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Black Indigeneities, Contested Sovereignties

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Introduction

In this essay, I propose a framework for understanding Black indigeneities beyond the connections between African-descended peoples in settler nations (such as the United States and Canada) and the original inhabitants of those nations. I focus on Black indigeneities in the African diaspora in the United States and on the African continent, especially the West African nations of Ghana and Nigeria, identifying five forms of indigeneity among Black people in the diaspora and on the continent of Africa: tacit, latent, overt, remembered, and recovered. While these forms are not exclusive to Black people, they provide a useful framework for understanding the differences and continuities among different kinds of Black indigeneity.

Drawing on cultural texts and practices, I show both the differences and the links between these indigeneities. Identifying sovereignty as an important basis for understanding those differences and connections, I argue that different kinds of indigeneity can be identified in relation to different kinds of sovereignty—both hegemonic sovereignties that have been at the root of histories of colonization and enslavement, and those (like Indigenous sovereignty) that have emerged in resistance. In the discussion that follows, I define and discuss the key concepts of indigeneity and sovereignty, then turn to an exploration of the five Black indigeneities, setting out the specific historical events that have produced them and explicating the ways in which they are tacit, latent, overt, remembered, or recovered.

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Key Terms

For purposes of this essay, I understand indigeneity following Shona Jackson's example in her work on Creole indigeneity, in which she first distinguishes "indigeneity" from "native" in order to define the former as "the practice and processes that constitute belonging for Creoles and Indigenous peoples." Jackson proceeds from this distinction to "develop and deploy the term 'Creole indigeneity' as a conceptual lens or analytic."[1] In the context of Guyana, the primary focus of Jackson's book, indigeneity is bound up with competing claims over territory. However, as I use the term in this essay, indigeneity is a condition that also exists where land-based claims are either impossible or untenable, complicating questions of belonging. Indigeneity in this essay thus denotes a people's ways or modes of being, with or without land. I am also interested in how those people maintain their ways in the face of challenges from dominant groups. Some of the most widespread, sustained, and consequential challenges to indigeneity came from Western colonization while others have emerged in the postcolonial era. In some cases, one can trace continuities between colonial and postcolonial assaults on indigeneity.

I choose to explore Black being and belonging through the lens of indigeneity rather than race because indigeneity allows for the conception of a wider range of modes and practices and enables understandings of variations within race; for example, the variation among people in an African nation who may be racially homogenous but belong to different indigeneities. Conceiving of Black peoples primarily in terms of their indigeneity rather than their race also facilitates an analysis of their structural relationship to self-identified Indigenous peoples.

Understanding of the word *indigeneity* as denoting a people's ways or modes of being and belonging is broader than the meanings of the related term *Indigenous*. For one thing, the absence of territory in some of the instances of indigeneity I discuss here shifts the term away from the definition of "Indigenous" as "born or originating in a particular place."[2] In addition, as applied to specific groups of people, Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes that use of the capitalized Indigenous is relatively recent. "Indigenous peoples" emerged in the 1970s mainly from the struggles of the North American groups, the American Indian Movement and the Canadian Indian Brotherhood.[3] Pointing to the significance of "peoples," Smith states that Indigenous activists argue for the plural "because of the right of peoples to self-determination. It is also used as a way of recognizing that there are real differences between different Indigenous peoples."[4] At the same time, Smith considers the term "problematic in appearing to collectivize many distinct populations whose experiences under imperialism have been vastly different."[5]

In her account of the history of Indigenous peoples' struggle in the international context, Joanne Barker reports that their use of the plural "peoples" was a deliberate strategy to apply the terminology of the international human rights framework in which "peoples" is synonymous with "nations." The goal of this effort was to challenge settler nations' designation of Indigenous peoples as ethnic minorities, and also intended to underscore Indigenous demands for recognition and autonomy.[6] The question of ethnicity is a thorny one in Indigenous self-identification and has had a bearing on African peoples' participation in Indigenous struggle in the international arena. In

light of this history, I use "indigeneity" as an analytic, following Jackson, and the capitalized "Indigenous" and "Indigenous peoples" to refer to a specific kind of identity as elaborated by Smith, Barker, and other Indigenous scholars.

One of those scholars is Sheryl Lightfoot, who identifies three important elements from the United Nations' working definition of Indigenous peoples:

1. A precolonial presence in a particular territory;
2. A continuous cultural, linguistic, and/or social distinctiveness from the sur–rounding population;
3. A self-identification as "Indigenous" and/or a recognition by other Indigenous groups as "Indigenous."[7]

Lightfoot notes, citing Niezen, that "these shared experiences distinguish Indigenous peoples from ethnic minority groups, and have formed the ways in which Indigenism has constituted itself on a global level."[8] For Lightfoot and other Indigenous scholars, Indigenous identity is not interchangeable with ethnic identity or ethnicity because ethnicity functions in settler nations as a way of diminishing Indigenous claims to autonomy. Citing Audra Simpson, Lightfoot states that "liberal democracies have continually attempted to transform Indigenous peoples from sovereign nations into ethnic minority citizens of the state, rather than respect them as nations with land and collective rights."[9]

