. Or as Chinyere Ezie reminds us, despite that “white women confidently marched to the polls in the wake of the Nineteenth Amendment, the right to vote remained largely theoretical for Black women voters for half a century longer” (661).

identify as women, girls, transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, Two Spirit, and/or queer. But the impacts of these efforts outweigh their intentions.¹⁰

Unfortunately, feminists who have embraced (or at least tacitly accepted) this carceral mindset leave unquestioned the systems that criminalize and castigate BIPOC communities (Law, “Against Carceral Feminism”). Namely, many critics have pointed out that the professionalization of anti-violence work has led to an increasing collusion with the criminal punishment system, which “inadvertently affirms illegitimate modes of governance and social regulation” (Aizura 123; Critical Resistance 223; Koyama 213–5; Ritchie, *Invisible* 213; Samudzi and Anderson 76; Smith et al. 1). Not only does placing trust in the state work to bolster its power, it also reinforces white supremacist, settler colonial ideologies. Or, as Zoé Samudzi and William C. Anderson affirm, supposedly “protecting the world from scary racialized men... sits at the root of so many implicitly racialized anti-domestic violence and intimate partner violence interventions,” and plays right into the hands of an already biased system (74). While there are decades worth of carceral feminist strands worthy of critique, there are also many threads that counter such discourse from within the fields of Black, Indigenous, and women-of-color feminisms, prison abolitionism, and queer theory.

¹⁰ Some examples of these efforts include (but are not limited to) passing hate crime laws and policies; increasing funding for jails and prisons to put away dangerous (i.e. men of color) offenders; championing more responsive and diverse representation at every level (e.g. DAs, lawmakers, police, etc.); utilizing policing and judicial systems to solve interpersonal conflicts; and neoliberalizing and professionalizing individual-based solutions like domestic violence shelters.

The founding of the U.S. settler state on genocidal coloniality demanded *controlling whether and how Indigenous people may even exist*. This is too often framed as a story of how the enclosure and punishment of individual, communal, and geographic bodies produces safety. Concerns over security are only a motivation insofar as the state manages the Other—deemed dangerous, pathological, disposable, criminal, guilty, and deserving of punishment—for the sake of the settler population. Through settler law, “Native people... became ‘criminals.’ *Criminal* meant to be anything other than Euro-American” (Ross 14, emphasis in original). Both Angela Davis and Luana Ross (Seliš-Ksanka-Sčłqetkwmcin Nation) have contended, respectively, that the bodily subject of the original penitentiary was a white one and that the punishment of Black or Indigenous peoples has always been detached from any goal of instilling morality or penitence. For Native Americans, Ronald Takaki noted that punishing and isolating mechanisms—such as the asylum, the boarding school, the penitentiary, and the reservation—serve “‘the principle of separation and seclusion’” that “would do more than merely maintain Indians: It would train and reform them” (186). I would go further and argue that separating people from their community and culture is not merely *reform*. It is death. Following the pronouncement that the U.S. must “[k]ill the Indian... and save the man,” Indigenous assimilation is in fact an iteration of genocidal control.¹¹ Sarah Deer (Muscogee Creek) provides a comprehensive overview of U.S. settler colonialism’s sexually violent history, in which there is an inseparable connection between the

¹¹ Richard H. Pratt’s famous words endorsing settler colonial practices were actually uttered in the same breath with the championing of similar practices for “civilizing” enslaved Africans.

sovereignty of Native bodies and the sovereignty of tribal nations.¹² “It is impossible,” Deer tells us, “to have a truly self-determining nation when its members have been denied self-determination over their own bodies” (xvi). Stephanie Lumsden (Hupa) expands on this: “By displacing Indigenous jurisprudence and imposing state punishment on Native people, incarceration legitimizes settler law” (33). Ultimately, “prison abolition politics are indispensable to tribal sovereignty” because abolition necessitates “the dismantling of all violence done to communities by settler colonialism” as well as “entails a commitment to a future in which communities are safe and healthy” (Lumsden 34). A specifically Indigenous feminist critique informs us that abolition is a key element of decolonial resistance to settler violence, control, and attempts at monopolizing sovereignty at all levels.

Another main area of feminist critique, at the front line of carcerality, is policing as a continual, everyday source of violence against—yet in the name of protection for—women, girls, transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, Two Spirit, and/or queer people of color. Co-authors Critical Resistance and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence expose the ways in which police fail to protect survivors of interpersonal violence, especially with the advent of many policies that require arrests to be made on

¹² For example, the ability for tribal nations to respond, especially in traditionally affirming ways, to gendered and sexualized violence has dwindled over the years, leaving many Native individuals who identify as women, girls, transgender, gender non-conforming, and/or Two Spirit vulnerable. *Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe* (1978) divested tribal courts of jurisdiction over non-Natives, meaning such courts cannot criminally prosecute non-Native defendants. This is part of a larger pattern of Native nations’ diminished and constrained self-determination—over outcomes for Indigenous bodies and for those that cause harm to Indigenous bodies—of which U.S. federal powers like the Bureau of Indian Affairs embody.

dispatches to domestic violence calls, often resulting in the arrests of people *experiencing* violence. Particularly alarming are cases where survivors fear re-victimization by law enforcement officers or where undocumented survivors are at risk of deportation if they come forward. In *Invisible No More*, Andrea Ritchie systematically elucidates the myriad of ways in which “police violence against Black women, Indigenous women, and women of color is systemic, not isolated, *inherent to policing as an institution*” (240, emphasis added). Because this gendered, racialized violence is inherent to policing, Ritchie does not advocate for institutional reforms as a means of securing stronger protections, but rather implores “us to do the incredibly hard work of envisioning and enacting alternatives to the police that will genuinely produce safety for survivors and targets of interpersonal and community violence” (*Invisible* 238). I share Ritchie’s and countless other Black feminists’ and women-of-color organizers’ commitment to “envisioning and enacting alternatives” beyond the white supremacist apparatus of the state.

I must also trouble terms like “safety” that sit uncomfortably close to the binaristic, institutionalized language of “security” and “crime,” “victim” and “perpetrator,” which prove difficult to recuperate. Criminal systems, such as courts and lawmaking, themselves enact (and are predicated on) a gendered, racialized practice of preserving respectable victims deserving of safety and redress, juxtaposed with criminals, offenders, and perpetrators deserving of punishment. The fields of queer and trans scholarship further interrogate these simplistic notions of safety and harm that carceral feminists often draw from in order to plead their case to the state—and that prison abolitionists must be wary of. Dean Spade maintains that being a crime “victim” grants

legal protection often desperately sought by vulnerable populations (170). This demands competing for safety and security as a subject who conforms to norms of good citizenship and simultaneously distancing oneself from what Amy Brandzel describes as less desirable, abject (non)citizen positions (14–5). Jackie Wang further problematizes innocence and victimhood, as these terms ignore how race and gender shape the figure of the guilty criminal (291). One of the exemplars of this has been hate crime legislation, which reinforces the criminal punishment system’s physical growth and its myth of meting out justice. Ryan Conrad, Karma Chávez, Yasmin Nair, and Deena Loeffler, in the introduction to the collection *Against Equality*, reiterate this: “Hate crime legislation, which purports to provide fairness for minority communities, does nothing to address root causes of violence, and increases the scope of the prison industrial complex” (3). Ultimately, any legislation bolsters punitive, retributive justice systems and “serves as an alibi to state violence”¹³ within “structures that cannot be redeemed.”¹⁴

The forms of policing, regulation, and lawmaking that both the state and carceral feminists mobilize all rely on the concepts of punishment and retribution, as evidenced by the proliferation of imprisonment and other punitive processes. These dominant models of addressing harm through state-sanctioned arbitration have rightly been called into question by authors and organizers who consider the impacts of prisons and prison abolition. As defined by (A)legal in “Beyond Revenge & Reconciliation,” retributive justice “involves responding to a transgression with some kind of harm” (67). Within the

¹³ Brandzel 38–42.

¹⁴ Spade 172.

U.S. context, using “some kind of harm” as a response is primarily executed through legal apparatuses, leaving survivors and broader communities removed from the center of the process, and ultimately failing to change the underlying causes of social problems. Although this retribution can occur with or without the criminal punishment system,¹⁵ retribution against those who commit harm, especially in the form of incarceration, doesn’t actually make people safer.¹⁶ In fact, the isolation inmates experience within prisons, particularly solitary confinement, does “grievous damage to their beings as consciousness” (Guenther 24). Therefore, if the goal of prisons and punishment is to provide safety, then it is questionable whose safety this is for. And furthermore, if it is to redress that individuals and communities seek for violence and harm, it is not within the carceral state that they will find relief.

“Practical Alternatives”

I have personally worked for over a decade within organizing efforts that have sought ways to evade and dismantle the violence of prisons, policing, and punishment—work that is deeply indebted to a lineage of abolitionist, anti-racist, and decolonial struggles. Feminist activists and academics, particularly BIPOC feminists, have long utilized grassroots and even quotidian alternatives to punishment. This “abolitionist feminism” is what Angela Davis, Gina Dent, Erica Meiners, and Beth Richie describe as “a dialectic, a relationality, and a form of interruption: an insistence that abolitionist theories and practices are most compelling when they are also feminist, and conversely, a

¹⁵ Crimethinc. actually offers validation of “vigilantism” in the case of survivors of sexual assault (48).

¹⁶ Critical Resistance 224.

feminism that is also abolitionist is the most inclusive and persuasive version of feminism for these times” (2). Pronouncing that communities “already have all the resources we need for self-defense” and fighting violence,¹⁷ advocates of supporting survivors without strengthening state control largely turn to community-based restorative and transformative—rather than retributive—practices in cases of gendered violence and harm.¹⁸ Restorative justice (RJ) focuses on restoring not so much the conditions before the harm occurred, but rather the inherent worth and integrity of all parties involved (Tsui 638–9). The survivor(s) of harm “take an active role”¹⁹ and the processes center on their needs.²⁰ Simultaneously, those who have caused harm are expected “to repair the harm they’ve done” (Chen et al. xxiii). However, this assumes that repair is even possible, and potentially overlooks how harm may alter people so much so that their relationships are not able to be restored. While restorative justice has well-meaningly been taken up on small scales so that neighbors can meet face-to-face to ameliorate conflict,²¹ it has also been co-opted in service to expunging low-level offenses at the city, county, and state levels.²²

¹⁷ Barry 44.

¹⁸ Smith et al. 2.

¹⁹ Chen et al. xxiii.

²⁰ Crimethinc. 33.

²¹ An example of which is the Minneapolis neighborhood project, the Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice.

²² Former Director of the UMN’s Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking, Mark Umbreit notes that “the greatest risk” to the restorative justice movement “is that of ‘window dressing,’ in which criminal and juvenile justice systems redefine what they have always done with more professionally acceptable and humane language while not really changing their policies and procedures” (“Restorative Justice”).

Transformative justice (TJ), on the other hand, embraces transformation and change. The practical and theoretical work that has been done on transformative justice has primarily originated—and remained—within collective organizing. For the Chrysalis Collective, formed explicitly to support a survivor amidst activism work, transformative justice “was a way of creating a system of community-based justice grounded in the humanity—not the brokenness—of its members and in our creative capacity to transform and heal from living in a violent and imbalanced society” (190). Both RJ and TJ operate as forms of community accountability (CA), which Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha describe as “any strategy to address violence, abuse or harm that creates safety, justice, reparations, and healing, without relying on police, prisons, childhood protective services, or any other state systems” (xxiii).

These strategies are not without their complications and critiques. Connie Burk believes that CA, as an alternative to problematic criminal punishment systems, should not be the only option because it “creates the false idea that we can *eliminate the harms* of the criminal legal system” while it also “tries to *replicate the helpful functions* of law enforcement...and prosecution...outside the framework of the State” (269–70, emphasis added). Good intentions are not enough to achieve desired results, since Emi Koyama reveals CA is “unrealistic” if it leans too heavily on notions of “romanticized communities” or “lacks structures” to adequately ensure motivation, compliance, and accountability (221). Instead, Koyama compels people to stay committed and connected to each other in order to hold one another accountable (222). Burk mirrors this, coining the phrase *accountable communities*, discussed more in chapter one. This term “shifts the

emphasis from a collective process for holding individuals accountable for their behavior to individual and collective responsibility” (273). Rather than idealizing an intervening party that swoops in only when there is trouble, building resilient, allied groups on a regular basis ensures commitment to each other and to accountability. Despite the contestations over specific terminology or tactics, many feminists have supplied compelling challenges and alternatives to the white supremacist, settler colonial, carceral state. For example, Mariame Kaba and Shira Hassan as well as Creative Interventions have both issued instructional guides for tangible answers to interpersonal conflict and harm. Overall, these appeals are for “practical alternatives” to state-based interventions (Gaarder 48).

However, I see a disconnect between how the material need for redressing violence and harm has been inattentive to the creative ability of literature, particularly speculative fiction from Black or Indigenous authors. Abolitionist feminist alternatives commonly approach harm through criminological and sociological lenses, conflict resolution practices, policymaking, legal reforms, and tangible instructional guides. While change through official channels is an important approach, it is not the limit of abolitionist possibility. Indeed, focusing solely on pragmatic, material solutions can leave efforts for change mired in specific, localized laws or initiatives, unintentionally foreclosing the broader horizon of an abolitionist future. Non-literary fields, what Imarisha calls the “what *is*,” are only part of the picture; *imagining otherwise*, therefore, enhances our real world responses to violence and harm by showing us “what *could be*” (“Rewriting”). As Gloria Anzaldúa once said, “Nothing happens in the ‘real’ world

unless it first happens in the images in our heads” (109). If we cannot first imagine other models of redress, then how can we alter or abolish the structures we now inhabit?

The generative nature of speculative fiction is that, in both style and content, it represents alternative imaginings. Although these works may take place in different times and places, it is necessary to consider that the versions of redress that these authors narrate could possibly be applied to our own world. Echoing Anzaldúa, Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee) observes, we can’t “live otherwise” without first being able to “imagine otherwise” (156). Speculative fiction from BIPOC communities can help with large-scale issues such as climate change or sovereignty, specifically by writing about futures, insights, relations, and solutions that we may otherwise miss (Spiers xxxix; Streeby 6). For the task of combatting white supremacist ideologies, theorists on Afrofuturism, specifically, make a clear connection between the ability to *envision* change and the ability to *enact* change (Jones 187; Mosley 406; Saunders 403). Rasheedah Phillips argues that speculating using literature provides practical solutions to the injustices of the present, in that there is a “utility of science fiction to envision new futures and new worlds in concrete terms—particularly for society’s marginalized” (242). In this research project, I reiterate these assertions that speculating is a valid and useful form of knowledge production, and I further extend this to the issues of alternative redressals for gendered, racialized, and colonial violence. By speculating an otherwise of responses to interpersonal and institutional violence that don’t rely on punishment, retribution, or the carceral state, fiction authors establish the cognitive conditions to bring them into existence in the here and now.

The Power of Speculating

Speculative fiction is central to this project, yet elusive in its definition.²³ As a form of storytelling, it cuts across literature, graphic novels, comics, poetry, plays, movies, television shows, and other kinds of cultural production. Distinct from other fictional genres, the speculative is not grounded by the constraints of the real or the possible. The term encompasses subgenres that speculate beyond known worlds and realities, including but not limited to science fiction, fantasy, horror, magical realism, and alternative histories. According to Sami Schalk, speculative fiction is comprised of “any creative writing in which the rules of reality do not fully apply,” including “culturally and historically specific social narratives of the possibilities and meanings of bodyminds, time, space, and technology, as well as our constructed notions of what constitutes a ‘real’ disability, gender, race, and so on” (17). Perhaps more important than what speculative fiction *is*, is what it can *do*. To speculate—through literature or otherwise—is a verb that denotes conjecture about what *could be*. Or as Schalk offers, “[s]peculative fiction allows us to *imagine otherwise*, to envision an alternative world or future in which what exists now has changed or disappeared and what does not exist now...is suddenly real” (2, emphasis added). In *The Jewel-Hinged Jaw: Notes on the Language of Science Fiction*, Samuel R. Delany delineates between realism (“events that *could have happened*”) and the realms of the speculative, like fantasy (“events that *could not have happened*”) and science fiction (“*events that have not happened*”). What distinguishes

²³ John Rieder bristles against decisive definitions, and is instead more drawn to “a web of resemblances” (17).

science fiction's power to speculate is its "particular subjunctive level," which "indicates the future" (Delany 11). The subjunctive is a grammatical mood of hope and possibility that "expresses an uncertain wish, suggestion, proposal, demand, or insistence" (Desai and Murphy 25). In the hands of Black and Indigenous peoples, "speculating" becomes a gerundive, active verb form that is itself a subject, rather than "speculative" which is an adjective that modifies a noun. In honor of this distinct practice of *creating* and *reading*, defined by the promise of *imagining* otherwise, I have titled my work *Speculating Abolition*.

The speculation of Black or Indigenous fiction authors must be contrasted with speculation in the realm of finance. Another definition of speculation refers to "the promise of future wealth" and amassing capital through the risks taken by investing in stocks, property, or other ventures (Martin 107). There is the hope or imagining of *future* gain, but this requires the risk or *potential* of loss. The speculation of financial capitalism is thus "unmoored from the material labors of production and circulation, even as it points in those same discussions to the collapse of the distinction between the imaginary and the real" (Martin 106). In other words, similar to the speculation of fiction, there is an untethering from present material conditions, while still potentially being influenced by and influencing those very conditions. Financial speculation runs alongside Black and Indigenous literary speculation, in that both take theoretical risks in order to build futures, yet they diverge in the space of capitalism's incredibly violent consequences. It is

precisely the “imaginary speculation”²⁴ and “narrative productions”²⁵ within capitalism that crystallize in the lived economic realities of Black and Indigenous communities.

Gambling on *all* of our futures, speculative capitalism creates an unsustainable, precarious, and impoverished present. Even the development of the genre of speculative fiction occurred in tandem with EuroAmerican dreams of capitalist and imperialist advances at the expense of Black and Indigenous peoples.

Unfortunately, speculative fiction has often been characterized as an invention or, at the very least, a diversion primarily of the West. For example, in an examination of science fiction, John Rieder notes that although there are literary precursors, the rise of this genre occurred in Europe and the U.S. during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, concurrent with heightening imperialist projects (3). Grace Dillon counters this, reminding readers that while Indigenous science fiction has been “overlooked,” it has nevertheless existed and provides a “valid way to renew, recover, and extend First Nations peoples’ voices and traditions” (1–2). Yet Dillon also warns us that this same genre has often been a site of furthering harmful colonial notions about Indigenous peoples. On the one hand, there is certainly a problem with defining speculative fiction and its subgenres solely in relation to a white canon and fandom. On the other hand, conflating traditional Indigenous worldviews—Dillon names slipstream conceptions of time as an example—with fiction risks reproducing a long history of “trivializing,” “reducing,” and denigrating non-white, non-Western epistemologies, ontologies, and

²⁴ Martin 106.

²⁵ Bahng 2.

cosmologies (Spiers xvii). Perhaps this points to the need to acknowledge that Black and Indigenous speculative fictions are not overdetermined by their conditions of emergence. These narrative forms that trouble Western epistemes already exist, have existed, and will continue to exist beyond the white-washed canon.

While there are forms of speculation within Anglophone fiction that adhere to anti-Black, settler colonial norms, it is important to discern the markedly different, emancipatory potential of speculation in the hands of those most marginalized. Specifically, speculative fiction from Black or Indigenous feminist authors expands the imaginative capacity to think beyond the real and envision completely different possibilities than the perpetual othering narratives of white supremacy and settler colonialism. Originally coined by white writer Mark Dery in the '90s, the term Afrofuturism has come to be defined as “a literary and cultural aesthetic...to interrogate and critique current conditions of Black and other people of color to examine the past and envision different futures” (Jackson and Moody-Freeman 3). This aesthetic is intentionally non-prescriptive and “values the power of creativity and imagination to reinvigorate culture and transcend social limitations” (Womack 24). In the hands of Black culture makers, the ability to simply envision different futures for Black folks—even if those futures are not ideal or utopian—is a potentially liberatory form of critique and creativity. The power to imagine otherwise aligns with longstanding traditions of Black “freedom dreams,” what Robin D.G. Kelley describes as an “emancipatory vision” conjured up by “renegade black intellectuals/activists/artists,” in service to movements that themselves “imagined a different future” beyond white supremacist narratives (6).

Indigenous speculation through story and literature is similarly crucial to creating counter narratives to the settler state.²⁶ As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou) tells us, “[w]riting about our experiences under imperialism and its more specific expression of colonialism has become a significant project of the indigenous world” (57). For Smith, Indigenous writing is an alternate account that challenges traditional settler epistemologies. Additionally, Chadwick Allen sees Indigenous creators of art and literature as not just correcting the inaccuracies of the past, but also as forward-looking in that they “continue to anticipate collective futures alternative to those assumed and celebrated by the settler nation” (95). In *Mark My Words*, Goeman states that “imaginative possibilities and creations” are “beyond a recovery of a violent history of erasure” and are, more importantly, “imaginative modes to unsettle settler space” (2). These imaginative possibilities that Goeman marks within literature are not overdetermined by settler space and its attendant violence, and in fact offer a way to “unsettle” present reality. At the same time, Kyle Whyte (Potawatomi) finds that Indigenous science fiction provides inspiration and guidance “through the ancestral dystopias we continue to endure” (233).

In an “Other” Time and Place

Creating and engaging with works of speculative fiction are therefore potentially liberatory acts for many Black or Indigenous peoples, as this presents “an intentionally disjunctive relationship with dominant understandings of the world as it is” (Rifkin 67). The dominant Western understanding of temporality has placed Black as well as

²⁶ “(Re)imagining” is what Laura Harjo deems “a decolonizing methodology” (34).

Indigenous peoples in a constant state of arrested development, the Other outside of the rational, linear timeline of Western progress to be subjected to violence with impunity. While on the one hand, as Fred Moten notes, the transatlantic slave trade and settler colonialism were both conditions of global modernity, at the same time, those condemned to its brutality were decidedly *pre-modern non-humans* (198). “As a nonhuman,” Ytasha Womack posits, “your life is not valued. You are an ‘alien,’ ‘foreign,’ ‘exotic,’ ‘savage’—a wild one to be conquered or a nuisance to be destroyed. Your bodies are not your own, fit for probing and research. *You have no history of value*” (32–3, emphasis added). This exclusion from the realms of modernity and the human bear traces in constructions of Blackness as well as Indigeneity, however differently.

For example, Blackness has been cast in opposition to cultural and technological advances, whether this is in literary narratives of the “dark continent” whereby Africa becomes spatially and temporally “outside,” or in visions of a “technologically enabled future” that is “unmoored from the past and from people of color” (Gunkel and Lynch 23; Nelson 6). In this way, people of the African diaspora on Turtle Island have been restricted from histories as well as futures (Everett 253; Gunkel and Lynch 27; Phillips 237). Defined as an irrational, backwards Other with no hope of a future, any safeguards against state violence or any promises of penitentiary redemption dwindle to zero. Because of this foreclosure, Anna Everett emphasizes, “it is a radical act for black people to imagine having a future” (274). For those who have been deemed stuck in the past or without a future, claiming presence and persistence is a rejection of this.

Though constructed differently than Blackness, the notion of a primitive Indigeneity also occludes Native peoples from the present and future. Illuminating the connections between the emergence of science fiction and the height of imperialist expansion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Rieder shows that early science fiction is imbued with supposed scientific advances such as “[e]volutionary theory and anthropology, both profoundly intertwined with colonial ideology and history” (2). It is no wonder that as the physical earth was being charted and surveyed heavily by Western projects of capitalist expansion, white authors invented peoples and places elsewhere to explore (Rieder 4). In fields of literature and sciences, then, we see obsessions with humanity’s origins popping up at the same time, mirror images of colonial anthropologists’ “missing link” fantasies (Rieder 32). Therefore, the ideology of progress that pervades colonialism (as well as speculative fiction) was shored up in opposition to backwards Indigenous peoples. Relegated to an Othered status deemed savage and outside civilized time and place makes violently punitive and controlling measures that much easier for the settler colonial state to inflict. Contrapuntally, Indigenous science fiction weaves stories of Native slipstream, alternative histories, and multiverses, all of which represent the past, present, and future as navigable without settler conceptions of linear time (Dillon 3–4). To return to Rifkin, literary works from Black or Indigenous authors posit “an intentionally disjunctive relationship” with these white supremacist, settler colonial discourses of Othering and, therefore, prove to be a crucial site for research into practices of further disrupting the status quo (61–2).

Scope, Methods, and Structure

After centuries of these Othering narratives, I illuminate alternative forms of redress—that are neither retributive nor punitive—for gendered, racialized, and colonial violence within literary works from Black and Indigenous feminist speculative fiction. For this reason, I have chosen to focus my study specifically to Anglophone texts from Black or Indigenous authors located on Turtle Island in the contemporary era of mass incarceration.²⁷ I pull from nearly a half century’s worth of literature from authors who identify as women, trans, non-binary, gender non-conforming, Two Spirit, and/or queer. These authors represent communities that simultaneously are disproportionately ensnared within the white supremacist, settler colonial, carceral state as well as have long histories of (extra)legal resistance to these ensnarements (Spade 167; Guenther xvi; Thuma 4). Furthermore, these literary works uniquely illuminate political questions because they emerge from respective Black and Indigenous histories of struggle and resistance. I therefore note the biographical and cultural context that grounds each authors’ writing, with snapshots of relevant, concurrent moments in sociopolitical spheres, elucidating who and what each author is in dialogue with. I also limited my parameters for inclusion to works that speak to some discussion of violence, whether at the interpersonal or institutional level, and the combating of such violence in a non-punitive way. I undertake feminist literary analysis, a method that recognizes how literature shapes and is shaped by social worlds (Plain and Sellers 2; Register 6–7). This involves a close reading of

²⁷ Scholars define this period as spanning from the 1970s until the present day (Davis 12–3; Wang 62).

elements such as sexual assault, enslavement, colonization, and resistance, themes that allow for experimentation around solutions to pressing contemporary issues that can then inform the concerns of real world abolitionist feminists.

Following this introduction, I turn to Black and Indigenous feminist speculative fiction with the first, second, and third chapters framed around the following thematic questions: How can abolitionist feminists resist the urge to punish, even in extreme examples of violence, like rape and murder? What are direct forms of redress that act as alternatives to the criminal punishment system? What do abolitionist feminists do if directly addressing violence and harm doesn't work? What, then, are indirect forms of redress that act as alternatives to the criminal punishment system? And finally, what is the application of these lessons for scholars and activists when prefiguring abolition?

The first chapter asks necessary questions about the place of punishment, penitence, and prevention in lieu of the carceral settler state, particularly in the case of egregious crimes like sexual assault and homicide. When asked the inevitable "what about the rapists and the murderers?" abolitionists can turn to the 1987 Afrofuturist novel *Dawn*, in which Octavia Butler presents resistance to these kinds of harmful characters. Butler's protagonist, Lilith, is a Black woman from Earth who grapples with masculinist violence onboard an alien craft. The title of this chapter, "I Hurt You Because You Were Trying to Hurt Another Person," is derived from Lilith's conversations and considerations in regards to violence as a means to prevent further violence as well as to impress penitence for harm that has already occurred. Although set in a distant time and place, hurting people who have hurt others resonates with contemporary real world

punitive practices. And yet Lilith's responses aren't so easily straightforward. Instead, reading Butler incites more questions for abolitionist feminists to think about. In particular, the novel is a helpful site to explore concerns for bodily autonomy; desires for vengeance; prevention outside of state models of predictive policing; redress beyond narrowly-focused, one-size-fits-all approaches; and definitions of a human subject without sanist cognition standards. I argue that *Dawn* can help abolitionist feminists to hold up a mirror to—and thereby challenge—the urge to punish, even in extreme examples of violence.

The second chapter, “Running Towards,” argues that a crucial part to addressing interpersonal and institutional violence is directly confronting those who cause harm. Here, redress takes the form of organized political acts of resistance as well as community gatherings that work towards resolution and reconnection. For instance, Mariame Kaba's short story “Justice” illustrates an example of peacekeeping processes following the murder of a teenage girl of color on a distant planet—in which characters confront an individual who kills—as a way to address (not punish) the harm. Kaba's ghost story is instructive in that it shows tangible models for peacekeeping that involves all community members directly communicating and sharing experiences in service to personal transformation based on collective affect. The characters in Métis novelist Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* combat genocidal settler colonial power and, specifically, resist neo-boarding schools in the late twenty-first century. Indigenous resurgence is meant to reduce if not wholly redress settler colonial extraction, control,

and harm—not through retribution but through reconnection. But what happens if these direct tactics don't work to bring about redress?

Chapter three, “Turning Inward, Turning Away,” examines indirect means of redressing harm through the generative act of turning away from those committing violence rather than facing them head on. Rivers Solomon’s *An Unkindness of Ghosts* presents the power of uncovering hidden ancestral knowledge and affirms fugitivity in the captive hold of a spaceship resembling the antebellum South, while Adam Garnett Jones’s (Cree/Métis) short story “History of the New World” validates Indigenous reclamation and (re)occupation on a dying Earth. Solomon illustrates alternative models of resistance to interpersonal violences, as characters conspire against those who cause harm in order to end (not punish) the abuses. Instead of turning towards violent overseers and powerful elites, *An Unkindness of Ghosts* offers Black study, planning, and fugitivity as forms of alliance through close connection to ancestral knowledge and community care work. Similarly, Jones’ Indigenous characters do not rely on directly interfacing with those who have caused large-scale, planetary conditions of precarity. Attending to the violence of the degradation of land and relations requires turning away from those who cause harm and towards those who are in need of immediate support.

Finally, my conclusion is grounded in the application of these lessons from speculative fiction that scholars and activists can take to heart while prefiguring police and prison abolition. Here, I return to my own experiences of gendered, racialized, and colonial interpersonal harm in order to tease out how abolitionist feminists might redress similar circumstances using the structure I’ve laid out: first, questioning any impulses to

punish; next, directly confronting harm; then turning away if possible and necessary. Ultimately, I argue that abolitionist feminists need the act of speculating through fiction. This provides not just lighthearted escapism or opportunities for literary analysis, but also crucial political imaginaries, which, as Imarisha affirms, our organizing already relies on. Therefore, I address how we might apply these alternative strategies for redress on the ground and in viable, material ways.

I am inspired by the thinking and writing within speculative fiction literature and how it can help to envision an anti-racist, feminist, decolonial, and anti-carceral futurity. My research challenges the advancement of policing, prisons, and punishment as the primary solutions to violence and harm, and is therefore situated within larger political and legal discussions on the impacts of the prison industrial complex. Hence, my dissertation is primarily meant to address an audience comprised of feminist scholars who operate in the field of thought on police and prison abolition. This interdisciplinary work also relates to past and present BIPOC cultural practices and feminist literary analysis. My greatest hope, though, is that this work contributes to anti-carceral feminist activists working towards abolition—particularly on community-based responses to violence—who are looking for alternatives to retributive models of justice. It is of the utmost importance for me to be in conversation with interlocutors within and especially *beyond* the academy. Therefore, my citational practice is firmly situated within a feminist tradition, what Sara Ahmed calls “feminist memory,” that acknowledges the robust contributions and theorizations that have come before me, in scholarly writing, in cultural productions, and in activist organizing (15).

Literature is a necessary site of speculating in order to conceive of alternative models of redress apart from the violence of police, courts, and mass incarceration. Approaching these abolitionist feminist concerns through speculative fiction is a way to “imagine otherwise,” a world without the violence of the carceral state (Schalk 2). Indeed, literature has the power to reveal the relationships between interpersonal and institutional oppression and genres like fantasy and science fiction allow for unique venues in which to imagine ways to address these harms (Dietrich 75; Goeman, “Ongoing” 100; Justice 208). Fictional works from Black or Indigenous authors don’t just help to “unchain the mind” or speak truth to power; they also hold the potential to formulate concrete solutions to our most pressing contemporary issues (Womack 15). As Esther Jones concludes,

science fiction enables us to interrogate our naturalized assumptions about our social patterns and behaviors, how we construct difference, and the development of ethical codes to deal with those differences. Science fiction, therefore, should not be regarded as an untenable, fantastical, and therefore absurd proxy for ‘factual’ science. Rather, it must be appreciated for its capacity to approach the question of social justice (in the realms of law, medicine, and public policy) through the interrogation of our most fundamental conceptions of human identity and behavior. (191)

To return to Imarisha, I’m not just interested in the “what *is*” of alternatives, but necessarily “what *could be*.” If feminists concerned with police and prison abolition do not embrace these speculations, the consequence will be a dearth of viable options for

liberatory decolonial, anti-racist futurities beyond the carceral state. Beyond my own research, settler states and those forced to interface with them are facing a collective reckoning: maintaining outmoded state-based models of so-called justice that punish in order to protect *or* grounding responses to harm in compassion, transformation, decolonization, and racial justice. With *Speculating Abolition*, I provide an urgent, feminist contribution to this vital conversation on alternatives to police, prisons, and punishment.

Chapter One

“I Hurt You Because You Were Trying to Hurt Another Person”:

Prevention & Punishment in Octavia E. Butler’s *Dawn*

Introduction

“But what about the rapists and the murderers?” If you, like me, believe in and work towards the abolition of the carceral settler state, then you will be all too familiar with this question.²⁸ We are confronted with it any time we share our visions of a world free of police and prisons. We are scoffed at, dismissed, and called “utopian,” as if our dreams are unfathomable, unrealistic, and unreachable. Hence, the above question is one tactic (among many) used to discredit us. It’s meant as a sort of “Gotcha!” as if we haven’t already thought of how to address violence without the use of the state. Or, as if there is no possible solution other than to inflict more punishment and pain on those who commit harm. By pointing to “the worst of the worst” forms of violence—rape and the taking of a life—abolitionists are painted as, at best, naive to such violence or, worse, dangerously complicit in it. It is to accuse us of absolving ourselves from any responsibility for what happens after the last cop is taken off the streets and the last correctional facility is shuttered. This ignores that abolition isn’t a single event; it is a process of dismantling “a society that could have prisons” (Harney and Moten 42). The question, “what about the rapists and murderers?” is also racialized in its implication that endarkened, threatening figures loom around every corner if not kept in check.

²⁸ So familiar, in fact, that it became the name of a zine of compiled anarchist writings on the subject of abolition, *What About the Rapists? Anarchist Approaches to Crime and Justice*.

Furthermore, it overlooks that we, as abolitionists, take seriously the need to address all forms of violence. As I discuss at length in the introduction, abolitionists have already thought long and hard about—and even proposed and implemented—alternative forms of redress. While I am in conversation with others who have taken up questions of such alternatives, I also argue that literature helps us to *imagine otherwise* and thereby supplements the work of activists and academics focused on the “real.” As my research aims to show, speculative fiction, specifically, can help to envision some of these possibilities about what else *could be*.

While my second and third chapters respectively explore direct and indirect strategies for redress in the face of gendered, racialized, and colonial violence, I first examine a single text from over a quarter century ago that represents a situation in which we see the most heinous acts of violence—sexual assault and murder—dealt with without a carceral punishment system. Octavia Butler’s 1987 novel, *Dawn*, paints a picture of a post-apocalyptic scenario for humankind, in which intra- (as well as inter-) species violence must be combatted. Readers find Lilith Iyapo, a Black ciswoman pushing back against and evading the violence that she and others experience. Butler’s Afrofuturism intertwines Black feminist thought in such a way that Lilith’s approaches to redress emerge alongside a critique of gendered, racialized violence itself—and her approaches are, therefore, helpful strategies for abolitionists to analyze as possible openings and foreclosures for alternatives to punishment in the case of severe forms of violence.

This particular literary work, although not necessarily written as an allegory for police and prison abolition, highlights a Black woman’s various means of resistance to

violence and harm that both aligns with feminist visions of extra-legal redress and at times reinscribes the present-day limited conceptions of options available. *Dawn* gives abolitionists multiple tools for redress, all of which are efficacious, yet simultaneously present consequences for us to contemplate. It is therefore a helpful piece of speculative fiction to use to weigh different kinds of responses—lessons abolitionists can take from the book into the real world. The text depicts Lilith’s Black feminist strategies—among a host of other forms of resistance—that I believe we can and must hold onto as valid, while also recognizing they are not the only strategies at these fictional characters’ disposal. When trying to imagine other possibilities beyond carceral, punitive, and retributive responses to violence and harm, we must consider many tools for our toolkit. In order to use this novel as abolitionists, we must establish what tools it contains. If we accept what Butler gives us as a more favorable, if not *the only*, form of resistance, then we might miss out on other possibilities.

