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Holding It Together: Indigeneity, (Settler-) Postcolonialism, and M. NourbeSe Philip

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Abstract: This article considers the conditions for relations between Indigenous and Black diasporic subjects, while also addressing Indigenous and South Asian relations. Concerned with the place of these subject relations within postcolonial and settler colonial paradigms and with their potential for decolonial practice, the article explores Jodi Byrd's and Marie Battiste's critiques of postcolonial and settler-colonial theories and M. NourbeSe Philip's verse-novella *Looking for Mr. Livingstone*. It also offers a personal anecdote about South Asian settler relations with caretakers of Stl'atl'imx land in British Columbia, Canada. It examines these texts and experiences through the concept of "the hold." "The hold," a spatial and epistemological condition for relations between Indigenous and diasporic subjects, allows one to imagine a sovereign Indigenous space as a practice of cross-racial kinship.

Keywords: Black Canadian literature, Indigenous studies, settler colonialism, diaspora, comparative studies

> Always collaboration, and always community and sharing. So often at the kitchen table, so often in the spaces that we happen to have together.
>
> Cecily Nicholson qtd. in Chariandy et al., "Conversations at the Crossroads"

Given the historical and ontological conditions for Blackness on Turtle Island, a name many Indigenous nations use to refer to so-called North America, Black subjecthood is a complicated category vis-à-vis settler colonialism. Like many others, M. NourbeSe Philip insists that the

colonial regime's forced transit of Black subjects to Turtle Island renders the term "settler" inappropriate to categorize their lived experiences and complicates Black diasporic relations with the Indigenous communities and realities of the land ("Echoes" 49).[1] While this article considers the potential of different critical terms that could fill this discursive void in postcolonial and settler-colonial studies, it primarily focuses on the conditions for Black-Indigenous relations that can emerge beyond the mediation of coloniality. I explore "the hold," a term recontextualized from its original use to describe the hold of the slave ship, as an epistemological and spatial condition of such relations. An embodied enclosure of intimacy that can be a room or a hug, the hold has the capacity to articulate the complexity of Black and Indigenous relations.

This article unfolds in three sections: first, a discussion of Jodi Byrd's and Marie Battiste's critiques of postcolonial theory and what they see as its binaric discourse; second, an exploration of Philip's verse-novella *Looking for Mr. Livingstone: An Odyssey of Silence* (1991); and, finally, a brief anecdote about my experience of South Asian settler friendship with Indigenous caretakers at Ulluilsc, a re-occupation village in British Columbia, Canada. Byrd's and Battiste's critiques problematize the temporal and epistemological foundations of postcolonial theory and create space for examining relations between Black and Indigenous subjects in Philip's *Looking for Mr. Livingstone*. In Philip's text, a diasporic Black woman visits Indigenous African women who welcome her into rooms, sweat lodges, hugs, and bounded circles to facilitate her journey toward understanding her identity and freeing herself from the shackles of colonialism. These enclosures become holds when the protagonist understands their structuring of care, teaching, and self-growth, all of which make up the conditions for Black diasporic and Indigenous relations. Though the Indigenous African women in the text provide the spatial, emotional, and epistemological parameters of the hold, it is the Black diasporic woman who experiences them and relays their significance. Moreover, as mediated by Philip's poetic voice, the hold is a Black Indigenous *and* Black diasporic concept that produces possibilities for relations between global Indigeneities and Black diasporas. In order to imagine the shape and possibilities of holds in Indigenous Turtle Island

spaces, specifically in the Interior Salish context of Stl'atl'imx land (recognized on colonial maps as the Lillooet, BC area) in the third section, I think through my experience at Ulluilsc. Ulluilsc is a St'át'imc word for "gathering place," another instantiation of the hold. This hold momentarily produces South Asian settler friendship with Indigenous caretakers, a relationship which nevertheless remains deeply inscribed by colonial violence. This section also offers my reflections on why terms like "settler" do not feel adequate in representing the ongoing settler presence of Asian-Canadians.

This article's conceptual thread, the hold, derives from Christina Sharpe's theorizations in *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (2017). While "the hold" originally referred to an architecture of containment, Sharpe unpacks its role in the history of the transatlantic slave trade and its psychosomatic and ontological impact on Black life in the diaspora. Not satisfied with "[t]he image of the ship" as a concept-metaphor for Black diasporic experience (Gilroy 4), her interrogation takes her deeper into the slave ship, to the hold, to trace the slave trade's legacies, which reproduce the conditions for Black diasporic loss (of Africa, humanity, kinships). The hold resembles what Édouard Glissant names the "womb abyss" of the Middle Passage (6). Transatlantic slavery turns the Black woman's "womb into a factory producing blackness as abjection much like the slave ship's hold and the prison, and turning the birth canal into another domestic Middle Passage with Black mothers" (Sharpe 74). Other iterations of the term hold, like "held," are inscribed by this original violence. Quoting Dionne Brand's *Thirsty* (2002), Sharpe notes that "we, Black people in the diaspora, are held and held in and by the 'brittle gnawed life we live,' unprotected from the terrible" (68). Black diasporic subjects are held in the terror of anti-Blackness, in the coloniality of slavery, and against the possibilities of moving beyond violent territorializations.

As I explore below, Philip's *Looking for Mr. Livingstone* considers the relational and transformative power of Indigenous African spaces that reveal an alternative trajectory for the hold. Instead of an architecture of captivity, the holds that keep the Black female protagonist, named the Traveller, in place are ones of kinship, pedagogy, and self-reflection;

rather than technologies of division and dehumanization, they provide conditions for affirming and intimate relations between the Black diaspora and an Indigenous Africa within and beyond coloniality. As I will discuss, the verse-novella articulates African Indigeneity as a land-based episteme practiced in the lived experience of kin-making. Sarah de Leeuw and Sarah Hunt criticize scholars who "often continue to engage *concepts of indigeneity* rather than Indigenous peoples themselves, their scholarship, their lived experience, and knowledge contributions" (6; emphasis in original). They suggest deferring to Indigenous scholars who write about subjects, histories, and geographies under study in colonial and settler-colonial scholarship because their work articulates "the everyday, ongoing, relational nature of Indigeneity" and "decenter[s] colonial frames of knowledge" (9). By participating in each African village's rituals of hospitality, pedagogy, and living, the Traveller learns about their distinct epistemologies and their geographical, cultural, and linguistic resistance to colonialism and colonial understandings of African Indigeneity, which Philip represents as resistance to the word "silence." The villages' practices help connect the Traveller to realities toward which she feels some intergenerational pull. This article thus does not extend only one idea of Indigeneity. Reading *Looking* and my experience at Ulluilsc through the lens of the differently iterated hold illuminates Indigeneity in Philip's text as self-determining practices of kinship and language-based resistance, and at Ulluilsc, in part, as a collectivizing process of storytelling and of (re)connecting with sacred St'át'imc sites. What connects both practices of Indigeneity is the Indigenous communities' commitment to relations with non-Indigenous communities as part of one's responsibility to the land and its stewardship.