Therefore, while the cultural, linguistic, and social distinctiveness of Indigenous identities are also distinguishing features of ethnicity, Lightfoot considers it important to maintain a distinction between the two kinds of identity. Writing a decade before Lightfoot, Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel emphasize the distinction between indigeneity and ethnicity, and identify "ethnic group" as a kind of state-created identity imposed by "contemporary settlers" on original peoples in a "colonizing process of redefinition from autonomous to derivative existence and cultural and political identities."[10]

As Joanne Barker shows in her discussion of Indigenous sovereignty and its historical roots, this use of ethnicity to diminish Indigenous claims of autonomy was a deliberate project in settler nations like the United States, Canada, and Australia.[11] The question this tactic raises for Indigenous identity in Africa, which was subjected mostly to indirect rather than settler colonization, is whether ethnicity has historically functioned in the same way and whether it might be possible to recuperate the concept and align it with indigeneity for decolonial ends. I argue in this essay that ethnicity may form the basis of Indigenous identity claims in the African context in what I propose is a difference between latent and overt indigeneities.

The element of self-definition, identified by Lightfoot, marked movement away from earlier definitions of Indigenous identity in the UN context that emphasized colonization, in particular settler colonialism, as a key condition of Indigenous identity. In their 2005 essay, Alfred and Corntassel adopt a framework of colonization, but offer the following caveat: "There is a danger in allowing colonization to be the only story of Indigenous lives. It must be recognized that colonialism is a narrative in which the Settler's power is the fundamental reference and assumption, inherently limiting Indigenous freedom and imposing a view of the world that is but an outcome or perspective on that power."[12]

Even as they warn against it, Alfred and Corntassel show that colonization remains an important factor in understanding Indigenous identity. Writing more recently, Glen Coulthard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson have identified the relationship to land and practices stemming from that relationship as foundational to Indigenous self-determination. Grounding their analysis in Marxist thought while seeking to transcend its limits, they depart from Marx's theorization of colonization as a historical (and past) step in the development of capitalism. Instead they understand colonization as an ongoing project with the goal of taking over Indigenous lands. Territory is therefore central to ongoing Indigenous anticolonial struggle. Elaborating on a concept previously developed by Coulthard, the two scholars state that "grounded normativity" refers to "the ethical frameworks provided by these Indigenous place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge."[13] Those frameworks provide Indigenous peoples with the resources for their struggle against colonization in its contemporary forms.

In adapting Marxist thought to their analysis, Coulthard and Simpson also reject perspectives on indigeneity that call for abandoning cultural identity. They further repudiate the view that "the Indigenous commitments to the land and jurisdictions that inform our identities as well as ethical relationships with others" are antimigrant and anti-Black. Rather, they argue, "Our relationship to the land itself generates the processes, practices, and knowledges that inform our political systems, and through which *we practice solidarity*."[14] In identifying culturally specific practices as resources for Indigenous struggle against colonization and also for solidarity with other marginalized groups, they open up a conceptual space for an understanding of the struggles of diasporic and continental Africans as aligned with those of Indigenous peoples.

Sovereignty

Indigenous scholars distinguish between sovereignty and *Indigenous* sovereignty. As an unmarked term, sovereignty, for these scholars, has been used as an instrument of dehumanization, genocide, and subjugation in the service of a colonial project that continues into the present. Discussing this use, Sheryl Lightfoot marks the term as "Westphalian sovereignty," while Joanne Barker offers a detailed account of the term's deployment.[15] Barker first outlines sovereignty's origins in Christian thought, its application to the power of European monarchs, and, with the decline of monarchies, its transfer to the concept of the nation that emerged in the European context. Barker shows how sovereignty was used not only to distinguish between European and non-European systems of governance but also to rank them in a hierarchy that equated sovereignty with civilization while denying the legitimacy of non-European systems.

Barker further discusses the "Marshall trilogy" of US Supreme Court rulings in the nineteenth century (named for Chief Justice John Marshall), which explicitly defined sovereignty in order to justify the seizure of Indigenous lands as well as the physical and cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples. Marshall also defined Indigenous groups not as autonomous nations but as "domestic dependent nations." The trilogy served as precedent not only in the United States but also in other settler nations like Canada and Australia and in Britain, which applied it to colonies including the Cape Colony in

Africa. Settler nations did not stop at denying the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples but in fact actively sought to reclassify them as ethnic minorities within the space of the nation-state. Barker notes that another legacy of the Marshall trilogy was its configuration of Indigenous peoples as welfare beneficiaries. She states:

> The notion that indigenous peoples are *weaker than, wards, dependent,* and *limited* in power in relation to their colonial states has perpetuated dominant ideologies of race, culture, and identity. Within these identificatory practices, "indigenous people" are marked as yet another ethnic group within the larger national melting pot, where the goal is to boil out cultural differences and the national jurisdictions and territorial boundaries of indigenous groups by boarding schools, farming programs, citizenship, and adoption.[16]

Adopting the terms *Indigenous* and *peoples*, then, provided bases for pressing legal claims both internationally and in the context of the nation-state. Against this background, I understand and use sovereignty as denoting several kinds of self-governance systems. These include the Indigenous sovereignties identified by scholars like Lightfoot and Barker, the sovereignties of various African peoples, as well as the "Westphalian" sovereignty that has come to define the "modern" nationhood of states like those that make up the membership of the United Nations. That this form of sovereignty continues as a mode of Indigenous subjugation is evident in Indigenous peoples' continued exclusion from formal membership in that body.