So, how does *Dawn* conceptualize and address examples of extreme violence? And how does Butler speculate about punishment? In other words, what does this text allow us to imagine as possible options for and limits to resistance in the face of racialized, gendered violence? How is the violence and oppression in this work constructed by and through race and gender? What are the conceptual distinctions that Butler makes about different kinds of prevention and punishment, and how does this relate to the ways in which Lilith combats violence? What does Butler create instead of statist forms of redress, like the criminal punishment system? And how can Afrofuturist,

Black feminist speculative fiction like this inspire present day responses to violence and oppression?

Long seen as at the forefront of modern speculative fiction, Octavia Butler's career spanned almost four decades and covered topics related to gender and sexuality, race, disability, violence and oppression, and social taboos, to name a few. As a Black feminist writer, a winner of the Hugo and Nebula (amongst other) literary awards, a MacArthur Fellow (also known as the "Genius Grant"), and the honoree of the *Perseverance* rover's Mars landing site in 2020, Butler was foundational to the work of crafting the realms of Afrofuturism well before the term was even coined.²⁹ Through the power of storytelling, Butler's "creative and critical work demonstrates that science fiction was never *really* a straight, white, male genre, despite its pretensions to the contrary.... She proved that the speculations of science fiction could no longer afford to ignore the fraught questions of identity and difference" (Canavan 3). Although *Kindred* has been the first of Butler's works to receive a major, live-action adaptation, *Lilith's Brood* (the reissued version of the *Xenogenesis* trilogy, of which *Dawn* is the first installment) has been rumored to be in production for years. Walidah Imarisha and adrienne maree brown even titled their edited collection, *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*, after both Butler and the series. All of this

²⁹ Although the term is believed to have first been used by Mark Dery in the 1994 essay "Black to the Future," Lavender argues that "Afrofuturism's lineage is significantly lengthier than Mark Dery admits, with its roots extending as far back as the seventeenth century" (104).

speaks to the author's persistent resonance and relevance in the world, that even after her death in 2006, Butler's work lives on to help us envision and enact social justice.

I critically engage with the primary material of *Dawn* in regards to several instances in which Lilith implements prevention and punishment. In order to do this, I look at themes of physical and sexual violence as well as their gendered, racialized, and dis/abled implications. Through these themes, I extricate parallel passages which illustrate Lilith's various approaches to her fellow characters' oppressive circumstances. One instance involves an attempted sexual assault of a ciswoman by two cismen (all racially "unmarked"), while the other example I'll explore pertains to the murder of a Chinese-Canadian cisman at the hands of another cisman. Both of these violences force Lilith, whether consciously or subconsciously, to ask herself, "what about the rapists and the murderers?" And rather than scapegoating men of color, Butler reverses hegemonic gendered, racialized subtexts, by revealing that it is, in fact, the literal and figurative embodiments of white supremacist, settler colonial cisheteropatriarchy who threaten the wellbeing of all. Each of these two scenes are important to analyze because the first harnesses discipline in order to *prevent* violence and, the second, harnesses discipline in order to *punish* violence. I've chosen this book precisely because it delineates these different possible reactions to "the worst of the worst" that detractors often invoke in the real world in an attempt to discredit abolitionists. This chapter will show how two modes—prevention and punishment—of countering danger, threat, violence, and harm are presented within the text and how we, as readers, might carefully evaluate them based on how they're presented.

In some sense, the identities of Butler's characters are representative and resonant with the real world histories that they invoke. Within the text, there are cismen of indeterminate race—Curt, Peter, and Gregory—who cause psychic and bodily harm to an Asian-descended man, Joseph, and a ciswoman of indeterminate race, Allison. Joseph and Allison experience violence that denotes the violence that their racialized and gendered non-literary equivalents have historically and continue to endure. Namely, Curt sees Joseph as the Asian alien Other³⁰ whereas Allison represents a victimized white femininity.³¹ Likewise, Curt, Peter, and Gregory's actions emerge from a particular masculinized and de-racialized whiteness—a subject position that has, in the U.S., traditionally been glorified and sympathized with. Rather than masculinist displays of violence, Black feminist resistances appear in *Dawn* as a series of considerations and choices made by Lilith after being exposed to caging, dehumanization, sexual and reproductive violations, and other psychological and bodily invasions similar to her real world progenitors. The chapter is therefore about more than what to do with “the murderers and the rapists”—it is about racialized, sexualized violence, particularly within the context of Black capture. The histories of racial difference, slavery, colonialism, and

³⁰ See Day 23–4.

³¹ Although Allison is racially unmarked in the text, her last name is Zeigler, a surname derived from the German word for “brick.” This leads me to believe that she is of European descent and, specifically, white. DiAngelo (citing Frankenberg) avers that whiteness entails not simply a phenotypic marker but also a set of social processes and practices that are “unmarked and unnamed” (56). The very fact that Allison's and other characters' races or ethnicities are not explicitly named aligns with this contribution from Whiteness Studies that whiteness itself is a neutral baseline from which all “Others” are measured. In regards to gender, white femininity specifically operates as a defining standard from which the bodies of Black women, girls, and femmes deviate (Haley 5).

cisheteropatriarchy in our own world are mirrored by these characters, meaning that it is imperative to take the novel on its own terms and also take it into this world. Considering the subject positions evoked in *Dawn*, I foreground Lilith to highlight Black feminist thought as a crucial lens through which to view abolitionist concerns. In other words, engaging with the particular history of Black women in the U.S. contextualizes Butler's choices as a writer, as a Black woman writing about Lilith, a Black woman, written in a Black feminist tradition. Certainly Lilith's resonance with Black feminist understandings of violence and resistance offer continued options for redress without the carceral state, so long as we are also cautious to not esteem Lilith's strategies, particularly the potentially punitive and ableist ones, more than any others and thereby foreclose other horizons of abolitionist possibility.

In what follows, I reveal the consequences of *Dawn*'s violence and redress for abolitionists here in the real world. Through this analysis, I wish to demonstrate that Octavia Butler, like the many Black and Indigenous speculative fiction writers whom I will discuss later, weaves a tale that supplements our abolitionist imaginings. We encounter a story about the opportunities and obstacles in the use of various tactics to combat oppression, as well as the opportunities and obstacles to our estimations of such tactics. First, I briefly overview *Dawn*'s plot summary as well as clarify how Lilith's character echoes real world histories, aided by fellow scholars on Butler. After this, I delve deeper into the ways in which Lilith may (or may not) evoke Black feminist and abolitionist concerns, in the respective cases of Curt, Peter, and Gregory's sexual violence against Allison and, then, Curt's murder of Joseph. Ultimately, *Dawn* is helpful

in that it presents multiple tools, regardless of whether its characters, author, or readers approve of and accept *all* of them, for it at least gives the chance to weigh them side by side. Hopefully, by expounding on what the book helpfully provides for thinking beyond policing, prisons, and punishment, I avoid suggesting that Butler has a particular intention and instead suggest that what she's crafted has specific consequences for those of us reading it for the purposes of social justice and, in particular, abolitionist inspiration. *Dawn* is a fraught text when thinking about how to counter violence without the use of punishment and retribution. Nonetheless, Butler is successful in exploring the complicated impacts of different forms of resistance, leaving us with important questions and uncomfortable acknowledgements about the punitive impulses we might have.

Contextual Considerations: Reading *Dawn* through an Abolitionist Lens

Dawn opens to a scene of incarceration: Lilith Iyapo,³² a Black woman, “Awakens” to being held captive in a drab room with “pale walls” (Butler 29). She is fed and clothed, but not allowed to see her captors, let alone any other human beings (Finch 131–2). Kept this way, she endures “[t]wo years of solitary confinement” (Butler 24). After Lilith has been questioned and largely refuses to cooperate, eventually the prisoners reveal themselves to her. She is told that she is aboard a spaceship with an alien species called the Oankali,³³ who have rescued any human survivors of a global nuclear war in the late 20th century on Earth. According to Jdahya, a member of the

³² This forename “name recalls Adam’s first and repudiated wife” while the “family name marks her status as the widow of the son of Nigerian immigrants to the United States” (Haraway 63).

³³ When Lilith asks what the name “Oankali” means, one responds to Lilith, “Several things. Traders for one” (Butler 23).

Oankali who is first charged with orienting Lilith, it has been several hundred years since these events took place, leaving the planet inhospitable and orphaning what is left of the human race. Lilith remains skeptical and reluctant, and therefore adopts the credo “Learn and Run!” in the hopes that if she at least outwardly appears obedient, gains what knowledge she can, and eventually earns the confidence of the Oankali, then she might one day be able to escape their clutches (Butler 118).

The Oankali have their own plans for her, though; she is to be given special privileges and extraordinary abilities, trained in their language and customs, made to acclimate herself to their “literal unearthliness” (Butler 13). Once Lilith has become accustomed, she is integral to the Oankali’s intent to “trade the essence of ourselves. Our genetic material for yours” (Butler 40). Eventually, the Oankali will release a number of compliant and genetically modified humans back into the jungles of the Amazonian basin³⁴ in order to repopulate the Earth. Lilith must prepare at least forty fellow humans for this on a “training floor” (Butler 197). But first she has to select them, Awaken them,

³⁴ Covering over a third of the South American continent, this area comprises all water, land, flora, and fauna touched by the Amazon River and its tributaries. In the novel, this space seems to have been chosen by the Oankali because of its resilience on a planet dealing with the aftermath of global nuclear winter. Indigenous peoples are stewards to the most biodiverse regions at present, so this seems an apt place for humans to survive and thrive. However, the hundreds of Indigenous nations that currently steward the Amazon basin are nowhere to be seen or heard from in *Dawn*, despite that Dayal claims “Butler paints a fantastical account of European settler colonization” and Indigenous dispossession on Turtle Island (96). This risks reproducing settler fantasies of land theft and Native disappearance. That is to say, the Oankali and non-Indigenous humans are finally able to make use of this *terra nullius* (made barren hundreds of years in the text’s past due to settler state militarism) since there are no longer any pesky natives to get in the way. In both the text and the real world, settler futures are dependent on both extracting from the rich lands stewarded by Indigenous peoples and also the complete absence of said peoples.

and build their trust, an endeavor which proves as difficult as—if not more so than—becoming comfortable with the Oankali. She is given responsibility to “parent” these people in a “nursery,” despite her reservations that they “won’t trust” and will probably “kill” her (Butler 111–3). Lilith is well aware that the humans who she’ll Awaken are “all strangers to one another,” disconnected from their kin and ancestral roots (Butler 116). Nevertheless, “no fewer than forty people” join Lilith as the seeds to germinate the Earth anew (Butler 115). That is, until they begin to turn on the Oankali and each other.

At first glance, Lilith’s separation, captivity, experimentation, alteration, indoctrination, and breeding appears to be emblematic of the capture and displacement of Black life through the Middle Passage during the trans-Atlantic slave trade, in that the Oankali abduction of Earthlings mirrors that of European abduction of Indigenous Africans (Peppers 51; Plisner 146). For example, the Oankali alter Lilith’s memory in a way that mirrors how the “transatlantic slave trade systematically forced native Africans to reimagine and in many instances forget their past languages, homelands, and cultural practices” (Hampton 276). This is one of the most common interpretations of the novel: the violence and coercion of the Oankali is a stand-in for real life historical and present-day oppression. However, other interpretations challenge analogizing the Oankali to real-world oppressors. For example, because the Oankali are not human, they thus cannot be compared or substituted for human “saviors or slavers” (Belk 383). Rather than approaching Butler’s writing solely as a neo-slave narrative focused on alien violence against humans, I am additionally interested in how the human-on-human violence unfolds in *Dawn*. I not only want to expand beyond scholarly discussions that primarily

highlight Butler's interspecies interactions; I also argue that the novel's intraspecies scenarios are applicable to the gendered, racialized sexual assaults and homicides that we all (abolitionist or not) must contend with.

Although Lilith is not the only human subjected to Oankali violence and violation, it is important that Lilith is the focus of both the Oankali and of the reader. After a litany of tests, Lilith is chosen by the Oankali to be a sort of mother-figure to the other humans that will be Awakened.³⁵ Despite being placed in a seemingly maternal, nurturing position, Lilith is still othered. The Oankali role for Lilith effectively separates her from being perceived by fellow human captives as a peer, but nor does she find herself an equal to the Oankali. Additionally,

Butler's use of a black female protagonist to act as the "first parent" is significant, focusing our attention on the position of actual women of color who must negotiate inescapable colonial forces that exert control over many aspects of their lives, particularly sexuality and reproduction. (Stein 215)

Although taking place in a distant future and beyond the Earth's atmosphere, *Dawn* echoes "the painful loss of bodily integrity and informed consent" of Black women in the United States and "population control" narratives in the global south (Stein 212–3, 216).

In her "use as a breeder for the colonizing aliens... it is clear that Butler draws on black

³⁵ One of the Oankali, Kahguyaht, uses the gender-neutral verb to "parent" when describing Lilith's role (111). Lilith and another human woman, Tate Mara, employ the gender-specific language of "mother" and "Mama," respectively (Butler 111, 144). Even the sections of the book are named after domestic, stereotypically maternal spaces: "Part I: Womb," "Part II: Family," "Part III: Nursery," etc. However, as the "progenitrix of the new race" of human-Oankali hybrids, Lilith "will give birth to herself as *other*" (Peppers 47, emphasis added). For more on how this maternal role is complicated, see Finch.

women's reproductive histories" (David 112). It is no coincidence that Butler makes a Black woman the object of the Oankali's fascination, themselves possessing "pale gray skin" (Butler 12). The othering of Black cis and trans women, girls, and femmes has been at the heart of racialized, gendered, colonial violence for centuries, and continues to this day.³⁶ Alternatively, it is significant to center a Black matriarchal figure in order to emphasize the power and centrality of Black women in historical and present-day struggles against oppression (Plisner 156).

While it appears that the Oankali do not fully understand Terran conceptions and historicizations of discrimination and othering,³⁷ analyzing *Dawn* from an abolitionist feminist perspective, I recognize that the violence that occurs within its pages is symbolic for and constructed by legacies of oppression. All of the captured humans undergo imprisonment and isolation, which I liken to the torturous effects of phenomenological violence under solitary confinement. While unconscious and disengaged from others, humans are stored in suspended animation pods until the Oankali choose to Awaken

³⁶ During the trans-Atlantic slave trade, Black bodies sexed as "female" were both dehumanized through a process of *ungendering*, leaving them further from humanness and femininity, and, simultaneously, hypersexualized, leaving Black women and girls subjected to sexual violence with limited to no possibility for redress (Snorton 90).

³⁷ For instance, one Oankali warns Lilith that "there are already two human males speaking against him [Joseph, a Chinese-Canadian cisman], trying to turn others against him. One has decided he's something called a faggot and the other dislikes the shape of his eyes," then proceeds to ask "What is a faggot?" implying that racialization and homophobia escape them (Butler 166). This actively muddies a reading of the Oankali's intentions and impacts because their ignorance both makes historical prejudices unlikely while simultaneously hinders their ability to address the complications arising from legacies of human oppression.

them.³⁸ Once Awakened, humans are isolated for long periods of time in rooms that they are unable to leave or control the conditions of. Lilith and other characters use words like “prison,” “cage,” “jailers,” “captive breeding program,” and even “solitary confinement” to describe these situations (Butler 11, 24, 88). Considering violence in Butler’s series, one scholar summarizes, “during isolation in a colorless room, the Humans are drugged, operated upon, interrogated, starved to death, shamed by their nakedness, and treated like animals” (Braid 56). This isolation in itself is a form of phenomenological violence, violence that occurs to one’s consciousness and sense of self through the withholding of (sensory) information and intraspecies contact (Outterson 435). In *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and Its Afterlives*, Lisa Guenther explains that orientation from one’s own body is constituted through “reciprocal relations of touch” and external meaning-making, hence “one cannot deprive individuals of their world without doing grievous damage to their beings as consciousness” (24, 31). Despite these harms, imprisonment and the regulation of freedoms are necessitated both for the Oankali’s experimentation purposes and because humans are seen to pose a threat to themselves and others. Just as imprisonment and isolation are wielded to control violent humans deemed unacceptable to deploy to the new Earth colony, real world imprisonment is meant to “break down the antisocial personalities of inmates and rebuild them in harmony with dominant social norms” (Guenther 66). Those who would not cooperate with the Oankali would, just like

³⁸ These pods are composed of a previously assimilated species that the Oankali have genetically manipulated for this specific purpose.

incarcerated populations, “be isolated in their independence, forced to bear the solitary freedom alone and without the support of others” (Guenther 79).

Common explanations of the relationship between the two species in *Dawn* often fall under one of two categories: xenophobic human/benevolent Oankali or victimized human/oppressive Oankali. Unfortunately, this reduces the contextual and intertwined nature of both species’ motivations and justifications for violence, and, as such, the narrative as a whole. Here, I outline each of these tropes to establish their merits and shortcomings. One aspect of the human/Oankali relationship that I want to make clear is the limitation to (if not the complete lack of) human consent, agency, and decision-making (Stein 213). While the Oankali may appear to have an ethical and practical concern for impeding the inborn trait of humans’ destructive tendencies, the Oankali ultimately impede through coercion, if not outright violence. The Oankali advance their social agenda of non-violence, communalism, and mutualism, not voluntarily but mandatorily. Most tellingly, the gene “trading” practiced by the Oankali to alter and enhance themselves and other species is not entirely selfless. The Oankali have a biological imperative to mix genetic differences,³⁹ and therefore have a self-serving impetus for their experimentation on and eventual assimilation of humans (Braid 59). Thus, the Oankali’s far-from-altruistic acts—that are justified in the creation of their utopian society—compromise any semblance of egalitarianism and mutual aid (Braid 49–50). These underlying problematic behaviors of the Oankali lend toward a converse characterization of the human subjects.

³⁹ One of the Oankali likens gene trading to the need to breathe (Butler 43).

Viewing the Oankali as more malevolent than benevolent leads to a contrasting view of humans as the victims of Oankali violence. At first, humans are in a vulnerable situation, found dead or dying and having no habitable home following a Cold War face-off between the United States and Russia, resulting in nuclear winter, mass extinctions, and ecological devastation. In this scenario, several scholars argue that the Oankali take advantage of human vulnerability. Emphasizing the real world resonances of *Dawn*, proponents of this line of thought assert that “the body parts of women of color come to be deemed as usable, extractable, tradable, natural resources that the women will be coerced or violently forced into relinquishing for the purposes of those in power” (Stein 210). The Oankali’s rhetoric of “betterment” also enforces the idea that human bodies are inherently flawed. For example, the Oankali intend to “improve” the human protagonist’s memory, implying that human neurological functions are inadequate (Hampton 270). Likewise, through a Critical Disability Studies lens, the Oankali are rendered as treating “the *condition* of being human,” that is, the naturally occurring diseases of hierarchy and violence, coupled with the positive trait of intelligence (Obourn 119, emphasis added). The Oankali “believe that it is their moral duty to repair any illness they find in individuals bodies and to prevent a purely human line genetically programmed to destroy itself to continue to procreate” (Obourn 113). Therefore, it is not just a lack of human consent for the Oankali procedures, but also the eugenic “need” for change that is

problematic (Curtis 25). In this line of analysis, *Dawn* is an account of the Oankali seeking to correct a group of vulnerable and victimized humans.⁴⁰

Despite accounts of the Oankali as oppressors, other scholars proclaim the Oankali are, in actuality, benevolent (Braid 50). This benevolence is exhibited in a number of ways: through their assistance to a dying race of humans as well as their utopian vision for a non-violent society—even if this utopia is achieved through less than ideal means. It is possible that the intention of the Oankali is to help humans after a near “humanicide” (Obourn 117). Highlighting the utopian tendencies within *Dawn*, it could be that the Oankali “didn’t merely save the humans for breeding” in order to exploit these new hybrids, but instead to save them in an attempt to repopulate a “rehabilitated planet Earth” (Belk 382). Literary interpretations of *Dawn* often describes the benevolence and utopianism of Oankali society, such as how the Oankali practice sustainability and mutualism and how they “are in total harmony with their ecosystem” (Belk 374; Plisner 152; Zaki 242–3). Yet this ignores that their sustainable practices are only possible because the Oankali have manipulated their surroundings to their whims. Yet another positive perception of the Oankali insists that, although *Xenogenesis* presents eugenic violence where all humans are seen as in need of improving, the series actually challenges curative measures and acknowledges bodily differences.⁴¹ Here, the Oankali

⁴⁰ Resonances with the colonial logic of “[k]ill the Indian... and save the man,” originally espoused by Richard H. Pratt, should also be apparent here.

⁴¹ Claire Curtis believes the series provides a framework for “living together recognizing the fact of radical bodily diversity and the discomfort that goes along with that diversity: discomfort for those whose bodies are different and discomfort for those who think of their bodies as the norm” (23).

are not sadistic in their elimination of negative human traits, and furthermore such “positive” ends justify the means through which they achieve them (Belk 374; Plisner 150). Dangerously, though, the justification of being for the “common good” leads to the silencing of humans who reject the estimation that they are violent, threatening, and in need of correction (Braid 58). In fact, these humans are implicitly deemed xenophobic for their discomfort with foreign bodies and modifications (discussed at length below).

It is difficult to ascertain who is justified in their use of violence and who is just violent; hence, there is a moral ambiguity in this novel which makes it difficult to determine Butler’s evaluation of violence (Otterson 440). *Both* the Earthlings and the Oankali are misguided at times, and we must acknowledge this complexity (Nanda 773; Smith 559–60). *Both* species create alternate forms of hierarchicalized differentiation and control: humans through their xenophobic and violent resistance, and Oankali through their othering and “correction” of speciated flaws (Miller 340; Otterson 442). *Both* groups rely on ableist ideals of purity in some sense: “the humans in the trilogy cling to certain body types to reinforce a human identity” and “the Oankali insist on a fixed, gendered combination of family units in order to produce medically ‘better’ bodies” (Obourn 123). For an abolitionist feminist, reading *Dawn* allows for a complication of these two binaristic ways of thinking. Rather than reduce both species’ motivations and justifications for violence, we must examine the contextual and intertwined nature of their actions. This also affirms that Black feminist speculative fiction generates important reflection—rather than top-down models or prescriptive measures—for abolitionist thought.

“Stay Human”: Taxonomies of Being in the Prevention of Sexual Assault

One particular human-on-human interaction within *Dawn* directly addresses the first part of the question, “what about the rapists and the murderers?” Two masculinized yet racially ambiguous characters attempt to sexually assault a woman, but Lilith, the novel’s protagonist, physically disarms these men before they can act further. In this section, I will demonstrate that Lilith’s violent response is meant to *prevent* rather than *punish* misogynist violence, a helpful distinction for abolitionists searching beyond the punitive measures of the carceral state. Lilith’s additional framing of rape as an inhuman act opens up questions for abolitionists about what it means to rely on the category of the human in the context of preventing gender-based violence and harm. Following this altercation, the Oankali also offer penitence as a form of redress, and Lilith reiterates this need for the perpetrators to personally reflect on their misdeeds. I discuss how this desire for penitence might overly rely on the state of a cognitively attentive, morally reparable subject. Rather than tacitly accept the impulse to entwine taxonomies of being with redemption, abolitionists can look to *Dawn* as a space to critically consider prevention and penitence as possible forms of redress for extreme acts of sexual violence.

Once in the “nursery” all of the humans begin to form factions. Splitting up is, in part, due to the cliques that form around similar or differing views of their situation and which tactics are best to deal with it (Butler 175). As Lilith Awakens more humans, she “recruited these, too” as a way to influence them and grow her own cadre of peaceful followers (Butler 176). These newly Awakened recruits initially see racially unmarked, cisman Peter Van Weerden’s group as “heckling and jeering” “troublemakers,” and

therefore less desirable to side with (Butler 176). In addition to tensions over strategy, rifts and couplings amongst the group also arise out of heteronormative social structures that many of them desire. For instance, the character Celene Ivers is particularly drawn to Conrad “Curt” Loehr for a sense of security that his masculinity provides her (Butler 141). But it is the racially unmarked men in particular who appear in the text as “aggressive and violent, disproportionately; therefore, social treatments and conditions demand that they be watched, controlled, and modified” (Jesser 42).

This cisheteronormative structure is likely why Peter eventually “decided to impress his followers by helping one of them get a woman” (Butler 176). Peter appears insecure about his social position as a man being taken less seriously than a Black woman. To assert a sense of anti-Black, masculinist dominance, he wants to show that he can control the situation and provide for his followers. Particularly troubling is that *what* and *how* he chooses to provide comes at the cost of another’s bodily autonomy. This arises when Peter and Gregory Sebaestes try to convince Allison Zeigler to pair with Gregory, but the two men quickly “stopped arguing with her and decided to drag her off to Gregory’s room” (Butler 176). Peter and Gregory grab Allison in an attempt to abscond with her for Gregory’s sexual gratification. Allison then yells for Lilith’s help; Lilith and some of her people attempt to intervene; and Peter’s people step in the way of any intervention. Lilith describes this “standoff” as “potentially deadly” (Butler 176). Members of each side shout back and forth about what humans can and can’t do with their bodies under the current circumstances. Gregory and Curt explicitly express an expectation of heterosexual coupling:

“We pair off!” Curt bellowed, drowning her [Allison] out. “One man, one woman. Nobody has the right to hold you. It just causes trouble.” (Butler 176)

“What is she to you!” Gregory used his free hand to knock someone away from Allison. “Get your own damn woman!” (Butler 177)

Curt and Gregory’s respective comments indicate that they are willing to fight to see their expectations come to fruition. These men seem to feel so entitled to women’s bodies that they don’t just verbally demand physical intimacy—“We pair off!”—they *take* it. This act of sexual violence, though not fully “completed,” demonstrates these characters’ underlying perception that men and women have an obligation to cisheterosexually pair and that men have a right to enforce this pairing.

Lilith clearly disagrees with this cisheterosexist stance and vocalizes as such. Even as she “shouted” for them to cease, still “her voice was lost in the many” (Butler 177). A few “near her froze, staring at her,” but her calls to disband aren’t enough to dissuade Peter’s group surrounding Allison. As these people continue to try to claim Allison—or more accurately, Allison’s body—for Gregory, Lilith steps up to confront them with more than just words. Several of them “caught her arms,” but Lilith was “too furious to worry about their blocking her” (Butler 177). It is only then, after being accosted by several of Peter’s followers, that Lilith takes physical steps to thwart the attempted sexual assault of Allison. In the process, Lilith (who possesses superhuman strength granted by the Oankali) manages to throw two people “aside without ever seeing their faces,” to “hit Curt hard in the stomach, doubling him, toppling him,” to intercept Gregory “in midair, snapping his head back, collapsing him to the floor unconscious,”

and to break Peter's arm (Butler 177-8). Lilith successfully stops Peter, Gregory, Curt, and others from kidnapping Allison by physically disarming them, but acknowledges that in the wake of "the carnage she had created," she "was untouched" (Butler 178). A moment of internal reflection reveals that Lilith even sees this altercation as the closest she has ever come to "losing control, killing people," which clearly even her own followers recognize and step away from her to avoid (Butler 178).

At the same time, Lilith repeatedly appeals to all groups present using a sense of rationalism:

"There will be no rape here," she said evenly. She raised her voice. "Nobody here is property. Nobody here has the right to the use of anybody else's body. There'll be no back-to-the-Stone-Age, caveman bullshit!" She let her voice drop to normal. "We stay human. We treat each other like people, and we get through this like people." (Butler 178).

This speech following her physically escalated encounter explains that the dangers of attempted sexual assault risk the bodily autonomy of the person harmed—"Nobody here is property." It also alludes that the consequences of sexual violence—as well as the masculinist expectations that shore up such violence—will even negatively affect those who perpetrate it. The phrase "back-to-the-Stone-Age, caveman bullshit!" is a caution against a regressive chauvinism that could prove damaging to everyone. This comment is particularly salient at a moment in *Dawn's* fictional human history hundreds of years in the future aboard a space-faring vessel navigated by a technologically advanced alien race. In other words, the author is juxtaposing an image of cartoonish prehistoric "Stone-

Age” male violence with the far future reality that they’re living in. It is as if to say, “We have come so far in both time and space; you are nowhere near the caves of yore and yet you might as well be.” Sexual violence is not a thing of the past, though. It has been ever-present for Black cis and trans women, girls, and femmes for hundreds of years on Turtle Island (North America). To relegate sexual violence to a regressive place in a linear timeline is both factually inaccurate and also reproduces the idea that “primitive” peoples are more “backwards,” irrational, and violent.

Lilith’s entreaty against sexual violence relies on naming this temporal and evolutionary atavism of “caveman bullshit” as much as it relies on a related theme of Enlightenment humanism. That is to say, Lilith names rape as an act of *inhumanity*: “We stay human. We treat each other like people, and we get through this like people” (Butler 178). If the Earthlings trapped on the Oankali craft “stay human” and “get through this like people” by not “us[ing] ...anybody else’s body,” then the logical conclusion is that sexual assault is *not human*. In one sense, Lilith is flipping the script on a Wynterian critique of the Enlightenment taxonomy of Man. In a white supremacist, settler colonial context, the body of the Western Man stands in for that of the human.⁴² But in Butler’s

⁴² This Eurocentric overrepresentation of Man is a progression extending from the Reformation, the Renaissance, and the colonization of the Americas. According to Wynter, race is a “construct that would enable the now globally expanding West to replace the earlier mortal/immortal, natural/supernatural, human/the ancestors, the gods/God distinction as the one on whose basis all human groups had millennially ‘grounded’ their descriptive statement/prescriptive statements of what it is to be human, and to reground its secularizing own on a newly projected human/subhuman distinction instead” (Wynter 264). Therefore, the separation between (white) Man and (nonwhite) human, for Wynter, is genealogically descended from theological and philosophical distinctions created in Europe (262).

novel, it is the cismen who are deemed less than human through their callous acts. Unfortunately, this assessment of aggressive masculinity still hinges on the category of “human,” which scholarship on Blackness and Indigeneity has rightly scrutinized (King 21). What is perhaps more compelling is Lilith’s call to “treat each other like people” (Butler 178). Although this too risks falling into the trap of Western ontology through its latent dependence on subjects able to be treated “like people,” it is also worth approaching through an abolitionist lens. What does it mean to demand being treated with a certain level of compassion, empathy, care/fulness, and respect? Is it possible for abolitionists to divorce such treatment from worthiness as a “human”? As many Black feminists have long contended, defense and redress for Black feminized bodies has been fraught precisely because of the perceived distance from innocence and harm as less than human (Hartman 101). What is required, then, for abolitionists is a turn to “treat each other like people” that doesn’t reproduce harmful notions and expectations of what it is to be human, or “like people,” at all. In our own attempts similar to Lilith’s to combat sexual violence, we mustn’t see humanity as a precondition of treatment.

We as abolitionists also reinforce ableism if we invoke the traits of cognition, rationality, and moral capacity when offering contemplation as possible redemption and redress to violence. In conversation with Lilith immediately following the attempted rape, one of the Oankali, named Ahajas, says of Peter, “Let him think for a while about his behavior” (Butler 179). Lilith then repeats this communication to Joseph: “She [Ahajas] said the Oankali would take care of Peter after he’s had time to think about his behavior” (Butler 179). Later on, Lilith echoes this in her own internal dialogue, by “hoping” but

“not believing” that “he would begin to think” about the gravity of his actions (Butler 182). Although Peter has a broken arm, he must nevertheless bear through the pain and hopefully learn his lesson (Butler 181). Neither the physical suffering nor the “think[ing] about his behavior” are presented as punishment for Peter’s transgressions. Instead, doing “nothing” with or for him “for a while” is the Oankali equivalent to putting a temperamental child in time-out (Butler 179). This use of reflection and penitence as an alternative to punishment, however, potentially reproduces early modern notions of cognition and rationality that were highly racist and ableist. A bodymindspirit⁴³ that has the capacity to “think for a while” about motivations and consequences is not a subjecthood that has always been granted to all.

Penitence has been a white supremacist, ableist specter haunting U.S. carcerality for centuries. Early penitentiaries claimed to be based in ideas of repentance and rehabilitation of the mind and soul. Prison reformers, like those on the East Coast in the mid-1800s, believed that solitude and time away from the world “provoked conscience and remorse, labor taught a useful trade and expelled morbidity, and religious instruction produced a reformation of character” (Thibaut 189). However, this was not offered equally to all inmates, as seen in the case of “Jim Crow modernity premised upon the devaluation and dehumanization of black life broadly,” which specifically “exposed and enforced the radical otherness of the black female subject” (Haley 3). Such “deviant,” “irrational,” racialized Others were not believed to have access to the promise of change through penalty. For example, “Black men and women were ideologically barred from

⁴³ See Lara 435.

the realm of morality and... were not even acknowledged as ever having been epistemological subjects and moral agents” (Davis 66). Therefore, the promise of the prison, however perverse, has had little or nothing to do with redemption, particularly for Black folks. For this reason, continuing to tie contemplation and penitence to mental, emotional, and spiritual capacity is something abolitionists should be wary of. This is not to say that individuals who cause harm should not understand the impacts they have and then learn from their mistakes. The processes for doing so, though, must be approached with intentionality. I discuss this further in chapter two in regards to Mariame Kaba’s short story, “Justice.” Unfortunately, Lilith doesn’t question the Oankali approach, yet still manages to provide more context for Peter about his expectations and actions around coerced heterosexual coupling.

Lilith approaches Peter after two days have passed, to explain the greater ramifications of his actions (Butler 181). Lilith knows that the Oankali will soon be revealing themselves to their captives in the hopes that the two species can coexist and eventually build a new life together on Earth. “Don’t do anything,” Lilith impels, “that would make them keep you here alone” (Butler 182). This is a final warning to Peter to change his outlook and behavior, lest he be relegated to a lifetime on the spaceship with only the Oankali. Such a tactic is individualistically rather than collectively driven, insofar as Peter is compelled to change for fear of negative outcomes for himself alone. But this could be an effective incentive for not causing harm. Even if Peter was able to “think for a while about his behavior” and nevertheless still didn’t see a problem with his masculinist expectations and violent actions, then Lilith at least gives him one last chance

“to be bright enough to survive” (Butler 181). Being “bright” as a synonym for “smart” or “intelligent” is yet another coded way of appealing to a cognitively competent humanity, one that at least has a sense of self-preservation, if not a sense of compassion toward others. How might abolitionists strategically use individualized incentives so long as, again, it is not aimed at redress dependent on narrowly-defined *humanity*?

When speaking with Peter afterwards, Lilith also explains that her violent response was preventative not punitive, in that her aim in twisting and breaking his arm was not punishment or violation, but instead prevention. Lilith clearly articulates that this violence is in an effort to immediately stop any further violence and ensure the safety of everyone:

“I hurt you because you were trying to hurt another person. No one else has hurt you at all. The Oankali have saved your life. Eventually, they’ll send you back to Earth to make a new life for yourself.” She paused. “A little thought, Pete. A little sanity.” (Butler 182, emphasis added)

Here, Lilith is advising Peter that violence directed at a person, whether Earthling or Oankali, will have consequences. However, there will only be consequences if the one who is harmed is deemed undeserving of victimization, as qualified by the sentiments “No one else has hurt you” and “The Oankali have saved your life.” Lilith exonerates culpability for those who commit violence *in reaction* against others who are violent. Peter attempted to harm someone else who hadn’t hurt him, therefore his violence is presented as unjustified. On the other hand, Lilith caused bodily damage to Peter but was warranted because she was impeding ongoing and further sexual violence. I find Lilith’s

explanation intriguing as a way for abolitionists to investigate the potentially troubling link between violence as preventative and violence as retributive. Put another way, Lilith's explanation contains violent resistance to and prevention of Peter's violence. Lilith fights an attempted sexual assault by *actually* fighting, which parallels the traits of human nature that Butler has constructed both within the text and also avowed beyond its pages (discussed further below). In effect, Lilith, Peter, Curt, Gregory, and all Earth's peoples are constructed as so judgmental and reactionary that the possibility of peaceful resolve between them is nil. But how do we affirm the need for effectual physical intervention in *some* instances? And how do we ensure that such prevention is not misplaced discipline and punishment? What if violence is cast as preventative and proactive for *perceived* but not yet *actualized* wrongdoing and harm? How can abolitionists resist the carceral methods of predictive policing and "algorithmic risk assessment in the criminal justice system" (Brayne 18)? The physical violence that Lilith inflicts becomes an immediate—though imperfect—solution to the threat of sexual violence. The task for abolitionists is to find inspiration in this form of combatting and transforming harm without the trappings of purely retributive violence.