I. Interventions into Postcolonial and Settler-Colonial Theory

Described by Leela Gandhi as "a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath" (*Postcolonial Theory* 8), postcolonialism as a field examines, from the perspective of the previously colonized, the violent and institutional remainders of colonialism. White coloniality persists in this field since colonialism's discursivity structures the very epistemic ground from which anticolonialists engage their study.

Consequently, postcolonialism often reproduces the "rigid oppositions" of colonial discourse (Gandhi, *Postcolonial* 32). Gandhi makes efforts to move past the field's well-worn critical procedures in her book *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (2005), in which she profiles unexpected friendships between "western 'nonplayers,'" a term she uses to refer to individuals belonging to colonial centres who renounce the "privileges of imperialism," and revolutionary figures in the "East" (1). Such friendships, she writes, "blur the rigid boundaries between West and non-West" and elude postcolonialism's conventional frames of encounter between colonist and colonial subject that hinge upon "oppositionality (culturalism, nativism, fundamentalism) or infiltration (hybridity, mimicry, reactive interpellation . . .)" (1). Gandhi's desire to complicate the binaries that undergird the colonizer-colonized relationship inaugurates another phase in postcolonial thought.

In the Canadian context, prominent postcolonial scholar Diana Brydon also expresses concern with the inflexibility of postcolonial binaries, particularly because of the way they erode Canadian-settler complexity in narratives of authenticity that dictate which nation can be qualified as *actually* colonized and therefore worthy of scholarly attention: "[T]he authentic colony is implicitly defined as poor, non-white, and resistant, and the inauthentic as rich, white, and complicit" (173). This logic, which determines inauthenticity as much as authenticity, elides Canada's invader-settler context and entails "the continuing denial and marginalization of Native people's experience of colonialism" (Brydon 173). Brydon addresses this issue by drawing on postcolonial reading strategies to name complicity as an enabling affective concept for settler subjects in settler-colonial states. Acknowledging one's complicity in colonialism—and therefore one's power and role in upholding the system—would instate a radical understanding of "the complexities of these emerging postcolonialisms" (171). Even though there is an epistemological distance between the current political terrain and one engaging with the "awareness of complicity" (171), settler individuals must try to imagine themselves "outside the binary of oppressor versus oppressed, as complicit in a system that can be analysed and changed,

in which it is not too late to make a difference" (171). Both Gandhi and Brydon gesture toward affective states and encounters because of their potential to baffle existing binaric paradigms and ability to produce "in-between" subject positions. Since whiteness, in their analyses, both defines and can be used to subvert the colonial paradigm, they argue that scholars must transform postcolonial methodologies from examining oppositional to adjacent relations.

Despite their transformative insights, Brydon and Gandhi nonetheless operate within an intellectual arena that continues to neglect Indigeneity. Scholars such as Byrd and Battiste offer critiques of postcolonialism that examine Western intellectual institutions' continued focus on whiteness and its universality, which erases Indigenous epistemologies and lived experiences. Byrd cites the work of Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, which contemplates "the place indigeneity might have within the global South" and its scholarly traditions ("Still Waiting" 77). Cook-Lynn argues that postcoloniality, "both in academia . . . and in political life" is a "deliberate strategy to take away nationalistic or tribal autonomy from millions of people" (qtd. in Byrd, "Still Waiting" 76).[2] The episteme of postcolonial theory cannot account for the unique relationship Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island have with the settler-colonial states on their land. Though colonized, the different nations maintain their own national, tribal, and hereditary structures of governance. "Postcolonial" is neither the current nor future political state capable of reflecting these nations' lived experiences. Accordingly, even as postcolonial theory attempts to move beyond the paradigm of white coloniality to Indigeneity, it reinscribes a set of theoretical protocols that efface any real consideration of Indigenous sovereignty and its practices.

Settler-colonial scholarship is particularly guilty of deferring Indigenous sovereignty. Byrd argues that "[t]he [continued] predicament of the 'post-' is that it forever anticipates that future [of Indigenous decolonization "and the return of lands"] at the same time that it forecloses it from ever arriving" ("Still Waiting" 77). She is referring to Brydon's work on settler-colonial contexts in which the white settler is neither colonizer nor colonized and "not only replaces the Indigenous as the ontological center of analysis, but is oppressed by the indigene

who now conspires with empire to isolate the abandoned white settler from the networks of power and authenticity" (Byrd, "Still Waiting" 86). Though Brydon develops her work on settler complicity against the reductive geopolitical antagonisms endemic to postcolonial theory, the racial binary of white-settler center and Indigenous margin remains intact in the field.

Battiste develops an alternative mode of inquiry and looks toward a grassroots development of Indigenous postcolonialism that can respond to the lived realities of settler-colonialism. Narrating the 1996 meeting of Indigenous delegates of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Battiste notes that the collective's work to define "cognitive imperialism" turned their conversation toward seeking "remedies for the colonization of the minds and souls of their peoples" (209). As soon as the group shifted the scope of their discussions to the level of lived experience, it became clear that decolonization needs to be an embodied practice of everyday resistance and psychosocial rehabilitation. De Leeuw and Hunt arrive at the same conclusion when they assert that "[s]ettler colonialism operates and accrues power more locally" (6) than colonialism. Accordingly, decolonization emerges from "grounded material practices, activism, or a lived reality" (de Leeuw and Hunt 5). The group at the 1996 gathering "revealed many perspectives on how to map and diagnose colonization, how to heal the colonized, and how to imagine and invoke a new society" (Battiste 210). Instead of synthesizing these insights into one political strategy, the participants focused on "sharing, listening, feeling, and analyzing," which led them to imagine "a postcolonial society that embraced and honoured our diversity," which Battiste defines as a diversity of "perspectives" (210). In the short space of a paragraph, she insists there is no logical step from understanding the varied psychosocial effects and contexts of colonialism to articulating a utopian imaginary. The collective practice of articulating a better "postcolonial society" loosens the grips of "colonial mentality and structures" (212) and begins the process of healing.