I also understand sovereignty as an important mediator in notions of belonging. For example, the projects of Creole indigeneity discussed by Shona Jackson seek to align Creole claims of territorial belonging with Creole sovereignty—or control over the nation-state. For African Americans, however, belonging on the terms of the settler state have always been fraught, at best. For centuries, formally excluded from conceptions of what it means to be human, and thus from full participation in the nation under conditions of settler sovereignty and from full belonging in the nation, African American assertions of sovereignty apart from the settler state reached their fullest expression in the Black nationalist movements of the 1960s and 1970s but ultimately failed. Demands for inclusion in the settler state on its own terms have been more successful. However, that inclusion has been constantly contested into the present with the recent resurgence of white supremacist movements and attempts to limit some of the gains of the mid-twentieth-century civil rights movement, especially voting rights.

Black Indigeneities

Robin D. G. Kelley has noted how both diasporic and continental Africans have been largely written out of indigeneity. Commenting on Patrick Wolfe's contribution to settler colonial studies, he takes issue with Wolfe's statement that "The role that colonialism has assigned to Indigenous people is to disappear. By contrast, though slavery meant the giving up of Africa, black Americans were primarily colonised for their labour rather than for their land."[17] Kelley regards this assertion as problematic in its assumption that Indigenous people only exist in the Americas and Australia. He continues, "African indigeneity is erased in this formulation because through linguistic sleight of hand, Africans

are turned into black Americans. The Atlantic Slave Trade rips Africans from their homeland and deposits them in territories undergoing settlement and dispossession but renaming severs any relationship to their land and indigenous communities."[18]

Citing Cedric Robinson, Kelley points out that this project did not fully succeed as, in Robinson's words,

> the cargoes of laborers also contained African cultures, critical mixes and admixtures of language and thought, of cosmology and metaphysics, of habits, belief and morality. These were the actual terms of their humanity. These cargoes, then, did not consist of intellectual isolates or deculturated Blacks—men, women and children separated from their previous universe. African labor brought the past with it, a past that had produced it and settled on it the first elements of consciousness and comprehension.[19]

Africans were also barred from indigeneity when they first tried to press their claims in the UN-sponsored international Indigenous movement, where African groups began to seek redress starting in the 1980s. However, according to Dorothy L. Hodgson, they initially faced an uphill battle due to views like those held by Manuel Alfonso Martínez, "a nonindigenous Cuban anthropologist" who served as chair of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations and held the view that (with the exception of the Maasai and San peoples) "Asians and Africans were not indigenous" but minorities and should therefore wage their struggles in the context of the UN Working Group on Minorities.[20] Hodgson also notes that during preparations for the Year of Indigenous Peoples in 1993, Africa was not considered an appropriate site for activities.

Although Hodgson notes a rise in African participation in the international Indigenous peoples' movement in general during the two decades following the Year of Indigenous Peoples, she reports a decline in participation in the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples by 2004. She expresses the view that this decrease was due, in part, to "resentment over the heavy-handed and sometimes hostile actions and words of the long-presiding chair, Manuel Alfonso Martínez."[21] Hodgson further maintains that Africans' late entry into the Indigenous people's movement "posed a structural disadvantage, as they had to engage the longstanding practices, discourses, and assumptions of the U.N. Working Group."[22] By 2007, when the UN adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, attitudes had shifted toward greater acceptance in response to African Indigenous activism. There was also a shift toward conceptions of "Indigenous peoples" that emphasized self-definition.

Some UN commentators also noted that definitions of Indigenous peoples based on colonial invasion and settlement make

> less sense in most parts of Asia and Africa, where the colonial powers did not displace whole populations of peoples and replace them with settlers of European descent. Domination and displacement of peoples have, of course, not been exclusively practised by white settlers and colonialists; in many parts of Africa and Asia, dominant groups have suppressed marginalized groups and it is in response to this experience that the indigenous movement in these regions has reacted.[23]

In emphasizing displacement as a condition of Indigenous identity, such views lose sight of the fact that the absence of complete displacement in most of Africa does not mean that African societies were left intact after colonization. It also obscures that, just as settler colonization and enslavement have shaped the United States in ways that persist today, the pernicious effects of colonization continue in Africa. If the indirect colonization of large parts of Africa did not entail settlement, it nonetheless treated the continent as terra nullius in general and especially at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, where European powers divided up the continent among themselves in the "Scramble for Africa." African peoples were neither represented nor consulted and, as such, it is clear that their status and rights as inhabitants of the continent were neither considered nor recognized by the nations gathered in Berlin. Although most of Africa went from colonization to independence in the twentieth century, that process typically involved the transfer of the colonial state rather than its transformation. Traces of colonialism therefore persist both in institutions like legal and educational systems and in some of the priorities and positions of postcolonial African states.