"Conscious and Aware": Determining Motivation and Punishment in Cases of Murder

What solutions might we, as abolitionists, take from Lilith in considering the latter subject of the question, "what about the rapists and the murderers?" A homicide within the pages of *Dawn* helps us to craft some possible answers. When Curt kills Joseph, Lilith calls into question Curt's stability, distinguishes Curt as solely responsible,

and dreams of exile and torture as viable responses. These determinations of Curt's motivations as well as the desire for his punishment, yet again, rely on a subject who is mentally conscious and competent. What is more, this negates any sense that Curt was aided and abetted by others who might also need to be held accountable. In what follows, I cover how abolitionist feminists can take up this extreme, life-taking case of violence in order to consider cognition and community when grappling with redress.

Curt Loehr, who frequently and openly voices opposition to Oankali presence, finally slips away from the extraterrestrial captors as soon as the humans are allowed more freedom in a "training room" constructed to resemble their eventual Earthly jungle habitation (Butler 199). Others slowly split off as well, hoping to find a permanent escape from the Oankali, some in disbelief that they're not already on Earth (Butler 217). Curt sees Lilith as a co-conspirator with the Oankali, even alien herself due to her genetic modifications, which could also be articulated as a "cyborg identity" in the body of a woman of color "synthesized from fusions of 'outsider' identities" (Haraway 54). Regardless of its roots, Curt's suspicion transposes onto Lilith's group of followers. One of these followers, a Chinese-Canadian⁴⁴ man named Joseph Li-Chin Shing, as Lilith's lover, has been granted special privileges and abilities at Lilith's request, such as the power to mend his wounds more quickly. Because of the outcome of this preferential treatment—fast physical recovery—as well as the general animosity aimed at *all* of

⁴⁴ Joseph is one of the few characters who is given both racial *and* national markers. It is therefore unclear if readers are to assume that the rest of the characters are from the U.S. unless stated otherwise.

Lilith's followers for their supposed lack of human solidarity, Joseph becomes the target of Curt's frustration once out of direct Oankali supervision.

Although Curt's and Lilith's respective groups have intentionally chosen to separate, "Curt and his people found the shelter" that Lilith, Joseph, and others had been using (Butler 220). Lilith wakes up from her sleep, immediately "knowing that something was not right," but is still taken by surprise and loses consciousness once "Curt hit her across the side of the head with the flat of his machete" (Butler 220-1). When Lilith comes to, she finds herself alone and tries to find her compatriots with the help of the Oankali. What she finds instead is Joseph's dead body, "already cold" (Butler 223). An Oankali named Nikanj explains that after Joseph was "slightly injured" following Curt's raid on the camp, "Curt saw the flesh healing," therefore "believed Joe wasn't human," and "all but severed" Joseph's head from his body with an ax (Butler 223).

Curt believed that it was not another human that he killed, but one of the enemy, an Oankali sympathizer. When defending the deed later on, Curt exclaims, "We didn't kill a human being," and instead declares, "We killed one of your animals!" (Butler 228). This could be interpreted as Curt resisting Oankali biocolonialism and assimilation, by murdering a genetically altered non-human "animal" in order to preserve the purity of the human race. Curt's violence might be, in part, rooted in the fear of nonconsensual mutations, inhuman offspring, and eventual "species-level genocide" (Miller 340; Stickgold-Sarah 417). Curt's words above signal that he is justifying his actions as a form of resistance to perceived Oankali tampering and control; as a concern with the right to self-determination; as well as the maintenance of some species difference and diversity

(Belk 382; Outterson 445). If being genetically altered makes Joseph an “animal” that distinctly “wasn’t human,” then this demonstrates a fear of degeneration insofar as it is a fear of becoming other. Seen thusly, Curt is framed as xenophobic toward the Oankali and anyone else who becomes more Oankali-like, inhuman, and other (Braid 51).

Through this reading, Curt and many of the other humans in *Dawn* embody the “Western traditionalist” through their response to that which is different, foreign, alien, and strange as “subaltern,” and their inability to practice shapeshifting, transformation, and adaptation as a means of survival in a new environment (Plisner 148-9).

Yet another interpretation could be that Curt is merely doing what comes “naturally” to him, that is, enacting (and quite literally fighting for) his human nature. Estimations of *Dawn*’s representation of an innately conflicted humanity take a variety of forms. The most commonly held critique of human actions actually comes from Octavia Butler herself, after considering “Ronald Reagan’s idea of a ‘winnable’ nuclear war” in the 1980s:

That’s when I began to think about human beings having the two conflicting characteristics of intelligence and a tendency toward hierarchical behavior—and that hierarchical behavior is too much in charge, too self-sustaining. (as quoted in Belk 372)

Butler reproduces this line of thinking in *Dawn* when the Oankali name these two characteristics—hierarchy and intelligence—that are at odds with one another within their captives (Butler 38–9). Exploring this deterministic conception of human tendencies, the novel is a narrative of Earthlings “crippled by a genetic predisposition to

hierarchy” (Belk 369; Plisner 146; White 403; Zaki 242). It appears that this predisposition “seems to preempt any possibility of utopian peace or unity” for the human characters and instead leads them to violence (Outterson 441). What is more, humans are not demonstrated to be able to overcome “the antagonism that accompanies ostensible monstrosity,” even simply difference, “on their own” (Goss and Riquelme 437; Smith 556; Zaki 241).

Certainly there are suggestions earlier in the narrative that Joseph’s perceived differences⁴⁵ cast him as lesser-than and even lead to him “having enemies” (Butler 221). In the nursery, “two human males” express their dislike of Joseph for his assumed queer sexuality and for being of Chinese descent; and once on the training floor, Curt decries Joseph was an “animal” (Butler 159, 228). Joseph’s treatment by these men is hierarchical insofar as it rests on species differentiation and valuation. These several men aboard have still held onto and enacted their (supposedly innate) desire for a racialized, cisheteronormative pecking order. In Curt’s eyes, Joseph deserves ostracization and even death because Joseph is not human. Curt’s implicit belief that he himself is more human—and therefore superior to Joseph—is a mutation of anti-Asian sentiment that Curt has inherited from lineages of settler colonial capitalism.⁴⁶ Whereas Butler

⁴⁵ See footnote 8.

⁴⁶ Although the place of labor and capital within *Dawn* are beyond the scope of this research project, I nevertheless draw from work on “a triangulation of symbolic positions that include the Native, the alien, and the settler” within Iyko Day’s *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logic of Settler Colonial Capitalism* (23). As Day states, “highly differentiated populations of African slaves and Asian migrants historically represented *alien* rather than settler migrations. This shared status in no way implies an equivalence in the heterogeneous racial experience of African slaves and Asian migrants. Instead, it clarifies their historical relationship to North American land, which was as exclusive and

naturalizes the “tendency toward hierarchical behavior,” readers might also view this tendency as part of U.S. historical demarcations of Asian alien-ness (Belk 372).

Coupled with the negative quality of hierarchy, the Oankali also deem humans to be an intelligent species, “potentially one of the most intelligent species we’ve found” (Butler 39). Despite being mentally remarkable in some ways, humans like Curt are still presented as irrational and almost hysterical in their use of violence. Therefore, the violence they perpetuate is inferred as a failure on their part at reason and compassion (Outterson 437). Even the Oankali named Nikanj recognized Curt’s attempt to gain control—though, in a dangerous and ultimately deadly way—in a state of feeling out-of-control: “And there was no sign that Curt meant to kill. He blames you [Lilith] for almost everything, yet he didn’t kill you. What happened here was... totally unplanned” (Butler 224). Curt exhibited no signs of premeditation and even practiced restraint—“he didn’t kill you”—yet was somehow overcome by being “angry and afraid and in pain” enough to take another’s life (Butler 224).

Similarly, Lilith more overtly calls into question Curt’s mental competency when she describes Curt’s act as “some kind of mistake. *Insanity!*” (Butler 224, emphasis added). Obviously Lilith is distraught, which explains some of her disdain as perhaps hyperbolic. However, these comments about the murder being a “mistake” and “insanity”

excludable alien labor forces. Their unsovereign alien status was a *precondition* of their exploitation and intersects with the multiple economic logics that require and reproduce alien-ness in settler colonies. While African slaves represented a system of forced migration, unfree alien labor, and property—a form of biopolitical life that was ‘market alienable’—the later recruitment of indentured and ‘free’ Chinese labor incorporated provisionality, excludability, and deportability into the notion of alien-ness” (24, emphasis in original).

along with Nikanj's assessment that it was "unplanned" nevertheless imply that Curt was acting impulsively, carelessly, and even not in his "right" mind. Furthermore, thinking back to Lilith's entreaties to Gregory and others after his attempted rape of Allison, "sanity" is repeatedly equivalized with a rational, intelligent, advanced human subject, incapable of or at least unlikely to commit violence. Curt's "insanity" is therefore equated with, at the very least, a neglectful confusion, and at the worst, a hierarchically-inflected, anti-Asian violence.

Extrapolating this to real world instances of murder, abolitionists following similar lines of reasoning find themselves facing several predicaments. First, labeling violence as "insanity" reinforces ableist stereotypes that people struggling with mental health issues are "dangerous." Within Critical Disability Studies, this is called *sanism*, or "oppression faced due to the imperative to be sane, rational, and non-mad/crazy/mentally ill/psychiatrically disabled" (Ben-Moshe 16). What this looks like in practice is appeals to control supposedly irrational and uncontrollable mentally ill persons. The concern for abolitionists, then, is that the "various measures that increase social control over those who are psychiatrized and criminalized" join forces with an "increase in state capacity toward reinstitutionalization," which leads "away from community living and adequate services in the community or peer support or noncoercive and affirming health care" (Ben-Moshe 158). In summation, relying more heavily on the controlling arms of government and private institutions to hold onto "insanity," leaves everyone impacted—those in crisis, their surrounding communities, and even those they *might* harm—disempowered. Beyond the pages of *Dawn*, ableism and sanism are, of course, highly

gendered, racialized, and classed (Erevelles 6; Pickens 10). Therefore, activism and scholarship on policing, prisons, and punishment “requires being attentive to forces of carceral ableism and sanism that seek to expand the carceral state in the so-called service of disability/madness” (Ben-Moshe 34).

At the same time, there are many examples of white heterosexual cismen blaming “diminished capacity” for their homicidal homophobia, misogyny, and racism.⁴⁷ These same men’s violence is completely “sensical” within a society that enables and encourages these behaviors. Additionally, there is a risk that calling violence “insanity” might foreclose it as a legitimate, planned or unplanned, act of resistance.⁴⁸ This last point will be explored more in my discussion of *The Marrow Thieves* in chapter two. For now, I am left with several questions for abolitionists: How do we hold people accountable for harmful acts that might be mistakes or accidents? How do we approach redressing planned versus unplanned violence differently? How do we redress harm caused by someone who is mentally unstable or even incoherent without reproducing ableism and sanism? How do we acknowledge people’s feelings of fear and need to defend themselves without succumbing to things like “gay panic” defenses and “stand your ground” laws? And how might abolitionists consider legitimate concerns over bodily autonomy without endorsing xenophobic violence? In this novel, how much can

⁴⁷ This can be seen from Dan White’s use of the “Twinkie defense” in his 1979 trial for the murders of San Francisco city Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone, and as recently as Robert Aaron Long’s claims that he was motivated by a supposed “sex addiction” to go on a misogynistic, anti-Asian shooting spree at three Atlanta spas and massage parlors in 2021.

⁴⁸ Cece McDonald’s physical defense that left her racist, transphobic attacker dead comes to mind here.

we attribute Curt's behavior to anti-assimilation, anti-miscegenation fears; to homophobic, anti-Asian sentiments that are the results of Earth's long history of hierarchical oppression; or to momentary recklessness and "insanity"? Ultimately, does it matter what the *intention* is if the *impact* (i.e. murder) is the same?

Although Lilith is at first almost catatonic from grief, she is eventually able to discern the impact that Curt has had on her life and what she intends to do about it. In her "anger and despair" in the aftermath of Joseph's death, she seeks out Curt and his followers in their encampment in order to confront them (Butler 224). When she and the Oankali encounter them, Lilith finds herself "facing hostile dangerous humans" (Butler 227). In this moment, she informs Nikanj that she is willing to fight Curt, "but not the others" in his party (Butler 227). This thereby distinguishes Curt as the person who has caused harm rather than anyone who may have abetted him. But abolitionists and likeminded proponents of transformative justice and accountability practices know that individuals do not harm others in a vacuum. Their behaviors are learned and even actively encouraged by larger group norms. So how could abolitionists hold someone like Curt responsible? Would addressing Curt's actions alone—through fighting or through some other means—be enough to bring Lilith comfort? What about the others in Curt's group who stood by or perhaps even helped while Joseph was murdered?

Connie Burk encourages rethinking such a singular focus and instead offers an "Accountable Communities" (AC) model, which "shifts the emphasis from a collective process for *holding individuals accountable* for their behavior to *individual and collective responsibility* for building a community where robust accountability is possible,

expected, and likely” (273, emphasis added). This model emerged through the work of the Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian, and Gay Survivors of Abuse, in which their organizational framework, educational documents, and series of projects are all informed by the belief that in order “[t]o understand one’s actions in their full context, a person must understand that systems of institutional oppression and privilege, personal challenges and aptitudes, and situational conditions profoundly impact the options s/he has to choose among” (Burk 273). This is not meant to absolve someone of responsibility for their actions. Instead, it presents a more nuanced way to approach why and how violence and harm occur. What might this Accountable Communities model look like in the case of Joseph’s murder? How could both Curt as an individual as well as his collective of followers take responsibility?⁴⁹

Rather than fostering an Accountable Community, violent vengeance is Lilith’s initial response. She describes Curt as “obscenely alive,” as if his presence in the absence of Joseph is not just offensive but profane (Butler 227). Curt’s mere existence is so obscene that Lilith imagines his bloody end and

Wanting to kill him. Wanting to take the ax from him and beat him to death with her own hands. Let him die here and rot in this alien place where he had left

Joseph. (Butler 227)

⁴⁹ There are glimpses of this when, during the confrontation between Lilith and Curt, an Oankali named Kahguyaht tells Curt, “you’ve exiled yourself permanently from your Earth” and asks Curt’s followers if they will “join him” in exile for violently defending him (Butler 228). Curt has already relegated himself to his fate, but others can therefore choose to redeem themselves.

At first, this reaction appears to be a case of taking “an eye for an eye,” Curt’s life for Joseph’s life. Revenge in order to balance the scales, as it were, is only a piece of the story, though. Lilith is also expressing a deep yearning for a physical outlet to her emotional distress. Using “her own hands” to punish Curt might bring her a sense of satisfaction. As Mariame Kaba affirms, “it’s normal and healthy often to want vengeance against people for causing you great harm,” but ultimately “punishment doesn’t work” (127, 131). Surely, Curt would no longer be alive and therefore not able to kill again if Lilith “beat him to death.” It’s also possible that such a public display of punishment might deter others from committing the same act. Yet there is very little real world evidence to back this up. In fact, if the stated utilitarian goal of the criminal punishment system is “crime control,” then it is inefficient and ineffective in achieving this at present (Gabbay 353; Kaba and Ritchie 41; Spade 168–9). What Lilith gestures toward at the end of the above passage—an “alien place” as a specific site of punishment—proves to be another important facet to effectively controlling Curt.

Indeed, there is something more powerful than simply killing Curt. The likelihood that Curt’s body, even in death, would not be allowed to join other humans on Earth is an added sanction. This would mean that Curt is not fit for a dignified human burial on his home planet and instead must “rot” like discarded scraps. And not just “rot,” but specifically do so “in this alien place.” To return to the possibility that Curt’s actions are motivated by a xenophobic fear, this exclusion is a further slight because his decomposing corpse would be surrounded by—even *merging with*—the extraterrestrial

life that he seemingly hates. Ostracizing and banishing Curt's body is contrasted with Lilith's wishes for Joseph in death:

He should be buried. Nikanj came to her again, seemed to read her thoughts.

"Shall we pick him up on our way back and have him sent to Earth?" it asked.

"He can end as part of his homeworld." Bury him on Earth? Let his flesh be part of the new beginning there? "Yes," she whispered. (Butler 224)

As a victim of violence, Lilith believes that Joseph deserves to return to "his homeworld" and have "his flesh be part of the new beginning" that his fellow humans will create. In a sense, Joseph will live on by being memorialized in a local burial site that Lilith could return to over and over again once on Earth. As the perpetrator of violence, Curt deserves only punishment, a physical and social death that no humans will enshrine nor remember.

As a posthumous form of exile, Lilith's wish for Curt resonates with the punishment that any human would receive for similar infractions. Nikanj explains to Joseph earlier in the novel:

"There is incentive not to do harm. No one who has killed or severely injured another will set foot on Earth again." "They'll be kept here?" "For the rest of their lives." "Even..." Joseph glanced at Lilith, then faced Nikanj again. "Even if the killing is in self-defense?" "She is exempt," Nikanj said. (Butler 154, emphasis added)

The real punishment for harm is continued off-world captivity, the inability for a human, living or dead, to ever "set foot on Earth again," which Nikanj labels less as a threat and more as an "incentive." Humans would theoretically be deterred from "kill[ing] or

severely injur[ing] another” by the possibility that they would be forced to spend “the rest of their lives” in this foreign space. What is being incentivized is freedom and autonomy they’ve been stripped of during captivity. Earth is promising not only as a homeworld, the cradle of human life, but also as a place that many humans believe they will be able to live freely without the Oankali.

Butler is also linking forced removal from homeland and one’s people to an ultimate expression of punishment, while simultaneously granting return to homeland only for those who are deserving. To be denied access to closeness and connection—to land and kin, while dead or alive, whether through exile or solitary confinement—speaks to histories of Black life on Turtle Island. Having already been taken from Earth (the site of her life, memories, and biological family’s bodily remains), Lilith has been held against her will for centuries. Hence, she knows intimately well the pain associated with Black capture. With this in mind, it coheres that the author would create a system of consequences for grievous, antagonistic infractions that mirror harsh realities. In chapter two, I will dig deeper into what displacement and disconnection might mean for redress.

Curt is offered no chance at redemption and instead ends up in “suspended animation” indefinitely and will “never get to Earth” (Butler 236). Truly, Curt’s worst fears come to fruition as the Oankali “will use him to study and explore” his ability to stimulate cell generation, a “talent” which both he and Lilith possess due to their family histories of cancer (Butler 236). Lilith is unsatisfied, stating that such an outcome “isn’t enough, but it’s better than nothing” (Butler 236). What she wants instead, in lieu of death, is torture. “She hoped” that Curt would “be conscious and aware during these

experiments” (Butler 238). Exile in suspended animation “isn’t enough” insofar as Curt won’t be cognizant of his condition, so vivisection is a superior option in Lilith’s mind. Curt must be a mental subject capable of recognition and reflection, “conscious and aware” of what is happening to him and why. Not in service to repentance or redemption, but retribution. He must have the same contemplative capacities of someone who is penitent, but ultimately Lilith doesn’t appear concerned with whether or not Curt will regret his actions, change his mind, or make penance. Hence, she desires the conscious discomfort inflicted on Curt by alien examiners as they poke and prod his body in search of answers on “how to awaken” his “dormant” genes (Butler 237).

Once again the demand for a mentally capable subject arises in this instance. Like her pleas to Peter to “be bright enough to survive,” Lilith continues to appeal to a cognitively competent humanity (Butler 181). If such a state of mind was not required for punishment, then awareness would not be a central concern for her—in that case, being anesthetized and unconscious while experimented on without his knowledge would be “enough.” But clearly it is not. The horrifying cruelty that she wishes for him *is* “enough,” in that it provides Lilith a sense of redress. Beyond the fact that Curt will have experiments done to him, it is crucial to consider Lilith’s *hope* that he experiences them as painful, a pain similar to his murder of Joseph. When Lilith’s real world counterparts—surviving friends and family of murder victims—long for punishment, retribution, vengeance, and even death, what is really being asked for? Is it that those who cause harm should no longer exist (e.g. “an eye for an eye”)? Is it that they should be denied access to closeness and proximity (e.g. exile, solitary confinement)? Or is it that

they should be “conscious and aware” of the consequences of their actions? And how can abolitionists respond to these desires?

Conclusion

Throughout *Dawn*, Lilith must ask herself: “But what about the rapists and the murderers,” like Curt, Peter, and Gregory? The sexual and physical violence of the racially ambiguous cismen in the novel is distinguished by the fact that it is cast as a genetic flaw, hysterical xenophobia, a destructive mental instability, or an inhuman disposition. They truly represent “the worst of the worst,” the kind who real world abolitionists are all too often asked to account for when we divulge our desire for an end to police and prisons. Lilith proceeds to make constrained choices, both preventative and punitive, in order to respond to this violence and harm—choices which also echo real world options for redress. Regardless of whether Butler’s novel is a one-for-one comparison, it is not hard to see resonances with human history’s racialized, gendered violence. Yet there are still more options beyond those within the pages of *Dawn*. As I have illustrated, we may not find *Dawn* so straightforwardly instructive.

To be sure, Butler allows readers to imagine preventative measures as an option for resistance to sexualized, gendered violence. Even though Lilith broke Peter’s arm and seriously wounded several other men, she did so “because [they] were trying to hurt another person,” a (presumably) white woman named Allison. Physically confronting and combatting would-be rapists is cast as a legitimate way to thwart present and future sexual violence. One limit to these preventative measures is the need to carefully balance being *proactive* versus *reactive* to perceived (but not yet actualized) wrongdoing and

harm. At the same time, the instance of Curt, Peter, and Gregory's masculinist behavior creates the emergent possibility for an alternative to any sort of criminal punishment system. Unlike the present U.S. carceral settler state, with its firm, one-size-fits all dictates, Lilith deals with violence through direct, one-on-one engagement with those who have attempted harm. Lilith's physical confrontation as well as the Oankali's insistence on a "time out" certainly mirrors some sense of discipline or penitence. Yet there is still space for a pause, reflection, and discussion. Abolitionists must ensure that this open-ended, personalized approach to prevention and penitence does not rely on ableist and sanist tropes.

Towards the end of the novel, Butler also illuminates punitive measures—exile, torture, and even death—as forms of redress to racialized, xenophobic violence. Particularly in the case of torture, Lilith desires Curt to be "conscious and aware," presumably of a pain comparable to taking an ax to the neck, like Curt's victim, Joseph, did. This punishment is cast, in some ways, as vindication and vengeance. Lilith's hope for Curt to be cognizant isn't rooted so much in the need for a moral or mental capacity to repent. Instead, Lilith seeks to address Curt's violence through the unmaking⁵⁰ force of torture. Instead of statist forms of punitive redress, though, Butler writes of a Black woman grappling with the complications of desiring punishment but not acting on it. In fact, Lilith never outwardly, explicitly, nor strongly advocates for Curt's removal, vivisection, and death; she only ever *thinks* about it. Ultimately, the limits of punishment are its inefficiency and ineffectiveness in actually addressing the root causes of homicidal

⁵⁰ See Scarry 4.

violence—let alone larger systemic structures that permit and encourage the killing of othered bodies. Abolitionists must consider how to balance the very real, internal desire for punishment that many survivors of harm feel with the need to not replicate further harm.

The task for abolitionists is to find inspiration from Lilith's means of combating harm, without reproducing the trappings of carcerality or retributive justice. Rather than neat, instructive answers, Butler leaves many more questions for abolitionists: How do we prevent violence, and also ensure that such prevention is not misplaced punishment or prediction? How can abolitionists divorce compassion for those who commit harm from worthiness as a human subject capable of reflection and penitence? How might abolitionists use individualized approaches to redress so long as we don't forget the role of community and social structures in causing harm? How might abolitionists respond to the very real desire for vengeance? How do we weigh intent versus impact? How do we approach redressing harm caused by someone who is mentally unstable or even incoherent without reproducing ableist tropes? And how might abolitionists validate fear for bodily autonomy without endorsing reactionary violence?

Obviously, no real world situation neatly fits the parameters of Butler's parable, yet we can still extrapolate meaning from the resistance of these characters, as a way to strategically speculate beyond the limits of our known world. Engaging with speculative fiction then becomes a way to explore the project of resistance in the face of violence and oppression, and think through for ourselves, what might redress and responses to violence, particularly racialized, gendered violence, look like beyond the retributive

justice of the criminal punishment system? When asked “what about the rapists and the murderers?” speculative fiction assists us in considering the complicated opportunities and obstacles to various forms of redress. In *Dawn*, Butler invites us to imagine and explore new possibilities and “posit alternative worlds,” and “critique the here-and-now by visiting alternatives” (Belk 370–1). Ultimately, the novel may not present a clear utopian destination beyond the violent carceral state, but Butler’s Afrofuturist, Black feminist science fiction at least gives us a few directions (Miller 357). Considering *Dawn* was published over three decades ago, I now turn to more recent Black and Indigenous feminist speculative fiction to address contemporary manifestations of racialized, gendered, and colonial violence and opportunities for resistance.

Chapter Two

Running Towards:

Resolution & Reconnection as Direct Interventions to Violence

“We need to use our radical imaginations to come up with new structures of accountability beyond the system we are working to dismantle.”

–Mariame Kaba and Andrea Ritchie, *No More Police: A Case for Abolition*

“...survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent.”

–Gerald Vizenor, *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed how Octavia Butler’s protagonist, Lilith, sought to both prevent and punish interpersonal, intraspecies sexual assault and murder in the 1987 Afrofuturist novel *Dawn*. Lilith certainly operated beyond the bounds of the carceral settler state—as Earth’s governments had since been eradicated along with most *homo sapiens* following a nuclear war. Lilith also used direct tactics, in the form of physical confrontations, in order to both preempt as well as penalize the harm that cismen perpetrated against her community. As I argued in chapter one, Lilith’s actions must be carefully weighed if abolitionist feminists are to apply them to cases of sexual assaults and murders, lest we reproduce sanism, individualism, Western humanism, and carceral logics of retribution. Other than Butler’s offers of being proactive or punitive, what are models that Black or Indigenous speculative fiction authors contribute in order to address gendered, racialized, and colonial interpersonal and institutional violence? Specifically, how might these literary texts envision *direct* forms of redress that act as alternatives to the criminal punishment system?

To preface this chapter, I draw on Kaba and Ritchie’s as well as Vizenor’s epigraphs to ground my dissertation’s overarching argument. I look to stories told by Black or Indigenous authors—specifically speculative fictions—that can help abolitionist feminists to “use our radical imaginations,” as abolitionists such as Kaba and Ritchie implore. While abolitionist feminists can (and have) “come up with new structures of accountability beyond the system we are working to dismantle,” speculative fiction is another useful site of imagining that simply can’t happen in spaces contained by the limits of the real. Vizenor (Anishinaabe) also tells us that the survivance of Indigenous peoples in particular necessarily involves the “continuance of stories.” It’s crucial to be able to tell (and live) stories of an otherwise that lies beyond “absence, nihility, and victimry” (Vizenor 1). A “continuance of stories” that “use our radical imaginations” is an assertion of life that is not overdetermined by nor “a mere reaction” to ongoing murderous settler colonialism, white supremacy, disaster capitalism, cisheteropatriarchy, xenophobia, and their disabling effects. Therefore, Black and Indigenous storytellers’ speculative representations of worlds in which policing, prisons, and punishment are not the primary model of redress for interpersonal and institutional violence utilize just this kind of “radical imagination.” What is more, such stories are a “continuance,” in that they are not new; there was a time before the carceral settler state and there will be a time after.

In what is to follow, I mobilize abolition organizer and theorist Mariame Kaba’s 2015 short story, “Justice” as well as Métis writer Cherie Dimaline’s 2017 novel, *The Marrow Thieves*, to envision several abolitionist possibilities of redress. With the help of

these works, I affirm models of redress that take the form of direct action, revolutionary violence, as well as accountability and conflict resolution. For instance, “Justice” illustrates an alternative model of resistance to interpersonal violence—in which characters confront an individual who kills—as a way to grapple with (not punish) the harm. Similarly, the characters in *The Marrow Thieves* engage directly with genocidal settler colonial power through decolonial and revolutionary violence. Unlike in the previous chapter on Butler’s *Dawn*, the direct interventions that occur in “Justice” and *The Marrow Thieves* are not meant to stop an act before or as it’s occurring (reminiscent of predictive policing) nor is it a form of vengeance, torture, and retribution for an act that’s already occurred.

Instead, Kaba and Dimaline respectively offer redress that relies on a different set of motivations than the criminal punishment system. Carceral settler states, like the U.S. and Canada, disconnect those who have caused harm, those who have been harmed, and the communities in which they are a part of from one another as well as from processes of adjudication. A direct intervention—or to *run towards*—requires (re)connection between all parties involved. “Justice” is a glimpse into another planet’s method of peacekeeping that mirrors Earth abolitionists’ practices of community accountability and circle processes, ways of relating that serve to reconcile and make amends regardless of the egregiousness of the crime. Indigenous (specifically, a Cree Elder and Métis youth) characters in *The Marrow Thieves* utilize direct action and revolutionary violence akin to real world activism that confronts the settler colonial state and its henchpersons. Both of

these authors provide useful direct interventions to violence and harm—what I label as resolution and reconnection, respectively.

These texts demonstrate a need for abolitionists to consider new ways of relating beyond the disconnection that carceral settler states design. For this, I turn to Kwakwaka'wakw scholar Sarah Hunt. Kaba and Dimaline deftly present the collision between what Sarah Hunt might deem to be two different forms of law. In the 2013 TEDxVictoria presentation “In Her Name: Relationships as Law,” Hunt explains that although Indigenous nations have their own distinct cultural, social, spiritual, and governing practices, an overarching facet of these lifeways is “our relationships.” Hunt adds that such community, closeness, and connection “are what hold us to account. *Our relationships become our law*” (“In Her Name,” emphasis added). In other words, being in relation with others demands one to “account” for oneself, and it is this responsibility that then defines what is “law,” or what is considered acceptable behavior within a given Indigenous nation. An abolitionist praxis inspired by Hunt’s Indigenous feminism requires that relationships, resolution, and reconnection are the basis from which we navigate the world. For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous models of redress, expanding law to incorporate Indigenous peoples’ narrative traditions serves the purpose of telling “stories that heal” and act “as an antidote to the texts of oppression” (Duthu 143; Justice 2). Or, as one Očhéthi Šakówiŋ Oyáte restorative justice practitioner puts it, “those harmed must have a space to tell their story” (Valandra 326).

Abolitionist feminists, Indigenous feminists, and other feminists of color have long espoused a converse critique of the settler state juridical system, asserting that

Western legal proceedings are inherently distancing and detached from relationality (Razack 6; Ross 17).⁵¹ Relationship and reciprocity is far from what drives CanAmerican law (Maracle 93). If laws are a system of rules that regulate action, then the laws of settler colonial nations, such as the U.S. and Canada, are based in disconnection: decisions are made in a top-down fashion, disconnected from those most impacted. And those who are to be punished—in service of making the settler state “safer” and more “livable”—are whisked away and disconnected from community. To put it succinctly, settler law is one of detachment, torture, and various kinds of death.

Echoing Hunt, the community in Kaba’s short story works together to directly confront someone who has caused interpersonal harm, in order to resolve and rebuild relations with them. I am defining resolution as a type of redress in “Justice” that is grounded in a Black abolitionist feminism and therefore takes to heart the importance of maintaining and relying on relationships, before, during, and after an act of violence. In *The Marrow Thieves*, Indigenous peoples’ direct interventions to structural violence is based on a law of reestablishing severed relations, by working together to resist further harm and restore kinship. Stated more explicitly, I define reconnection in *The Marrow Thieves* as a form of redress grounded in Indigenous epistemology, a way to maintain Indigenous peoples’ bodymindspirits despite the violences of settler colonial disconnection.

⁵¹ So disconnected, in fact, that in the case of Indigenous deaths in police custody, “no one is to blame, no one can be called to account,” according to settler logics (Razack 9).

The title of this chapter, “Running Towards,” is inspired by the protagonist in Dimaline’s novel, who “decides to stop running and start fighting” (Zanella 190).⁵² Acts of escape and rescue in the novel at once appear fugitive but are coupled with an insistence that evasion is not always enough to continue to survive and thrive. Kaba’s and Dimaline’s respective characters *run towards* conflict and harm, rather than shy away from it. At the same time, they directly intervene in and combat the interpersonal and institutional violence that befalls their loved ones without the use of the state and punishment. These literary works draw distinctions between turning towards and turning away, between building and severance, between relation through connection and punishment through disconnection. In an abolitionist sense, a crucial step to combating violence is running towards a harmful act or structure in order to directly confront it. This also means that redress, for abolitionists, is not something that should be individualized or invisibilized within a disconnected statist system; it is a collective process of resolution and reconnection. However, if such attempts at reasserting being in “a good way”⁵³ are rejected, then the result may necessitate refusal and fugitivity, as we shall see in the next chapter.

⁵² After the youngest member of the protagonist’s group is killed, he expresses, “I wasn’t sure I even wanted to run anymore” (Dimaline 40). With the “second huge loss” of the group’s Elder, Minerva, shortly thereafter, Francis is more decisive: “I said no. I’m not going north. ...I’m going after Minerva” (Dimaline 153). Through this declaration, Francis “urges his family to stop running away from the danger and instead to charge towards it” (De Vos 31).

⁵³ Lyn Trudeau (Sagamok Anishinawbek) describes what this phrase means “through my Anishnawbek culture” (114). Primarily Trudeau understands this “way” to be “one of good relations—relations to and with all beings. All beings are kindred spirits since the time the Creator brought us all together, so now we must acknowledge all life and move forward with peace in our hearts and a calmness of the mind. ‘A good way’ is not only

It is not just the similarities between factual and fictional forms of redress and relationality that I'm drawn to. The very circumstances that inaugurate these reactions, the harms that we witness as readers, will undoubtedly be intimately familiar to many abolitionist feminists. I've chosen these texts precisely because they both speak to themes of interpersonal and institutional violence, of punishment, and of incarceration, all with a distinctly gendered, racialized, and colonial weight to them. Indeed, it is these textual themes that mirror real world histories and experiences of murderous misogynoir and genocidal boarding schools. With such salient similarities, it follows that abolitionist feminists might draw parallels between Kaba's and Dimaline's characters and what those of us who experience and combat comparable violences must do.

The Justice Rituals of “Justice”

Mariame Kaba is a longtime organizer and advocate around alternative forms of justice and redress. She is the founder and director of Project NIA, a New York-based organization that seeks to end youth incarceration by fostering “community-based alternatives to the criminal legal process” (“About Us”). Kaba has co-founded numerous other abolitionist groups, such as Survived & Punished, whose “work specifically focuses on criminalized survivors to raise awareness about the integrated relationship between systems of punishment and the pervasiveness of gender violence” (“About S&P”). Kaba was also instrumental in the creation of We Charge Genocide, a grassroots effort to bring a case to the United Nations against the decades of torture committed under Chicago

words, but also an experience each must have and a journey each must make on their own” (Trudeau and Cherubini 114).

Police Commander Jon Burge.⁵⁴ She has insisted on the need for police and prison abolition extensively in edited collections, op-eds, and speaking engagements. Taken together, her activism has relied on tactics such as petitioning, writing, educating and training, practicing transformative justice, as well as direct advocacy and services for those who are systems-impacted. These tangible abolitionist aims are direly needed, so in one sense it is surprising that Kaba would pen “Justice,” a piece of literary speculation far from grounded in the reality of the U.S. carceral state.

Yet in her short story, Kaba uses fiction to articulate the Black abolitionist feminist practices that she continually works to build on a daily basis. So, from another perspective, Kaba is simply utilizing a diversity of tactics, not just championing material change but also recognizing the importance of “radical imaginations” in service to liberation, as she mentions in this chapter’s epigraph. In an interview regarding the short story, Kaba reveals that her choice “to imagine a world without prisons” was made precisely “because it’s a central focus of my organizing” (as quoted in Macaré). But the author goes on to say that, rather than “trying to create the conditions necessary to ensure the possibility of a world without prisons” in the here and now, “Justice” is “about a place and time where we’d already succeeded in ending prisons” (Kaba, as quoted in Macaré). Circle-keeping and community accountability processes are well-worn approaches for Kaba despite that they are still not widely embraced by larger U.S. society

⁵⁴ Chicago’s We Charge Genocide took inspiration for its name from the 1951 petition of the same name signed by W.E.B. Du Bois (among others) and delivered to the United Nations by Paul Robeson, which documented over 100 cases of racialized police brutality and murder in the U.S.

and, in particular, the criminal punishment system (Kaba and Hassan 2). By writing a fictionalized account of these alternative forms of redress from the perspective of a young woman of color, “Justice” lends plausibility to otherwise highly scrutinized peoples and practices.