This imagining, according to Battiste, constitutes postcolonial Indigenous thought, which "is an aspirational practice, goal, or idea that

the delegates used to imagine a new form of society that they desired to create" (212). She differentiates between Indigenous postcolonial collective thinking and literary postcolonial theory, writing that the former is informed by experiences of "pain" and a desire for a different future for one's community, and the latter is immanent to Western ontologies that mistake postcolonial theoretical maps for all geopolitical terrains (212). For Battiste, Indigenous postcolonial thought is unlike postcolonial theory because its temporal and affective structures are undergirded by the experience of personal and intergenerational pain and it "refuses to allow others to appropriate this pain and these experiences" (212).[3] It is an episteme formed from a psychosomatic reality and cannot exist as a theoretical frame outside its historical and affective context. Moreover, this epistemology does not centre the source of affliction—colonial systems—and thereby reproduce Indigenous marginality; instead, it is a vigilant practice of remembering how colonial pain scars every experience differently and cannot be homogenized as exclusively juridical and state-inflicted violence.

Because this section introduces the rest of the article, I repeat Byrd's and Battiste's insights in order to think about the role of Indigenous criticism in non-Indigenous scholarship. Byrd argues that settler-colonial contexts foreclose Indigenous epistemologies, and Battiste insists Indigenous postcolonial thought accounts for lived experience in a way that postcolonial theory does not. Both voice what others have said, are saying, and will continue to say: that Indigeneity requires its own vocabulary and intellectual space, and its particularity should not be erased by inclusion into comparativist frameworks of postcolonial and settler-postcolonial theories. The critical apparatuses that lump Indigenous, white, and people-of-colour discourses into the same field equalize concerns and flatten differentials of power, thereby discursively reproducing the theft of Indigenous land and political thought. Within this critical inheritance, this article asks the following: How do non-Indigenous scholars really listen to Indigenous voices without relegating them to one voice in a pluralist dialogue? Ethical listening is a precarious undertaking, vulnerable to the movement of time, mental health, and environment: the time comes when one listens and ignores, when

one can no longer listen with focus. The Traveller in *Looking* represents such waverings in her friendship with African Indigenous women. Irrespective of her good intentions, colonial violence always inscribes and interrupts their friendship. Nonetheless, immanent to this violence are care and listening as modes of relation between forcefully individuated communities.

II. "a net that held us close": The Traveller in African Indigenous Spaces

Philip has long narrated histories of pain that cut across Black Canadian lived experiences in the settler nation-state. In her essay "Echoes in a Strange Land," Philip unearths the problematic of "be/longing" on a territory that "was nothing but a source of anguish—how could they—we—begin to love the land, which is the first step in be/longing?" (48–49). The slash in "be/longing" signals one's longing to be, to exist. It is a desire never satisfied. Uncoupling "belonging" from a feeling of being at home, the slash also places settlers into a defamiliarized position. By emphasizing the verb "to long," Philip disrupts the entitlement that nouns like settlement and belonging represent in the Canadian settler-colonial imaginary. Indeed, "[t]he only peoples who be(truly)long here . . . are the Indigenous peoples. . . . [T]he Africans did not choose to come, but were forced to come as a consequence of one of the most cruel enterprises in history, the transatlantic trade in Africans" (49). While Indigenous peoples are "truly" at home—a state Philip acknowledges is more complicated because of displacement and colonial violence—everyone else is in longing, or, according to Lee Maracle (56) and Aileen Moreton-Robinson (9), is part of the diaspora.

However, this Diaspora is a disparate community. Philip suggests that settler experiences are incommensurable with Black Canadian "be/longing" because of the Black Canadian relationship to a "m/othering" Canada ("Echoes" 44). She demonstrates that a study of Black subject-positions needs to contend with inscriptions of othering. She asks: "How do we lose the sense of being 'othered,' and how does Canada begin its m/othering of us who now live here, were born here, given birth here—all under a darker sun?" (44–45). The slash sets the "other,"

the Black subject, apart, much like Canada does through state-instituted violence. The slash thus represents the violent difference between being mothered and othered as well as memorializes this anti-Black history and the legacies of slavery when naming Black subject relations with the state: "We must never forget" (50). Philip desires this "m/othering" for the potential it holds. One must demand this intimate relationship from the empire that has always taken up the trope of the mother to affectively draw allegiance from its colonies and colonized subjects. Conflating Canada and the British Empire, Philip suggests that they are both the mother who mothers and the Other that others the Black diaspora. As a result, the colonial order is the Other that needs to be reconstituted for ethical relations to emerge.

Philip's fraught relationship with Canada attunes her to how the colonial episteme mediates and problematizes relations between the Black diaspora and Indigenous nations in the Western Hemisphere. In an interview with Kristen Mahlis, Philip acknowledges that understanding herself as a "*new world writer*" erases "the very long history" of the Indigenous nations on Turtle Island ("A Poet of Place" 696; emphasis in original). She wonders whether "we [can] have an expression that will allow both for [the reality that "people like myself . . . were brought here forcibly"] as well as for the reality that the First Nations people experienced" (696). One instance of such an expression, which acknowledges the place she inhabits, is her use of the term Caribbean rather than West Indian because of how the former is marked by "a lost history [of] the Caribs who were there as well as the Taino and the Arawaks" (695). The Indigenous realities of and Black forced migration to the so-called new world are historically and epistemologically entangled. Philip cannot know herself as part of the Caribbean, and thereby as "be/longing" to Canada, without evoking the Caribs, Taino, Arawaks, and Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island.

Looking for Mr. Livingstone takes up the problematic of Black diasporic relations to a different Indigeneity, existing in Africa. Before discussing the text, I note that her consideration of Africa and Turtle Island, as Indigenous spaces with sovereign ties to land and history, signals Philip's explorations of the Black diasporic subject who feels at home nowhere

in the anti-Black world of modernity. The dislocated, dissociated, and "un/belonging" Black diasporic individual is a global and historical subject position, and its encounters with global Indigeneities can exaggerate feelings of loss or produce intimate relationships but only within the mediating structures of coloniality. This global context also alerts us to how Philip's literary and critical corpus uncovers different transatlantic sites of Black being and nonbeing with an attention to space that reveals itself as palimpsestic and inscribed by transatlantic sites of Indigenous resistances and histories. Further, the juxtaposition of Turtle Island Indigeneity and African Indigeneity allows us to trace the transversal possibilities of the hold as a critical concept and prevents us from reading any one Indigeneity as representative of others. This global paradigm in Philip's work remains attentive to the critical differences between the lived experience of Black diasporic relations with the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island and, in *Looking*, Black diasporic relations with the peoples of Africa with whom the protagonist shares ancestral bonds.