Against this background, a key argument in this essay is that indigeneity is a condition of people of African descent on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In the case of Africans in the diaspora, my justification is precisely the one Kelley cites from Cedric Robinson—that enslaved Africans were not emptied of their indigeneity in the process of being forcibly removed from their homelands and having an ocean between those lands and their cultures of origin. By the same token, I argue that the colonial rearrangement of African peoples into multicultural colonial territories and subsequently "multiethnic" independent nation-states did not erase African indigeneities. Looking at continental and diasporic African indigeneities as tacit, latent, overt, remembered, and recovered reveals what dominant accounts have overlooked.

Some scholars of Black indigeneity have used the term "arrivant," borrowed from Barbadian poet and scholar Edward Kamau Braithwaite, to refer to Africans in the diaspora.[24] According to Jodi Byrd, arrivants are "those people forced into the Americas through the violence of European and Anglo-American colonialism and imperialism around the globe."[25] Byrd's understanding of imperialism as ongoing conceives of arrivants across time—from those seized and sold into chattel slavery from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, to those compelled by the dislocations of war and economic destabilization, more recently.

Indigenous-arrivant relations in the United States sometimes reproduced and extended the violence of settler-Indigenous relations, with the Indigenous enslavement of arrivants and arrivant subjugation of Indigenous peoples. The limited rights granted by the settler state also pitted Indigenous and arrivant against each other in struggles for recognition within that state. For example, the legitimized identity of being labeled a "pioneer" offered formerly enslaved Africans alternative options for self-making that aligned them more closely with white settlers than original peoples. Thus, Nate Harrison, a Black man who escaped enslavement in Kentucky and made his way to Southern California, was not only able to acquire land on the terms available to white settlers, but is also reported to have described himself as "the first white man" on Palomar Mountain, where he lived.[26] Although Harrison appears to have lived in

harmony with the Luiseño/Payómkawichum, the original inhabitants of the area, his presence on Palomar Mountain was on the terms of white settlement, including legal title to Indigenous lands.

This arrivant adoption of the position of the settler in relation to Indigenous peoples is what Shona Jackson designates "Creole indigeneity" in Guyana and other Caribbean nations. With the formal end of colonization, Creoles in those nations (the descendants of enslaved Africans and indentured South Asians) succeeded Europeans as the nation's dominant groups. Jackson examines the ways in which Creoles perpetuate the European displacement of Indigenous peoples and reorganize both land and modes of attachment to land in ways that privilege Creole claims of belonging over those of Indigenous peoples. Jackson's work is important in revealing a kind of Black indigeneity in the diaspora in which Blacks inherit the settler project and are thus complicit in the ways in which that project persists. However, Creole indigeneity is less helpful in accounting for Black indigeneities in the context of a nation like the United States, where arrivants might occupy space on the terms of the settler state but do not control that state.

In distinguishing enslaved peoples, their descendants, and more recent Black arrivals from white settlers, the concept of arrivant can serve as a check on the cooptation of African-descended peoples into ongoing settler projects against the interests of Indigenous peoples. In many cases, where past arrivants refused such cooptation, they and Indigenous peoples established a range of mutually beneficial connections.[27] Some of those ties drew upon practices remembered from arrivants' original African cultures and produced the most self-evident forms of North American Black Indigenous identity for arrivants who could claim kinship ties with Indigenous peoples.[28] Following the scheme proposed here, such "Afro Indigeneities" can be described as overt indigeneities.

However, an exclusive focus on Black indigeneities based on blood ties between arrivants and Indigenous peoples obscures African territorial and cultural origins as important elements in arrivant-Indigenous relations. While useful for situating Africa-descended peoples in relation to Indigenous peoples in the Americas, arrivantcy indicates where arrivants are *not* from (the Americas) but has little to say about where they *are* from. In the process, connections to specific lands and cultures become features of non-arrivant Black indigeneities. Yet there is evidence that arrivantcy does not erase African origins and modes of being. I therefore seek to return African connections to the condition of arrivantcy in order to account for the resources arrivants bring with them into their indigeneity both within and outside Afro-Indigenous ties and communities.

Scholars like Saidiya Hartman, Stephanie Smallwood, and Tiya Miles have shown how enslaved Africans resisted projects of cultural erasure to hold onto practices from their lands of origin or craft new practices adapted to the new realities of their lives in the Americas.[29] In other words, through the work of remembering and recovering, arrivants resisted projects of systematic erasure. In the case of the arrivants of the Middle Passage, those projects took away everything from language to religion from enslaved Africans in an effort to inculcate them with the religion, language, and culture of slaveowners. Through arrivants' work of remembering, much survived these acts of deliberate cultural erasure.