Kaba’s longstanding abolitionist feminist commitment to the liberation of Black women, girls, and femmes is front and center in “Justice,” originally published in Alexandra Brodsky and Rachel Kauder Nalebuff’s edited anthology from 2015, *The Feminist Utopia Project: Fifty-Seven Visions of a Wildly Better Future*. “Justice” is told from the first person perspective of Adila, a sixteen-year-old girl living in Small Place (SP). Adila describes Small Place as “very green,” so verdant that “you can smell the green and the salt water and you can hear the wind rustling through the trees” (Kaba 82). The people of Small Place are family, although not all related by blood. They “are a close-knit community,” in which private property is non-existent and “everyone... had their basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter [as well as health care and education] met” (Kaba 83–4). Because “[t]here is no such thing as private property and everyone’s basic needs are met,” the residents of Small Place are free “to consider new ways of relating to each other, ways that do not rely on coercion, containment and captivity” (Kaba, as quoted in Macaré). The correlation between care and captivity can be articulated as such: “the occurrence of crime does not exist in the imaginations of the people who live there [in SP] because the conditions that create lack or need have been eradicated, and the people living there have healed through wounds and trauma” (“Staff”). This short story presents an imagined “constellation of alternative strategies and institutions,” the shape of

luminous possibilities which Angela Davis deems necessary to decarcerate society (107). In *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Davis explains, “positing decarceration as our overarching strategy, we would try to envision a continuum of alternatives to imprisonment—demilitarization of schools, revitalization of education at all levels, a health system that provides free physical and mental care to all, and a justice system based on reparation and reconciliation rather than retribution and vengeance” and propertarianism (107). It is these widespread changes to principles, priorities, and practices that a Black abolitionist feminism demands, as a way to provide stability and care for the bodymindspirits and lifeways of all people. The community of Small Place has already implemented this constellation of alternatives.

Kaba also implicitly centers non-white protagonists, without ever using real-world signifiers like “Black,” “Brown,” “Indigenous,” or “people of color.” The author juxtaposes a visiting outsider as “pale like she doesn’t spend a lot of time in the sun,” hence I interpret this to mean that the people of Small Place are at least darker in complexion and that the narrator, specifically, is a young woman of color (Kaba 83). This lack of present-day language widely used in the U.S. is important because the reader comes to understand that Small Place is not on Earth, and therefore doesn’t carry with it equivalent histories, attitudes, or value systems.⁵⁵ At the same time, Small Place is not

⁵⁵ “In my utopia,” Kaba explains, “we’ve done away with the gender binary and racism” (as quoted in Macaré). By “do[ing] away with” systems of essentialism and oppression, the author isn’t so much relying on what Lavender calls the “blackground” through which color-blind Western science fiction often foregrounds itself (19). Instead, Kaba is constructing an “ethnoscape.” Lavender defines this as a space that “provides a symbolic transfer of meaning between racial/ethnic politics and the shifting world of the sf text, resolving the contradictions of homogeneity and exposing the ways that sf unthinkingly

wholly disconnected from our planet, spatially or relationally. Earth “is very far indeed,” Adila clarifies, yet its inhabitants are “a distant relative of our neighbors” (Kaba 83). Further confirming SP’s relationship to Earth, at the end of the story it is divulged that Adila’s name “means ‘justice’” (Kaba 89). Although the author doesn’t explicitly state that this is a translation from Urdu, it seems important to note that Kaba is taking linguistic inspiration from Earth, even if Small Place is only distantly connected to our planet.⁵⁶ Perhaps, since the people of Small Place “often get visitors from other places,” this South Asian and Southwest Asian-related language has made its way to extended kin across vast distances of space (Kaba 83).

Regardless of the seemingly abolitionist utopianism of this “close-knit community,” tragedy still occurs in SP. Early on, Adila establishes, “I was sixteen when I died. Darn, I did it again. I rushed to the end of the story before telling the beginning” (Kaba 87). This accidental admittance immediately lets the reader know that Kaba is in a long lineage of other Black authors who, similarly, “are raising the dead, allowing them to speak, and providing them with the agency of the physical bodies in order to tell the story of death-in-life” (Holland 4). We know that the protagonist of “Justice” is no longer

reproduces white privilege. The writer constructs a socio-spatial environment in which to tell a story, but the reader can reconfigure those arrangements, draw out the assumptions and implications of the text to perceive its ethnoscape” (158).

⁵⁶ Kaba clearly illustrates a land which the residents belong to and steward, possibly characterizing Adila and others as Indigenous. In pondering whether the residents of Small Place are Indigenous, Black, and/or South Asian-descended, perhaps Shona Jackson’s work on “the messy cleavages of Blackness, Indianness (of South Asian descent), and Indigenous identity in the Anglophone Caribbean” could be useful here (344). However, since Kaba refuses racialization *qua* Anglophone racialization on Turtle Island, I also wish to take the story on its own terms.

alive, but we nevertheless don't know why or how this will happen.⁵⁷ Initial clues emerge in a brief episode that Adila shares at the beginning:

I'm standing on the shore watching a woman drown. My friends and family members are witnessing the same scene, or maybe it looks different to their eyes. They are grieving; I am not. I turn to my mother (who is a man) and whisper in his ear: 'vengeance is not justice.' And again 'vengeance is not justice.' I let the wind carry my words because human beings (even highly evolved ones) can't hear spirits. (Kaba 87)

Adila might have died, but she is not absent. She is in a different state of existence as a "spirit" that others "can't hear." This form of posthumous storytelling crucially provides an alternative perception, which "maybe...looks different" for those who are "witnessing the same scene." Kaba is crafting the narrative conditions for a girl of color to tell her own story and define justice for herself, even if others are not ready or able to receive these declarations.

The short story's connections—between a woman drowning, a group of family and friends grieving, and a mother seeking justice—will soon become clear. But first, I want to emphasize the importance that a girl of color, who experiences violence and even

⁵⁷ By skipping ahead "to the end of the story" and to the end of Adila's life, any sense of linear time short circuits in "Justice." Knowing the outcome ahead of time means that no one in Small Place can change what will happen. Rather than present this as fatalistic or defeatist, Kaba gives the impression that Adila's death—and, by proxy, similar grief and harm—is an inevitability that abolitionists must prepare for. The author has asserted elsewhere that a "world without harm isn't possible and isn't what an abolitionist vision purports to achieve" (*We Do This* 26). "Justice," then, encourages us to work towards "creating survivable conditions [that] might *prevent future harm*" (Kaba and Hayes 69, emphasis added).

death, is the one who recounts this tale. “Justice” is a ghost story, in that Adila gets to chronicle it as a “spirit” and even “whisper in [the] ear” of a family member in her own words. Adila is taking it upon herself to advocate—if not to the human beings of Small Place, then to the reader—for an alternative form of redress. Kaba’s short story therefore bears some resemblance to the kinds of entreaties women, girls, and femmes of color make within U.S. carceral systems that all-too-often go unheard. Particularly, survivors who are punished for defending themselves are not passive recipients of interpersonal and institutional violences; they are active participants fighting for their continued existence (“About S&P”).

As a recently deceased teen, Adila “is alive, so to speak,” insofar as she is “something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there” yet making herself “known or apparent” to those around her (Gordon 8, 64). She haunts Small Place through her persistent resonance in the lives of those she left behind. Adila is mourned, to be sure. But whether or not those in Small Place perceive her apparition, her aliveness after death is not cast as monstrous. Perhaps this is because the story is written in Adila’s affable, conversational tone. Neither residents of Small Place nor we as readers fall prey to dominant U.S. horror imaginaries, in which the hauntings of ghosts, spirits, ghouls, and specters are “positioned as undeserved” (Tuck and Ree 641). In this Western sense, the haunted become innocent victims, unnecessarily terrorized by trespassing ghosts. Kaba refuses such characterizations of the dead, and instead presents Adila’s haunting as “the cost of subjugation” and “the price paid for violence” (Tuck and Ree 643). “Justice” is the story of one such violent encounter and the price that must be paid.

Adila tells of an “Earth visitor (EV)” who arrived the previous month, a woman with light skin and long, brown hair (Kaba 83). This visitor lives among the people of Small Place and proceeds to insist that their practices are “unsafe” (Kaba 84). Specifically, EV is fixated on the possibility of theft and physical violence—and the subsequent need for punishment. The interpersonal violence that EV believes is an ever-lingering threat has a particular gendered component to it.

[EV] walked around SP carrying a knife in her purse. She said that it was in case she “ran into trouble.” She added that on Earth, “women could never be too careful.” (Kaba 83)

EV is cautious precisely because she believes her gender identity, as a woman, makes her a more likely target of harm. The best preventative measure, in EV’s mind, is not to collectively and proactively address *why* gender puts one at risk, but rather to individually and independently prepare herself to react to the inevitability of violence. Additionally, Adila recounts that “EV then asked my father if they were afraid for me and my siblings’ safety” (Kaba 84). For EV, the responsibility for combating or preventing violence does not fall to all community members in Small Place; it is the particular patriarchal power of a father to fear for, protect, and possibly even avenge any harm that befalls children—namely girl children—and others in the biological family unit. In lieu of a singular patriarch to dole out punishment, EV advocates for carceral institutions as adjudicators of retributive justice: “EV responded that jails and prisons offered accountability and punishment and that a strict justice system is especially important for women” (Kaba 86). Overall, EV is “disturbed” and in disbelief at the “alien” ways of Small Place—rooted in

mutual care and community accountability—and instead, EV advocates in favor of fear-based, highly gendered, retributive responses to interpersonal conflict and harm (Kaba 86). Despite EV’s insistence on retributive and punitive justice, Kaba is resolute in her political commitments to Black feminism and abolition, ultimately providing the voice of Adila, a (ghost) girl of color, to chronicle SP’s alternative models of redress.

“All You Need Is to Listen and to Make Space”: Seeking Resolution as Direct Intervention

It is precisely Small Place’s practice of community accountability that Kaba illuminates as a viable option for redressing conflict, harm, and violence through more direct means and close-knit relationality. To reiterate Kaba and Ritchie’s point in the epigraph, abolitionists “need to use our radical imaginations” to create means of resolving interpersonal issues that do not rely on the carceral settler state. Kaba’s short story provides one such case of an alternative model of redress. In *Small Place*, one method is an ongoing, rotating position known as a “peace-holder.” Adila outlines Small Place’s existing system of electing and maintaining peace-holders for conflict resolution:

While arguments and conflicts happen, we always resolve them. My parents are SP’s chief peace-holders. If you are wondering how one becomes a chief peace-holder, it’s simple really. Anyone over twenty years old is eligible. Every five years, a representative group of SP residents gather to consider candidates. Peace-holders are not special or better than anyone else in SP. The only requirements are a desire to serve and a commitment to embody and hold true to our community values. Those values are revisited, reviewed, and sometimes revised annually.

Peace-holders' primary responsibilities are to make sure that all of our conflicts are swiftly and peacefully addressed. (Kaba 82)

Small Place has created, implemented, and normalized a way to name everyday tensions that inevitably arise while holding onto the interests of everyone involved. Central to this practice is the tenet that “when one person in our community experiences harm, all of us are harmed” (Kaba 83). Peace-holders are expected to uphold and enact this sense of collective compassion and empathy, as “one of [SP’s] most sacred and important values,” when addressing and resolving conflict (Kaba 83). It should be noted that in the above passage Kaba does not mention interpersonal violence or abuse as “conflict.” As we shall see, these are escalated sources of harm that are not meant to be addressed by the use of peace-holders alone.

It is “circles” and “circle-keepers” that create space for larger, generative community connection and communication. All residents of Small Place are able to participate freely in, are impacted by, and therefore have a stake in maintaining circles. In Small Place, “all of us are circle-keepers,” because any member of the community, regardless of age or skill level, “can call and keep a circle at any time and for any reason” (Kaba 83). Circles and circle-keeping are non-hierarchically structured, with the main expectation being that “all you need is to listen and to make space” (Kaba 83). Anything can be held in a circle, from discussion and support to celebration and mourning (Kaba 87). Because circles are initiated for a myriad of purposes, the practice is at once quotidian *and* unique. In other words, talking through issues, feeling together, and fostering strong bonds all become normalized, everyday practices—special but not

specialized nor intimidating.⁵⁸ Recalling Sarah Hunt’s lecture on violence and relations, “all members of a community are actively involved in upholding local laws,” which “activates our sense of power, our agency,” rather than “appealing to some powerful figure like the police or a judge for help” (“In Her Name”). Kaba herself has emphasized that, as abolitionists, “we must imagine and experiment with new collective structures that enable us to take more principled action, such as *embracing collective responsibility to resolve conflicts*” (*We Do This* 26, emphasis added). Small Place has already embraced this sense of collectivity and connection.

Hearing all of this, EV disbelieves, distrusts, and disparages Small Place’s flexible, compassionate, and responsive values and practices. EV’s ideology lies in contrast with Small Place and its residents. While SP’s representatives and values are (re)considered regularly, allowing for flexibility and change, EV upholds rigid, one-size-fits-all redress as unparalleled in its utility. Hence, EV “couldn’t believe that there were no prisons in SP” (Kaba 87). After EV asks “where all of the criminals were housed” in Small Place and receives only blank stares, “she became agitated and yelled” at her hosts (Kaba 85). EV espouses a belief that there are inherently “bad people” or, at least, “people who do bad things,” an essentialized quality of a person or action that is inescapable, unavoidable, and therefore must be sequestered elsewhere (Kaba 86). What is more, the hostility that EV expresses demonstrates a deeply rooted disbelief and distrust with any possible alternative approach. Although unfamiliar to SP, this carceral

⁵⁸ See Akinola and Uzodike 98–9, on how *Ubuntu* informs an Indigenous African approach to conflict resolution.

mindset is likely strikingly familiar to many abolitionists on Earth: there are *bad people*, individuals who will inevitably do *bad things*, and the *only recourse* is to be reactive after the bad things happen.⁵⁹ Additionally, there is a belief that such a response must come from above, from some ultimate arbiter such as a state, governing body, or its representatives.⁶⁰ To think or act differently than disconnected, top-down judgment and punishment is, for EV, dangerous for those individuals who might be or are harmed as well as society as a whole. But EV does not consider how those who are locked away might need to heal or make amends as well (Kaba 86). By contrast, in *Small Place*, the focus is first and foremost on the needs of those harmed, then circles discuss how those who commit harm might “take responsibility” and be guided “in completing the agreed-on restitution” (Kaba 87). Even if it is a reaction to the aftermath of harm, SP’s isn’t a top-down approach, but a direct and collective process.

EV’s incredulity and hostility culminates in an act that she would undoubtedly deem “bad.” EV approaches Adila while Adila is swimming naked in the ocean after school. Peacefully “floating” in the water, lost in a “daydream” with “eyes closed,” Adila is “jolted out” of her serenity when she notices that EV is near, “staring” and with “a knife in her hand” (Kaba 87). As readers, we are spared the gruesome details of this encounter. Yet from Adila’s firsthand posthumous account, we know that “I was killed

⁵⁹ As Spade instructs, “[e]nding up in prison or jail or deportation proceedings is not a matter of dangerousness or lawlessness, it’s about whether you are part of a group targeted for enforcement” (167).

⁶⁰ Adila researches the “punishment system on Earth and was shocked that the harmed person played almost no role in the process. The trials (I looked up that word too) were the *State of Indiana v. the name of the person who caused harm*” (Kaba 86).

by a visitor from a place called Earth who couldn't believe that there were no prisons in SP" (Kaba 87). From this, we can surmise that EV kills Adila with the same knife EV had initially brandished for safety. EV's homicidal actions contain a multiplicity of possible motivations. Did she, as a light-skinned woman, believe she was keeping herself safe from a person she saw as an "alien" threat, a young darker-skinned woman who did not share EV's views? In this way, was she reproducing Earthly logics of white supremacy and xenophobia, epistemes unknown to Small Place? Was EV trying to prove a point? Possibly she meant to teach the entirety of Small Place a lesson that threats of harm lurk around every corner if one is not too careful. Or, had she come to Small Place already agitated and obsessed with violence, as many of her comments indicate? Were the calm, comfort, and customs of Small Place—and, specifically, Adila—so enraging to EV, that she felt the need to enact her rage?

In Kaba's story, Adila does not narrate an explicit account of her death and readers also don't hear much of EV's perspective throughout the story, yet we can still ascertain what EV stands for.⁶¹ Omitting EV's point of view could be strategic on the author's part, as mentioned earlier, to decenter the person who caused harm and to instead center those most impacted, namely a girl of color and her community. This is not to say that people's motivations and the contexts in which they operate shouldn't be taken into account when seeking resolution and redress (see discussion of Accountable Communities in chapter one). In terms of intent within "Justice," the killer is consistently

⁶¹ I intentionally use the phrase "stand for" to draw on several of its meanings: both "to be a symbol for" as well as "to be in support of."

referred to by the acronym EV throughout the story. This could be pronounced a number of ways; for example, “EE-vee” (/’i:vi/). However, if read as “Eve” (/’i:v/), then she could be interpreted as synonymous with the Biblical first woman and, by association, Christian notions of sin. Even though Eve was not cast out of Eden for murder, Kaba might be using the character of EV to reenact Eve’s impulsivity and transgressiveness, as a way to gesture towards issues of blame and responsibility. EV’s actions appear more premeditated, though. I understand EV to be intentionally killing not just Adila, but also the spirit of justice that Adila personally advocates for and linguistically translates to. In this way, EV truly embodies those of us on Earth who “are conditioned to be fearful of one another” and “are convinced that we are surrounded by sociopaths and need to be protected from the ‘other’” (Kaba, as quoted in Macaré). Rather than viewing her as an allegory for original sin, EV parrots the epistemological maneuverings meant to challenge and disprove real world systems of accountability similar to SP’s. Regardless of possible motives, Kaba nevertheless doesn’t lead readers to easily sympathize or identify with EV, which hopefully allows for a more sympathetic attitude toward abolitionist practices.

Questions of context and motive would best be carefully considered in one of Small Place’s circles. In the immediate aftermath of Adila’s murder, Adila narrates how circles were held day and night for the people of Small Place to come together, celebrate Adila’s life, and console one another over her death. Kaba writes of “talking circles, mourning circles, circles of support, and celebration circles” (87). Here, again, the reader encounters circles serving many purposes, meeting many needs. Circles are not one-size-

fits-all nor are they monolithically positive or negative. Although this is not a typical event, since Adila's "was the second murder ever in our community," the members of Small Place have had much practice with circles before (Kaba 87). Even though this is an extreme example of violence that SP must react to, fortunately, their community has been proactively building up a system for conflict resolution for generations. Their system is rattled—but not broken—by EV's killing of Adila. Calling a circle for Adila's death likely wouldn't feel especially difficult or fraught; instead, it would be a well-practiced tradition, in spite of the extenuating circumstances. Rather than serving the sole function of, say, a funeral or other mourning ritual, SP's circles can hold onto the spectrum and complexity of emotions and needs that people might have. In this way, those most impacted by Adila's murder—her immediate "family members and friends," rather than her killer—are attended to for weeks (Kaba 88). In death, Adila remarks how people "told stories about my life through tears, anger, and laughter," but members of Small Place did not "talk of punishment or vengeance" (Kaba 88). They prioritized their own healing, which they understood would not be aided or accelerated by the "punishment or vengeance" of EV, because ultimately "[n]either would bring me back" (Kaba 88). In presenting circles as quotidian, multifaceted, and community-centered, Kaba demonstrates that a key component of redress is to help and empower those most impacted by harm.

Eventually, characters directly confront EV about killing Adila. Even this direct attention is meant to reconcile and resolve—not punish—the harm. Because Adila's parents are SP's current chief peace-holders, they are tasked to "ensure that the harm

caused was addressed” (Kaba 87). Kaba’s language is instructive, in that the author describes harm as being “addressed,” not “punished” or “avenged.” This gives the sense that, much like in other circles, Adila’s murder will be seriously considered and dealt with openly. It will be addressed, as in it will be spoken of and engaged with. Facing the harm and who caused it head-on does not require a one-size-fits-all solution, top-down retribution, nor a severing of relations. Small Place processes all community issues in circles, and this particularly egregious harm is just one more chance to do so. Once ready, finally,

the SP community turned its attention to my killer. EV was included in all of the previous circles and so she had experienced the community’s outpouring of grief and loss. She heard stories about my life. She knew the extent of the pain felt by my community. After she killed me, she turned herself in to my parents. Her first words to them were: “Where will you put me?” They responded in unison: “In circle.” And so it was that EV came to understand the impact of her actions on an entire community. And so it was that she experienced remorse for her actions and sought to make amends. And so it was that my community held EV in her humanity while seeking to hold her accountable for her actions. (Kaba 88)

Kaba shows that all circles following Adila’s death and leading up to the moment when Small Place “turned its attention to” EV were, in fact, part of the way “that EV came to understand the impact of her actions on an entire community” (88). After participating in circles that centered on Adila’s family and friends, EV witnessed firsthand what Adila meant to Small Place, witnessed SP’s love for Adila’s presence in life, and witnessed

their grief after her death. Being in community with those most impacted by the murder led EV to feel “remorse for her actions,” a kind of personal transformation based in collective affect (Kaba 88). Regarding real world contexts, Kaba has remarked, “[y]ou can’t force somebody into being accountable for things they do. That is not possible. People have to take accountability for things that they actually do wrong. They have to decide that this is wrong” (*We Do This* 57). This entire process allows EV to “see how her actions effected [sic] them all,” how she had wronged Adila and, by extension, Adila’s community (“Staff”). However, EV’s question was still rooted in punitive justice, or her belief that she must be “put” somewhere in order to make things right. Also, EV only addresses Adila’s parents, which overlooks the communal aspect of Small Place’s practices. Nevertheless, it is EV who reflects and comes to the conclusion that she is ready “to make amends” (Kaba 88). What she has witnessed and learned has made her a willing participant in her own and others’ transformation and redress. Only then—and after their own internal processing—are the chief peace-keepers and other community members of Small Place able to hold another form of circle.

Although there has only been one previous murder, SP’s forebears created a particular kind of circle, involving what residents call a “Justice Ritual.” Beyond the necessary reflection on the life of the harmed parties, the Justice Ritual attends to “the killer’s life and actions” (Kaba 88). Adila explains,

[i]n a series of circles, participants discuss why the violence happened, how it happened, and who was harmed. Community members are asked to stand in the shoes of the person who committed the harm, to consider the conditions that

underlie their actions, and to examine their own roles in perpetuating those conditions. (Kaba 88–9)

This ritual centers on the person who committed the murder and also acknowledges that such an individual is not inherently “bad,” does not exist in a vacuum, nor do they act alone. Context must be taken into account through compassionate deliberation and “stand[ing] in the shoes of” another (Kaba 88). Worlds apart from the one-size-fits all, top-down, punitive approach that EV is accustomed to, she will not be subjected to scrutiny or interrogation from select trained experts. The Justice Ritual involves everyday people with their own opinions, strengths, and shortcomings. The people of Small Place carefully weigh the circumstances that would lead someone like EV to kill, “emotions like jealousy, envy, and anger” that inevitably “remain within us and can negatively impact our relationships” (Kaba 89). In a discussion of transformative justice, Kaba and Hayes implore, “we have to acknowledge the reality that often it is hurt people who hurt other people... that harm originates from situations dominated by stress, scarcity, and oppression,” an acknowledgement that would, in turn, “also create a culture that enables people to actually take accountability for violence and harm” (*We Do This* 69). Normalizing these fraught emotions and complex conditions directly confronts their negative impacts when they arise, instead of punishing and pathologizing people’s motivations.

The culmination of the Justice Ritual also provides direct control to those most impacted. Whereas the Earth that EV inhabits utilizes a system in which victims (as well as perpetrators) play little to no part, Small Place deliberately and literally places power

in the hands of those who live in the aftermath of violence. Adila's family chooses whether or not EV may live after they've discussed the murder at length in circles.

When circles have been exhausted, the killer is taken to the ocean, tied up, and dropped into the water. This empathy ceremony takes place in front of the entire community. The immediate family members of the victim are given the option of saving the life of the killer or letting them drown. (Kaba 89)

This scene may at first appear violent and startling, especially for a community that supposedly centers "look[ing] out for one another" (Kaba 83). By presenting the possibility of "letting them drown," Kaba exposes the troubling, punitive mindset that lies at the heart of the U.S. settler state's death penalty. Once outside of its normalized context, this form of redress is denaturalized. Readers are therefore forced to confront any feeling of surprise and shock at corporal punishment.

But is this component of the Justice Ritual so misaligned with the principles of Small Place's peacekeeping? Adila's family have allowed for deliberation to be "exhausted," implying that this is not an impulsive decision and that nothing will be rushed or taken lightly. The Justice Ritual also enacts mercy. Mercy might take the form of "saving the life of the killer." Or, it might require "letting them drown" if that is deemed more merciful to the people of SP as well as more merciful to a person who, unlike EV, shows no remorse or willingness to change. Neither saving nor drowning are foregone because both are accepted options of redress if that is the conclusion reached—if that best serves to "look out for one another." Either outcome is able to fully "hold each other," as long as it is not enacted as a form of vengeance, which Adila asserts "is not

justice” (Kaba 89). In an interview with Autumn Brown and adrienne maree brown, Kaba differentiates between vengeful punishment and commensurate consequences. The former involves “inflicting cruelty and suffering on people” in the spirit of vengeance (*We Do This* 131). Conversely, consequences “can be unpleasant and uncomfortable,” yet are logical outcomes following transgressions against an individual or group (*We Do This* 131). The consequences meted out to EV—to live or to die—are decided by Adila’s “immediate family members.” At the same time, they act under the purview of “the entire community” and are, therefore, publicly accountable to others in their choice. They cannot hide, for nothing happens behind closed doors in Small Place.

Adila’s parents decide to spare EV from a watery grave. In this case, when a killer is shown mercy and allowed to live, “they are then required to take the place of the person killed within the community” (Kaba 89). Instead of being shunned, caged, tortured, or even executed, people who cause grievous harm must “liv[e] as integrated members” of Small Place (Kaba 89). EV must step in and replace Adila in her kinships and relations.⁶² Kaba labels this as something EV is “required” to do, so how is this not a form of punishment, or at least coerced? Certainly, there is an expectation that EV and others who kill must “pay a debt for the life taken for however long the harmed parties deem necessary” (Kaba 89). It is unclear what this payment might look like. Perhaps, like the duration, it is up to the “harmed parties.” EV gets to continue living in a way that

⁶² EV is not related by blood, but she’s able to be incorporated into the community. See Innes 34 and Killsback 42, for more about how this kinship practice of adoption, reciprocity, and relationality has been commonly observed amongst Plains Indians, such as Cowessess and Cheyenne societies.

Adila cannot, because Adila's parents know that killing EV will not bring Adila back. Instead, they receive "pay" for their loss by gaining a family member in Adila's place. This is a sort of restoration, or balancing of the scales. Kaba points to several other conditions, however, that present a more transformational picture. Because EV must "take the place" of Adila, be an "integrated member" of Small Place, and act with responsibility in the ways that others "deem necessary," it's clear that the repercussions of EV's actions draw her *closer to* rather than isolate and separate her from those whom she harmed. In fact, Kaba even qualifies that killers must give restitution for past injustice, "but they do so *within the community*" (89, emphasis added). This indicates that there is an obligation to others, but it is not a form of punishment.

Throughout "Justice," abolitionist feminist readers witness that another system of redress is possible, one different from the carceral settler state in which we and EV inhabit. Small Place has an existing process of peacemaking and circle-keeping that centers the people most impacted as well as normalizes practices of collectivity, discussion, and repair. Although visitors like EV might be taken aback by such practices—and even go to drastic lengths to try to prove them wrong—the community of Small Place is nevertheless steadfast in its approach. EV's murder of a teenage girl, Adila, necessitates a Justice Ritual which provides residents with a way to grapple with, not punish, the harm, to enact mercy rather than vengeance. This resonates with accountability processes already being proposed and taken up by abolitionist feminists (discussed in the introduction), ways to achieve or at least run towards resolution that center collective experience, compassion, and relationships. Kaba's world building thus

allows her to sidestep the problem of dreaming abolition under the existing carceral state, which has socialized so many of us, like EV, to internalize carceral solutions to violence. This text—and speculative fiction more broadly—allows for a different kind of abolitionist thought through its denaturalization of punishment and imagining of alternative forms of redress. EV may be “a distant relative” of SP’s neighbors, but these practices are not that far from possible. By directly confronting interpersonal harms and making amends through community-centered, transformative conflict resolution, abolitionist feminists can bring Small Place to any place.

Real World Resonances in *The Marrow Thieves*

While Mariame Kaba’s short story features a Black abolitionist feminist response to a girl of color’s murder in a far off place, *The Marrow Thieves* imagines Indigenous resistance and reconnection as alternative models of redress here on Turtle Island. Widely lauded,⁶³ Métis novelist Cherie Dimaline’s *The Marrow Thieves* follows Francis (or “French/ie”), a Métis adolescent who has evaded the capture of the Canadian government’s “Department of Oneirology” programming in the late 21st century (4). Following rapid environmental and societal decline across the continent, finally resulting in the loss of white peoples’ capacity to dream, the settler state implements a systematic plan to experiment on the Indigenous peoples who have maintained dreaming abilities.⁶⁴

⁶³ Nominated and selected for at least a half dozen literary prizes, the young adult novel is now recognized as one of *TIME* magazine’s “The 100 Best YA Books of All Time,” alongside *Little Women*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Lord of the Flies*.

⁶⁴ Despite that it is unclear if, in fact, *all* Indigenous people are able to dream and how exactly Indigeneity is even being defined, what is clear is that settlers have an essentialized understanding of the neurobiology of race and Indigeneity in the book.

This involves the tracking, kidnapping, confining, vivisection, thieving marrow from, and killing anyone who is (or *might be*) Indigenous (Dimaline 81). Truancy agents called “Recruiters,” along with school Headmistresses and Catholic Cardinals—as state actors who enact this violence—are hardly enlisting people consensually.⁶⁵ French witnesses Recruiters forcibly take his brother, and the rest of his immediate family have all been disappeared by similar means. However, the young man joins an intergenerational, intertribal⁶⁶ group of Indigenous children, teens, and elders. Growing closer to one another, French’s new chosen family shares skills for survival as well as for cultural resurgence, in spite of the settler state’s continual attempts to harvest their bodies’ abilities. Eventually they are taken in by a larger, more established, and Council-led Indigenous community near Espanola, Ontario, who have also been resisting capture, assimilation, and death.

The capture and killing of Indigenous peoples in *The Marrow Thieves* closely resembles the residential schooling programs that incarcerated children and young adults on Turtle Island (and beyond) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Canella 114; Cox 69; De Cristofaro 25; Pravinchandra 136; Zanella 180). Residential and boarding schools run by federal governments and the Catholic Church were assuredly sites of incarceration (Lumsden 35; Ogden 65; Ross 3). In fact, the characters in the novel regularly remark on the resemblance and even call the recruitment centers “schools” (Dimaline 5). I disagree

Dimaline critiques this understanding if the ability to dream is read more expansively and not as a purely somnological practice (discussed below).

⁶⁵ In fact, some of the first “participants” in the experiments are people already held in correctional facilities.

⁶⁶ Primarily Cree, Métis, and Anishinaabe.

with Pravinchandra that “the new schools” in *The Marrow Thieves* are “of a different order,” though (136). In the article “‘More Than Biological’: Cherie Dimaline’s *The Marrow Thieves* as Indigenous Counter-genetic Fiction,” the author insists that, unlike historical residential schools “where undesirable traits were forced out of Indigenous children, the residential school now becomes the place where a coveted resource is harvested from Indigenous Peoples so that non-Indigenous Peoples can benefit from it” (136). I believe that both the original residential schools and the fictitious facilities in the novel enact great physical and psychic harm on their inhabitants in the name of extracting from and making the bodies and minds of Indigenous peoples more “useful” to the settler state.⁶⁷ Hence, I echo the assessment that the new schools “serve a similarly self-interested goal of securing the settler state’s future” by assimilating what is profitable and eradicating what is not (Zanella 178). However, the facilities in the novel are purely for stealing the bone marrow, dreams, and thus life from any and all Native peoples—the stated intention of which is to help white settlers regain lost abilities—with no promise (however false it may be) of eventual redemption or release. Many—but tragically not all—children were released from real world residential schools, but not without being forced to cope with the aftermath of such trauma and disconnection. Dimaline’s characters represent such outcomes, through their struggles and resistances. That is to say, the Indigenous peoples captured and caged in *The Marrow Thieves* experience something parallel to the eliminatory logics that residential schools incurred. To be taken

⁶⁷ This clearly resonates with Richard H. Pratt’s pronouncement that the U.S. must “[k]ill the Indian... and save the man.”

from family, place, culture, language, and lifeways and assimilated into Western epistememes is a facet of colonial genocide (Moses 17–8). This is reflected in the novel when readers witness Recruiters wielding authoritative discernment to “scoop” people and imprison them, ultimately severing Indigenous relations.

Dimaline’s novel asserts that such disconnection is not totalizing. Most Indigenous characters act in a good way with their kin,⁶⁸ including the more-than-human world, whereas settlers are presented as destructive and distanced from themselves and others. This is why Indigenous peoples in the text are able to dream and settlers are not. The book’s settlers narrowly define dreaming as the images and sensations produced primarily during the stage of REM sleep. But dreaming is more than what can be measured. Dian Million (Tanana Athabascan) expands thusly:

Dreaming to me is the effort to make sense of relations in the worlds we live, dreaming and empathizing intensely our relations with past and present and the future without the boundaries of linear time. Dreaming is a communicative sacred activity. Dreaming often allows us to creatively sidestep all the neat little boxes that obscure larger relations and syntheses of imagination. I also believe that dreaming, theory, narrative, and critical thinking are not exclusive of each other.

They form different ways of knowing.... (314–5)

Inspired by Million, I affirm that dreaming is not just a state of slumber. It is agentic and aspirational—aspiring, in all ways, to think and be and relate and communicate

⁶⁸ Miigwans, an Elder of French’s chosen family, reminds the younger members that “Not every Indian is an Indian,” in a prescient moment before one traitorous deadly encounter (Dimaline 55).

differently. Dreaming, as a way of discerning a temporality, spatiality, and ontology beyond settler colonialism, is powerful.⁶⁹ As a state of being in which the mind is active while the body is possibly more passive or dormant, dreaming is also a component of rest and sleep that counters the demand for productivity under racial settler capitalism. Non-Native folks in the novel cannot dream because they “worked longer hours” and cannot fathom a world in which their bodymindspirits are able to rest and be seemingly unproductive (Dimaline 26; Hersey 12). On the other hand, losing the ability to dream, to aspire, to imagine (whether in sleep or waking) conveys that settlers in *The Marrow Thieves* have lost any sense of connection—to themselves, each other, the world around them, and time beyond the immediate (Heise-von der Lippe 95). Settlers lose dreaming in multiple senses of the word: nighttime dreaming as anti-capitalist rest *and* day-dreaming as imagination.

Settlers seek a Western understanding of their loss of oneirological ability by researching dreaming through the elements of blood and marrow. Readers—and even the state actors in *The Marrow Thieves*—don’t necessarily know if the process of thieving Indigenous marrow is even effective. However, the Indigenous people in Dimaline’s novel never accept that settler science has found a cure for dreamlessness. But much like the history of genomic research on the DNA of Indigenous peoples and western

⁶⁹ Kim TallBear (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate) might call this “settler ontocide,” or “ridding ourselves of the category of the settler along with its discourse of white supremacy and assertions of an inherent right to these lands and waters,” and instead “practicing in every possible moment small acts of visionary resistance and deep narrative and ontological revision that forgo the relentlessly violent love for the nation-state in favor of loving and caring for our relatives, both human and other-than-human, whose lives depend upon these lands” (39, 36).

governments' commitment to the racialization of Indigeneity in their pursuit of biological difference, the Recruiters, Headmistresses, Cardinals, and others in the novel have accepted Western science wholeheartedly, essentialized identity categories, and adopted extractive measures in the pursuit of knowledge (TallBear 2). This delimits the issue to inherent and observable anatomical, physiological, and phenotypic characteristics, when dreaming is actually ontoepistemological or even spiritual in nature. The violence of this particular site of incarceration as well as the settler epistemes that underpin it is precisely what the characters in *The Marrow Thieves* seek to abolish and redress.

“Morphing Her Singular Voice to Many”: Reconnection as Decolonial Redress

Efforts for decolonial, anti-carceral resistance and reconnection in *The Marrow Thieves* take several forms, both direct and indirect. As an initial indirect resistance, many Indigenous people refuse compliance in this new iteration of colonial genocide by fleeing urban areas and remaining transient. Before French's biological family was torn apart, they hid in a “small cottage we'd been staying in since our apartment in the city had lost power and things had gotten really dangerous” (Dimaline 5). This flight reflects the growing inhospitality of urban landscapes due to the enduring effects of climate change, the concomitant loss of “power” in both material and immaterial senses.