In *Looking*, the journey of the Traveller toward her embodiment of "Silence" (38)—the capitalized "Silence" symbolizes the women's reclamation of the lowercased "silence" that colonizers weaponized to justify their inhuman treatment of African women—is a metaphorical modality through which Philip explores Black diasporic relations to Africa. The Traveller moves through Africa to find David Livingstone, the famed British missionary who got lost in the "heart" of Africa, but she is made to realize that her real journey is to connect with "Silence." Curdella Forbes notes that *Looking*'s form revisits the nineteenth-century travelogue genre as it "mimics and inverts Livingstone's" narrative of Africa to depict a journey "into the interior of African (diaspora) female being" (4).[4] In her travelogue, the Traveller battles against the non-capitalized "silence" imposed on Africa by colonialism, which she subverts not through language but other "forms of silence" (Siemerling 234).

This linguistic struggle is also a family drama. As demonstrated in Philip's earlier works, such as "Echoes in a Strange Land" and her collection of poetry, *She Tries Her Tongue: Her Silence Softly Breaks* (1988), she is concerned with the deep connection between a historical relationship

to Africa and her relationship to her parents (and the psychosocial paradigms the nuclear family signifies). Insofar as practices of colonialism and slavery have repressed, contained, and violated the female body, the mother figure, in Philip's writing, becomes a conceit that represents Africa, the "original language," "mother tongue," "culture," and "spirituality" lost to the diaspora (Philip, "A Poet of Place" 690). In the abovementioned interview, Philip provides an analogy of a child searching for lost parents to signify what a return to Africa, and to Silence, could mean:

> I don't think that you can necessarily equate looking for Africa with longing for Europe. . . . In the one case you have a father who, if you want to be very brutal, who [sic] raped a mother, attempted to kill her and bury her; somehow the mother survives and the child maybe hears the mother crying and realizes she is still alive somewhere and begins to search for her. . . . [W]e do romanticize the lost mother. . . . What you're looking for you don't know, you tend to romanticize. . . . [T]he father will be so wonderful, the mother will be special, and so on. (696–97)

Against the seductions of this desire to retrieve the lost homeland by way of the lost mother, Philip asserts that "we [Black diasporic subjects] are also of the West" (697) and Africa "has a particular manifestation given where we are" (697). Though she does not have access to an Africa that exists before, during, or after the Atlantic history of the slave trade, transformed conceptions of Africa manifest in the Black Caribbean context. Africa exists in the Black diaspora through its constructed imaginary as the "lost mother." Whereas in *She Tries Her Tongue*, Philip formally wrangles with recovering the "lost mother" from within the linguistic violence of the father tongue, in *Looking* she turns her attentions toward the spatial and thematic dimensions of the labour involved in recovering something lost.

The women who enable this recovery live in African villages that appear in the text without historical or realist specificity yet within their own temporal, spatial, and historical paradigms. For example, the names

of the African communities the Traveller encounters are anagrams of the word *silence*: SCENILE, CESLIENS, CLEENIS, NEECLIS, etc. For Sharpe, anagrams signal the "violability and also potentiality" (75) of Blackness as the Black ontology of "non/being" renders Blackness rearrangeable to anti-Black rubrics but also to "new meanings" (76). An "anagrammatical blackness" is thus "blackness as a/temporal, in and out of place and time putting pressure on meaning and that against which meaning is made" (76). The anagrams embody the village's distinct pressures on the colonial meaning of "silence" and the resurgence of their own "Silence." Though they are named by the silence imposed on them during colonial reign, the anagrams suggest the communities have emerged differently from that violence in their own ways, through their own language, with their own rituals, and in their own time.

For the Traveller, time begins when the Word of God colonized (read: silenced) Africa. In her second journal entry, the Traveller notes the date: "THE FOUR HUNDREDTH DAY IN THE SIXTEENTH MONTH OF THE TEN THOUSANDTH YEAR OF OUR WORD" (Philip, *Looking* 10). Time-space stretches on as the Traveller stays with different communities for millennia at a time and realizes she has been travelling for "[s]even billion years" (57). She also inhabits her own timeline as "three months" in her life account for "half a day" for the ECNELIS, which marks her difference as a Black woman outside of the time-spaces of Africa (10). Significantly, the elastic and shifting timelines make it difficult to attribute the Indigenous African epistemologies she learns about from the women in the villages to a postcolonial or anticolonial phenomenon. The lack of specificity, the abstractions, and, in Sharpe's words, the "a/temporal" anagrammatical (76) representation of the African communities signal an Indigeneity that is not defined by its relation to the colonial event (to David Livingstone), even though these communities are marked by the silence imposed by this event. This temporal paradigm works in its own relation to, and is not overdetermined by, the real-world's Common Era that Philip references by including a letter from Mary Livingstone to her husband, David Livingstone, dated "*Friday the eighteenth day of January 1859*" (29; emphasis in original). These two timelines converge when the Traveller, at the end of the

novella, is close to meeting David Livingstone. The Traveller records the date as the "EIGHTEENTH BILLIONTH YEAR OF OUR WORD, WHICH IS THE SAME AS THE END OF TIME, WHICH IS THE SAME AS . . . NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY SEVEN IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD" (60). The year that she positions as the end of time, 1987, is the year Philip wrote *She Tries Her Tongue* and a hundred years after Henry Morton Stanley began his last African expedition. It is the end of time for the novella and for the life the Traveller experiences under the subjugation of colonial silence. The end marks the beginning of her relationship to her own Silence, which the African women help her conceptualize.

As the Traveller sets out on her journey, without knowing what she is "searching for" (10), the ECNELIS, the first community the Traveller visits, introduces her to the problem of silence. They believe that "God first created silence" when the first man and woman reproduced "the first word" and God punished them as "she [God] shook out her bag of words over the world[,] . . . shattering forever the whole that once was silence" (11). They rework the Biblical origin story and the story of Babel to follow a teleological narrative from European colonialism to the Indigenous reclamation of the very silence that was shattered. Recovering silence, therefore, is not an atavistic desire to be precolonial. It is recovering the value of silence from its misconstruction as inferiority and thoughtlessness that "Stanley and Livingstone—white fathers of the continent" (7) reproduced in their representations of Africa. The recovery is a long and circuitous route and, as the Traveller experiences, the route is interrupted by sexual violence. In the second of two dreams that haunt the Traveller for two hundred years (the first being one in which Livingstone and the narrator "COPULATE LIKE TWO BEASTS" [25]), the narrator strains to birth a "MONSTROUS PRODUCT" (26) of Word and Silence. This labour echoes the fruitless labour of the LENSECI, the second community she visits, who live on a "land harsh and hostile to all their efforts at cultivation" (14). Their harsh "sun baked" land structures their life as "labour [that] stretched the hours into days, the days into weeks" (14). Similarly, the Traveller's nightmare child labour "LASTS FOREVER" and contorts her body

to kneel, sit, walk, groan, and "GRUNT LIKE THE ANIMAL I AM" (26). The violent impregnation of the Traveller's silence by the Word is not a metaphor but a psychosomatic pain.