On the African continent, the arbitrary process by which colonial powers divided up their respective territories—with lines of demarcation that went around and through lands of people of distinct cultures—created multicultural colonial territories. For the most part, peoples in those territories waged their independence struggles collectively, leading to today's multiethnic African nations. This forced collection of multiple peoples into singular colonies seems to bear out ethnicity as a colonially imposed derivative existence, in Alfred and Corntassel's terms. However, scholars like Hodgson, writing about the Maasai in East Africa, and Foster in her scholarship on the San of southern Africa have shown that Black majority rule in independent African nations did not translate into equal rights for all groups within them.[30] For groups that identify as Indigenous, the injustices of the colonial state endured under the postcolonial state.

In place of the opposition between an anticolonial indigeneity and a colonially imposed ethnicity, and also departing from Michaela Pelican's definition of indigeneity as a kind of ethnicity, I propose an alternative in the African context that conceives of the difference as one among tacit, latent, and overt indigeneities.[31] Tacit indigneities refer to modes of being that have both persisted in defiance of the ravages of colonization and adapted in response. Such indigeneities are also latent because they can become overt in times of crisis. Overt indigeneities conform to the definitions proposed by Lightfoot, Alfred, and Corntassel, where African peoples self-identify as Indigenous.

In designating the indigeneities of African and African-descended peoples on the Continent and in the United States as Black, I am aware of Michelle Wright's caution against "overreliance on the exclusive use of linear progress narratives to define Blackness."[32] Wright notes the tendency to conceive of blackness in the United States as going exclusively through the Middle Passage of transatlantic slavery, thus situating African and African-descended peoples with different histories outside of blackness in a distinction that only conceives of Black and non-Black. Wright attributes this distinction in part to conceptions of blackness as historical and based on linear time. She calls for adding to such conceptions an understanding of blackness as happening in epiphenomenal time, that is, in the "now . . . through which past present and future are always interpreted."[33] Wright notes that even though their histories are intertwined, people of African descent understand themselves differently. A phenomenological understanding of blackness makes it possible to conceive of differences beyond the dichotomy of Black and non-Black.

Reading Wright's analysis in relation to Robin G. Kelley's discussion, cited at the beginning of this section, one consequence of the Black/non-Black binary is that it erases Africans in the diaspora from indigeneity. As Kelley argues, inattention to the reality of settler colonialism in Africa also excludes continental Africans from indigeneity, making it a condition only of peoples in the Americas and Australia. Extending Kelley's point, I argue that an exclusive focus on settler colonialism as a condition of indigeneity similarly erases Africans in societies with nonsettler histories from indigeneity. I seek both to return indigeneity to blackness on both sides of the Atlantic and to heed Wright's call for an epiphenomenal understanding of blackness that accounts for blackness as a range of experiences related by history but not reducible to each other.

In the discussion that follows, I begin with tacit indigeneities. These are the conditions of African being and belonging at the basis of the claims of African Indigenous peoples in the context of the UN that, just as importantly, have taken-for-granted status in many African societies. In the scheme I propose here, those indigeneities are tacit when taken for granted and overt when they take the form of self-identification as Indigenous. Overt indigeneities include Africans in the diaspora who identify as Indigenous on the basis of kinship ties with Indigenous peoples. I locate another category, latent indigeneities, between tacit and overt ones. These are indigeneities that shift from being tacit to overt in times of crisis. An example is the Ogoni people of the Niger Delta in Nigeria, who have waged a long struggle with both the Nigerian government and transnational corporations over the exploitation of their lands for petroleum extraction as well as the environmental degradation and compromised livelihoods that exploitation has caused. In a move from latent to overt indigeneity, they now identify as Indigenous.[34]

Remembered indigeneities are those modes of being and attendant practices that have survived both enslavement and transportation to the Americas as well as colonization on the Continent. They are anchored in the qualities Cedric Robinson references when he argues that enslaved Africans brought with them their cultures, language, thought, cosmology, metaphysics, beliefs, and morality. Finally, recovered indigeneities are those that Africans in the diaspora have crafted for themselves from different resources including practices and cultural artifacts recovered from the African continent and peoples.

Tacit Indigeneities

Tacit indigeneities are ways or modes of being that are distinctive to a people and also have a taken-for-granted status. Chimamanda Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* provides several examples of such indigeneities. It tells the story of a wealthy Nigerian family from the Igbo ethnic group. Eugene Achike, the head of the family, is a devout Catholic who is critical of worship practices that fall short of the standards set by white missionaries (including attempts to introduce Igbo language songs into the liturgy). He is also disdainful of the proliferation of what he calls "mushroom" Pentecostal churches. Achike is an entrepreneur and newspaper publisher and widely respected in his community for his philanthropy and his use of journalism to hold a corrupt government accountable to the people.

In private, he is abusive toward his wife and two children, both of whom are in their teens. His daughter Kambili, the book's narrator, is a watchful presence who observes her father's internalized racism as he values the ways of the Catholicism to which he is a convert, over the norms of his own society. He assumes this position to the extent of cutting ties with his own father, who continues to observe precolonial traditions, and ensuring that his children spend as little time as possible with their grandfather. Kambili, the narrator, also recounts her mother's subservience and her aunt's, her father's sister's, defiance of this insistence that the ways of the colonizing Catholics are superior. For example, the sister, Auntie Ifeoma, rejects her brother Eugene's characterization of their father as a "heathen," asserting instead that he is a "traditionalist."