Dwindling sources of power (e.g. loss of electricity, water, dreams) incites settler colonial violence at not only the national level—through the stealing of Indigenous bodymindspirits—but also at the site of the local. The city “had gotten really dangerous” presumably because “the city had lost power” and such scarcity turned residents against one another in individualistic attempts to survive. French's family heads to the

countryside for refuge, where there are likely fewer scavengers and Recruiters. Certainly, this is a “traditional dystopian narrative—the drive to move north for possible safety, away from the tyranny and wreckage of urban centers,” but Dimaline narrates a distinctly Indigenous experience that serves “to echo how the Métis have previously made and lived along this path” (Lypka 31). Along these lines, I read the retreat from the city as a caution against a dog-eat-dog mentality that accompanies capitalism. Dimaline is implicitly advocating for responses rooted in solidarity and collectivity, rather than Western individualism. Much like Kaba’s “Justice,” in the face of harm—in this case, at the institutional or environmental level—people who live in close proximity should be able to count on one another for support. Unfortunately, this reciprocity, mutualism, and relationality has actively been discouraged by centuries of settler colonial policy and practice. A relevant example of this is the Canadian child welfare system’s removal of Indigenous children for the purposes of indoctrinating and assimilating them in white settler foster homes and residential schools. Hence, part of the Indigenous flight from urban areas in *The Marrow Thieves* reflects a rejection of The Sixties Scoop. Characters’ movement is not equivalent to other urban-to-rural or urban-to-suburban migration, such as white flight or the queer hipster dream of “getting back to the land.”⁷⁰ Indigenous peoples are resisting being “scooped” yet again and, in fact, undoing the removal from reserves generations ago.

⁷⁰ For more on how the construction of Indigenous peoples as “disappeared” and “past” thereby “grants queer exiles solace and a means for them to come ‘home’” to rural land, see Morgensen 6.

Indigenous characters also resist capture and reconnect with kin by avoiding and escaping Recruiters and the settler state's neo-boarding schools. French's father Jean tells his wife and two sons about a man named Miigwans, who "escaped from one of the satellite schools" and was able to reach a council of Native leaders and tell them what he'd seen (Dimaline 5). Once French is orphaned, he meets and befriends Miigwans on the road, along with another Elder, Minerva, as well as four boys (Chi-Boy, Slopper, Tree, and Zheegwon) and three girls (Wab, RiRi, and Rose). The group slowly makes its way further and further north because "schools were an ever-spreading network from the south stretching northward" (Dimaline 147). All of these individuals and groups are perpetually on the move through rural areas, so as to be evasive and keep far away from Recruiters. In evading the Canadian government's grasp, they resist its violence. At first, neither French's blood relations nor chosen relations stay to fight back directly or to wait things out. Their responses appear to be *reactions* to settler colonialism, and are therefore responses not entirely of their own choosing. And yet they do still make a choice—between limited options—and are thus willful and agentic. I will discuss more of these valid kinds of indirect modes of being in the third chapter on generative refusal and fugitivity. For now, I turn to the other more direct modes of redress that the Indigenous peoples in *The Marrow Thieves* enact, which parallels Kaba's "Justice," in the ways that characters in both run towards those causing harm.

No matter the evasive maneuvers that French's new chosen family takes while on the road, Recruiters nevertheless abduct Minerva, the eldest of the travelers. One night while taking refuge in an abandoned barn, Miigwans and the young ones sleep in a

hayloft, but Minerva refuses to join them. She smokes and smudges before bed, a ritual that seems especially prophetic and proactive considering what occurs next. Everyone awakens to the sound of whistles: “Sharp metal; angular auditory jabs; cold, dry, biting alarm” (Dimaline 150). Recruiters pour into the main floor of the barn, seizing the only apparent person in sight. As French and the others hide quietly in the loft, Minerva looks up at French, “held her finger to her thin lips, just for a split second, before they curled back in a mischievous smile” (Dimaline 150). Miming a “shhh!” motion, Minerva is wordlessly communicating to French that she knows what she’s doing and that he needn’t interfere. Once the Recruiters drag her out and confirm that the barn is clear, Miigwans alerts the others that the ladder to the hay loft is gone. The realization dawns on them

that Minerva had moved the ladder sometime in the night, before the Recruiters woke us. Understanding that she’d sacrificed herself and allowed us to remain hidden. How long had she known that they were coming? (Dimaline 151)

Minerva must have been aware that the threat of Recruiters was near—all Indigenous peoples in *The Marrow Thieves* share the understanding of this threat. But some other premeditation on Minerva’s part is apparent, considering that she insists on staying alone on the floor of the barn, even “taking extra-long hauls [of smoke] so she could smudge herself” thoroughly before “she’d sacrificed herself” (Dimaline 149). She chooses not to evade the threat of Recruiters any longer and, instead, faces it directly. She chooses to sacrifice herself, knowing that this sacrifice will not only save the lives of her small group but also potentially “create meaningful change in the future by restoring the land to Indigenous communities and repairing what capitalism has destroyed” (Lypka 35).

Minerva proves to be a key part of the Indigenous resurgence and reconnection within *The Marrow Thieves* through her use of traditional knowledge and song, which destroys settler technology in the recruitment center she's held in. Once Minerva is captured, she is taken to "the school closest to the Espanola settlement" to be "processed" and "drain[ed]" (Dimaline 171). But along the way, Minerva "began singing" and disturbs the Recruiters, Headmistress, and Cardinals' torturous tasks (Dimaline 171-2). Dimaline describes Minerva's interruption at length:

Minerva hummed and drummed out an old song on her flannel thighs throughout it all. But when the wires were fastened to her own neural connectors, and the probes reached into her heartbeat and instinct, that's when she opened her mouth. That's when she called on her blood memory, her teachings, her ancestors. That's when she brought the whole thing down. She sang. She sang with volume and pitch and a heartbreaking wail that echoed through her relative's bones, rattling them in the ground under the school itself. Wave after wave, changing her heartbeat to drum, morphing her singular voice to many, pulling every dream from her own marrow and into her song. And there were words: words in the language that the conductor couldn't process, words the Cardinals couldn't hear, words the wires couldn't transfer. As it turns out, every dream Minerva had ever dreamed was in the language. It was her gift, her secret, her plan. (172)

The equipment that Minerva is strapped into "sparked," "malfunctioned," and "failed" (Dimaline 173). Eventually the whole property catches fire and burns down, taking the lives of the settlers within it, itself a form of abolitionist destruction. Annihilating the

prison by fire is “an act of poetic justice that counters the cruel ways in which children were forbidden from speaking their language at residential schools” (Zanella 190–1). Minerva’s song draws on traditional Cree knowledge that short-circuits the machinery and sends the school up in smoke, and Dimaline is clear that Minerva’s knowledge is not held just in “neural” pathways, but also in “heartbeat and instinct” (172). The author thus challenges the Cartesian mind-body dualism that instills the belief in a separation between “rational,” intellectual thoughts and lived, bodily experience. Ultimately, this makes clear “the impossibility of reducing the Indigenous person to a series of biological properties and functions” (Pravinchandra 140).

Minerva channels multiple tangible and intangible forces, her “connection through land, through language, through ceremony, and through kinship across time,” in order to resist this site of incarceration (De Vos 33). Dimaline describes the quantitative, biological evidence of sound and movement: the powerful “volume and pitch” of song and words, the “rattling” of “her relative’s bones,” and “changing her heartbeat” to overload the machines. Clearly, there is a tangible physical power that Minerva wields. Yet there is also an intangible—but nevertheless impactful—force invoked from the multiple voices that speak as one, a lifetime of an Elder’s dreams, and ancestral language as a gift itself. After hearing from Father Carole, a Catholic priest who is the Espanola Indigenous community’s “guy on the inside,” about what has transpired, the other characters become aware of the power that Minerva has tapped into, going so far as to deem it “the key” to “shut them down” (Dimaline 171, 177, 183). When pressed about Minerva “finding” such a tool, Miigwans retorts, “She didn’t find anything. *She always*

had it. Maybe we just need to be better listeners” (Dimaline 178, emphasis added).

Minerva “always had” singing and language, the ability to know and express understandings of the world and relationships differently.

The Marrow Thieves speaks back to simplified Western scientific conceptions of genetic kinship while affirming (re)connections and relationships as modes of resisting settler colonialism. Dimaline explicitly names Minerva’s knowledge as “blood memory,” a term originally brought to prominence by Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday (Allen 93). Also sometimes referred to as “memory in the blood,” at times this has been a contentious concept. In Momaday’s writing, there is a “blurring” of experiences in which the writer is “coincident with indigenous ancestors and with indigenous history” (Allen 101, 106). Even in its creative and playful form, blood memory is controversial for its potential similarities to the use of blood quantum for official federal tribal enlistment and recognition (Allen 96-7; Mithlo 106). As Kim TallBear (Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate) has also explained in *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*, research into Indigenous “bloodlines” is presented as saving those who “were seen as doomed to vanish before the steam engine of westward expansion” and, therefore, such practices surrounding DNA and blood are believed to be benevolent, “despite complaints by Native Americans then and now about research purposes and methods” (2). Nevertheless, Nancy Marie Mithlo (Chiricahua Apache) claims that the Indigenous use of blood-related terms is not necessarily regressive or essentialist. “Blood relationships,” Mithlo counters,

reference not only the common understanding of what is considered biological heritage or race but also, in an expanded sense, the internalized memories of communal history, knowledge, and wisdom. Blood memories are powerful political tropes mobilized to call attention to the legacies of colonialism in contexts as diverse as battlefields, boarding schools, and sacred sites. This common tribal value of multigenerational remembrance runs directly counter to prevailing Western traits of individual achievement, lack of transgenerational memory, and transcendence of one's genealogical fate and place of origin. (106)

Similar to Mithlo's warning against the "prevailing Western traits" of individualized experiences of knowledge and time, a compelling argument for a more generous, abstract reading of memory in the blood comes from Narungga scholar Natalie Harkin's poetic (re)telling of history. In searching beyond official records, Harkin calls upon a nonlinear narrative relationship between past-present-future that rethinks Momaday, whose "memory in the blood... is not about genetic or biological determinism, notions of fixed identity or timeless essences, but can be understood as an evocative synonym for culture, reconstructed and reimagined on the record" (Harkin 7). I'm certainly not invested in espousing genetic essentializing or authenticating tropes that reproduce settler ideas of blood quantum and DNA research. I observe Dimaline offering a counter narrative about ancestral connections as an Indigenous technology of resistance, "show[ing] that genetics is ill-equipped to understand Indigenous ways of articulating kinship and belonging" (Pravinchandra 135). Indeed, the remaining Indigenous characters have valuable means

with which to stop further encroachment on their bodymindspirits, lands, and ways of being.

Before being able to “be better listeners,” Francis, his chosen family, and newly-joined Indigenous community must find their Elder in order to *listen to* her and truly understand the “key” to unlocking their future. Minerva has been spared from the fire at the recruitment center and is to be transported by plane to Ottawa, but will first “pass right by here [the camp] on the Trans-Canada to get from Espanola to the airstrip,” according to Father Carole (Dimaline 200–1). After the Espanola community’s Council discusses the “best way to do this,” a plan is hatched to send nineteen of them “loaded up with every available weapon, mostly bows and arrows pulled taut with young wood and reinforced with repurposed wire. There were a few guns, ...some crossbows, and an arsenal of knives” (Dimaline 202). The use of weapons belies their decidedly non-lethal approach:

The plan was to wait for the convoy and shoot out the tires. Then we’d disable the drivers or allow them to run into the woods, at which point we’d tie them up so they couldn’t join the ranks that would be sure to follow. ...Then we’d spring Minerva and join the main camp, who would already be on the move to another safe haven, a straight shot north from here. (Dimaline 204)

This choice of direct confrontation with Recruiters is an attack of opportunity—and also of necessity. It’s convenient insofar as the settler state actors are “bringing her right to us” (Dimaline 201). The dire need to take advantage of this chance to get Minerva back isn’t lost on them and remains the central goal. By intending only to debilitate (not

destroy) the vehicles and drivers, these characters engage directly—neither evasively nor non-violently—with murderous white settlers and physical representations of state power.

There are symbolic and material differences between the arms and armor that Indigenous peoples and settlers harness in *The Marrow Thieves*. Once the Recruiters approach in “a dusty red car” and a “white van,” the members of the rescue party shoot wave after wave of arrows from their bows:

This was our chance. The archers drew and released, and the road was littered with arrows that flew in a trained arc. Some hit the road like hard rain, one punctured the roof of the red car, and another hit the front tire. (Dimaline 206).

Dimaline’s choice of arrows is instructive. Arrows are an obvious choice of long range weaponry in a (post)apocalypse when machine-made guns and bullets might be in short supply. Additionally, the image of bows and arrows calls to mind their apparent visual and cultural connection to Native America.⁷¹ Here, the author replaces and subverts settler imaginings of scenes of “savages” lying in wait and bombarding a wagon train of supposedly innocent white “pioneers.” At the same time, a band of Natives is represented by “trained” arrows that “littered” the pavement. They are trained, calling upon ancestral knowledge and acting with intention. They are multiple, too many to count, taking up space, resisting replacement by encroaching settlers.

⁷¹ See Raibmon for a discussion of settlers’ desire for visual depictions of the “authentic Indians” of the Northwest Coast in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In particular, the imagery of an arrow piercing “the front tire” of the first vehicle symbolizes Indigenous history colliding with Western modernity. It would be dangerous to interpret such a depiction as reproducing harmful stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as always prehistorical or anti-modern, certainly a notion present in settler narratives (Deloria 143; O’Brien xxi; Rifkin vii). Dimaline isn’t so much constructing Indigeneity as part of a bygone era only replicable through “authentic” technology, but rather as an agentic presence in the face of contemporary settler weapons of elimination (Raibmon 3). The acceleration of resource extraction, the reinstatement of genocidal residential schools, and other such harms are represented by “the front tire” while Indigenous resistance to them is represented by the arrow that “hit.” A stone arrowhead perforating a rubber tire demonstrates the power of Indigenous knowledges and practices that never died, that live on, and that have the power to challenge settler hegemony. Rubber itself is a substance with violent colonial implications, since the history of this “industry necessarily stretches across multiple geographies and temporalities. It links the tropical forests of the Amazon and Southeast Asia, highlighting the competing imperial holdings of England, the Netherlands, and the United States” (Bahng 26). To put it plainly, the wheel of the dusty red car is not just a simple machine. In *The Marrow Thieves*, it is recast as an icon of imperialist tradition; its very existence requires centuries of labor exploitation, land theft, and ecological degradation. This interpretation resonates with numerous other scholars who have written about the future that the novel presents, a future that is informed by past and present impacts of colonization, capitalism, and climate change (Brydon 101; Ingwersen 6; Turner 113–4). These manifestations of real

world violence in Dimaline's text are not limited to an *impending* apocalypse; instead, they are the outcome of what has already been *happening* for centuries on Turtle Island (Estes 10; LeMenager 105; Whyte 226).

Furthermore, the settler car caravan and “hard rain” of arrows juxtapose two competing relationalities, one of connection and one of disconnection. Just as in the real world, the continuation of the Canadian settler state in *The Marrow Thieves* demands extractive technologies and economies. For example, Minerva is moved by plane and van, both modes of transportation presumably dependent on fossil fuels or, at least, acting as stand-ins for the petroleum and automobile industries. Her kidnapping is made possible partially through the aid of these technologies and economies of extraction, precisely the ones that present-day Indigenous decolonial and environmental justice movements organize against.⁷² Indigenous resistance in the form of an arrow “hit[ting] the front tire” of the red car elicits not just decolonial resistance to fossil fuel-induced climate change and disaster capitalism. Again, it also represents a perseverance in the face of the imperialist history of rubber harvesting that spanned across the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

Another component to this extractive language and symbolism is how Dimaline describes Indigenous dreams as “leach[ed]” from where they reside “buried in our bones” (90). This conjures up images of draining liquid from the earth, the skeletal remains of gravesites, and even the namesake of fossil fuels themselves. Leaching dreams from bone

⁷² Correlations between Dimaline's imagery and real world calls to “kill the snake” of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL)—along with other similarly dangerous conduits carrying crude oil—should be apparent here (Streeby 36–7).

“invokes fossils as a metonymy” for “Indigenous erasure” (Ingwersen 7). In this way, Indigenous peoples are disconnected from the present, no different than the dead plants and animals that lived millions of years ago and eventually decomposed into petroleum, natural gas, and coal. Through these materials, we see how settler colonial ways of being in the world are disconnected from—and perpetually work to disconnect—the reciprocity that is inherent to kinship between both human and more-than-human worlds. Therefore, this novel “reflect[s] the longer history of settler colonialism that has severed and continues to sever relations between Indigenous communities” (Lypka 45). Recruiters utilize vehicles built through extractive practices in order to extract Indigenous peoples from their communities in order to further extract marrow from their bones. At no point do settler marrow thieves exercise connection; instead “every member of the group’s connections to family members has been broken by [the] government’s Recruiters, with devastating results for all of them” (Xausa 96).

Conversely, connection remains a central component to the direct confrontation led by the Indigenous characters in the book (Canella 118; De Vos 21; Horner et al. 8). And these connections lie outside of the settler colonial cisheteropatriarchal familial structure and consanguinity (Cox 75; Pravinchandra 138; Turner 106; Zanella 185). But the overarching narrative of connection doesn’t start with the denouement. In the beginning of the novel, Francis nearly dies of dehydration, starvation, and exposure (Dimaline 15). As an orphan struggling to survive on his own, he clearly needs to be in community with others. Francis does not possess the experiential knowledge necessary to find water and stay alive. Miigwans and the others in the travel party rescue Francis from

certain death, proving that individualism is not a viable option for one's well-being.

Throughout their time together, the youth of the group learn from the Elders, Miigwans and Minerva, by practicing language skills, herbalism, trapping and shooting, as well as food preparation (Turner 109). Hence, (re)connecting with their ancestral roots is also a life-affirming practice that will sustain them in their present—and into their future.

Therefore, “it is not a backward-looking search,” because education around traditional Indigenous ways of knowing is the key to Indigenous survivance (Brydon 110; De Vos 15-6; Horner et al. 3; Zanella 189). Minerva's voice, song, and language destroys an entire recruitment center, and the utilization of bow hunting skills aids in the attempt to rescue Minerva. By restoring Indigenous knowledges, they are able to restore their relationships with each other; by restoring their relationships with each other, they are able to restore Indigenous knowledges.

The apex of *The Marrow Thieves* thus rests on a direct form of decolonial resistance and revolutionary violence, a facet that has largely been underexplored in scholarly literature about the text (Cox 74). One of the most obvious similarities between *The Marrow Thieves* and decolonial violence might at first appear to be Frantz Fanon's ideations, insofar as Fanon reveals “decolonization is always a violent phenomenon” that is actually constructive, affirming, and transformative (*Wretched* 35). This is analogous to what Jean Améry, summarizing Fanon, defines as revolutionary violence (16). Being able to make a demand for change and will it into being (re)establishes the power and self-determination of colonized peoples. Or, as Fanon emphasizes, the colonized cannot be “set free by the master” and granted liberation “from the outside” (*Black Skin* 194).

Decolonization—and I would add, reconnection to relations is a component of this—must be taken, not given. But, so long as the Canadian settler state (and its proxies) monopolizes permissible violence, it will continue to concoct ways of scapegoating the direct action of decolonial protest movements (e.g. #NoDAPL, Defend the Depot, Stop Cop City, etc.) in order to induce charges of terrorism, animate state-of-emergency conditions, and justify statist repression (Barker x).

Similarly, Indigenous feminism is engaged in—and is itself a form of—decolonial resistance, with its sharp critique rooted in rage as well as love (Deer et al. 1064). Michi Saagig Nishnabeg writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson insists that resistance in the form of direct action—regardless of whether or not it is violent—is affirming, strengthening, and transformative.⁷³ The colonized resist in spite of the fact that their subjecthood, agency, and mere existence has continually been denied. Taking inspiration from the context of the MMIWG2S movement, even as “Indigenous women’s bodies are described as targets of gendered colonial violence, it is critical not to lose sight that *we are also legal and political actors*” (Flowers 41, emphasis added). Survivors, yes. And also agents of change, who can ensure that injustice doesn’t persist. Furthermore, “[t]he anger that we experience as a response to violence is our tool to unleash against the very techniques that brought it into being” (Flowers 47). Restated, the violence of revolutionary and decolonial direct actions must be distinguished as a valid resistance to the violences being enacted and resisted. Therefore the former typology, decolonial

⁷³ This is especially true if direct action centers the bodies, minds, and experiences of Indigenous women and 2SQs (Simpson 236).

violence, is not equivalent to any originary violence, such as a colonizing force. Decolonial violence, as a reaction to oppression, is not the same as the inherent eliminatory logics⁷⁴ of settler colonialism. Taken together, these kinds of real world and literary resistances are a way to run towards and directly redress structural harms.

It should be noted that the resistance, direct action, and decolonial violence of Dimaline's novel stand in contrast to recognition and reconciliation, both of which are intertwined forms of redress offered by the Canadian settler state. Whereas in Kaba's short story, we see that resolution with a murder/er is possible through interpersonal and community accountability processes, readers receive no such guarantee that those who cause harm in *The Marrow Thieves* will be accountable for their actions. So-called reconciliation through processes like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada views harm as *past* as well as *passed*, redress as linear and final. This mindset demarcates how Canada's form of settler colonialism has shifted to a "more conciliatory set of discourses and institutional practices that emphasize [Indigenous peoples'] recognition and accommodation" (Coulthard 6). In practice, this takes the form of rhetorical and legal maneuvers that, on a surface level, take up Indigenous concerns, yet merely pay lip service to demands for sovereignty. This new iteration of settler colonialism is not built on mutual respect and reciprocity, but instead is just another mutation of denying Indigenous claims to self-determination and folding them into settler state apparatuses. The future of *The Marrow Thieves* is a time in which this form of settler state recognition has reached its logical conclusion: "There appear to be no strong

⁷⁴ See Wolfe.

Indigenous nations anymore, tribal leadership has very limited power, and Native people have been forcibly assimilated into Canadian society in a way that detached many from their languages and cultures” (De Vos 16). Therefore, “the novel challenges a certain notion of reconciliation,” a reconciliation that requires settler state recognition and apology but brings about no real change (Zanella 177).

All the while, Dimaline’s Indigenous characters do not use destruction, punishment, retribution, nor killing as their primary goal. Instead, decolonial resistance to violence requires a resurgence of cultural tradition—in the form of vocal reverberations breaking machines and arrows piercing car tires. It is only *incidentally* that their direct action takes the lives of a few Recruiters, white settlers who themselves are genocidal. As several authors have noted, Recruiters are “monstrous,” anonymized agents and “the state of the settler society is mostly revealed indirectly through exposition” (Cox 73; Huebener 81). Thus, they are ever-present, yet decentered in the narrative of Indigenous reconnection. Largely this reconnection is framed as a reclaiming of lost, stolen, or dwindling traditional knowledge. Therefore, it is not entirely contingent on the settler colonial actors and structures who have caused harm, but rather how to ameliorate such harm from within the community most affected (De Vos 32; Lypka 40). Francis and the other eighteen members of the rescue party are primarily seeking to free Minerva and eventually learn from her. Again, white settlers and physical representations of state power are affected, yet this is not as a form of retribution. The plan clearly states that the Recruiters could “run into the woods” and that “we’d tie them up” if need be (Dimaline 204). Dimaline indicates the possibility that those who cause harm may be allowed to

live, and even escape consequences, as long as they don't reconvene with their violent peers. A physical altercation might be necessary, so that "they couldn't join the ranks that would be sure to follow," in which case the Recruiters are only prevented from future harmful action, not maimed, tortured, or killed (Dimaline 204). Abolitionist feminists can take note here: resistance and redress can be direct without being punitive. Those who have been harmed by institutional forces (such as survivors of residential schools) can seek redress through direct action in order to decarcerate, end the harm, as well as assert their power, on their own terms, as Indigenous peoples and as political actors with continued histories and futures. Even when seemingly violent (e.g. setting fires, forcibly stopping moving vehicles, restraining people intending harm), decolonial writers and Indigenous feminists remind us that this violence is not equivalent to that which is being prevented.

Conclusion

Both "Justice" and *The Marrow Thieves* depict and assert direct forms of redress, resolution, and reconnection that do not rely on the carceral settler state. Mariame Kaba's short story is instructive in that it shows tangible models for peacekeeping. The circle processes and community accountability of Small Place mirror real world practices that already exist, which Kaba, as a community organizer, is certainly aware of. Through the sixteen-year-old protagonist Adila's voice, the act of intervening directly with someone who has committed murder appears quotidian, although not without pain, grief, and even possible further death. By presenting the rituals and routines of Small Place through the genre of speculative fiction, the author also invites a sense of newness and curiosity. Not

all of the short story's readers will be familiar with present-day abolitionist approaches to addressing interpersonal violence and harm,⁷⁵ while abolitionists themselves might be heartened to see the alternatives that they live and breathe ensconced in writing. The questions for abolitionist feminists that then arise are: How might we continue to experiment with such direct forms of resolution? What alterations might we need to make to bring *Small Place* to any place? At the same time, how can we resist a one-size-fits all, top-down solution when taking inspiration from "Justice"? And what do we say to the EVs of *this* world, who naysay and actively antagonize our real and imagined alternatives? I maintain that the location of "Justice" may be distant from Earth and insignificant in size (hence labeled "Small Place"), yet it proves significant for and closely tied to Black feminist abolitionist models of redress.

Similarly, *Dimaline* presents an alternative model of direct redress, but in this case redress for the large-scale structural violences of climate change, disaster capitalism, and cultural genocide. In the face of such behemoths stand a Cree Elder and a Métis teenager. First we encounter Minerva's "key" to destroying colonial structures of oppression, which operates through plugging into and interfacing with settler technology. Later, Francis accompanies a rescue party to confront Recruiters and wield revolutionary violence and direct action, echoing both decolonial and Indigenous feminist academic

⁷⁵ For example, Auteri admits that her first foray into alternatives to police, prisons, and punishment was "years ago when I read 'Justice' by Mariame Kaba, a short story in *The Feminist Utopia Project*. I didn't know the term 'restorative justice' at the time, but I could already feel how the process described within the story might provide a better way." Furthermore, Auteri's "interest in both restorative and transformative justice has since grown thanks to my readings on abolition (most specifically Mariame Kaba's *We Do This 'Til We Free Us*) and the Defund the Police movement."

and activist work. In *The Marrow Thieves*, the Indigenous resistance to institutional violence is not vengeful. Simultaneously, it requires ancestral knowledge, whether through tapping into “blood memory” or through (re)learning lost, stolen, or dwindling skills and lifeways. Ultimately, Indigenous resurgence is meant to reduce if not wholly redress settler colonial extraction, control, and harm—not through retribution but through reconnection. Directly resisting plantationocene⁷⁶ extraction (e.g. rubber plantations, oil pipelines) is a form of confronting and stopping violence in order to assert different relations. As one literary scholar contends, “*The Marrow Thieves* represents colonization as a conflict between two different cultural models of sleep and dreams” (Huebener 68). I extend this analysis to affirm that Dimaline’s novel represents a conflict between two different cultural models of *law*, one based on connection and one based on disconnection. How can those of us who have been harmed by institutional forces (e.g. survivors and descendants of boarding schools) seek redress directly without falling into traps of settler state recognition and reconciliation? Instead, how can abolitionist feminists ensure that “[o]ur relationships become our law” (Hunt)? And how can we discern if acts of decolonial resistance are preventative not punitive? Last but not least, how can we reject being overdetermined by the violences of the carceral settler state, and assert survivance in our search for (re)connection and resurgence?

I opened this chapter with several quotes that emphasize the significance of stories and imagination for reconceptualizing law and redress. Kaba and Dimaline also affirm that storytelling is crucial within these texts, and not simply *because* they are

⁷⁶ See Davis, Moulton, Van Sant, and Williams.

literature. Stories emerge in their books as crucial for comporting oneself in a good way with others. In “Justice,” Small Place’s circle-keeping involves all community members directly communicating and sharing experiences. Stories allow them to connect to one another, empathize with each other’s perspectives, and resolve issues together. *The Marrow Thieves* contains “Story” orated by Miigwans “every week” as well as each characters’ “coming-to” story of their life, shared only when they are ready (Dimaline 25, 80). Each time one of these stories is told, the Indigenous community of youth and Elders is able to learn more about each other, themselves, and their histories, without settler colonial epistemes and educational practices (Heise-von der Lippe 93). Within these narratives and in speculative fiction more broadly, stories are instructive.

Thus, the alternative forms of redress I’ve gleaned can be read as pedagogical but not prescriptive. Adila explicitly specifies that SP’s “values are revisited, reviewed, and sometimes revised annually” (Kaba 82). Paralleling this, against the backdrop of settler state approaches to linear processes of redress as well as singular models of thinking and being in the world, Minerva embraces a multitude of voices to strengthen her own (Dimaline 172). How can abolitionist feminists encourage similar practices without enshrining one-size-fits-all models of resolution and reconnection? How can we ensure that resistance and redress is direct without being punitive? How can we empower ourselves and each other to “run towards” conflict and even harm in order to resolve it? And what happens when these tactics don’t work? What else is there if the options presented here—such as circle-keeping (à la Kaba) and revolutionary violence (à la Dimaline)—fail to bring about accountability?

After putting “Justice” and *The Marrow Thieves* in conversation with one another, I hope that it is even clearer now how speculative fiction from Black and Indigenous authors can help abolitionist feminists formulate alternative models. Specifically, both Cherie Dimaline and Mariame Kaba explore redress as a restoration of connection, a running towards rather than away from direct confrontation. The kind of resistance to violence and harm that Kaba and Dimaline provide may operate on slightly different scales—the interpersonal and the institutional. Yet both authors use speculative fiction to consider the violence inherent to the settler colonial carceral state as it stands now and in the not-too-distant-future. What is more, these literary works look beyond this same system—that punishes in order to supposedly protect—to illuminate other ways of being. Kaba’s resolution takes place through a community-based practice that is small-scale, quotidian, decentralized, and emerges organically yet is frequently amended, functioning beyond U.S. policing, prisons, and punishment. Indigenous resurgence and reconnection, as proffered by Dimaline, exists in spite of neo-boarding schools but is not overdetermined by rhetorics of reconciliation that the Canadian government currently espouses. These alternatives are also built on a foundation of wildly different understandings of law and justice than carceral logics. Just as Sarah Hunt describes in “In Her Name,” the short story “Justice” illustrates “a network of people who are responsible to one another” when reconciling the murder of a young woman (Hunt). In the case of resisting the kidnapping and killing of Indigenous peoples in *The Marrow Thieves*, social relations bound by coming together in connection (not cutting off through retribution) take precedent. What I’ve learned from these stories is that we don’t need policing,

prisons, and punishment when we have connections to each other. Indeed, Kaba and Dimaline enact a pedagogical move by demonstrating that other worlds are possible, if not already here, should we choose to run towards them.

Chapter Three:

Turning Away, Turning Inward

Redressing Harms through Fugitivity & Refusal

In this moment, communities are creating, building from, and experimenting wildly with forms of collective care at an entirely new scale and scope. Forgotten places are not, after all, forgotten by all. And in those places forgotten—abandoned—by the state, people have their own visions for freedom, for their own multiple struggles to make life livable, to strive for a different and more collective way of organizing human life, and of distributing care.

—Robyn Maynard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Rehearsals for Living*

Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored several works of speculative fiction from Black and Indigenous authors that help to envision alternative possibilities of redress. These texts imagine other times and places in which interpersonal and institutional violence are not addressed through state processes akin to the present carceral punishment system in the US. In Mariame Kaba's "Justice," the murder of a dark-skinned teenage girl on a distant planet is directly met with peacekeeping and justice rituals that have community and compassion in mind. Indigenous characters in Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* utilize direct action and revolutionary violence in their attempts to halt the harm of late 21st century settler colonial neo-boarding schools. Bringing attention to—and even impeding—the impacts of these small and large scale violences is effective in both cases. Characters are able to (re)establish connections through direct means, by running towards and meeting conflict head-on. But what do abolitionist feminists do if directly addressing violence and harm *doesn't* work? What if confrontation and resistance don't bring about accountability?

Speculative fiction continues to be a productive site from which to answer such questions, as it explores unfamiliar contexts through which we can see our own familiar issues mirrored. Particularly, Rivers Solomon's novel *An Unkindness of Ghosts* and Adam Garnet Jones's (Cree/Métis) short story "History of the New World" respectively afford Black and Indigenous perspectives on interpersonal and institutional violences. Just like "Justice," *The Marrow Thieves*, and Butler's *Dawn*, the literary works in this chapter are set in a vaguely defined future. And also, the characters depicted by Solomon and Jones combat interpersonal and institutional violence without the use of the carceral state and retributive justice. Yet, unlike in the previous examples, the following analysis will focus on how characters achieve redress through *indirect* means. First, I attend to *An Unkindness of Ghosts* and what Black scholarship has described as fugitivity. Then, I turn to Indigenous feminist work on the idea of generative refusal as it pertains to "History of the New World." Although arising from different "conditions of emergence," I assert that both of these tactics are useful to consider as ways to address violence without directly interfacing with those causing harm (Rifkin 4). In both instances, as Robyn Maynard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) expand on in the epigraph, "[f]reedom is continually being forged in and across forgotten places" (Maynard and Simpson 73).

Solomon's text resonates with alternative ways of indirectly fighting sexual assault and other violences under enslavement, consonant with the concept of fugitivity. As Fred Moten and Stefano Harney tell us, fugitivity denotes being in flight or in motion, it exceeds bounds and is a "transcendence" (30). Tina Campt expands on fugitivity

thusly: “it’s defined not by opposition or necessarily resistance, but instead a refusal of the very premises that have historically negated the lived experience of Blackness as either pathological or exceptional to the logic of white supremacy” (“Black Feminist Futures”). Fugitivity marks the failure of the white supremacist settler state’s attempts to control and contain Black subjects. As Camp states, it rejects “the very premises” on which anti-Black regulation is based. But this rejection may not be overt or even evident because, as Camp says, fugitivity is “the *quotidian* practice of refusal” (“Black Feminist Futures,” emphasis added). When looking at historical and present day examples of fugitivity, it may be evident to point to the flights of maroons or the Underground Railroad. Rather than rely on overt “opposition or...resistance,” an escape from the conditions of chattellization can be a covert act meant to cease or at least abate the violence of enslavement.⁷⁷ As I wish to show in the case of *An Unkindness of Ghosts*, fugitivity can be both physical and psychic. That is to say, the novel’s characters flee by secretly stealing away their bodies *and* minds.

This practice of fugitivity is a form of refusal, an alternative conception of redressing the effects of violence, through *indirect* rather than *direct* means. In one sense, refusal has been defined by Indigenous feminists as both a politics and theory that

⁷⁷ Saidiya Hartman contends that, especially in cases of sexual violence, resistance and nonconsent was constrained, if not an “impossibility,” for the enslaved Black (female) body, because “the prerogative of refusal” was “denied the captive” (86). However, Sharon Morgan Beckford clarifies that there nevertheless remain/ed some forms of refusal, such as suicidality, in which “there is a finality, no opportunity for negotiation, settlement, no prospect for compliance, forced or otherwise” (10). Rivers Solomon’s character, Giselle, embodies the tension between these scholars’ interpretations of refusal, yet is beyond the scope of this chapter.

encompasses a “structure of apprehension that maintains and produces sociality through time” (Simpson, “Consent’s Revenge” 329). In the book *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson advances an extension of this through the notion of “generative refusal.” The addendum of generative, fruitful, enriching action refers to how communities refuse to engage with white supremacist settler state apparatuses that cause violence, and instead move towards generative internal rebuilding and affirmation. Simpson describes this as a withdrawal from any tangible or intangible space that causes harm, and instead a “turn[ing] inward to rebuild” (*As We Have Always Done* 244). Generative refusal is a tactic that seeks to renew and repair without the engagement of those who are causing harm, and is therefore a helpful way to think about not merely existing in reaction or in response to state-based violence. Rather than countering the Canadian government through appeals and legislation, or allowing the new iteration of residential schools to over-determine the lives of the characters in *The Marrow Thieves*, instead readers see Indigenous communities refusing to engage, which constitutes a generative move of rebuilding and affirmation. This generative refusal is one way to think beyond state-based models of redress that involve policing, prisons, and punishment, and instead that affirms that, if possible, such a disengagement from settler colonialism is necessary. Like Dimaline’s book, Jones’s short story is also in conversation with Simpson’s idea of generative refusal, as an alternative way to fighting destruction and harm at a systemic—even global or galactic—level.