As she begins to understand the source of her anguish, the CESLIENS uncover the direction of her journey. While the CESLIENS do not talk, their silence is not an "absence of sound" (51) but "has its own sound, speech, or language" (35). On the Traveller's last day with them, the community holds a ceremony, during which an elder, Mama Ohnce, draws a circle in the earth around her while everyone else stands back to watch. She gives a piece of string to the Traveller who sees it first as a snake and then as a birth cord dripping "blood on to the already red earth" (37). The circle, an instantiation of the hold, speaks the "language of violence" (Sharpe 70). As the Traveller attempts to step out of the circle, "some unknown force hurled me back to the centre. . . . [A]gain and again the force hurled me back, back, back, finally I lay there, curled like a fetus" (Philip, *Looking* 37). Becoming a fetus in the womb of the circle, the Traveller becomes the unbirthed child from her dreams; that unbirthed child represents a refusal to come into a life overdetermined by the violence of the Word. However, this child, the Traveller, is released. She escapes when she solves the anagrams a different community had given her. Upon etching the words "SURRENDER" and "WITHIN" into the circle, she steps out of the hold and "into the arms of Mama Ohnce and the women" (38). This birth is different from the birth canal of the Middle Passage, which opened into a Black diasporic reality. The Traveller surrenders to herself, a microcosm of the many interstices of identity—of sound, word, and silence—that meet in the knot of the body. The birth canal of the circle leads in two coextensive directions: into herself and into the hold of Indigenous women's care as Mama Ohnce and the other woman embrace her and cry with her (38). Though she leaves them like she leaves the ECNELIS and every other village, she carries these moments and teachings of kinship within her.

It is upon encountering the CLEENIS that the Traveller begins to unlearn the oppositions that colonialism imposes to divide the world—and that postcolonialism, as Gandhi observes, unwittingly inherits—as

a necessary step to understanding her Silence. In the colonial paradigm of *Looking*'s world, the differences between word and silence are the differences between colonizer and colonized. The Indigenous African women, who inhabit a different epistemological paradigm in *Looking*, see the world in shades of silence that preserve diversity and yet dismantle divides that isolate them from each other. The CLEENIS, a friendly and sensual community of women, reach across such divides and perform a ritual of hospitality as they insist that "[a]ll visitors to our society must go" to the sweat lodge, their own instantiation of the hold (Philip, *Looking* 41). They allow the Traveller only three words that will give her strength. Though the Traveller experiences "three words . . . [that] refused to leave: 'Birth.' 'Death.' And 'Silence'" (43), they eventually disappear as "language disintegrates" (Sharpe 69) in the hold:

> [D]ank dark of my silence, wet, moist like birth[,] . . . and a balance to the dryness of death where all moisture flees, like my words now fled leaving a desert, perhaps to bloom again into moisture. Was my silence the desert awaiting the bloom of words, or was it a desert of words that awaited the bloom of silence? I didn't know. (Philip, *Looking* 44)

In her hallucinatory state, the Traveller imagines words blooming in fertile land, whereas silence deepens in the "dryness of death," in the absence of sound. This opposition loses its logic when she asks if the desert is a condition for silence or words. This chiastic question breaks down the logical divisions between bloom and desert, and their corresponding terms, birth and death. In fact, her body loses sense of itself in the sweat lodge, which mirrors the way the three words lose their paradigmatic difference. She is thirsty in the moisture of a sweat lodge when only silence is left with her: "throat tight dry mouth" (44). Yet after this vicious fever of thirst, she finally finds "my Silence," a personal sound that she can drink down (45). Silence is a drink and a dry mouth at the same time. The dry/barren/death versus wet/fertile/birth opposition breaks down and becomes an entangled network that acts out a paradoxical experience on her body through which she understands the complexities of silence and recovers her own.

The sweat-lodge experience clarifies the constitutive roles of entanglement and transformation in the verse-novella's conception of the hold. Whether the circle or the sweat lodge—and later a "huge room, ablaze with coloured fabric and yarn" (51)—the holds' architectural and epistemological production of space provides the conditions for the Traveller to recover and confront parts of herself that were other to herself and yet entangled with her sense of self. At the same time, these rituals of the hold, as modalities of kinship for the African women who welcome visitors to their land, produce disciplinary spaces. The women do not permit the Traveller to step out until she articulates her configuration of Silence. The Traveller aptly describes the holds as "imprisonment and challenge" (53). But when her experiences in the holds become too painful or exhausting, other forms of the hold—the women's embraces, caresses, and even a lover's "voice weaving a net that held us close" (50)—provide her with affirmations, care, and reassurance and embody the practice of kinship necessary to sustain personal and collective growth.

With regards to Black diasporic and Black Indigenous relations and the animating questions of this article, these holds signal their potential to bind a complex of identities and histories together. The sweat lodge's breakdown of the divide between water and desert is significant for studies of Black Diasporic and Indigenous relations. Whereas land and water have been separated with a cartographic violence that displaced Black diasporic communities from land and turned them toward the sea—a history recorded powerfully by Glissant, Brand, Sharpe, Sylvia Wynter, and others—the dissolution of their opposition could generate new methodological avenues for the study of Indigeneity and Diaspora together.[5] Rather than a negotiation between the disruption of place by Black diasporic movement and the ontological Indigenous relation to land, the holds in the verse-novella generate Indigenous-Diasporic kinship as they require subjects to be still in a moment of time and in a sense of place. They do not ground or territorialize Black diasporic subjectivity but allow it to pause momentarily in a specific community for self-learning and kinship. A structure of Black Indigenous epistemology, the holds' pedagogy is a process of coming to know oneself and the

relations that constitute that identity through place, which occurs without indigenizing the Traveller or erasing the historical specificity and lived experience of her Black diasporic female identity. These Black holds are therefore a locatable space within Black Indigenous epistemologies of kinship and of the land that emerge from an entanglement of Black being, Black time, Black women's labour, and Black deconstructions of the discursive differences between Indigeneity and the Diaspora.