A short passage from the novel provides a useful illustration of tacit indigeneity. The novel's narrator describes her own and other urban Igbo families' return to their ancestral homes or "hometowns" each Christmas. An Irish Catholic nun calls it "the yearly migration of the Igbo" and wonders aloud why the Igbo build large houses in their hometowns that they only occupy for a few weeks each year. Silently, the narrator wonders, in turn, "why Sister Veronica needed to understand it, when it was simply the way things were done."[35] Embedded in this seemingly minor comment is a history of British colonization and Nigerian anticolonial struggle, with their accompanying shifts in social, economic, and political structures.

"The way things are done" was a prime target of colonization in Nigeria and elsewhere in the British and other European empires and in settler colonies in Africa, the Americas, and beyond. Undergirded by processes of racialization, projects of imperial and colonial dominance systematically destroyed or undermined Indigenous practices in the Americas and Africa from land use and economic systems to language, religion, kinship arrangements, and gender norms. While it is important to be attentive to the dangers of "the way things are done" in entrenching unjust social and political arrangements in precolonial societies, there is no questioning the profound and wide-ranging harms of European colonization in deeming all non-European Indigenous ways inferior. In that wholesale undermining and erasure of Indigenous ways, the arbiters of what was just and unjust about the way things are done were not Indigenous peoples themselves but colonizers who assigned superiority to their own ways even when those ways diminished female autonomy, enforced heteronormativity, and ravaged the natural environment.

The novel is set well after Nigerian independence from British colonial rule and also after the violent resolution of the Igbo attempt at secession in the Biafran war that lasted from 1967 to 1970. At the same time, the novel speaks to the persistence of both, as traces remain in some characters' memories, words, and actions. The narrator's comment signals a moment beyond official colonization when Nigerians, as citizens of their own nation, have the authority to challenge Eurocentric conceptions of their ways as strange, as the narrator does in refusing the Irish nun's read on Igbo practices. It is obvious that "the way things are done" refers to more than just the ways of the Igbo people before colonization. Indigeneity, here, is not a matter of cultural purity, essence, or ethnic harmony restored by the rise of the independent nation-state.

Rather, indigeneity is a function of Nigerian peoples' work of repair in dealing with the changes imposed by colonization, including the colonial restructuring of local economies such that the best opportunities shifted to urban centers, resulting in the rise of urbanization. It is also a function of the status of the imported festival of Christmas in relation to older Indigenous ones. Instead of everyone returning home for harvest festivals at different times of the year, as dictated by the growing season for the dominant crop of their region and ethnic group, they return at Christmas, the relatively new festival sanctioned first by colonial authorities and then by the Nigerian state. In becoming the basis of a national holiday, Christmas supersedes other festivals as a time when one can most easily take leave of one's employment in the city and return to one's ancestral home. With urbanization and dislocation, that ancestral home

is, nonetheless, the place to which one hopes to return and therefore where one invests in building. It is where one can be certain of a place in an ancestral home, and kinship ties may also make it the place where the land needed for such investment is most readily available.

The nun's focus on houses that remain unoccupied for most of the year detracts from the conceptions of home and belonging that undergird the annual return. It ignores the history and structural forces that weakened ties to home and kin as the growth of towns and cities as primary sites of economic opportunity during and after colonization spelled a shift from lifelong residence in ancestral homes toward residence in urban centers. The yearly return, in the wake of that shift, heals the rupture as the Igbo in urban centers reconnect with extended family and clan members. Therefore, "the way things are done" is not only about building homes that are mostly unoccupied; more importantly, it is a reference to the importance of maintaining ancestral ties.

Establishing and normalizing these new ways, and Sister Veronica's questioning of their purpose, evince the combination of old and new practices that constitute indigeneity in the novel. This indigeneity has emerged in resistance to the destruction or subversion of the rightness of Igbo ways of doing things under colonization. The *Purple Hibiscus* example is significant because it is set in a moment beyond that destruction and points to recovery and the possibility of fashioning new ways of being. Out of the ravages of colonization, hegemonic Christianity, and civil war, Nigerians have modified new traditions in the spirit of earlier ones, in this case the tradition of maintaining ties with ancestral homes. As narrated in the book, Christmas also coincides with other, older traditions, and the return home is an opportunity to observe those as well, in this case a masquerade.[36] In effect, despite its origins in problematic and colonizing conceptions of the state, Nigerian national sovereignty reclaims power from the Sister Veronicas of this new order.

Neighboring Ghana, like Nigeria, was colonized by the British and provides additional examples of indigeneities moving from the crisis of colonization to repair and restructuring. One site of such repair and restructuring is the institution of marriage. As a British colony, Ghana was subject to British colonial laws, including laws dating back to 1884 that imposed British norms of marriage. Along with Christian evangelization, those laws delegitimized the institution of marriage as practiced by ethnic groups in the territory, and it was not until over a century later, in 1985, that Ghana granted legal recognition to marriages contracted under "customary law."[37] Rather than replacing the British-derived marriage "ordinance" law, the 1985 law provided for Indigenous forms of marriage as an alternative.