In order to demonstrate the value of these texts for abolitionist feminists, I analyze the following themes within each. Amidst the many harms that take place in *An Unkindness of Ghosts* and “History of the New World,” I pay particular attention to interpersonal and institutional violence. Namely, in Solomon’s book, enslavement and its attendant brutality are a prominent focus. Physically confined to the equivalent of slave quarters, the dark-skinned inhabitants of the spaceship *HSS Matilda* are relegated to decks that are ruthlessly patrolled by guards—clear stand-ins for slave drivers and slave catchers. Similarly, the sexual violence that occurs in *An Unkindness of Ghosts* is an obvious parallel to that which Black women, girls, femmes, and gender non-conforming folks have faced on this continent for centuries. Nearly all of the central characters in the book have experienced sexual harassment and assault; the violent structuring of the space and social systems forces characters to (appear to) acquiesce on the *Matilda*. Yet I’m also interested in how interpersonal relations and interactions are one of the many oppressive phenomena that they ultimately resist. Primarily, I investigate the suppression and reclamation of knowledge that prove to be catalysts for change in the novel. The ongoing discussion of relationships of care, herbalism and tradition, ancestral connections, and familial ghosts represents centuries of Black feminist knowledge and resistance in spite of the murderously anti-Black white supremacy on Turtle Island. Just as the real-world affirmation and application of Black epistemologies provides flight from oppressive conditions, characters in *An Unkindness of Ghosts* indirectly, covertly, and fugitively turn away.

Within the short story, “History of the New World,” the central foci of my analysis are the large-scale forces of settler colonization and disaster capitalism as well as the climate change both generate and, simultaneously, how Native peoples collectively choose to turn away from participating in the further destruction of Earth as well as the imposition on a new planet’s peoples.⁷⁸ The theme of colonization arises in multiple ways, both as a foil in the protagonist’s personal life as well as the thrust of Earth’s settlement on a new planet. Indeed, the very cause of the cosmic colonization that occurs in the text is due to the ongoing settler practices that wreak havoc on present day Earth. The effects of settler colonialism aren’t relegated to the macro level, though; “spatial injustice” impacts bodies at all levels (Goeman 101). Jones narrates families (both queer and biological) torn apart; refugees killed with impunity; Earth and its inhabitants abandoned; land grabbed on the *terra nullius* of a “New World”; and appeals unheeded by settler scientists and governments. At all these various scales, resistance arises throughout the story. The reader sees Cree and Anishinaabe peoples, specifically, reclaiming language, lifeways, and land. The move to anchor roots rather than abandon their human and more-than-human kin reflects real-world Indigenous resistance to extraction and disconnection. By paying close attention to these refusals and inward

⁷⁸ Although “literary imagination has given a sort of powerful propellant to American (and human) projects of Outer Space colonization,” Jones’s short story reflects how science fiction also “repeatedly warned humanity against the risks of duplicating the errors that have been committed on planet Earth” (Calanchi et al. 211). However, “History of the New World” cautions through a distinctly Indigenous lens, demonstrating that not all of “humanity” are responsible for these projects, neither as stimuli for the climate catastrophes to be fled nor as those who fantasize of final frontiers.

motions, I demonstrate that “History of the New World” as well as *An Unkindness of Ghosts* present indirect redress crucial for abolitionist feminists to consider.

Containment in *An Unkindness of Ghosts*

Aboard the spacecraft *HSS Matilda* a society exists structured similar to the transatlantic slave trade and the antebellum American South (Davis 53; Hamilton 140; Murphey 196–7; Ray 175; Rivett 312; Sargent 40). The *Matilda* is theocratically ruled and completely self-contained, separated for hundreds of years from a dead planet known only as the “Great Lifehouse” (Solomon 69). As readers, we come to understand it was “global ecological crises” on the Great Lifehouse that led inhabitants to flee, only to subject others and be subjected to a “scarcity of resources under authoritarian regimes” of racialized, gendered extraction (Winn 10). Light-skinned, upper deck elites, led by the “Sovereign,” force twenty thousand darker-skinned inhabitants of the ship’s lower decks to perform agricultural and domestic labor (Solomon 16).⁷⁹ A twenty-five-year-old, neuro-atypical⁸⁰ healer named Aster Grey lives in the lower decks and—along with the ship’s Surgeon General Theo and Aster’s bunkmate Giselle—uncovers the secret to several mysterious deaths aboard the ship. The elites have long upheld their position by divine right, which has left the truth of the *Matilda* hidden from the masses: the ship has intentionally been kept floating in space, continually enslaving people for generations, despite a habitable homeworld waiting for its passengers. In a self-sufficient space of

⁷⁹ See Kiara Icely Davis for how the organization on “[e]ach level corresponds to a racialized population of people” and, thus, relates to Sylvia “Wynter’s theory of the second iteration of Man” (53).

⁸⁰ “While the text does not state that Aster has autism, numerous instances throughout the novel highlight Aster’s autistic behaviors” (Nelson 12).

containment, what hope is there for liberation? When a small population of elites rely on lies to maintain their position, what could possibly change the order of things? With racialized, gendered violence lurking around every corner, what escape can lower deckers find? What does redress look like when these violences do occur and how might this be applicable to our own world?

In the face of containment, lower deckers eventually stage a rebellion spurred by Giselle's martyrdom towards the end of the novel. As seen in the previous chapter, overt forms of direct action, community accountability processes, and revolutionary violence are all valid ways to bring people together, even encourage them to make amends, after acts of harm and severance. What interests me in this chapter, however, are the covert forms of resistance that Aster, Theo, and others perform. Aster regularly shirks expectations of forced labor, steals away to various forbidden parts of the *Matilda*, and practices medicine secretly. Because the upper deckers have long suppressed the "generational memory" of lower deckers, Solomon's readers see them "manufacturing the myth of Middle Passage tabula rasa again and again" (Rivett 312). According to Aint "Ainy" Melusine, Aster's grandmother, "*memorating*" is the task of the "*womenfolk*" in their family (Solomon 69, emphasis in original). This requires capturing each generation's likeness through camera obscura pictures as well as documenting other memories. As Ainy asserts, "*You never know when a memory's gonna save your life*" (Solomon 69, emphasis in original). Hence, memorating is a way of "creating a path back" to one's ancestors as well as ensuring the lives of future generations (Rivett 312). Aster is, in fact, part of "a lineage of custodians who create, preserve, and transmit

counter-narratives through tangible media and intangible traditions,” namely a lineage that extends to Aster’s deceased biological mother, Luna (Winn 10). Such moments, even while constrained by white supremacy, echo historical practices as well as can inform present-day abolitionist feminist ones.

The abolitionist feminist potential of *An Unkindness of Ghosts* is particularly salient considering the connections to real world racialized, gendered, dis/abled stratification. Not only are the decks of the *Matilda* organized by skin color, but there also appear to be physiological consequences to this structure. Residents of lower decks P, Q, R, S, and T are known pejoratively as “Tarlanders” (Solomon 11). What is more, they have “*hereditary suprarenal dysregula*. Due to a broad range of hormonal disturbances, Tarlander bodies did not always present as clearly male and female,” although they are not labeled as intersex in the book (Solomon 20, emphasis in original). This pathologized “broad range” of human bodies is explained as the result of scientific experimentation on the black and brown bodies of those believed to be “from the Realm of Chaos—the world that existed before the Heavens overruled it, replacing nonsense with divine structure. Their demon forms could not conform to the Holy Order set forth by the Heavens” (Solomon 19). Deeming the more melanated lower deckers with *suprarenal dysregula* as having emerged from “Chaos,” “nonsense,” and embodying “demon forms” denotes religious justification for the conceptual conversion of persons into unholy aberrations. The particular ways this taxonomic gendered, racialized violence shows up on the *Matilda* is inflected with real world histories of “the ‘ungendering’ of blackness within a dominant symbolic order” (Snorton, “Gender” 90). The interstices of

Blackness and transness, in particular, “have been constituted as fungible, *thingified*, and interchangeable, particularly within the logics of transatlantic exchange” (Snorton, *Black* 6, emphasis added). We can see the similarities between the symbolic ungendering of characters in Solomon’s novel through the author’s use of physically and spiritually othered bodies that refuse to “conform to the Holy Order” of Christian white supremacy. Aster, Giselle, and others exist only as sources of fungible labor, not full subjects with rich interior lives and gender identities.

An Unkindness of Ghosts also relates the horrors of chattel slavery from the specific perspective of the othered, (hyper)sexualized Black body. However, Solomon refuses to detail racialized, gendered brutality firsthand, and thereby she refuses the totalization of misogynoir.⁸¹ “The poor” in the novel, such as Aster’s bunkmate Giselle, “suffer rape and other brutalizations by overseers and guards, but Solomon doesn’t describe rape for titillation” (Murphey 196). Rather than “a voyeuristic re-enactment” of Giselle’s sexual assault, Solomon illustrates “the physical aftermath of the trauma on the victim’s body” (Murphey 197). This firsthand, embodied knowledge of physical and psychic harm is crucial to understand the “intimate injustice”⁸² of enslavement on the *Matilda*. And yet the focus towards the impact on Giselle—rather than the visceral scene of abuse itself—allows readers to see Giselle more fully. She is “not a badass” as she

⁸¹ Moya Bailey explains the portmanteau she coined: “Misogynoir is not simply the racism that Black women encounter, nor is it the misogyny Black women negotiate. Misogynoir describes the uniquely co-constitutive racialized and sexist violence that befalls Black women as a result of their simultaneous and interlocking oppression at the intersection of racial and gender marginalization” (1).

⁸² See Threadcraft for more on how “the sphere of intimate relations is a significant realm in which black women experience injustice” (32).

often outwardly projects in the book (Murphey 197). Solomon attends to the survivor and the harm that she's experienced so that readers can see how Giselle has been deeply destabilized and yet is still not wholly defined by her trauma. Many abolitionist feminists have demanded a similar focus on survivors in their critiques of models of redress that instead center those who cause harm (Cole et al. 259). *An Unkindness of Ghosts* helpfully answers the call to locate methods of healing in the bodies, minds, and actions of those most impacted.

“Try to Remember Even That Which Has Been Forgotten”: Study & Fugitivity in Outer Space

The spacecraft imagined by Solomon captures the bodies and minds of its lower deckers. People with dark skin fill *Matilda*'s field decks as their stolen labor is exploited to grow crops for the rest of the ship. Capture and forced work are overseen by armed guards, who retaliate against any perceived disobedience or slight. Aster directly experiences and witnesses verbal denigration, whippings, beatings, sexual assault, and execution. The regularity of such violence is one way in which the upper deckers maintain their position and the obedience of others. Simultaneously, the lower deckers' thoughts and beliefs are shackled by religious piety, deceived by the lies of the Sovereign. Even a young child named Flick, with “dark brown skin” can easily, though mockingly, recite that the ship's leader “is the Heavens' chosen ruler” (Solomon 11, 13). Similarly, Aster's bunkmate Pippi comments, “The Gods navigate *Matilda*,” implying that no human (knowledge) is responsible for the science of space travel (Solomon 285).

Forced to trust in divine right—rather than critical thought—ensures that people believe their conditions are not only pre-ordained, but also unchangeable.

With bodies and minds inhibited thusly, *Matilda*'s lower deck inhabitants rarely discuss overt, violent rebellion.⁸³ Only a handful of times during childhood, Aster set off explosives or committed arson, small-scale acts of destruction. Widespread change is only considered—or even seems remotely possible—after Aster uncovers the secret that her mother “wanted to get the ship closer to [a black hole] so it would be pulled into its orbit and reverse direction” back towards the “Great Lifehouse” (Solomon 286). Aster enlists friends to help her “save us all,” after the assessment that “the autonavigation system is slowing the ship down as we approach the Great Lifehouse, preparing *Matilda* for orbit” (Solomon 284, 287). Together they concoct a plan for others to distract the guards long enough for Aster to make an escape towards the Great Lifehouse, where “more than one thousand years had passed” and “life had started anew there after whatever disaster had reduced it to ruins” (Solomon 289). Disrupting the *Matilda* requires a coordinated effort akin to rebellion, the likes of which are never discussed at any other point in the novel. Clearly, this is an act of resistance to long-standing injustices as well as an attack of opportunity. However, for the purposes of this chapter, it is the more covert and quotidian acts of fugitivity within *An Unkindness of Ghosts* that I'm interested in.

⁸³ This is also possibly due to the physical isolation and immobility imposed on Matildans, which operates to “stave off insurrection” (Hamilton 140). Furthermore, “*Matilda*'s enslaved population has literally nowhere else to go but the cold recesses of space, and a revolution against their oppressors would spell their own demise. They are trapped in a cycle of crisis and present need” (de Bruin-Molé 4).

Aster resists the power of the Sovereign in more ways than just outright non-compliance. She also covertly practices herbal and healing arts, echoing centuries of real world Black and Brown rituals and routines. Solomon's novel opens to one such scene in which the young child, Flick, is being treated for a "rotted foot," which Aster must eventually amputate (9). From the beginning we see Aster as a trusted community member amongst lower deckers, despite "her naturally abrupt manner" (Solomon 11). Like her mother, Lune, before her and her grandmother, Melusine, the protagonist cares for others by accessing and revitalizing ancestral knowledge. Aster admits to herself that ancestral knowledge is difficult to uncover: "This far from the past, no one could truly know their history" (Solomon 24). Yet Melusine imparts the following wisdom to Aster: "We remember. We must try to remember even that which has been forgotten" (Solomon 69).

While Lune was a scientist and Melusine is a chef, Aster's care work takes the form of secretly creating and running a "botanarium" in "[w]hat had once been a mess hall" on an "abandoned"—or what Maynard and Simpson might deem "forgotten"—part of the ship known as "X deck" (Solomon 25). Solomon describes Aster's mindful attention to the craft:

Aster took to keeping what free time she had in her botanarium, in the company of plants. There was comfort in their spindly branches. She'd made them. She knew which were dethorned and which were not, which could poison with a single prick or cure cancer with a taste. (251)

Aster is more at ease in the refuge of the botanarium. Here, she is safe from the abuses of the Lieutenant, overseers, and other upper deck elites. She also clearly takes “comfort” amidst “the company of plants,” despite “their spindly branches.” Their spines and thorns are worth the effort of stewarding because it is ultimately in service to aiding others in need. Aster is far from isolated, not just in the sense that she is spending time with more-than-humans; she is also choosing to allocate “what free time she had” in order to cultivate flora that can both “poison” and “cure cancer.” This speaks to her commitment to fellow lower deckers. Aster forgoes more leisurely pursuits when off-duty, even other social activities, but not to shun or shy away from her compatriots. Instead, her solitude is a laborious, caring act, the fruits of which are medicines otherwise not available to the poorest of the *Matilda*. Aster eschews rules that dictate where she can and cannot go, she reclaims space that has been abandoned, and she cultivates vital, life-giving (and life-taking) plants. Her resistance is therefore singular but not individualized, covert yet also communally-minded.

In the face of intimate violences that she and other Matildans survive (yet are often debilitated by), Aster takes it upon herself as a neurodivergent person to provide care for other disabled, sick, and mad people. Care work is therefore a fugitive and abolitionist practice, both within and beyond *An Unkindness of Ghosts*, in that it constructs alternatives beyond decidedly uncaring systems. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha notes that disabled people organize and enact care differently: through the emergent and organic—yet largely invisibilized—work of collectivity, advocacy, skill-building, and resource sharing (Piepzna-Samarasinha 32; Piepzna-Samarasinha and

Agbebyi). This runs directly counter to expectations within the ableist dominant U.S. society that bodymindspirits adhere to individualism and self-sufficiency. As neoliberal withholding of resources continues in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clearer and clearer that the settler state cannot and will not provide the kinds of care that disabled, poor, BIPOC, immigrant, queer and trans, and other marginalized communities need. To put it another way, with “the intensified revelation of capitalism’s inadequacies,” we are compelled towards “a mass re-imagination of systems of collective care” (Chua S-128). Such networks of care have already been reimagined, created, implemented, and experimented with beyond the prison and medical industrial complexes (Dinh 449; Medel 874). Abolitionist healing practitioners can learn from Aster, “from care structures that have historically operated at the margins,” and from the communities that, across time and place, “have found ways to heal and care for one another outside of institutional structures through mobilizing resistance, mutual aid, and collective care networks that came about in response to organized abandonment” (Khan et al. 241–2).

In addition to its entreaties for disability justice-inspired care work, *An Unkindness of Ghosts* also helps abolitionists rethink solidarity and study, across both space *and* time. Decades before Aster’s acts of rebellion, her mother, Lune, worked tirelessly to create an escape from the *Matilda*, but tragically died in the process. Lune was attempting to steer the ship towards the home world known as the Great Lifehouse, by slingshotting around a black hole. Little did she know, her research would expose her to toxic amounts of “siluminium” (Solomon 157). In fact, all of her understanding of the inner-workings of the *Matilda* was shrouded in mystery. Information had forever been

distorted and restricted for lower deckers. Light skinned upper deckers led their darker skinned shipmates to believe that there was no habitable planet to return to and that the order of things on the ship was for the greater good. Due to this suppression of knowledge, Lune herself was forced to hide what she discovered for fear of penalty. But nevertheless she continued her exploration and experimentation in secret. She successfully “used the gravity of the black hole to propel *Matilda* faster,” making the journey back to the Great Lifehouse “shorter than our initial three hundred-odd years” (Solomon 286). Unfortunately, Lune’s calculations were off, so rather than “a single year,” it took “[t]wenty-five years” to return to the planet’s orbit (Solomon 286–7). Lune had prepared to enter the atmosphere herself and set down in a small craft that she’d secretly built in the Shuttle Bay on the ship’s starboard side (Solomon 340–1). An escape such as this would be considered blasphemy and could carry serious consequences.

Hence, Lune invented a way to produce scientific research and compile copious notes without anyone being the wiser. Aster and Giselle are the ones who uncover the secret code that Lune’s notebooks are written in; what appears to be a private diary that recounts each day’s activities is actually a complex system of notation on Lune’s inquiries. Deciphering her mother’s daily record is a way to cross space-time, connect to the past, and therefore “get some direction about [Aster’s] own future and the future of everyone aboard the *Matilda*” (Hamilton 145). Fugitive planning took not only the form of Lune’s careful, methodical interrogation of matter and energy, but also “study” in the sense that Moten and Harney utilize the concept in *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. For the authors, study is a form of contrapuntal planning with

others, particularly in the corners, cracks, and back rooms of formal institutions. An overture is extended to study: “come let’s plan something together. And that’s what we’re going to do. We’re telling all of you but we’re not telling anyone else” (Moten and Harney 68). There is a secrecy and selectiveness to study (“we’re not telling anyone else”). But this is only insofar as study is an invitation (“let’s plan something together”) to create and rehearse with those who are (or might be) sympathetic to the practice of being “involved in a kind of common intellectual practice” (Moten and Harney 110). Although Lune carries on alone at first, it is Aster who eventually picks up where Lune left off. In other words, Lune and Aster study together across time and space in service to liberatory escape. Just as *The Undercommons*, tapping into this ongoing lineage of fugitive planning, “allows you to access a whole, varied, alternative history of thought” (Moten and Harney 110).

Once Aster unlocks the secret that has been hidden from all lower deckers, she continues in her mother’s work. This involves deciphering the encrypted journal that Lune left behind, reading for clues, and searching the *Matilda* for a way out. Solomon connects ancestral practices of enslaved Black people—particularly Black women, girls, and femmes—encoding their artistry and abilities (Ruppel et al. 322; Tobin and Dobard 1).⁸⁴ In this fictional space, there are echoes of the real world consequences imposed for the supposed transgression of reading and writing (Gundaker 1601). Despite that intellectual pursuits are prohibited on the *Matilda*, Lune and Aster nevertheless risk their

⁸⁴ Connections to Pexa’s notion of “cultural camouflage” also seem relevant here, yet are beyond the scope of this chapter (1).

lives by stoking the fires of their passions. Such kindling is fuel for the destruction of the plantation system in which they live. Lune and Aster are sparks for the flame of rebellion, a reordering of things. However, it is also their careful experimentation and planning that itself *is* and *provides* a means of escape. Both characters harness forbidden knowledge, therefore dream of a future denied. This is a form of fugitivity in the present, a resistance to the totalization of the plantation/ship's capture, an escape in and of itself, and a "freedom ingrained in their interior lives even as the external world indicated they were trapped" (Haley 199). They are asserting that they can think and know and create beyond the bounds of what they are told is possible. But taken more literally, they are calculating and executing a plan that offers a line of flight.

Eventually, after others stage a rebellion and distract *Matilda's* guards, Aster flees in the same small shuttle that her mother meant to use. The final moments of *An Unkindness of Ghosts* finds Aster having landed the shuttle on the planet no one was allowed to return to. She has collectively created a way out of oppressive conditions. Turning and moving away from the plantation/ship is a fugitive act, one that does not necessarily rely on direct confrontation with overseers, but does not exclude it from the realm of possibility. Instead, fugitivity is itself a generative act in that it is life-preserving for the self and others. In a sense, we as readers might infer that Aster has abandoned her shipmates, stolen not only a shuttlecraft but also stolen back herself, her body, her mind, and the place that was denied to her and so many others.⁸⁵ Aster is not alone, though, as

⁸⁵ Despite that, as Mariame Kaba tells us, "Black women have always been vulnerable to violence in this country and have long been judged as having 'no selves to defend'" ("Black Women Punished").

she has also brought with her Giselle and Lune's remains to be reunited with their ancestral homeland. Additionally, she encounters trees and birds the likes of which she has never seen, thus (re)connecting with more-than-human kin. In this way, Solomon offers a kinship that is expansive in both time and type. More-than-humans as well as the deceased are included in these idyllic "Heavenly Lands," liberated from the Sovereign's rule (Solomon 347). Here, I am inspired to "salvage utopianism"—or at least optimism—from such an unlikely place (de Bruin-Molé 1). Certainly, we as readers might feel uncertain about how Aster will survive on the Great Lifehouse, "but at the same time her arc in the novel has taught us that she will do just that: that darkness is her country, where she lives and finds nourishment in spite of her oppressors, and where the future of humankind lies as a result" (de Bruin-Molé 9).

Solomon does not narrate the aftermath of the mutiny back on *Matilda*, but one can assume that Aster's actions made good on her promise "to save us all" (284). Aster, Giselle, Theo, and others were able to reorder things for at least a short time. And those in power now know that they cannot contain low deck inhabitants to their ascribed station, not within the ship's levels, let alone to the ship itself. This is the power of covert study and fugitivity: those who have been violated and oppressed will not be contained in body or mind. Rather than *solely* seeking direct confrontation, they will also resist in secret or on small-scale levels. For Aster, the botanarium and the spacecraft to the Great Lifehouse were means of care and escape in spite of the racialized, gendered violence she and others continually experienced. Abolitionist feminists can then imagine similar real world scenarios of interpersonal violence that this might apply to: What small-scale

resistances can survivors of sexual assault enact in order to steal back their bodies? How can communities provide support and care, whether in secret or in robust networks? And what are the limits to these alternative forms of redress? Solomon presents the power of uncovering forgotten spaces and ancestral knowledges, which I will now compare to the generative refusal within Indigenous speculation.

Histories of New (Intra- and Inter-Planetary) Worlds

How do Indigenous people resist the confinement of the settler state? How do Indigenous peoples redress the harm that settler states have wrought on themselves, their kin, and the more-than-human world? And how does this redress bypass carceral practices of punishment and policing? Settler colonialism's project of circumscription and control—and the attendant expectations of assimilation into norms around gender, family, language, and lifeways—has long affected Two Spirit Indigenous folks (Ellasante 1515). And it is towards these same people that we might turn to when answering the above questions of alternative forms of redress.⁸⁶ “History of the New World” is a short story by Indigiqueer filmmaker and author Adam Garnet Jones (Cree/Métis), originally published in *Love After the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit & Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction*. Told from the first-person perspective of Em,⁸⁷ a Two Spirit parent, “History”

⁸⁶ By taking up an Indigiqueer writer who centers “a brown-eyed Two-Spirit nehiyow [Cree],” the inclusion of Adam Garnet Jones’s story is meant to be directly counter to the “exclusion and tokenization in current dialogues surrounding Two-Spirit people” (Jones 41; Pyle 93). Too often Two Spirit people, particularly those who are transfemme, are obscured by language around “women and 2spirits,” a “vague juxtaposition” that “inadvertently reveals the marginalized position which transgender Indigenous people hold in our communities” (Pyle 86).

⁸⁷ And later in the story, from the perspective of Em’s unnamed grandchild (Jones 60).

follows Em, Em's white partner, Thorah, and their child, Asêciwan, in and around so-called Toronto, Canada. The three of them discuss the possibility of seeking refuge on another planet after Earth has become increasingly less habitable for humans. Ultimately, though, Jones lays bare the tensions between settler colonial compulsions and the solutions of Indigenous communities in the face of the harms and violences of disaster capitalism and climate catastrophe.

Themes of colonial violence and generational trauma arise in multiple ways as part of the backstory of the parents, Em and Thorah ("Love After the End"). Em explains that Thorah is a descendent of United Empire Loyalists, Americans who resettled in British territory after the American Revolution. Thorah was a "Liberal atheist" by the time the two of them met, when both were involved in environmental and refugee activism (Jones 41). Despite Thorah's more progressive leanings than her forebears, she nevertheless demonstrated her vanguardist, white savior impulses when "she had to be the chair of every committee, leader of every picket line—the loudest voice in the room" (Jones 47). Em watched as Thorah—however (un)intentionally—colonized activist spaces, though still falling in love and lust with her. The two of them built a life together, despite that Em seems continually resigned to Thorah's unchecked privilege and "a decade of swallowed arguments" (Jones 47).

Looking toward their future, Thorah wants to escape Earth's destruction by partaking in the colonization of another planet in order to ensure their nuclear family's future. Focusing on individual family units, rather than larger webs of kinship, is demonstrative of "settler homonationalism" (Morgensen 107–8). In other words, even

(settler) queer folks can adhere to and uphold dominant colonial ideas of reproductive and domestic “normalcy.” In this way, Em and Thorah’s relational history speaks not just to their own tensions and power dynamics. Jones’s mixed couple also exposes broader issues of queer settlers’ narrow political scope when it comes to who is worthy of state subjecthood and reproductive futures. When facing large-scale harms of colonialism- and capitalism-induced environmental change, Thorah proves that she is aligned with her fellow settlers, even though she is queer. Abolitionist feminists can take note here: we must not reify notions of hetero- or homonormative kinship structures when seeking redress for victims and survivors of institutional injustices.⁸⁸ All are worthy of redress, regardless of adherence to normative settler familial structures.

Although living in the not-too-distant-future, Em narrates the slow environmental degradation—and the settler state and scientific responses to it—that we are already witnessing today. Within real world claims that it is permissible to consider exploring other worlds in our cosmos and even “colonizing Mars to help ensure survival of the human species,” I observe a neo-Malthusian argument disguised as innovation and progress (Gottlieb 307). Catastrophic planetary threats such as rising sea levels and

⁸⁸ One real world example that comes to mind is the liberal settler response to forced migration and refugeeism on Turtle Island—calls for no family separations at the border. When discussing people who are fleeing violence and persecution to request asylum at or near the border, appealing to an idea of the nuclear family leaves many trans people—who may not be with biological kin when crossing—at risk of falling through the cracks of immigrant movements (Gutiérrez and Portillo 392). If we seek redress for institutional or structural violence, then we as abolitionist feminists need to affirm kinship and connection beyond what the carceral settler state defines it as. Rather than asking for no families to be separated at the border, we demand no borders, no detentions, nor rigid definitions of “deserving” cisheteronormative victims (DasGupta 324–5).

supposed overpopulation are cast as unavoidable lest we as a united species lean into “multiplanetarity” for a technological solution (Fitzmaurice and Henderson 842; Kearnes and van Dooren 182; Levchenko et al. 8; Temmen 484–5). In “History of the New World,” Earth “heated up” and “first became uninhabitable all around the wide equatorial hips of aski” (Jones 40, 42). Unlike contemporary reports, in which “the drive to expand beyond earthly limits is a natural and inevitable characteristic of *an amorphously defined human subject or species*,” Jones makes it clear that some populations are more impacted than others by increasingly inhospitable environs (Kearnes and van Dooren 179, emphasis added; Taylor 10). The author focuses on how the effects of settler-caused crises are “disproportionally impacting communities in the global south while having (for now) afforded the global north the luxury of fantasies of quick technological fixes for a disaster imagined to be still beyond the horizon” (Temmen 479). In particular, Canada in “History of the New World” experiences “wave after wave of refugees from the rapidly growing deserts and work camps” (Jones 42). Jones’s choice of words, “wave after wave,” is pointed; rather than torrents of desperately needed fresh water in a drought ridden clime, the Global North is flooded with people fleeing the effects of the plantationocene’s⁸⁹ disaster capitalism. The very cause of this resource scarcity and, later, cosmic colonization is due to the ongoing settler practices and Western lifeways that

⁸⁹ I am drawn to this concept as a way to signal that the plantation is not “a time-limited phenomenon” (Taylor 11). Instead, the term demarcates an expansive temporal frame and “has emerged as a compelling rubric for knitting together the global structures of Indigenous removal, bound and coerced labor, extractive capitalism, monocultural devastation, and the permanent effacement of Black humanity and Indigenous value that continues to replicate in modern institutions and labor markets” (Taylor 11).

wreak havoc in the present day on Earth. In Jones's short story, settler states kept the climate refugees at bay for a while before "that failed" and "our government let go of its tight-lipped politeness," finally resorting to "indirect" and direct forms of "murder" (42). Just as on Earth now, Jones presents the settler belief that "space colonization, instead of global cooperation, will save us" (Estruth and Perold 72).

The protagonist, Em, was born at a time when "most governments had stopped believing in the possibility of saving the planet" (Jones 40). Instead, Earth is treated as disposable and exchangeable. Hope for humanity's future is shifted away from averting catastrophe here and towards the exploration of other hospitable worlds.⁹⁰ Settler states and Western science "assured us that an escape plan was taking shape" (Jones 42). This hope for a soon-to-be-discovered "escape plan" resonates with 19th, 20th, and 21st century narratives of the American Western frontier, space exploration, as well as military endeavors of conquest (Anker 239; Corioni 92; Estruth and Perold 69–70; Gouge). However, some scholars claim that multiplanetary settlement isn't a direct comparison to historical examples of colonization because it is not related to the expansion and "actualization of an already existing settlement" (Grove 1035). "Extraterrestrial projects" are believed to be "far more complex" than the "simple notion of the frontier" (Kearnes and van Dooren 179). Surely, we cannot deny the similarities, though. For one, there are resonances with "cultural discourses that have been (re)produced in [the] context of exploration, colonization and settlement for centuries"

⁹⁰ For another science fictional account of Earthlings' colonial endeavors to seek out more habitable worlds, see Pak.

(Fitzmaurice and Henderson 847; Temmen 485). Additionally, space settlers will inevitably take Earthly structures, histories, linkages, and understandings with them, regardless of any good intentions (Dunnett et al. 330; Tavares 7).

In the short story, news is finally released about a planet similar to Earth, called “the New World” (Jones 38). Echoes of the past should be apparent here; presumably the author’s intention is to mirror the kinds of language and ideology that surrounded European colonization of Turtle Island. After two years of “massive intermittent data dumps” about the New World, the general public learns that its weather and land masses are nearly identical to Earth’s (Jones 38). However, unlike Earth, there appears to be “no humans” nor any other species that “showed any evidence that they possessed intelligence or self-awareness” (Jones 38). Torah accepts it as the salvation that humanity needs, “the only way for any of us to survive,” as she puts it (Jones 43). But who is the “us” who is able to access the means “to survive”? Connections to the settler ideology of a *terra nullius*⁹¹ landscapes are clear when Torah remarks, “The New World is a blank page. ...we can make our story there, anything we want” (Jones 43). Therefore, those invested in populating the New World reproduce the settler colonial language of place as a blank slate (Carnes 295). Just as what was said of Turtle Island, it is as if having no evident “buildings, monuments, or systems of writing” means that a

⁹¹ Kearnes and van Dooren remark at length about the frontier logic of space, how “space is conceived of as an empty vessel, or, more accurately, one with profound but specific forms of both absence and possibility. Through this lens, space is seen as awaiting purposeful inscription by the human species” (182).

geographical location is unstewarded (Jones 39). Even better, ripe for the picking—no competition.

Within modern-day frontier talk about space, there are ontological, epistemological, and cosmological implications of viewing extraplanetary travel, exploration, and settlement imbued with *terra nullius* understandings of bodies and life. Theorists are already positing the implications this has for the sovereignty of any beings whom Earthlings might encounter (Tavares 5). Regardless of if “there are no fellow humans or delicate ecologies” on “a faraway planet,” nevertheless, “there is an obligation for the colonists to attempt to preserve where possible the unspoiled alien environment”; this could be as much a self-sustaining motivation for space colonists as it is an ethical consideration (Estruth and Perold 72; Levchenko et al. 8). Further evidence to tread lightly (if at all) on other worlds, space settlers must consider the importance of these celestial bodies to those of us on Earth. Cultural practices affirm “the complex of relations between earth and other cosmic bodies” and that “the Moon and other planetary bodies are sacred” (Kearnes and van Dooren 192; Tavares 5). Resource extraction on those worlds thus denigrates a conception of life and land in which ancestral and spiritual presence exists within earth, stone, and soil on all landscapes. Furthermore, other planets’ physical difference from Earth challenges the ways in which, in the here and now, “gravity fixes” settler ways of thinking and being in the world (Valentine 191). Overall, future space settlers are called to honor a “respect for the environment and geo(Mars)bio-diversity—whatever it may be,” so that they don’t fall prey to “repeating the same errors of the past” on future worlds (Calanchi et al. 207).

The New World that Earth's "Committee on Trans-Dimensional Migration" has been sending people to does, in fact, already have inhabitants (Jones 39). Seemingly, the existence of a sea-dwelling native species, with "striking physical resemblance to Earth's extinct manatees," was unknown when humans first started settling (Jones 44). Also called "the Mermaids," these creatures send a cryptic message, "a single non-threatening phrase repeated on loop," with several different possible translations: "Your circle is not round," "All beings require more than one tide," and "Even desert animals live underwater" (Jones 44). The Mermaids' attempts to communicate clearly demarcates sentience. Their words, although "non-threatening," also demonstrate cognizance of what's happening, perhaps an unease or even non-consent to Earthling occupation of their homeworld. "They're people," Em affirms, "Not like us, but still. Some kind of people" (Jones 45). Thorah's response to the Mermaids' personhood is taken directly from history books when she suggests, "maybe we'll draft treaties with them" (Jones 46).⁹² The Mermaids seem intelligent and therefore worthy of respect to settlers like Thorah. Yet just like First Nations peoples under the eye of the Canadian settler state, subjecthood and sovereignty has a limit that must be clearly drawn up on white paper.

⁹² An Outer Space Treaty, formally known as the United Nations "Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies," already exists. However, "the rules relating to state sovereignty do not apply in the same way as they do on Earth" (Fitzmaurice and Henderson 849). Unfortunately, the issue of the "sovereignty of permanent colonies on the surface of Mars and, possibly, in the Martian orbit is one that at present is not well articulated or defined in the current version of the Outer Space Treaty" (Levchenko et al. 4).

This is only the beginning of the differing ways in which settlers and Indigenous peoples approach danger and injustice in “History.”

As I shall address below, Indigenous (in particular, Cree and Anishinaabe) peoples resist the confinement of the settler state by refusing to take part in its expanding reach into the cosmos. Indigenous peoples redress the harm that settler states have wrought on themselves, their kin, and the more-than-human world by turning inward towards themselves, their communities, and their extended kin. This redress bypasses the state altogether by seeking care in spite of legal and extra-legal violences (e.g. refugees “murder[ed],” vulnerable populations “stolen and sold”) as well as inhospitable, “heated up” landscapes. Therefore, I encourage abolitionist feminists to extrapolate this to the real world, in order to imagine similar ways to approach redress when direct confrontation or reconciliation with settler states seem unlikely to be fruitful. Sometimes, we must turn away from those causing institutional harm and create other, more generative alternatives.