The practices of kinship that the Traveller learns from the holds help her when she ultimately comes face to face with someone who represents the colonial system: David Livingstone. Her African journey resonates powerfully in the context of Saidiya Hartman's autobiographical narrative *Lose Your Mother*, in which Hartman travels to Africa not to reconnect with some lost past but to study the paths and deaths of slavery that continue to structure Black diasporic life. She writes: "Neither blood nor belonging accounted for my presence in Ghana, only the path of strangers impelled toward the sea. There were no survivors of my lineage or far-flung relatives of whom I had come in search, no places and people before slavery that I could trace" (7). Even if losing one's mother is the impetus for her journey to Africa, the point is not to reunite or reconnect with the object of loss but to trace how and why the loss occurred.

Similarly, the Traveller, now armed with her "Silence," wants to revisit the conditions of the loss that shapes her, conditions of patriarchal colonialism and the Word of God that are embodied by Livingstone. She meets him in "Somewhere, Africa" (Philip, *Looking* 60). While the vague place emphasizes the impossibility of her feeling at home, an alienation that reflects the state of the Black diaspora, the sentences in this passage, broken by hyphens and the sound-image, "(silence)," signal the Traveller's difficulty in addressing the colonizer with the colonizer's language (60). Instead, the Traveller and Livingstone both reach out silently: "I took his hand and he mine" (61). The two enter a precarious relationship, not a friendship, that acknowledges the "infinite" time and space between them (61), a space that does not offer a foundation for intersubjective recognition.[6] The Traveller ensures that Livingstone does not mistake their relation for a reconciliation that elides their historical and epistemological differences but instead conceives of it as a

relationship constituted by their incommensurable and irreducible subjectivities.

The Traveller's pendulum-like extension of hate and care toward Livingstone is one way she preserves their differences. As she begins to converse with him, she names him the "nemesis" and reimagines the historical conditions of their encounter: "I, the discoverer—he, the discovered" (62). Her tone swings between flirtatious and stern. When the Traveller names all the people who came to Livingstone's "discoveries" before him, he "sulk[s] . . . like a little boy" (63) and she tries to comfort him: "I gave him credit for discovering my silence. . . . This cheered him up" (63). The conversation continues in an erotic play of discipline and acquiescence, resistance and intimacy, but the Traveller controls the conversation and confronts Livingstone's theft of "the Silence of the African" and how he "replaced it with . . . the silence of [his] word" (70). This rebuke reveals her desire to rewrite the colonial archives, a desire that she makes good when reclaiming the narratives around historical African figures. She undercuts Livingstone's recorded legacy by stating that "Sekeletu, chief of the Makololo, discovered" the so-called Victoria Falls, and "Sechele, Chief of the Bakwains," who was his only convert to Christianity, "afterwards reverted to his African religion" (68). History pens Sekeletu and Sechele as aids to Livingstone at various points of his expeditions, which they were. But by subverting their legacy as complicit Africans, the Traveller acknowledges their agency and the resurgence of African traditions to demonstrate colonialism's inability to eradicate African ontologies and epistemologies.

The pendulum then swings toward intimacy. As night comes and she can no longer see Livingstone, the Traveller "reache[s] out [her] hand . . . touche[s] something warm familiar like [her] own hand human . . . [and] reaching out through the SILENCE of space . . . [she] touche[s] it his hand held it his hand *and* the SILENCE" (75; emphasis in original). Silence becomes the fabric of their encounter, a dark black space, in which the Traveller encounters herself and her decolonial silence. This affirmation gives her the strength to hold Livingstone's hand and acknowledge his radical difference. Though he has nothing to offer to heal the wounds of diasporic rupture, the Traveller offers him the teachings

she has gathered on her journey. The holds of each village, which have taught the Traveller about herself and about Black-Indigenous kinships, also help her conceptualize care and friendship toward the colonialism exemplified both in the figure of Livingstone and by the internalized violence she battles in her own body. In this moment of hand-holding, the Traveller relays the histories of transformative and liberatory Black power she experienced in the holds of Africa.

While Philip's verse-novella highlights the role of Black Indigenous and Black diasporic dialogue in the processes of healing from the scars of colonialism—and in being better able to confront colonial legacies like Livingstone's—the next section provides another perspective on the encounter of Indigeneity and diaspora in colonized spaces. In my anecdote about racialized subject relations and solidarity with Xwisten and non-Xwisten Indigenous caretakers of land, I explore how, on Turtle Island, other instantiations of the hold manifest in land reclamation and reoccupation villages in which Indigenous leaders and communities and racialized settler friends negotiate decolonial relationality amidst practices of Indigenous sovereignty and land restitution.

III. Cross-Racial Solidarities and Punjabi History on Stl'atl'imx Lands

On 16 March 2015, after being asked by Xwisten Elders, Christine Jack initiated the reoccupation of ancestral and unceded St'át'imc lands threatened by commercial logging.[7] Formerly addressed as Voice for the Voiceless, the reoccupation site was always Ulluilsc (pronounced oo-Loosh, meaning a "gathering place"). It is Christine's home, a burgeoning community, and a sacred meeting ground for the St'át'imc, Secwepemc, and Tsilhqot'in peoples. Historically, Ulluilsc was also a site for *s7ístken*, pit-houses. Semi-subterranean homes, *s7ístken* were erected in sacred spaces of intense spiritual energy. One can still see where they once stood by the deep indents beside the forest road. This legacy of spiritual and collective living continues as Christine and her community have steadily created a sustainable and self-sufficient village. She works tirelessly to make Ulluilsc a space of spiritual regeneration, self-reflection, and healing for many Indigenous peoples—a space capable of holding all

their complexity while nurturing their relations with the land. When I and my friends, a group of Malaysian, Indigenous, Indian-descent, and white people, visited in July 2015, there was a small, multi-generational community of caretakers around Christine who demonstrated that the feminine labour of care does not require female bodies. It is instead the work of any body, irrespective of sexual and gendered experience, who can nurture and welcome the other in open-armed and trusting postures of embrace.

Christine's reoccupation had been active for about four months by the time my friends and I visited to deliver funds. At the time, Ulluilsc was comprised of one cabin that stored food, an outdoor sink, a large grill, furniture under a tarpaulin, a tent, a tipi, and, a few steps deeper into the forest, a wooden pit toilet. It has grown a lot since then. We introduced ourselves and the caretakers immediately welcomed us. Knowing that nothing makes one feel welcomed like when they can contribute to the functioning of a home, Christine immediately gave us some work. My half of the group was told to gather raspberries, and though what we foraged was meagre, we did acquaint ourselves with the land. In our group was our experienced forager friend, a Secwepemc woman, who led us through the mountaintop forest and encouraged us to taste horsehair (a dark brown lichen on trees called Wila) and juniper berries. After our wandering, we set the raspberries aside and joined Christine, who was already cleaning *xúsum* (soapberries) to make *sxúsum* (Indian ice cream) from a recipe she had learned from the women in her family. Later in the day, after helping Christine line the earth oven with cob, our relations deepened through song. Christine drummed and sang about power, grief, and community. My three friends, racialized settlers from a talented musical family in Malaysia, shared in the singing and brought out their guitar. The songs established a sonic embrace. The hold at Ulluilsc was speaking itself.