In their actual practices, however, Ghanaians bridged the gap between British/Christian and Indigenous marriage norms long before the passage of the 1985 law. It was (and continues to be) common practice for couples seeking to marry to first do so under the norms of their ethnic group but call it an "engagement" in apparent compliance with the imposed norms. In practice, however, "engaged" couples may live for years in that status, forming a household and having children before eventually getting married under one of the options sanctioned by law. While such eventual "marriage" is celebrated, the "engagements" that precede them are also widely recognized as

marriage even if they do not have formal legal status. In this way, Ghanaians have kept Indigenous marriage practices alive since—and in spite of—colonization.

In a different example, Ghanaian social protocols have survived in spaces that remained beyond the reach of colonial hegemonies. Among the Akan and other ethnic groups of Ghana, such protocols include greeting people counterclockwise if they are seated in a circle or from right to left if seated in a row.[38] Such greeting does not stand alone but is part of a set of norms for receiving visitors to one's home. First, one offers them a seat, then gives them a drink of water. Handshakes follow in the required direction, and only then do hosts formally ask their visitors the reason for the visit. Persons joining the gathering after these protocols greet those who came first, going counterclockwise, before sitting down, being given a drink of water, and then being asked their mission even where it is known. In the case of a death, for example, when people gather at the house of the bereaved, each person arriving at the house, after greeting everyone and sitting down, is asked their mission, prefaced by the words, "*yenim nso yebisa* (we know but we ask)." These rituals foster civil discourse, especially when visits are between antagonists, as might be the case when the purpose of the visit is to settle a dispute. Offering visitors a seat, a drink of water, and a formal greeting signals welcome and respect regardless of whether they come in enmity or in friendship. Even as the combined forces of colonization and evangelization altered Ghanaian ways right down to social structures and norms including marriage and the naming of families and children, these norms of civility in social discourse represent one small but important site of Indigenous survival.

In these cases from Ghana and Nigeria, an insistence on the way things are done restores value to norms that were delegitimized in the twin processes of colonization and Christian evangelization. It also entails the indigenization of imposed norms as in the repurposing of Christmas for maintaining kinship and ancestral ties. An important condition for such adaptations is the way in which postcolonial African states have negotiated and managed power differences between ethnic groups. In effect, it is a function of the relationship between differing kinds of sovereignty within African nations, namely, the hegemonic sovereignty of the nation-state and the subjugated sovereignties of the peoples who were converted into ethnic groups through the creation of colonial states. In some cases, hegemonic and ethnic sovereignties converge when a dominant ethnic group also controls the state. Such convergence was at play when the Igbo sought to secede from Nigeria in the failures of the state's distribution of oil wealth derived from Igbo territories. The Biafran war of secession may not have been waged in terms of Indigenous struggle but the stakes bore important similarities to those in the case of the Ogoni people who see their struggle as one of Indigenous peoples against the nation-state.[39]

In Ghana, few such claims have risen to the level of Biafra or the Ogoni. However, the possibility is always there, as evidenced in recent calls for secession by a group from southeastern Ghana. A formal and tiered system of sovereignties grants major ethnic groups representation through their rulers or "chiefs" in a constitutionally mandated National House of Chiefs.[40] This body establishes a parallel system of governance that grants those rulers some autonomy in their respective territories. It is also part of a strategy by which the nation-state has managed the power of the dominant ethnic

group, the Asante, who, at their peak, controlled most of the territory of present-day Ghana. In trying to maintain equilibrium between dominant and less powerful groups, the state recognizes ethnic diversity in some instances and emphasizes a common Ghanaian identity in others. This ongoing attempt at balance is evident, for example, in the Ghana government's refusal to recognize ethnic claims over the distinctive kente cloth made by the Asante and Ewe people of Ghana.[41] Under these conditions, Ghanaian indigeneities are tacit projects of ongoing negotiation between the nation-state and its constituent peoples.

Latent Indigeneities

Tacit indigeneities reveal themselves as latent when peoples who have found in the postcolonial nation-state a conducive environment for their ways of being and belonging (or tacit indigeneities) choose to identify as Indigenous because doing so better enables them to press their claims beyond the space of that nation-state. This is the choice that the Maasai of Tanzania made under the leadership of Moringe Ole Parkipuny when they began to participate in the international Indigenous movement. In the case of neighboring Kenya, the lands of many of the peoples in the territory were seized and settled by British colonizers from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Under those conditions, the Maasai and other ethnic groups were similarly dispossessed. They experienced territorial loss and threats to their economic survival and cultural integrity under British colonization.