“We Could Dig In”: Generative Refusal on Earth

While New World settlers are “escaping Earth” as, what Jones dubs, “pioneers,” Native peoples remain on their home planet (Jones 38–9). Em’s Cree family has stayed on Earth and “begged me to return home with Thorah and Asêciwan” (Jones 42). Because Jones later identifies that Em is “originally from Edmonton,” home is presumably Enoch Cree Nation 135 land in Treaty 6 territory (60). The family’s request that Em “return home” with other kin demonstrates that not only have some Indigenous peoples stayed on their ancestral lands, but that they intend to do so into the future,

regardless of the settler promise of the New World: “The only ones not pinning their hopes on fleeing to some distant planet were NDNs. Our people had been rebuilding our languages and cultures for the last three generations, returning to the land as the rest of the world prepared to abandon it” (Jones 42). Indigenous, particularly Cree, “people and communities presented here try to survive...by refusing to leave a seemingly dying Earth to reenact colonialism on another planet” (Keep). “NDNs” have remained on and returned to land, rather than abandoned it, because it is an ancestral space key to their survivance.

Jones implies that other Native peoples have collectively chosen to resist further destruction of Earth and its peoples. Em observes, “a group had raised a rainbow flag with a warrior head on it in High Park. They claimed the territory as the Nagweyaab Anishinaabek Camp, the Rainbow Peoples’ Camp, and erected barriers all around the perimeter” (Jones 42). On one hand, this could be interpreted as people who have no other option, those whom Thorah deems “[t]he poor and the paranoid” (Jones 43). On the other hand, the use of barriers and a Two Spirit pride flag marks this camp as an intentional political statement, not one of resignation but of reclamation. This is a form of refusal that is “deliberate” and “willful” (Simpson, “Consent’s Revenge” 328). It is as if to announce that they are warriors who will fight for themselves and the land; they are a rainbow of genders and bodies, diverse yet united under one banner for one cause; and they have demarcated a sovereign space that might be subjected to extreme weather caused by settler practices, but they won’t be subjected to settler law. The narrator doesn’t clarify what goes on within the Nagweyaab Anishinaabek Camp, since all we get

is a description of the flags, snares, hand-painted signs, and reinforced barricades made of repurposed materials. While we can't know for sure the intentions of its residents, the fact that they use Ojibwemowin and Cree speaks to their reclamatory efforts. This place—High Park, Toronto, Canada, Turtle Island, Earth—is to be inhabited by those who act and steward it in a good way. It appears that they're rejecting settler practices and mindsets, not only actively reclaiming space but also lifeways (such as spoken language) that have been discouraged and denied for centuries. Unlike similar historical decolonial actions, these efforts are not met with state resistance: "No one moved to stop them. Why bother to quash an act of resistance on a planet that's about to be abandoned?" (Jones 42). As settlers turn towards the New World, Indigenous peoples turn away from further colonization of land, of people, and of minds, and towards each other and land.

Even before learning of these Native peoples choosing to resist settler impositions on this planet and another one, Em and Asêciwan both respectively express a desire to maintain the life and home that they've built. For example, Asêciwan states plainly, "I want to stay here" (Jones 46). This is a reflection of Indigenous peoples who are preserving their lifeways by turning inward, rather than outward, as well as of abolitionist feminist and transformative justice values. Em and Asêciwan don't want to abandon a relation, aski,⁹³ just because it is increasingly dangerous and harmful to their physical well-being. These characters know that the context and conditions of aski are not of the planet's own making; aski has been hurt by settler colonial practices and has since reacted by "heat[ing] up" and becoming "uninhabitable" (Jones 40, 42). The Indigenous

⁹³ ᐱᓂᓂᓂ (askiy) means land, earth, or world in Cree.

characters want to turn away from settlers who have inaugurated these destructive conditions; but they don't see their home and community as disposable simply because they are difficult to inhabit. Abolitionist scholars and transformative justice practitioners have rightly critiqued "disposability culture," explaining that no one is beyond change and therefore no one is disposable (Burks, "Disposability"). This assertion comes from the understanding that certain populations experience "desubjectivation in relation to waste," waste that is abject, expendable, and demands spatial ejection (Khanna 182). From this perspective, transformative justice (TJ) movements

rethink the meanings of justice, community, and the self. Through acknowledging and prioritizing interdependence, our shared vulnerability, and our ties to each other, TJ refuses disposability and reframes what it means to be a person in community and in the world. In contrast to colonial frameworks of liberal individualism, Indigenous nations have always understood humans, all living beings, and the natural world as fundamentally interconnected—TJ movements envision a present and a future in which this knowledge that the self is necessarily relational leads to transformative approaches to harm. (Barrie 91)

Similarly, aski is not treated as disposable nor beyond repair from the harm inflicted. All Indigenous relations—human and more-than-human—are called to dig in.

Em, Asêciwan, and other Indigenous peoples are holding onto the complexity of harm, that aski has not "heated up" without cause and, instead, needs support. When Em quietly thinks, "*We could dig in. We could stay,*" Em is embracing a place that has been forsaken and disposed of by settlers like Thorah (Jones 46, emphasis in original). The

planet is worth staying on and digging into, rather than throwing away. Here, “*dig in*” could mean several things. At first, it seems to be paired with the verb “*stay*” in order to convey a sense of immobility and perseverance, as in “to dig in one’s heels,” especially in the sense of not ceding rights to sovereignty and land. But it could also be a colloquial expression of digging into and getting to the root of an issue, to further inquire and investigate. Another possible interpretation is a literal sense of digging in order to garden or till soil, which evokes ideas of cultivation and stewarding land. All of these interpretations of Em’s desire to “*dig in*” provide parallels between Indigenous resistance and transformative justice politics; both overlap in their embrace of digging in as inquiry, turning away from harmful actions while at the same time turning towards generative change.

Em believes that rather than colonize another planet and abandon this one, it is still possible, nay crucial, to be stewards to the place Indigenous (particularly Cree) peoples currently exist in. Clearly the protagonist is choosing to turn away from settler colonial practices when retorting aloud to Thorah, “we know that those governments aren’t going to let anything or anyone prevent them from carving up that land” in the New World (Jones 46). Em wants nothing to do with “carving up” other peoples’ land for the benefit of Canada’s state powers. Surely, they will abuse the Mermaids and their homeworld, just as they have on Earth. Even though life on Earth may prove difficult in the present and future and may require toiling (re: digging in), Em and Asêciwan nevertheless identify this place as more desirable. It is not only “home,” an ancestral place of refuge to turn to and stay in, it is also an offer of life-giving connection that does

not require extraction and exploitation. To turn inward and to stay—despite the impacts of climate change—actually rejects the violences of settler colonialism by refusing to continue to participate.

After an argument between Em and Thorah about whether or not to stay, the couple packs up and heads to Union Station with their child. Amidst the “chaos” of the “crowd of shuffling bodies,” in the blink of an eye Asêciwan is “gone” just as the family is meant to board a shuttle to the New World (Jones 51). Em suggests the two parents split up to search for the eight-year-old. Instead, Thorah counters that she will get on the shuttle and “save a place for us” (Jones 52). Reading Thorah’s body language, Em understands that she intends to leave regardless of whether her partner and child are with her. Thorah had previously expressed concern for Asêciwan’s future life chances should the young one live to adulthood on Earth (Jones 46, 48). However, in this moment at the station, Thorah is frantically weighing the options, constantly checking the gate—looking not for her daughter but for her spot in line. Em elects to stay behind to look for Asêciwan, which means Em may not get the chance to leave Earth at all.⁹⁴ Thorah eventually prioritizes her own individual life over that of the collectivity; Em acts on the need to stay and dig in with Asêciwan. Through this act, Em will additionally not be party to the settling of a new planet. Em will instead care for their Native child as well as the planet that they both remain on.

⁹⁴ Tickets to the New World are “one-time one way” only (Jones 50). “Immigration had taken this measure,” Jones explains, “after too many people got cold feet and abandoned their seat in the portal’s shuttle at the last moment. After the government lost hundreds of millions to half-full shuttles, they declared that each citizen would only be allowed one confirmed ticket” (Jones 50).

As a newly reconfigured family unit amidst the growing violence of Toronto and the environmental dangers of the planet, Em and Asêciwan still have each other. Once they discover that their house has been consigned to be demolished, the two wander through the streets of “the hollowed-out city” (Jones 58). The imagery of abandonment is relentless as they encounter stragglers, scavengers, and scrappers, some of whom have been rumored to abduct women and children (Jones 55). Between the bleak imagery of abandonment, Em still remarks on what is generative and what will be.⁹⁵ In the moment, Em and Asêciwan are “without anything beyond each other” (Jones 58). This realization might at first appear precarious considering the circumstances; they are potentially at threat of “being stolen and sold” (Jones 55). Yet Em also recalls Indigenous peoples’ invitations to foster relations and make home with as well as steward and protect kin, both human and more-than-human. Em and Asêciwan, their Cree family in Edmonton, and the Nagweyaab Anishinaabek Camp don’t need “anything beyond each other,” because what is beyond these relations—settler colonial lifeways—has proven violent and harmful.

Hence, the parent and child turn inward towards other Indigenous peoples and accomplices, ultimately making their way to the Camp in Toronto’s High Park. Although it clearly announces itself as a statement of sovereignty (“THIS IS INDIAN LAND!”), the Camp also appears open to other non-2SLGBTQI and non-Indians, as “A HOME FOR INDIGENOUS 2SLGBTQI PEOPLE AND FAMILIES” (Jones 58-9). The words

⁹⁵ “It occurred to me,” Em ponders, “that in a year or two the streets would look completely different as plants and animals began to reclaim it” (Jones 58).

“home” and “family,” while evoking heteronormative domesticity, might also conjure up kinship that is nurturing and inviting. If “home” is seen more as a sanctuary and “family” is used more queerly and expansively, then the camp is open to people who are displaced and seeking refuge. As “shared homeplaces,” encampments “are microcosms of mutual aid and treaty relations between Black and Indigenous peoples,” because they “build a practical alternative to live in while generating shared Black and Indigenous meaning and theory that could not have been generated otherwise” (Maynard and Simpson 98–9). Therefore, the Nagweyaab Anishinaabek Camp in “History of the New World” is a space of both sovereignty and solidarity.

The first words spoken to Em and Asêciwan emphasize this point. As the two approach the Camp, “a small panel slid open and a voice called out” in Ojibwemowin. Em recognizes the person as Anishnaabe and Asêciwan proceeds to name herself and her relationship with her parents in her Cree language. This accounting for oneself and one’s kin—even though in a different tongue than the original speaker—conveys the nature of the Camp. In the real world,

Two-Spirit people, and other Indigenous queer and gender-expansive people who do not don the pan-tribal identifier, are substantially engaging with the elements of their peoplehood. They are learning and recounting the sacred histories of their roles among their communities; engaging in ceremonies for which their roles have been designated. They are gathering on their homelands throughout the continent to build, heal, and nurture relationships with Turtle Island. They are learning and

speaking tribal languages, tribally-specific terms for their roles, and terms for other genders in their traditional systems. (Ellasante 1521)

Those at the Nagweyaab Anishinaabek Camp may not be related by blood, but they nevertheless share a common vision of Indigenous stewardship of land and thus gather together to “engag[e] with the elements of their peoplehood.”

Because of the emphasis on kinship, gender and sexual affirmation, education, and reclamation of land, I read the Camp in Jones’s “History” as a correlate to the real-world Two Spirit Nation present at the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) protests (Gilio-Whitaker 12–3; *TWO SPIRIT*). Originally started in North Dakota near the Missouri River on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, the first camp “was set up on the first of April, 2016 by Standing Rock elder, LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, for cultural preservation and spiritual resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline” (Gilio-Whitaker 12; Jackson; Weiss 285). After the arrest of a relative in August 2016, Candi Brings Plenty (Oglala Lakota Sioux) was inspired to set up the Two Spirit Nation camp there as well: “In Lakota culture, your sister’s children are your children, so it was like my daughter got arrested. So I had to be here; I had to support her” (as quoted in Larkey). Like Em’s family, Brings Plenty was called to go “back home, on my indigenous lands,” and then extended this invitation to other Two Spirit leaders to “set up our camp, to claim our space,” and, within it, encourage *all* people—regardless of if they are from disparate Native nations or non-Native—to learn about Two Spirit identities and needs (as quoted in Larkey). Brings Plenty makes a connection between the need to protect extended family with the need to protect Indian Country, “our space” as (quoted in Larkey). Trudie

Jackson (Navajo) emphasizes this: “The Two-Spirit presence at Standing Rock is distinct because Two-Spirit visibility, on an international platform, asserted *alliance to the earth, water, and other living beings*” (“Two-Spirit Nation,” emphasis added).

Assertions about the importance of a Two Spirit-centered camp on Oceti Sakowin lands elucidate the reason for Jones’s creation of a similar space in “History of the New World.”⁹⁶ The short story’s Nagweyaab Anishinaabek Camp may not be resisting an oil pipeline, specifically, but it nevertheless emerges as a response to settler colonial resource extraction.⁹⁷ Because it is explicitly a camp for “UNITED NDN SEXUALITIES” and “UNITED NDN GENDERS,” it operates similarly to the Two Spirit Nation camp’s opposition to the encroachment of the Dakota Access Pipeline (Jones 58). “The Two-Spirit camp,” as Jackson states, “challenged the gender norms by representing multiple genders at the NoDAPL camps, thereby also refusing to accept patriarchal domination of what the oil pipeline represents” (“Two-Spirit Nation”). The Nagweyaab Anishinaabek Camp, like its real-world counterpart, was forged out of a recognition of alliance between humans and more-than-humans, a rejection of settler extraction and abandonment, and the prioritization of gender and sexual expansiveness in the fight for sovereignty and redress.

⁹⁶ “Two Spirit activism has provably benefitted [sic] an environmental movement struggling to respond to the acting United States administration’s multiple attacks on the sovereignty of both land and body—subjects that settler colonialism might deem separate—and to confront its own whiteness and heteronormativity” (Amor 45).

⁹⁷ The actions of the Committee on Trans-Dimensional Migration could be compared to Energy Transfer Partners’s Dakota Access Pipeline, in that both, respectively, are “just one more assault on the lands, resources, and self-determination of Native peoples since the beginning of American settler colonialism” (Gilio-Whitaker 20).

On the final page of “History of the New World,” Em and Asêciwan Callihoo “walked side by side” into the Camp, but this is not the end of “the âcimowin, the story” (Jones 60). The reader learns that the preceding pages have all been a history recounted by a descendant of the Callihoo family. The narrative voice shifts to this relative living even further in the future, speaking of “my nôhkom”⁹⁸ who “lived back in the time before the reports came that life on the New World had fallen apart” (Jones 60). This unnamed storyteller has provided a history of the New World that occurs before Em and Asêciwan live in the Nagweyaab Anishinaabek Camp, before “our protectors dismantled the portal,”⁹⁹ and before “our matriarchs” created the “High Law” about “shared responsibilities between the people and all our relations” (Jones 60). What is omitted from Jones’s history is this more detailed process by which humans and more-than-humans (re)claim Indigenous lifeways and presence. However, we are left with a few lessons about the necessity of generative refusal. Em, Em’s Cree family, and the queer kin at the Rainbow Camp have all refused the violences of settler colonialism by no longer participating. As settlers turn towards the New World, Indigenous peoples turn away from the false promise that colonization of a new planet brings. They turn inward and stay, despite the dangers. They dig in and return to their lands, rather than abandon it. They reclaim their languages and lifeways, even though they’ve been denied traditional knowledges for centuries. They care for each other as well as the planet, regardless of whether or not they are related by blood. Abolitionist feminists and TJ practitioners

⁹⁸ ᓄᓂᓂᓂ (nôhkom) means grandmother in Cree.

⁹⁹ See Nick Estes for more about the use of the term “water *protectors*” during the NoDAPL protests (15, emphasis added).

already affirm many of these practices, by refusing the carceral settler state, rejecting disposability culture, and engaging with community-centered formations. Further informed by Indigiqueer speculative fiction, together we can all create these (new) worlds.

Conclusion

How do the literary texts I've analyzed in this chapter envision *indirect* forms of redress that act as alternatives to the criminal punishment system? Rivers Solomon's protagonist, Aster, flees the spaceship *Matilda* in an act that seems to abandon responsibilities to community and care. However, *An Unkindness of Ghosts* actually offers Black study, planning, and fugitivity as forms of alliance rather than abandonment. Aster turns towards the coded work of her mother and towards the insurgent possibilities of her friends in order to flee the drudgery, horror, and confinement of the plantation/ship. This is a model of *indirect* redress for the various interpersonal violences Aster experiences—a redress that does not rely on direct confrontation with overseers. Turning away from the plantation is a fugitive act, one that does not foreclose direct action, however. Obviously, Solomon's text still includes insurrection, but this has not been the primary concern of this chapter. Instead, Aster's fugitivity as redress requires close connection to ancestral knowledge and community care work. In fact, the resistance that takes place is largely through disobedience and the unearthing of suppressed knowledge, therefore Solomon is able to "incorporate and uplift alternate ways of knowing and understanding" (Davis 60). The revolt that occurs in *An Unkindness of Ghosts* would not be possible if it were not for Aster's and Lune's respective

experimentation and planning—deeds that themselves *are* and *provide* a means of escape. Furthermore, covertly practicing science and medicine is a resistance to the totalization of mental and physical capture under enslavement. Therefore, Aster and Lune enact a form of fugitivity in their present time and also usher in the possibility of future escape. So, while it might be easy to read this novel as an endorsement of running away from responsibility to community or fighting oppressors through revolutionary violence, I argue that abolitionist feminists might also find within its pages other generative acts that preserve life for the self and others. The questions, then, are: How can those who are captured within the current plantationocene practice this fugitivity? What planning and study are necessary to turn away from abuse and towards the possibility of reprieve? Just as Aster found solidarity in Giselle (a fellow mad Black femme) and Theo (a light-skinned, gender non-conforming elite), who can we trust to turn towards and invite to join in flight? Let's share secret maps, plans, recipes, etc. in service to liberation.

In "History of the New World," Cree and Métis author Adam Garnet Jones crafts a speculative history that is neither dystopic nor utopic. Instead, abolitionist feminist readers encounter our world in the not-too-distant future in which apocalyptic climate disaster *as well as* hopeful resistance to it have continued. In the midst of ecological and geopolitical violence—caused by ongoing settler colonialism—the protagonist, Cree family members, and extended Indigenous kinship circles turn inward. Em and others reject abandoning their biological, chosen, and extended kin—including the Earth itself. They do not seek recognition or redress for the horrors that the settler state has wrought. They do not petition, vote, appeal to authority, or demonstrate. In choosing to dig in (i.e.

remain, interrogate, cultivate), they refuse to participate in the Canadian government's historical practices that have ushered in impending ecological collapse as well as refuse the late 21st century settler solutions that shirk responsibility for the outcomes of their past actions. In this way, Jones depicts an indirect form of redress for harm. That is to say, Indigenous characters' redress does not rest on directly interfacing with those who have caused large-scale, planetary conditions of precarity. Attending to the violence of the degradation of land and relations requires turning away from those who cause harm and towards those who are in need of immediate support. In this case, the settler colonial harm that has been caused can best be addressed by Indigenous reclamation and (re)occupation, by reclaiming connections to one another, to languages and lifeways, and to the more-than-human world. By presenting an alternative model of indirect redress for institutional violence, Jones's short story validates Indigenous action in our present moment. Abolitionist feminists can take inspiration from "History of the New World" when seeking out alternatives to retribution and carcerality, by imagining scenarios in which generative refusal is the best option. For instance, when institutional violence occurs, how can we not rely on those same institutions for redress? Who and where might we turn to instead in order to generate solutions? What traditional or ancestral skills do we need to cultivate to best do this work? And in the case of interpersonal violence, what support networks must be in place for one to turn away from those causing harm? How can kin create the conditions for survivor support in the here and now? Alternatively, when would refusal be too limiting of an option?

One of the key similarities between these works of Black and Indigenous speculative fiction is the connection between fugitivity, generative refusal, and the quotidian, and how these connections might prove helpful for abolitionist feminists. To return to Campt, fugitivity is “the quotidian practice of refusal” (“Black Feminist Futures”). Simpson’s expression of generative refusal—a tactic to renew and repair without the engagement of those who are causing harm—doesn’t foreclose this as a quotidian practice. But other Indigenous feminist and Two Spirit scholars have explicitly affirmed that opposition and decolonization can be a covert, daily occurrence (Ellasante 1522; Hunt and Holmes 156). Indeed, “[t]he frontline is everywhere,” reminds one account of Standing Rock (Weiss 291). Lower deckers in *An Unkindness of Ghosts* regularly steal away their bodies and their minds through study in secret. In “History of the New World,” Cree and Anishinaabe characters utilize language in everyday conversation as a way to forge alliance with one another. If possible, such a disengagement from those causing harm is necessary in cases of interpersonal and institutional violence. Rather than involving state-based models of so-called justice that necessitate policing, prisons, and punishment, abolitionist feminists can take inspiration from fugitivity and generative refusal. We must attempt to foster relationships with one another, build up care webs, make plans for escape, and practice skills in secret if need be. Both fugitivity and generative refusal are useful to think about not merely existing in reaction or in response to violence. They provide abolitionist feminists with conceptions of indirect, even covert and quotidian, redress, turning inward to rebuild.

In this chapter I have attempted to read *An Unkindness of Ghosts* alongside “History of the New World,” speculative fiction set in the future after ecological destruction threatens the habitability of Earth. The impulse to flee shows up in both texts: Solomon’s novel takes place in an off-world space of captivity that the protagonist must escape from—in both the literal and figurative sense—in order to release herself from violence. Jones employs an Indigenous ethic of stewardship and relation that demands the Cree characters stay with aski, even as an imperiled place. Despite these differences of location, Solomon and Jones both depict spaces of indirect redress that offer comparable lessons for abolitionist feminists. When faced with interpersonal and/or institutional violence (e.g. threats of sexual assault from overseers, threats of displacement from home), characters look to one another, their ancestors, and traditional knowledges for liberation. The connection between fugitivity and generative refusal, although emerging from different Black and Indigenous struggles, respectively, is that both entrust in and encourage “experimenting wildly with forms of collective care” outside of the purview of the powers-that-be (Maynard and Simpson 72). Abolitionist feminists and many other activists and scholars have already demonstrated that the state does not have the best interests of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color in mind, particularly those who identify as women, girls, femmes, trans, queer, and Two Spirit. Hence, it makes sense that we would not look to systems founded on settler colonialism and anti-Blackness in order to grapple with the harms we experience. As I argued in the previous chapter, there are certainly circumstances in which we might directly interface with those who enact interpersonal and institutional violence. But if we take the novel and short story from this

chapter to heart, we as abolitionist feminists must also recognize the times when the best option is to refuse, to flee, and to generate strength from within.

Conclusion

Bringing It Back Down to Earth:

Speculative Fiction's Implications for Abolitionist Feminisms

Whenever we try to envision a world without war, without violence, without prisons, without capitalism, we are engaging in speculative fiction. All organizing is science fiction.

—Walidah Imarisha, Introduction to *Octavia's Brood*

When the abuse started in my teens, I didn't tell anyone because I didn't understand it as such. I didn't identify what was happening with that language, even though I regarded myself as a feminist as early as my late teens and early twenties. I saw myself as strong and independent, so I questioned what more could I have done to confront the harm? I had a solid group of peers who cared about me, but my boyfriend and I shared the same friend circle—who could I trust to turn to? And I thought that I shared a bond with my boyfriend after dating for four years, so how could I turn away from him?

When I finally found the strength and support to leave him, one of my first impulses was to seek revenge. He was a musician in several local bands and I wanted everyone to know what he had done and to shun him. I stopped hanging out with people that kept company with him. I wrote a letter to the editor of the hipster street paper asking that they not list any of his gigs or review his albums. I grabbed the microphone in between sets at a house show where I knew his friends would be and stated plainly, "Jon Roe hits women." Perhaps all of this was to punish him, I still can't tell. I'd like to believe that it was instead meant to help warn others that he might do the same to them

and the people they care about. But it certainly wasn't in service to getting him to do the internal work of combatting his racist misogyny. I acted largely out of vengefulness, to make him suffer and feel some semblance of the pain that I had felt.

Looking to speculative fiction from Black or Indigenous authors, I'm attempting to rethink this period of my life so that others might not experience the same. What concepts and strategies from texts by Octavia Butler, Cherie Dimaline, Mariame Kaba, Adam Garnet Jones, and Rivers Solomon could have informed my responses? What alternative models do I wish I'd had to redress the harm I experienced due to my ex-boyfriend? How could I have ensured that this method of redress did not reproduce carceral logics of retribution? And how can other abolitionist feminists put these into practice in the here and now?

What countless other scholars and activists have made abundantly clear is that the settler state and its carceral logics does not have the best interests of Black, Indigenous, and people of color who are survivors of violence in mind. Not only did I as a young person not have clear paths for redress, I likely would not have received adequate help even if I had sought it out from the state. Therefore, abolitionist feminists must look beyond policing, prisons, and punishment to redress interpersonal and institutional violences. Using my own life as an example, the following are my concluding reflections and suggestions about how to apply these lessons when prefiguring abolition here on Earth. I trace one possible arc based on my discussion throughout the preceding chapters: first, question impulses to punish; next, directly confront the harm; then, turn away if necessary and possible.

I had the urge to punish my ex for the harm I experienced, but punishment didn't guarantee that he would change his behavior. Instead, one of the first steps we as abolitionist feminists can collectively take is to *prevent* gendered, racialized, colonial violence. Inspired by Octavia Butler's *Dawn*, I consider the option of prevention very carefully. Butler's protagonist Lilith explains to Peter, "I hurt you because you were trying to hurt another person" (182). Lilith's interception, although effective in the moment at stopping an attempted rape, has the potential to conflate violence as prevention with violence as retribution. Preventative measures need to carefully balance being *proactive* versus *reactive* to perceived (but not yet actualized) wrongdoing and harm. In other words, how do we guarantee that such prevention is not misplaced discipline and punishment? If we want to create a world (or, at least, communities) in which the kind of abuse I experienced is unlikely, then how can we interrupt racialized misogyny?

Getting to the root of an issue will hopefully prevent harm before it occurs. One of the issues that I believe my ex needed to address was residual trauma from childhood neglect and abandonment. In his struggles with addiction, he also received little to no assistance. Like Curt's murky motivations in *Dawn*, it is possible that undealt with fear, implicit bias, hostility, and traumatic experiences all thread through the tapestry of violence that these men weave. This is not to excuse their behavior as not of their own doing nor to divert attention from the survivors of their wrath, but rather to call attention, yet again, to the fact that "it is hurt people who hurt other people" (Kaba and Hayes 69). If provided with robust mental health care from friends, family, community, as well as

professional services, perhaps some of my ex's misplaced anger would have been dealt with earlier, thus protecting my wellbeing too. In this way, preventing harm is not undue attention on those who cause it; it is a necessary step to supporting survivors.

Also necessary in this scenario is what Connie Burk labels "Accountable Communities." Abolitionists and transformative justice practitioners affirm that individuals do not harm others in a vacuum. Behaviors are learned and actively encouraged by societal norms, especially within the white supremacist settler colonial states of CanAmerica. Certainly focusing on a singular culpable person is one component of preventative measures, but considering context and changing conditions is also imperative. In the case of Joseph's murder, Butler signals that an entire cadre of Curt's followers enabled him to commit homicide. Had their xenophobic groupthink been disputed from within their faction, Joseph might still be alive by the end of the novel. Or, if my ex had a social circle that regularly discussed how racism and sexism show up in their lives as well as encouraged one another to deconstruct their biases, then perhaps such chauvinism would've been less likely to crystallize as actions. Rather than *solely* calling Curt or my ex to account for their behavior, we need forms of redress that can contain a multitude of actors and levels of involvement.

In the aftermath, "it's normal and healthy often to want vengeance against people for causing you great harm" (Kaba 127). This could look like the kind of deplatforming and vigilantism I attempted with my ex, or like the threats of exile and desires for torture as seen in *Dawn*. While these are not outside of the realm of possibility, abolitionist feminists must also contemplate what is wanted or needed when we ask for vengeance:

these men's conscious discomfort? Their regret? Transformation? Something else? All of the above? Abolitionist feminists can help translate these "normal and healthy" responses into altered behavior, beliefs, and circumstances, not just penance and punishment.

Retribution and revenge satisfied me in the moment, but ultimately did not bring about actionable adjustment on the part of my ex. Curt too did not change and, as a result, the Oankali imposed indefinite suspended animation on him. We must also question if and how we risk reproducing carceral logics, particularly related to penitence and sanism, when requiring mental subjects who are capable of recognition and reflection, thereby inadvertently foreclosing mental illness and madness from entering into conversations of redress.

Instead of reverting to models of redress that closely mirror the criminal punishment system's practices of disconnection, I advocate for also attempting to *run towards* conflict and harm, when possible. Mariame Kaba's and Cherie Dimaline's respective characters directly intervene in and combat interpersonal and institutional violence, rather than shy away from it. In these author's literary works, redress is not something that is individualized or invisibilized within a disconnected statist system; it is a collective process of resolution and reconnection. In "Justice," circle-keeping involves all community members directly communicating and resolving issues together. For Indigenous characters in *The Marrow Thieves*, resistance to institutional violence requires fighting back to reconnect with stolen skills and relations. With this in mind, confronting the harm I experienced could have involved turning towards my ex with the aid of a pre-established support system. Having already built up peacekeeping practices, community

relations, and traditional skills—like what the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective deems “pod maps”—I would have been better equipped to deal with interpersonal abuse once it happened (Mingus, “Pods”). And if my ex rejected these direct attempts, then the result may have necessitated turning away and turning inward.

It’s entirely possible that preventative measures and direct confrontation could fail to bring about accountability and transformation. After all, “no one but you can do the hard work of taking accountability for yourself” (Mingus, “Four Parts”). So what could I and others do to redress harm indirectly without the criminal punishment system? As I demonstrated in chapter three, turning away and turning inward are valid alternatives when those who cause harm do not cease. In order to flee the drudgery, horror, and confinement on *HSS Matilda*, Rivers Solomon’s protagonist, Aster, turns away from the plantation/ship in a fugitive act and simultaneously turns towards the coded work of her mother. *An Unkindness of Ghosts* thus presents a model of indirect redress for various interpersonal violences—a redress that does not rest on (but also does not preclude) direct confrontation. Similarly, Adam Garnet Jones’s Indigenous characters do not directly interface with those who have caused large-scale, planetary conditions of precarity in “History of the New World.” In this case, the settler colonial harm that has been caused can best be addressed by Indigenous generative refusal, with one another and with the more-than-human world. Attending to the harm I experienced might have required turning away from the person who caused harm, inward to care for myself, and also towards those able to immediately help me escape dangerous situations and/or dig into applicable knowledges.

All of these proposals I've made necessitate networks of care that some (but not enough) of us have access to: kinship, stable housing, adequate food and water, readily available medical care, freedom from wage servitude, etc. Thus, the abolition of prisons, policing, and punishment also demands the complete reordering of things.¹⁰⁰ This is what Moten and Harney declare to be “the object of abolition”: “Not so much the abolition of prisons but the abolition of a society that could have prisons, that could have slavery, that could have the wage, and therefore not abolition as the elimination of anything but abolition as the founding of a new society” (42).

I sit within a long lineage of abolitionist feminists, who have already argued convincingly that the current forms of redress that are most available in the U.S. (and beyond) are wholly inadequate, if not actively oppressive. With a model inherited from chattel slavery and the denial of Indigenous sovereignty, with ties to historical and ongoing disablement, sexual violence, torture, xenophobic immigration practices, imperialist militarism overseas, trans necropolitics, and the criminalization of queerness, just to name a few impacts, I wholeheartedly believe that we can *imagine otherwise* and put it into practice. I have used speculative fiction both as an object of study as well as an accomplice in this struggle. The strategies outlined throughout help put into practice our abolitionist feminist aims of alternative models of redress beyond the white supremacist carceral settler state. Just as Imarisha indicates that “our justice movements desperately need science fiction,” I argue that abolitionist feminists need all forms of speculating—

¹⁰⁰ Presumably this sentiment is what inspired Ruth Wilson Gilmore's forthcoming book, *Change Everything: Racial Capitalism and the Case for Abolition*.

including horror movies, fantastical role playing games, science fiction fan art, music from decolonial futurists, and so much more—which provide not just lighthearted escapism or opportunities for scholarly analysis, but also crucial political imaginaries (“Rewriting”). It is through the gerundive, active verb form of *speculating* that we are *creating* alternatives from our awareness that there was a time before and there will be a time again, to which we shall return, when punishment ends.

Bibliography

“About S&P.” *Survived & Punished*, survivedandpunished.org/about. Accessed 7 Apr. 2022.

“About Us.” *Project NIA*, project-nia.org/mission-history. Accessed 7 Apr. 2022.

Acevedo, Elizabeth, Kacen Callender, Jenny Han, Jason Reynolds, Adam Silvera, Angie Thomas and Nicola Yoon. “The 100 Best YA Books of All Time.” *TIME*, time.com/collection/100-best-ya-books. Accessed 7 Apr. 2022.

Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke University Press, 2017.

Aizura, Aren Z. “Affective Vulnerability and Transgender Exceptionalism: Norma Ureiro in Transgression.” *Trans Studies: The Challenge to Hetero/Homo Normativities*, edited by Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel and Sarah Tobias, Rutgers University Press, 2016, pp. 122–38.

Akinola, Adeoye, and Ufo Okeke Uzodike. “Ubuntu and the Quest for Conflict Resolution in Africa.” *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2018, pp. 91–113.

(A)legal. “Beyond Revenge & Reconciliation: Demolishing the Straw Men.” *What About the Rapists? Anarchist Approaches to Crime & Justice*, Active Distribution, 2017, pp. 67–80.

Allen, Chadwick. “Blood (and) Memory.” *American Literature*, vol. 71, no. 1, 1999, pp. 93–116. ---. *Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies*. University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Améry, Jean. “The Birth of Man from the Spirit of Violence: Frantz Fanon the Revolutionary.” *Wasafiri*, vol. 20, no. 44, 2005, pp. 13–18.

Amor, Bani. “QUEERING THE MOVEMENT.” *Earth Island Journal*, vol. 33, no. 3, 2018, pp. 45–46.

- Anker, Peder. "The Ecological Colonization of Space." *Environmental History*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2005, pp. 239–68, doi.org/10.1093/envhis/10.2.239.
- Auteri, Steph. "Educate & Activate: Restorative Justice." *Feminist Book Club*, 31 Mar. 2022, feministbookclub.com/educate-activate-restorative-justice. Accessed 21 Apr. 2022.
- Bahng, Aimee. *Migrant Futures: Decolonizing Speculation in Financial Times*. Duke University Press, 2018.
- Bailey, Moya. *Misogynoir Transformed: Black Women's Digital Resistance*. New York University Press, 2021.
- Barker, Joanne. *Red Scare: The State's Indigenous Terrorist*. University of California Press, 2021.
- Barrie, Hannah. "No One Is Disposable: Towards Feminist Models of Transformative Justice." *Journal of Law and Social Policy*, vol. 33, 2020, pp. 65–92.
- Barry, Louise. "How to Make a Fist: Writing on Women's Self-Defense from the Collection of Interference Archive." *Take Back the Fight: Resisting Sexual Violence from the Ground Up*, edited by Lani Hanna, Interference Archive, 2017, pp. 38–45.
- Belk, Nolan. "The Certainty of the Flesh: Octavia Butler's Use of the Erotic in the Xenogenesis Trilogy." *Utopian Studies*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2008, pp. 369–389.
- Ben-Moshe, Liat. *Decarcerating Disability: Deinstitutionalization and Prison Abolition*. University of Minnesota Press, 2020.
- Bernstein, Elizabeth. "The Sexual Politics of the 'New Abolitionism.'" *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2007, pp. 128–151.

- Braid, Christina. "Contemplating and Contesting Violence in Dystopia: Violence in Octavia Butler's XENOGENESIS Trilogy." *Contemporary Justice Review*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2006, pp. 47–65.
- Brandzel, Amy L. *Against Citizenship: the Violence of the Normative*. University of Illinois Press, 2016.
- Brayne, Sarah. *Predict and Surveil: Data, Discretion, and the Future of Policing*. Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Brings Plenty, Candi, panelist. Panel discussion. National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition 2nd Annual Virtual Summit: Healing in a Time of Truth and Justice, 20 Nov 2021, online.
- Brydon, Diana. "Risk, Mortality, and Memory: The Global Imaginaries of Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves*, M.G. Vassanji's *Nostalgia*, and André Alexis's *Fifteen Dogs*." *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, vol. 78, 2019, pp. 97–112.
- Burk, Connie. "Think. Re-Think: Accountable Communities." *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence within Activist Communities*, edited by Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, AK Press, 2011, pp. 265–279.
- Burks, Tiffany. "Disposability Culture." *Medium*, 6 Sep 2019, medium.com/@southfloridahealing/disposability-culture-d5ed213fd983. Accessed 22 Apr 2023.
- Butler, Octavia. *Dawn*. Warner Books, 1987.
- Calanchi, Alessandra, et al. "An Eco-Critical Cultural Approach to Mars Colonization." *Forum for World Literature Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2017, pp. 205–16.