One of the more significant teachings during our visit was about the gathering place, which Christine told us through story and memory-work. After climbing up a short incline from the forest road, we found ourselves at the edge of a small vale where different nations had once met regularly. They would gather at the edges while some members

would descend into the middle of the vale with food and objects to trade or share. Christine urged us to imagine this history as if it were unfolding right then. She narrated our collective experience of the vale into being by sharing the stories that had been passed to her and that were emerging for her in the present from the sacred relations between spirits, ancestors, and the land. Christine's storytelling was an embodied act of memory and imagination. Pedagogical moments like these constitute, according to Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and her Nishnaabeg-centred worldview, Indigenous epistemology, which is the "pursuit of whole body intelligence practiced in the context of freedom" (7). Christine's narration recalls the histories of the land not only in the context of protest and resurgence but also in the context of settler visitors. Simpson notes that Elders are always "'qualifying' their statements that position them as learners, that position their ideas as their own understandings, and place their teachings within the context of their lived experience" (11). In line with this method of storytelling, Christine had to rearticulate the story of Ulluilsc and, at the same time, listen carefully to herself to learn what this iteration generated.

Christine's storytelling was strengthened by the memories that came to her as she connected with Ulluilsc, but as I try to relay my experience, I confront my own failures of memory. I am incapable of fully reproducing the stories we heard at Ulluilsc because, though I listened, my body has not, and perhaps cannot, establish a sustained relation to that particular land. What I do remember comes to me because of a sense of responsibility my friends and I cultivated toward the land and the caretakers and because of our ongoing commitment to that responsibility. However, moments at Ulluilsc were framed by my own struggles of trying to listen beyond the cacophony of noise I brought with me to the reoccupation. For one thing, I thought about my heritage and position on this land as a Punjabi settler, and how that reality affects the past and ongoing spiritual presence of St'át'imc ancestry. Since that trip, I have sought Punjabi narratives on Coast Salish and Interior Salish lands that acknowledged Punjabi communities as settler presences. Did a Punjabi come to Ulluilsc before me? While important critical texts unpack the complications of Asian and Asian-Canadian relations with Indigenous peoples in North America—most notably the work of Rita

Wong, Larissa Lai, Iyko Day, Quynh Nu Le, and Malissa Phung—Punjabi voices, especially community and non-academic voices, remain concerned with diasporic identity in the nation-state. Diaspora is an important analytic frame in my work and orientation toward solidarity practices as it structures my relations to both the nation-state and Indigenous sovereignty. Part of the incompleteness of my trip's narrative derives from the loss that is immanent to diasporic subjectivity. The past cannot be recovered even as one moves in and out of it. However, I came upon a fact during the writing of this essay, itself an imaginary return to the past, that rewrites my experience at Ulluilsc.

The hold of decolonial love at Ulluilsc currently halts the encroachment of the logging company threatening its livelihood, sustenance, and futurity: Aspen Planers Ltd. This company was built by Punjabi settler Tara Singh Ghog. Whereas during my time at Ulluilsc, I conceptualized resource extraction as white colonialism, I now need to grapple with Punjabi settler history and its ongoing threat to Ulluilsc. Born in 1922, Ghog immigrated from Athouli, Punjab—a village only an hour away from Shankhar, my father's village—to British Columbia when he was seventeen years old. Originally from a farming background, he first worked in sawmills and then moved into management near Merritt, BC. In 1967, he bought out his business partners to be the sole owner of Aspen Planers and increased his holdings in 1970 by buying timber on reserve land from the Coldwater Indian Reserve, an acquisition for which the company exclusively employed the reserve's "First Nation band members" to manage the small wood license and project ("About Us"). Upon his death, *The Merritt Herald* remembered him as "an Indo-Canadian Pioneer" and as "the man who built Aspen Planers Ltd" ("Hard Worker"). Like other Punjabi immigrants who occupied, cleared, and cultivated land with skills developed by working in the fertile territory of Punjab, Ghog achieved his sense of belonging in Canada through his labour on the land. Racialized settlers like him build financial security upon the continued dispossession of land from Indigenous peoples, which reproduces the conditions of erasure of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. What I did not know in 2015 was that I encountered Ghog's settler presence in very intimate ways, visiting the same land his company had encroached upon and cleared without consent.

I walked into Ghog's legacy; his company continues to pursue logging on St'át'imc lands. One could frame my trip in 2015 as a small gesture in the rewriting of Punjabi settler presence on St'át'imc lands, from a presence of environmental degradation to one of friendship. However, my unexpected research finding illuminates a deep history of Punjabi settlerhood in Canada. I struggle to find an affective frame outside of the "Eurocentric structure of liberal" affects like "settler colonial guilt and sorrow" (Phung, "Asian-Indigenous" 66) within which to understand this inheritance that is not simply the consequence of Canadian anti-Asian racism and history that determines, in part, Punjabi settler and Indigenous relations. In other words, though the state structures the presence of people of colour in Canada as settler-colonial presence by recognizing it as part of its settler body politic, Asian-Canadian communities need to acknowledge the very literal encroachment on and destruction of Indigenous sovereignty and the environment by Asian-Canadian enterprise. How do we account for the insidious way Punjabi capitalist-colonialism feeds into the narrative of the model minority and thereby becomes a part of the fabric of Canadian multiculturalism? Can an alternative Punjabi relation to or narrative within the nation-state result in a different Punjabi relation to Indigenous sovereignty?

What I encounter then, are the problems and limits of naming. In the context of South Asian immigration to and life in Canada, the state affords a repertoire of names—the other, minority, labourer, assimilated citizen—all of which hold the promise of inclusion into the cultural and economic forces of national identity. Ghog, through his journey from British-colonized India to a successful resource-extracting enterprise in Canada, experienced the fulfillment of such promise. While these state-sanctioned discourses have been complicated by scholars such as Phung, who supplies the terms "complicit settlers" and "settlers of colour" ("Are People" 292) to describe Asian-Canadian identity, I suggest that even these critical terms—which I still use in my everyday to self-identify—reduce racialized existence in Canada to a variation of white settlerhood. We must develop new terms. Taking my cue from Philip's formal experimentation, which suggests that our language needs not be pretty (nor even pronounceable, for that matter), I submit the term "un/settling" as a way of naming the experiences of Asian settler inhabitation on

Turtle Island. As a verb, this unlovely word does not interpellate Asian identities into ontological or abstract categories. Instead, it marks the ongoing and everyday realities of racialized settlerhood and, by extension, settler colonialism. The mere presence of racialized minorities, not least of which manifests as the violent encroachments of South Asian agriculture and resource extraction, unsettles Indigenous life-worlds and sovereignties. At the same time, the slash acknowledges state interruptions of Asian settlement—through immigration bans and exclusions, and by making Asian acceptance into the nation conditional upon certain stereotypes—and signals how Asian presence and its diasporic movements, as Roy Miki and Gayatri Gopinath show, can unsettle colonial categories like nation. This conceptual deconstruction has the potential to facilitate Asian solidarity with Indigenous decolonization. "Un/settling" might not be appropriate in every setting, and should not be grafted onto, for instance, Black diasporic subjecthood, but it affords one way of framing the complexity of racialized subject experiences with regards to Indigeneity and the nation-state.

But these terms are only one dimension of the reality in which Indigenous and racialized peoples extend kinships with one another to create families, friendships, alliances, scholarly accomplices, incarcerated intimacies, stranger affinities, and so on. The practice of the hold demonstrates that these relations are not just nominal categories but stories and lived experiences of community. People, either in the hold or outside of it, understand their own story in relation to others. For example, mine is the story of un/settling. While these holds have other functions and intentions—the Indigenous African women in *Looking* have distinctive rituals for themselves in the circles and sweat-lodges, for instance—I have chosen to highlight the diasporic journey to self-understanding as the pedagogical function of the holds in the time-spaces of *Looking* and of my experience at Ulluilsc. Indigenous Elders and caretakers facilitate the racialized subject's articulation of the matrix of violence and intimacy that constitutes their relations to Indigeneity and coloniality. Crucially, these understandings are not structural or long-lasting. Understanding one's relation to St'át'imc land, for example, does not transfer to an understanding of one's relations to other Indigenous lands and epistemologies on Turtle Island. These holds

are not the same everywhere and are not open to everyone. Nor does this journey of understanding ask Indigenous peoples to assume the burden of the educator. In this article's context, the openness of the hold, as an enclosure or an embrace, reveals the gesture of kinship that the Indigenous communities begin with as they bring the un/settling and be/longing into their spaces. Once one engages with the particular epistemologies, rituals, and practices of the land, the painful process of confronting one's complicit, violent, and affective relations to colonialism—and naming those relations—is a burden to bear all on one's own. My hope is that this confrontation and understanding leads to some shift in the way racialized subjects maneuver within settler-colonial or postcolonial states and that they practice an everyday commitment to centring Indigenous sovereignty.

Notes

1 See also Byrd's *The Transit of Empire* for the term "arrivant" (xix) and p. 15 of Justice's *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*.

2 See also Thomas King on postcolonialism's "non-nationalistic method" (185) in "Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial" and Kim, McCall, and Singer's *Cultural Grammars of Nation, Diaspora, and Indigeneity in Canada*, which explores the comorbid implications of postcolonial studies and nationalism in the Canadian literary context. Kim, McCall, and Singer note how the emergence of postcolonial theory in Canadian literary criticism corresponds with Canlit's cultural nationalism in the 1960s, whereby a homegrown national literature desired a decolonial split from the literary traditions of Britain and reproduced the imaginary of a particular Canadian nation. Within this history, however, many "diasporic and First Nations texts are often read with many of the tools of postcolonial theory" (9). Such reading strategies flatten the differences between postcolonial theory and Indigenous studies. The authors issue a call to transform the "cultural grammars" underpinning Canadian race studies, which would enable scholars to engage differently with the intersections and divergences between "diasporic and Indigenous criticism" and the "overarching project" of postcolonial theory (9).

3 In *The Black Shoals*, Tiffany Lethabo King critiques settler-colonial and postcolonial studies through a similar focus on pain, which she understands specifically as experiences of colonial violence. For King, "White settler colonial studies" (10) is inattentive to the violence that strips Black and Indigenous subjects of their humanity and renders them nonhuman flesh. This parallels the disavowal that marks Eurocentric scholarship in its refusal to acknowledge the role of Black and Indigenous genocide in constructing the co-extensive categories of White-

ness and the human (20). She urges scholars to address the violence inflicted on racialized bodies as a way to transform "normative discourses within colonial, settler colonial, and postcolonial studies that narrowly posit land and labor as the primary frames from which to theorize coloniality, anti-Indigenism, and anti-Black racism" (11). King's criticism also echoes Byrd's denunciations of the centrality of Whiteness in settler-colonial studies.

4 The Traveller parodies Henry Morton Stanley's *How I Found Livingstone: Travels, Adventures, and Discoveries in Central Africa* (1872). She narrates her journey toward Livingstone through sincere allusions to Stanley's descriptions of his expedition and injects her meeting with Livingstone with an ironic repetition and subversion of the famous line "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" that Stanley allegedly fabricated for his published text (Stanley 331).

5 See also Tiffany Lethabo King's *The Black Shoals*.

6 The dynamic between the Traveller and Livingstone can be better understood through Gandhi's theorizations of anticolonial friendships. Rejecting a Hegelian model—much like Philip does for this scene in *Looking*—Gandhi reads relations of inequality through Derrida's conception of friendship as "yet 'to come'" (Gandhi, "Affective Communities," 19) and Luc-Nancy's notion of the inoperative community—a collective emerging spontaneously and purposelessly. This alternative genealogy of relationality helps Gandhi uncover the potential for unpredictable intimacies and "crosscultural collaboration between oppressors and oppressed" (6). Further, if Philip is trying to represent the relation between the Traveller and Livingstone as an abstraction or trope of the white master-Black slave encounter, she does so by subverting the power dynamics—the Traveller is in control—and by preserving both characters' vulnerability and radical openness toward one another, characteristics that Gandhi highlights as important affective structures in anticolonial friendships.

7 I want to thank Badger Jack, a tireless caretaker for Ulluilsc, and Lisa Oorton for their insights and edits. Also, my deepest thanks to Christine Jack for not only hosting us in 2015 but for reading this section of the article. In writing this article, I followed a reflective practice of contemplating my own lived experiences of an active engagement with community. The original intent of my trip in 2015 was for non-research purposes. For this reason, I did not submit the work for Research Ethics Review. However, Badger Jack and Christine Jack granted me permission to use their names and to refer to our personal communications.

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