- Campt, Tina. "Black Feminist Futures and the Practice of Fugitivity." *YouTube*, uploaded by Barnard Center for Research on Women, 21 Oct 2014, [youtube.com/watch?v=2ozhqw840PU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ozhqw840PU).
- Canavan, Gerry. *Octavia E. Butler*. University of Illinois Press, 2016.
- Cannella, Megan E. "Dreams in a Time of Dystopic Colonialism: Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* and Louise Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God*." *Displaced: Literature of Indigeneity, Migration, and Trauma*, edited by Kate Rose, Routledge, 2020, pp 111–20.
- Carnes, Jeremy M. "'Our Bodies Dazzle in the Light': A Review of *Love After the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction*." *SFRA Review*, vol. 51, no. 3, 2021, pp. 294–7.
- Curtin, Deane, and Robert Litke. *Institutional Violence*. BRILL, 1999.
- Chen, Ching-In, Jai Dulani, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha. Introduction. *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence within Activist Communities*, edited by Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, AK Press, 2016, pp. xix–xxxvi.
- Chrysalis Collective, the. "Beautiful, Difficult, Powerful: Ending Sexual Assault Through Transformative Justice." *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence within Activist Communities*, edited by Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, AK Press, 2011, pp. 189–205.
- Chua, Charmaine. "Abolition Is A Constant Struggle: Five Lessons from Minneapolis." *Theory & Event*, vol. 23, no. 4 supplement, 2020, p. S-127–47.

- Cole, Adrian, YaliniDream, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Jenna Peters-Golden, Ejeris Dixon, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha. "Our Hearts are Beating Together: A Conversation with Some TJ Old Heads." *Beyond Survival: Strategies and Stories from the Transformative Justice Movement*, edited by Ejeris Dixon and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, AK Press, 2020, pp. 257–73.
- Conrad, Ryan, Karma Chávez, Yasmin Nair, and Deena Loeffler. "Against Equality: Queer Revolution, Not Mere Inclusion." *Against Equality: Queer Revolution, Not Mere Inclusion*, edited by Ryan Conrad, AK Press, 2014, pp. 1–11.
- Corioni, Elena. "Apocalyptic Visions from the Past: The Colonization of Mars in Dick's *Martian Time-Slip*." *JAm It*, no. 3, 2020, doi.org/10.13135/2612-5641/4142.
- Coulthard, Glen. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. University of Minnesota Press, 2014.
- Cox, Sandra. "Decolonial Speculative Fiction: Indigenous Resistance in *The Marrow Thieves*, *Trail of Lightning* and *Storm of Locusts*." *Journal of Science Fiction*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2021, pp. 65–79.
- Crimethinc. "Accounting for Ourselves: Breaking the Impasse Around Assault and Abuse in Anarchist Scenes." *What About the Rapists? Anarchist Approaches to Crime & Justice*, Active Distribution, 2017, pp. 30–61.
- Creative Interventions. *Creative Interventions Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Stop Interpersonal Violence*. 2012.

- Critical Resistance and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence. "Gender Violence and the Prison-Industrial Complex." *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology*, edited by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 223–226.
- Curley, Andrew, Pallavi Gupta, Lara Lookabaugh, Christopher Neubert, and Sara Smith. "Decolonisation is a Political Project: Overcoming Impasses between Indigenous Sovereignty and Abolition." *Antipode*, vol. 54, no. 4, 2022, pp. 1043–1062.
- Curtis, Claire P. "Utopian Possibilities." *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2015, pp. 19–33.
- DasGupta, Debanuj. "Rescripting Trauma: Trans/Gender Detention Politics and Desire in the United States." *Women's Studies in Communication*, vol. 41, no. 4, 2018, pp. 324–28, doi.org/10.1080/07491409.2018.1544011.
- David, Marlo D. *Mama's Gun: Black Maternal Figures and the Politics of Transgression*. The Ohio State University Press, 2016.
- Davis, Angela. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Seven Stories Press, 2003.
- . *Women, Race, and Class*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011.
- Davis, Angela, Gina Dent, Erica Meiners, and Beth Richie. *Abolition. Feminism. Now*. Haymarket Books, 2022.
- Davis, Janae, Alex A. Moulton, Levi Van Sant, and Brian Williams. "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, ...Plantationocene?: A Manifesto for Ecological Justice in an Age of Global Crises." *Geography Compass*, vol. 13, no. 5, 2019, pp. 1–15.
- Davis, Kiara Icely. *Sites of Humanism: Intimate Encounters within Black Feminist Geographies*. 2020. The University of Texas at Austin, Master's thesis. dx.doi.org/10.26153/tsw/11752.

- Day, Iyko. *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logic of Settler Colonial Capitalism*. Duke University Press, 2016.
- Dayal, Smaran. "Octavia Butler and the Settler Colonial Speculative: *Xenogenesis* and Planetary Loss." *American Studies*, vol. 60, no. 3, 2021, pp. 95–118, doi.org/10.1353/ams.2021.0030.
- De Bruin-Molé, Megen. "Salvaging Utopia: Lessons for (and from) the Left in Rivers Solomon's *An Unkindness of Ghosts* (2017), *The Deep* (2019), and *Sorrowland* (2021)." *Humanities*, vol. 10, no. 4, 2021, p. 109 (1–11), doi.org/10.3390/h10040109.
- De Cristofaro, Diletta. "Patterns of Repetition: Colonialism, Capitalism and Climate Breakdown in Contemporary Post-Apocalyptic Fiction." *Parallax*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2021, pp. 12–30.
- De Vos, Laura Maria. "Spiralic Temporality and Cultural Continuity for Indigenous Sovereignty: Idle No More and *The Marrow Thieves*." *Transmotion*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2020, pp. 1–42.
- Deer, Sarah. *The Beginning and the End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America*. University of Minnesota Press, 2015.
- Deer, Sarah, Jodi A. Byrd, Durba Mitra, and Sarah Haley. "Rage, Indigenous Feminisms, and the Politics of Survival." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 46, no. 4, 2021, pp. 1057–71.
- Delany, Samuel R. *The Jewel-Hinged Jaw: Notes on the Language of Science Fiction*. Dragon Press, 1977.
- Deloria, Philip Joseph. *Indians in Unexpected Places*. University Press of Kansas, 2004.
- Desai, Jigna, and Kevin Murphy. "Subjunctively Inhabiting the University." *Critical Ethnic Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2018, pp. 21–43, doi.org/10.5749/jcritethnstud.4.1.0021.

- DiAngelo, Robin. "White Fragility." *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2011, pp. 54–70.
- Dietrich, René. "The Biopolitical Logics of Settler Colonialism and Disruptive Relationality." *Cultural Studies↔Critical Methodologies*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2017, pp. 67–77.
- Dillon, Grace L. "Imagining Indigenous Futurisms." *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction*, edited by Grace L. Dillon, University of Arizona Press, 2012, pp. 1–12.
- Dimaline, Cherie. *The Marrow Thieves*. Dancing Cat Books, 2017.
- Dinh, Thaomi Michelle. "'When We Fight, We Win': Time and Care in Asian American Abolition Work." *Journal of Asian American Studies*, vol. 25, no. 3, 2022, pp. 445–62, doi.org/10.1353/jaas.2022.0036.
- Dunnett, Oliver, et al. "Geographies of Outer Space: Progress and New Opportunities." *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2019, pp. 314–36, doi.org/10.1177/0309132517747727.
- Duthu, N. Bruce. "Incorporative Discourse in Federal Indian Law: Negotiating Tribal Sovereignty through the Lens of Native American Literature." *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, vol. 13, 2000, pp. 141–90.
- Ellasante, Ian Khara. "Radical Sovereignty, Rhetorical Borders, and the Everyday Decolonial Praxis of Indigenous Peoplehood and Two-Spirit Reclamation." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 44, no. 9, 2021, pp. 1507–26, doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2021.1906437.
- Erevelles, Nirmala. *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts: Enabling a Transformative Body Politic*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

- Estes, Nick. *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*. Verso, 2019.
- Estruth, Jeannette Alden, and Colette Perold. "From the Gold Rush to the Colonization of Mars: How Silicon Valley Imagines Away the Working Class." *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing*, vol. 44, no. 2, 2022, pp. 69–73, doi.org/10.1109/MAHC.2022.3172519.
- Everett, Anna. "Afrofuturism on My Mind." *We Travel the Space Ways: Black Imagination, Fragments, and Diffractions*, edited by Henriette Gunkel and kara lynch, Transcript, 2019, pp. 251–278.
- Ezie, Chinyere. "Not Your Mule? Disrupting the Political Powerlessness of Black Women Voters." *University of Colorado Law Review*, vol. 92, no. 3, 2021, pp. 659–714.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox, Grove Press, 2008.
- . *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Constance Farrington, Grove Press, 1963.
- Finch, Megan. *Unreasonable Blackness: Black Women Writing Madness (1970–Present)*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2020.
- Fitzmaurice, Joshua, and Stacey Henderson. "On the Legality of Mars Colonisation." *Adelaide Law Review*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2019, pp. 841–56.
- Flowers, Rachel. "Refusal to Forgive: Indigenous Women's Love and Rage." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2015, pp. 32–49.
- Gaarder, Emily. "Addressing Violence Against Women: Alternatives to State-Based Law and Punishment." *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*, edited by Randall Amster, Abraham DeLeon, Luis A. Fernandez, Anthony J. Nocella II, and Deric Shannon, Routledge, 2009, pp. 46–55.

- Gabbay, Zvi D. "Justifying Restorative Justice: A Theoretical Justification for the Use of Restorative Justice Practices." *Journal of Dispute Resolution*, vol. 2005, no. 2, 2005, pp. 349–397.
- Garnett Jones, Adam. "The History of the New World." *Love After the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit & Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction*, edited by Joshua Whitehead, Arsenal Pulp Press, 2020, pp. 35–60.
- Gilio-Whitaker, Dina. *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock*. Beacon Press, 2020.
- Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Change Everything: Racial Capitalism and the Case for Abolition*. Haymarket Books, 2023.
- Goeman, Mishuana. *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*. University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- . "Ongoing Storms and Struggles: Gendered Violence and Resource Exploitation." *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies*, edited by Joanne Barker, Duke University Press, 2017, pp. 99–126.
- Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Goss, Theodora, and John Paul Riquelme. "From Superhuman to Posthuman: The Gothic Technological Imaginary in Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein' and Octavia Butler's 'Xenogenesis.'" *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 53, no. 3, 2007, pp. 434–59, doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2007.0068.

- Gottlieb, Joseph. "Space Colonization and Existential Risk." *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2019, pp. 306–20, doi.org/10.1017/apa.2019.12.
- Gouge, Catherine. "The Great Storefront of American Nationalism: Narratives of Mars and the Outerspatial Frontier." *Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2002, americanpopularculture.com/journal/articles/fall_2002/gouge.htm.
- Grove, Nicole Sunday. "'Welcome to Mars': Space Colonization, Anticipatory Authoritarianism, and the Labour of Hope." *Globalizations*, vol. 18, no. 6, 2021, pp. 1033–48, doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2020.1859764.
- Guenther, Lisa. *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and Its Afterlives*. University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Gundaker, Grey. "Hidden Education Among African Americans During Slavery." *Teachers College Record*, vol. 109, no. 7, 2007, pp. 1591–612, doi.org/10.1177/016146810710900707.
- Gunkel, Henriette, and kara lynch. "Lift Off... an Introduction." *We Travel the Space Ways: Black Imagination, Fragments, and Diffractions*, edited by Henriette Gunkel and kara lynch, Transcript, 2019, pp. 21–43.
- Gutiérrez, Jennicet, and Suyapa Portillo. "Trans(formation) of a Movement." *NACLA Report on the Americas*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2018, pp. 392–94, doi.org/10.1080/10714839.2018.1550983.
- Haley, Sarah. *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2016.

- Hamilton, Regina Danielle. *Speculative Aesthetics: Time, Space, and the Black Subject in 20th and 21st Century*. 2019. Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, PhD dissertation. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Hampton, Gregory. "Lost Memories: Memory as a Process of Identity in the Fiction of Octavia Butler." *College Language Association Journal*, vol. 55, no. 3, 2012, pp. 262–278.
- Harjo, Laura. *Spiral to the Stars: Mvskoke Tools of Futurity*. University of Arizona Press, 2019.
- Harkin, Natalie. "The Poetics of (Re)Mapping Archives: Memory in the Blood." *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature: JASAL*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2014, p. 1–14.
- Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Minor Compositions, 2013.
- Hartman, Saidiya V. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Heise-von der Lippe, Anya. "'What Language Do You Dream In?' Re-imagining the Future of (Post-)Human Kinships." *Kinship and Collective Action: in Literature and Culture*, edited by Gero Bauer, Anya Heise-von der Lippe, Nicole Hirschfelder, Katharina Luther, 2020, pp. 83–99.
- Hersey, Tricia. *Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto*. Little, Brown Spark, 2022.
- Holland, Sharon Patricia. *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity*. Duke University Press, 2000.
- Horner, Melissa, Joaquin Muñoz, and Robert Petrone. "Ni kehtwawmi mooshahkinitounawn: Lifting Up Representations of Indigenous Education and Futures in *The Marrow Thieves*." *Research on Diversity in Youth Literature*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2021, pp. 1–25.

- Hu Pegues, Juliana. "Rape Is/Not a Metaphor." *Journal of Asian American Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2021, pp. 9–17, doi.org/10.1353/jaas.2021.0002.
- Huebener, Paul. "Stealing Sleep: Expanding the Conversation on the Literary Politics of Sleep and Insomnia." *English Studies in Canada*, vol. 44, no. 3, 2018, pp. 67–89.
- Hunt, Sarah. "In Her Name: Relationships as Law." *YouTube*, uploaded by TEDx Talks, 18 Dec. 2013, youtube.com/watch?v=XmJZP2liqKI.
- Hunt, Sarah, and Cindy Holmes. "Everyday Decolonization: Living a Decolonizing Queer Politics." *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2015, pp. 154–72, doi.org/10.1080/10894160.2015.970975.
- Husso, Marita, Tuija Virkki, Marianne Notko, Helena Hirvonen, and Jari Eilola. *Interpersonal Violence: Differences and Connections*. Routledge, 2016. doi-org.ezp1.lib.umn.edu/10.4324/9781315628509.
- Imarisha, Walidah. Introduction. *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*. AK Press and the Institute for Anarchist Studies, 2015, pp. 3–5.
- . "Rewriting the Future: Using Science Fiction to Re-Envision Justice." *Bitch Media*, 11 Feb 2015, bitchmedia.org/article/rewriting-the-future-prison-abolition-science-fiction. Accessed 29 Apr 2020.
- Ingwersen, Moritz. "Reclaiming Fossil Ghosts: Indigenous Resistance to Resource Extraction in Works by Warren Cariou, Cherie Dimaline, and Nathan Adler." *Canadian Literature*, no. 240, 2020, pp. 59–76.
- Innes, Robert Alexander. "Elder Brother, the Law of the People, and Contemporary Kinship Practices of Cowessess First Nation Members: Reconceptualizing Kinship in American

- Indian Studies Research.” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, vol. 34, no. 2, 2010, pp. 27–46.
- Jackson, Sandra, and Julie E. Moody-Freeman. “The Black Imagination and the Genres: Science Fiction, Futurism and the Speculative.” *The Black Imagination: Science Fiction, Futurism and the Speculative*, edited by Sandra Jackson and Julie E. Moody-Freeman, Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2011, pp. 1–14.
- Jackson, Shona N. “Movement and Time: A Diasporic Response to Grounded Light.” *American Quarterly*, vol. 71, no. 2, 2019, pp. 343–52.
- Jackson, Trudie. “Two-Spirit Nation: Water Protectors Rise to Reclaim Space in the Sacred Fire.” *Color Bloq*, Nov 2018, colorbloq.org/article/two-spirit-nation-water-protectors-rise-to-reclaim-space-in-the-sacred-fire.
- Jesser, Nancy. “Blood, Genes and Gender in Octavia Butler’s *Kindred* and *Dawn*.” *Extrapolation*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2002, pp. 36–61, doi.org/10.3828/extr.2002.43.1.05.
- Jones, Esther. “Africana Women’s Science Fiction and Narrative Medicine: Difference, Ethics, and Empathy.” *Afrofuturism 2.0: The Rise of Astro-Blackness*, edited by Reynaldo Anderson and Charles E. Jones. Lexington Books, 2016, pp. 185–205.
- Justice, Daniel Heath. *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2018.
- Kaba, Mariame. “Black Women Punished for Self-Defense Must Be Freed from Their Cages.” *The Guardian*, 3 Jan 2019, [theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/03/cyntoia-brown-marissa-alexander-black-women-self-defense-prison](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/03/cyntoia-brown-marissa-alexander-black-women-self-defense-prison).

- . "Justice." *The Feminist Utopia Project: Fifty-Seven Visions of a Wildly Better Future*, edited by Alexandra Brodsky and Rachel Kauder Nalebuff, The Feminist Press, 2015, pp. 80-90.
- Kaba, Mariame, et al. *We Do This 'til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice*. Haymarket Books, 2021.
- Kaba, Mariame, and Andrea J Ritchie. *No More Police: A Case for Abolition*. The New Press, 2022.
- Kaba, Mariame, and Shira Hassan. *Fumbling Towards Repair: A Workbook for Community Accountability Facilitators*. Project NIA/Just Practice, 2019.
- Kearnes, Matthew, and Thom van Dooren. "Rethinking the Final Frontier: Cosmo-Logics and an Ethic of Interstellar Flourishing." *GeoHumanities*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2017, pp. 178–97, doi.org/10.1080/2373566X.2017.1300448.
- Keep, Nell. "Love after the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction." *Booklist*, vol. 117, no. 1–2, *American Library Association*, 2020, p. 52.
- Kelley, Robin D. G. *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Beacon Press, 2002.
- Khan, Zahra, et al. "Abolitionist Reimaginings of Health." *AMA Journal of Ethics*, vol. 24, no. 3, 2022, pp. E239–246, doi.org/10.1001/amajethics.2022.239.
- Khanna, Ranjana. "Disposability." *Differences*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2009, pp. 181–98, doi.org/10.1215/10407391-2008-021.
- Killsback, Leo Kevin. "A Nation of Families: Traditional Indigenous Kinship, the Foundation for Cheyenne Sovereignty." *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2019, pp. 34–43.

- Kim, Mimi E. "The Carceral Creep: Gender-Based Violence, Race, and the Expansion of the Punitive State, 1973–1983." *Social Problems*, vol. 67, no. 2, 2020, pp. 251–69, doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spz013.
- King, Tiffany Lethabo. *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*. Duke University Press, 2019.
- King, Tiffany Lethabo, Jenell Navarro, and Andrea Smith. "Beyond Incommensurability: Toward an Otherwise Stance on Black and Indigenous Relationality." *Otherwise Worlds: Against Settler Colonialism and Anti-Blackness*, edited by Tiffany Lethabo King, Jenell Navarro, and Andrea Smith, Duke University Press, 2020, pp. 1–23.
- Koyama, Emi. "Disloyal to Feminism: Abuse of Survivors within the Domestic Violence Shelter System." *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology*, edited by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 208–222.
- Lara, Irene. "Healing Sueños for Academia." *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Gloria Anzaldúa & AnaLouise Keating, Routledge, 2002, pp. 433–438.
- Larkey, Molly. "Meet the Leader of the Two-Spirit Camp at Standing Rock." *Go Mag*, 13 Jan 2017, gomag.com/article/meet-the-leader-of-the-two-spirit-camp-at-standing-rock.
- Lavender III, Isiah. *Afrofuturism Rising: The Literary Prehistory of a Movement*. Ohio State University Press, 2019.
- . *Race in American Science Fiction*. Indiana University Press, 2011.
- Law, Victoria. "Against Carceral Feminism." *Jacobin*, 17 Oct 2014, jacobinmag.com/2014/10/against-carceral-feminism. Accessed 9 Nov 2016.

- LeMenager, Stephanie. "Love and Theft; or, Provincializing the Anthropocene." *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 136, no. 1, 2021, pp. 102–9.
- Levchenko, Igor, et al. "Mars Colonization: Beyond Getting There." *Global Challenges*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2019, pp. 1800062 (1–11), doi.org/10.1002/gch2.201800062.
- Llewellyn, Kristina, and Nicholas Ng-A-Fook. *Oral History, Education, and Justice: Possibilities and Limitations for Redress and Reconciliation*. Routledge, 2020. doi-org.ezp2.lib.umn.edu/10.4324/9781315179278.
- "Love After the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction." *Publishers Weekly*, vol. 267, no. 33, 2020, p. 59.
- Lumsden, Stephanie. "Reproductive Justice, Sovereignty, and Incarceration: Prison Abolition Politics and California Indians." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2016, pp. 33–46, doi.org/10.17953/aicrj.40.1.lumsden.
- Lypka, Celiese. "Métis Survivance: Land, Love, and Futures in Cherie Dimaline's Dystopian Novels." *American Studies*, vol. 60, no. 3/4, 2021, pp. 27–49.
- Macaré, Joe. "'The Feminist Utopia Project': Figuring Out the Futures We Want to Build." *Truthout*, 23 Nov. 2015, truthout.org/articles/the-feminist-utopia-project-figuring-out-the-futures-we-want-to-build. Accessed 21 Apr. 2022.
- Maracle, Lee. *I Am Woman: A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism*. Press Gang Publishers, 1996.
- Martin, Randy. "Finance." *Keywords for American Cultural Studies, Second Edition*, edited by Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, NYU Press, 2014, pp. 106–110.

- Maynard, Robyn, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. *Rehearsals for Living*. Haymarket Books, 2022.
- Medel, China. "Abolitionist Care in the Militarized Borderlands." *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 116, no. 4, 2017, pp. 873–83, doi.org/10.1215/00382876-4235084.
- Miller, Jim. "Post-Apocalyptic Hoping: Octavia Butler's Dystopian/Utopian Vision." *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1998, pp. 336–60.
- Million, Dian. "Intense Dreaming: Theories, Narratives, and Our Search for Home." *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2011, pp. 313–33.
- Mingus, Mia. "The Four Parts of Accountability & How to Give a Genuine Apology." *Leaving Evidence*, 18 Dec 2019, leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2019/12/18/how-to-give-a-good-apology-part-1-the-four-parts-of-accountability.
- . "Pods and Pod Mapping Worksheet." *Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective*, Jun 2016, batjc.wordpress.com/resources/pods-and-pod-mapping-worksheet.
- Mithlo, Nancy Marie. "Blood Memory and the Arts: Indigenous Genealogies and Imagined Truths." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2011, pp. 103–118.
- Morgan Beckford, Sharon. "When to Die Is to Live: Acts of Refusal as Songs of Freedom in the African Diaspora." *Interdisciplinary Humanities*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2021, pp. 9–31.
- Morgensen, Scott Lauria. "Settler Homonationalism." *GLQ: Gay and Lesbian Studies Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 1–2, 2010, pp. 105–31, doi.org/10.1215/10642684-2009-015.
- . *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

- Moses, A. Dirk. "Genocide and Settler Society in Australian History." *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, edited by A. Dirk Moses, Berghahn Books, 2004, 3-48.
- Mosley, Walter. "Black to the Future." *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora*, edited by Sheree R. Thomas, Warner Books Inc., 2000, pp. 405–7.
- Moten, Fred. *Black and Blur*. Duke University Press, 2017.
- Moten, Fred and Stefano Harney. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Autonomedia, 2013.
- Murphey, Kathleen. "The Phoenix Moment as another Vehicle for Normalizing Rape Culture." *Pennsylvania Literary Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2019, pp. 190–198.
- Nanda, Aparajita. "Power, Politics, and Domestic Desire in Octavia Butler's *Lilith's Brood*." *Callaloo*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2013, 773–788. doi.org/10.1353/cal.2013.0164.
- Nelson, Alondra. "Introduction: Future Texts." *Social Text* 71, vol. 20, no. 2, 2002, pp. 1–15.
- Nelson, Jennifer J. "An Analysis of Self-published Novels by Autistic Authors as a Form of Advocacy." *Ought: The Journal of Autistic Culture*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2022, pp. 10-29.
- O'Brien, Jean M. *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England*. University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
- Obourn, Megan. "Octavia Butler's Disabled Futures." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 54, no. 1, 2013, pp. 109–138.
- Ogden, Stormy. "Ex-Prisoner Pomo Woman Speaks Out." *Social Justice*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2004, pp. 63–69.

- Outterson, Sarah. "Diversity, Change, Violence: Octavia Butler's Pedagogical Philosophy." *Utopian Studies*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2008, pp. 433–456.
- Pak, Chris. "Ecocriticism and Terraforming: Building Critical Spaces." *Forum*, no. 10, 2010, pp. 1–14.
- Peppers, Cathy. "Dialogic Origins and Alien Identities in Butler's Xenogenesis." *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1995, pp. 47–62.
- Pexa, Christopher. *Translated Nation: Rewriting the Dakhóta Oyáte*. University of Minnesota Press, 2019.
- Phillips, Rasheedah. "Organize Your Own Temporality: Notes on Self-Determined Temporalities and Radical Futurities." *We Travel the Space Ways: Black Imagination, Fragments, and Diffractions*, edited by Henriette Gunkel and kara lynch, Transcript, 2019, pp. 237–243.
- Pickens, Therí A. *Black Madness :: Mad Blackness*. Duke University Press, 2019.
- Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi. *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018.
- Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi, and K. Agbebyi. "The Future Is Disabled: Prophecies, Love Notes and Mourning Songs." *YouTube*, uploaded by Charis Circle, 17 Oct 2022, [youtube.com/watch?v=tcyayOv0Des](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcyayOv0Des).
- Plain, Gill, and Susan Sellers. Introduction. *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism*. Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 1–4.
- Plisner, Andrew. "Arboreal Dialogics: An Ecocritical Exploration of Octavia Butler's *Dawn*." *African Identities*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2009, pp. 145–159.

- Pratt, Richard H. "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites." *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880–1900*, edited by Francis Paul Prucha, Harvard University Press, 1973, pp. 260–271.
- Pravinchandra, Shital. "'More Than Biological': Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* as Indigenous Counter-genetic Fiction." *Medical Humanities*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2021, pp. 135–44.
- Pyle, Kai. "'Women and 2spirits': On the Marginalization of Transgender Indigenous People in Activist Rhetoric." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, vol. 43, no. 3, 2020, pp. 85–94, doi.org/10.17953/aicrj.43.3.pyle.
- Raibmon, Paige Sylvia. *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast*. Duke University Press, 2005.
- Ray, Philip. "Toward Supportive Political Action: An Autoethnographic Approach to Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism." *Standpoints: Black Feminist Knowledges*, edited by Andrea N. Baldwin, Ashley V. Reichelmann, and Anthony Kwame Harrison, Virginia Tech Publishing, 2019, pp. 163–87.
- Razack, Sherene. *Dying from Improvement: Inquests and Inquiries into Indigenous Deaths in Custody*. University of Toronto Press, 2015.
- Register, Cheri. "American Feminist Literary Criticism: A Bibliographical Introduction." *Feminist Literary Criticism: Explorations in Theory*, edited by Josephine Donovan, University Press of Kentucky, 1989, pp. 1–28. jstor.org/stable/j.ctt130jh6x.5.
- Rieder, John. *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*. Wesleyan University Press, 2008.

Rifkin, Mark. *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*.
Duke University Press, 2017.

---. *Fictions of Land and Flesh: Blackness, Indigeneity, Speculation*. Duke University Press,
2019.

Ritchie, Andrea. "Carcerality." *Keywords for Gender and Sexuality Studies*, edited by the
Keywords Feminist Editorial Collective, New York University Press, 2021, pp. 40–3.

---. *Invisible No More: Police Violence against Black Women and Women of Color*. Beacon
Press, 2017.

Rivett, Sarah. "Raven's Land: American Literary History *In Medias Res*." *American Literary
History*, vol. 34, no. 1, Oxford University Press, 2022, pp. 301–14.

Ross, Luana. *Inventing the Savage: The Social Construction of Native American Criminality*.
University of Texas Press, 1998.

Ruppel, Timothy, et al. "Hidden in View: African Spiritual Spaces in North American
Landscapes." *Antiquity*, vol. 77, no. 296, 2003, pp. 321–35,
doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00092309.

Samudzi, Zoé, and William C. Anderson. *As Black as Resistance: Finding the Conditions for
Liberation*. AK Press, 2018.

Sargent, Lyman Tower. "African Americans and Utopia: Visions of a Better Life." *Utopian
Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2020, pp. 25–96.

Saunders, Charles R. "Why Blacks Should Read (and Write) Science Fiction." *Dark Matter: A
Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora*, edited by Sheree R. Thomas.
Warner Books Inc., 2000, pp. 398–404.

- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Schalk, Sami. *Bodyminds Reimagined: (Dis)ability, Race, and Gender in Black Women's Speculative Fiction*. Duke University Press, 2018.
- Simpson, Audra. "Consent's Revenge." *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2016, pp. 326–333.
- Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. University of Minnesota Press, 2017.
- Smith, Andrea, Beth Richie, Julia Sudbury, Janelle White, and the INCITE! Anthology Co-editors. "The Color of Violence: Introduction." *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology*, edited by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 1–10.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books, 2012.
- Smith, Rachel Greenwald. "Ecology Beyond Ecology: Life after the Accident in Octavia Butler's 'Xenogenesis' Trilogy." *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 55, no. 3, 2009, pp. 545–65, doi.org/10.1353/mfs.0.1627.
- Snorton, C. Riley. *Black on Both Sides: a Racial History of Trans Identity*. University of Minnesota Press, 2017.
- . "Gender." *Keywords for African American Studies*, edited by Erica Edwards, Roderick A. Ferguson, and Jeffrey Ogbar, New York University Press, 2015, pp. 90–92.
- Solomon, Rivers. *An Unkindness of Ghosts*. Akashic Books, 2017.

- Spade, Dean. "Their Laws Will Never Make Us Safer." *Against Equality: Queer Revolution, Not Mere Inclusion*, edited by Ryan Conrad et al, AK Press, 2014, pp. 165–175.
- Spiers, Miriam C. Brown. *Encountering the Sovereign Other: Indigenous Science Fiction*. Michigan State University Press, 2021.
- "Staff." *The Restorative Justice Institute of Maine*, rjimaine.org/staff. Accessed 21 Apr. 2022.
- Stein, Rachel. "Bodily Invasions: Gene Trading and Organ Theft in Octavia Butler and Nalo Hopkinson's Speculative Fiction." *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality, and Activism*, edited by Rachel Stein, Rutgers University Press, 2004, pp. 209–224.
- Stickgold-Sarah, Jessie. "'Your Children Will Know Us, You Never Will': The Pessimistic Utopia of Octavia Butler's Xenogenesis Trilogy." *Extrapolation*, vol. 51, no. 3, 2010, pp. 414–30, doi.org/10.3828/extr.2010.51.3.6.
- Streeby, Shelley. *Imagining the Future of Climate Change: World-Making through Science Fiction and Activism*. University of California Press, 2018.
- Takaki, Ronald. *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*. Oxford University Press, 1979.
- TallBear, Kim. "Caretaking Relations, Not American Dreaming." *Kalfou*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2019, pp. 24–41.
- . *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*. University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

- Taterka, Madeline. “57 Feminists Riff on What the World Could be in ‘The Feminist Utopia Project.’” *Autostraddle*, 13 Oct. 2015, autostraddle.com/57-feminists-riff-on-what-the-world-could-be-in-the-feminist-utopia-project-310857. Accessed 21 Apr. 2022.
- Tavares, Frank, et al. “Ethical Exploration and the Role of Planetary Protection in Disrupting Colonial Practices.” *Planetary Science and Astrobiology Decadal Survey 2023–2032*, 2020, pp. 1–7, doi.org/10.48550/arxiv.2010.08344.
- Taylor, Melanie Benson. “Indigenous Interruptions in the Anthropocene.” *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 136, no. 1, 2021, pp. 9–16, doi.org/10.1632/S0030812920000139.
- Temmen, Jens. “Scorched Earth: Discourses of Multiplanetary, Climate Change, and Martian Terraforming in *Finch* and *Once Upon a Time I Lived on Mars*.” *LiLi: Zeitschrift Für Literaturwissenschaft Und Linguistik*, vol. 52, no. 3, 2022, pp. 477–88, doi.org/10.1007/s41244-022-00262-2.
- Thibaut, Jacqueline. “‘To Pave the Way to Penitence’: Prisoners and Discipline at the Eastern State Penitentiary 1829–1835.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 106, no. 2, 1982, pp. 187–222.
- Threadcraft, Shatema. *Intimate Justice: The Black Female Body and the Body Politic*. Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Thuma, Emily. *All Our Trials: Prisons, Policing, and the Feminist Fight to End Violence*. University of Illinois Press, 2019.

- Thuma, Emily, and Sarah Haley. "Justice." *Keywords for Gender and Sexuality Studies*, edited by the Keywords Feminist Editorial Collective, New York University Press, 2021, pp. 136–40.
- Tobin, Jacqueline, and Raymond G. Dobard. *Hidden in Plain View: The Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*. Doubleday, 1999.
- Trudeau, Lyn, and Lorenzo Cherubini. "Speaking Our Truths in 'A Good Way.'" *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2010, p. 113–21.
- Tsui, Judy C. "Breaking Free do the Prison Paradigm: Integrating Restorative Justice Techniques into Chicago's Juvenile Justice System." *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, vol. 104, no. 3, 2014, pp. 635–666.
- Tuck, Eve, and C. Ree. "A Glossary of Haunting." *Handbook of Autoethnography*, edited by Stacy Holman Jones, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis, Routledge, 2013, 639–658.
- Turner, Christina. "Water as Wahkohtowin in Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves*." *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, vol. 33, no. 3-4, 2021, pp. 98–124.
- "*TWO SPIRIT NATION: A CAMP OF WATER PROTECTORS AT STANDING ROCK.*"
TheTwoSpiritNation.org. Accessed 23 Apr 2023.
- Umbreit, Mark S. "Restorative Justice through Victim-Offender Mediation: A Multi-Site Assessment." *Western Criminology Review* vol. 1, no. 1, 1998.
- Valandra, Edward Charles. "Undoing the First Harm: Settlers in Restorative Justice." *Colorizing Restorative Justice: Voicing Our Realities*, Edward Charles Valandra and Robert Yazzie, Living Justice Press, 2020, pp. 325–70.

- Valentine, David. "Gravity Fixes: Habituating to the Human on Mars and Island Three." *HAU Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2017, pp. 185–209, doi.org/10.14318/hau7.3.012.
- Vizenor, Gerald. *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*. University of Nebraska Press, 2008.
- Wang, Jackie. *Carceral Capitalism*. Semiotext(e), 2018.
- Wazyatawin. *What Does Justice Look Like? The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota Homeland*. Living Justice Press, 2008.
- Weiss, Sol Yael. "A Tribute to Ibrahim Baba Farajajé: An Intersectional Perspective on Sexual Violence, Decolonization, and Standing Rock." *Journal of Bisexuality*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2022, pp. 284–94, doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2018.1450175.
- White, Eric. "The Erotics of Becoming: Xenogenesis and *The Thing*." *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 20, no. 3, 1993, pp. 394–408.
- Whyte, Kyle P. "Indigenous Science (Fiction) for the Anthropocene: Ancestral Dystopias and Fantasies of Climate Change Crises." *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, vol. 1, no. 1–2, 2018, pp. 224–242.
- Winn, Samantha R. "Dying Well in the Anthropocene: On the End of Archivists." In "Libraries and Archives in the Anthropocene," edited by Eira Tansey and Rob Montoya. Special issue, *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2019, pp. 1-20.
- Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2006, pp. 387–409.
- Womack, Ytasha. *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture*. Lawrence Hill Books, 2013.

- Wynter, Sylvia. “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument.” *CR: The New Centennial Review*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2003, pp. 257–337, doi.org/10.1353/ncr.2004.0015.
- Xausa, Chiara. “Decolonizing the Anthropocene: ‘Slow Violence’ and Indigenous Resistance in Cherie Dimaline’s *The Marrow Thieves*.” *Il Tolomeo*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2020, pp. 87–100.
- Zaki, Hoda M. “Utopia, Dystopia, and Ideology in the Science Fiction of Octavia Butler.” *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1990, pp. 239–51.
- Zanella, Patrizia. “Witnessing Story and Creating Kinship in a New Era of Residential Schools: Cherie Dimaline’s *The Marrow Thieves*.” *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, vol. 32, no. 3/4, 2019, pp. 176–200.