However, with Kenyan independence, the Kikuyu, who had led the anticolonial struggle, emerged as the dominant ethnic and political group while the Maasai became a prominent example of a minority group that went from subjection under the colonial state to subjection by the sovereign nation-state despite their nominal status as citizens. Since the late 1990s, the Maasai have variously pressed their claims to land and autonomy against the nation-state of Kenya as Indigenous people within the international Indigenous movement and as citizens of the Kenyan state.[42] The San in southern Africa similarly identify as Indigenous peoples against the postcolonial successors to the settler colonial state, including the Republic of South Africa.[43]

Another example can be found in the Ogoni people in the postcolonial state of Nigeria. In the 1990s, the Ogoni came to national attention under the leadership of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, who reportedly broadened the reach of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in their struggle "against the Nigerian military regime and the Anglo-Dutch petroleum company, Royal Dutch/Shell for causing environmental damage to the land of the Ogoni people."[44] Saro-Wiwa was arrested in 1994 on allegations of complicity in the killings of four Ogoni chiefs and was executed following a trial that attracted condemnation from human right activists around the world and led to Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth.[45]

In their decades-long struggle for their rights in the face of state and corporate exploitation and devastation of their oil-rich lands, the Ogoni now identify as Indigenous in opposition to the postcolonial state (MOSOP). The case of the Ogoni people demonstrates that in many parts of Africa and Asia, the postcolonial project, or what Lightfoot

terms "UN decolonization" is not complete. It also undermines the claim by some postcolonial nations that all their peoples are Indigenous. As discussed in the following section, Alfred and Corntassel offer Bangladesh as an example of how such claims can in fact serve to undermine Indigenous struggles against the postcolonial state.[46]

Overt Indigeneities

Dorothy L. Hodgson reports that if the international Indigenous movement was initially resistant to African inclusion, most African nations also responded with hostility to African Indigenous groups mobilizing in the context of that movement. She additionally reports that such hostility was based on those nations' claim "that all of their citizens were Indigenous." They further argued that "indigenous rights fomented 'tribalism,' and challenged any discussion of collective rights and restitution."[47] Asian nations have made similar claims. In an example cited by Alfred and Corntassel, Bangladesh has used its official position that all of its people are "Indigenous" and "Bengalee" to displace a number of Indigenous communities collectively known as "Jumma."[48] The claim that all Africans are Indigenous not only homogenizes extremely diverse peoples, histories, and struggles, but also obscures the fact that in African nations, as in Bangladesh, the transfer of power from colonial to postcolonial states did not end the subjugation of all African peoples.

Hodgson gives the example of Maasai activist Moringe Ole Parkipuny, who brought the plight of the Maasai people to international attention in the 1980s, following his conviction that the plight of the Maasai in the postcolonial state was akin to that of Indigenous peoples in settler nations. Parkipuny's efforts led the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) to commission a report on the Maasai in 1985. Hodgson reports, "the IWGIA was instrumental in encouraging certain African groups to link their struggles to the Indigenous rights movement, promoting the participation of Africans like Parkipuny at the relevant U.N. meetings and expanding the working definition of Indigenous to embrace their positions and claims."[49]

As noted previously, the Maasai and San were considered exceptions to the view that African groups were not Indigenous peoples but ethnic minorities within the space of the postcolonial nation-state. Following the combination of Parkipuny's pioneering activism and the international Indigenous movement's relaxation of its opposition to African participation, other African groups joined in the struggle for self-determination as Indigenous peoples. These included the "Batwa . . . from Rwanda, Amazigh from Morocco, and Dorobo, Ogiek and Maasai from Kenya."[50]

The struggles of the Maasai and other African Indigenous peoples seem to signal a rejection of the sovereignty of the postcolonial nation-state in line with a similar rejection by Indigenous peoples in settler nations. Yet Hodgson reports that some have moved back and forth between the postcolonial state and the international Indigenous movement in what seem to be strategic calculations about what best serves their interests.

Remembered Indigeneities

The work of remembering is at the center of Julie Dash's landmark film *Daughters of the Dust* (1991), a multilayered and multitemporal work about the Peazant family in

1902 as they prepare to migrate north to the US mainland from Ibo Landing, one of the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.[51] The family is descended from enslaved Africans forcibly transported to the islands, and Ibo Landing is named for a group of Ibo (or Igbo) people from the last ship to bring enslaved Africans to the islands. By the time of events in the film, multiple accounts of the Ibo's dramatic resistance have emerged. In one account, narrated by Eula, one of the film's spiritual centers, the Ibo came to land, took a good look around, and then turned and walked back home across the sea as though on solid ground, despite the weight of their shackles. Bilal Muhammad, a member of the community, provides an eyewitness account when he says that he came to the island on the same ship that brought the Ibo. Contradicting Eula's account of the mode of their resistance but not the resistance itself, he reports that the Ibo chose to drown themselves rather than serve in captivity.

In *Daughters of the Dust*, Julie Dash fictionally portrays two kinds of Black indigeneity. One is the overt Afro-Indigeneity in the love between St. Julien Lastchild and Iona, a young member of the Peazant family. In a letter to Iona near the beginning of the film, Lastchild signs himself "son of the Cherokee nation" and appeals to Iona to stay behind with him on the island. Later in the film, we see him and Iona embracing on the beach. Finally, in one of the film's most dramatic scenes, Lastchild rides up to the dock just before the family sails away. Iona, who has been expecting him but has boarded the boat, hastily disembarks and climbs onto the horse behind him. They ride away as Haagar, Iona's mother, desperately protests, calling out the true meaning of her daughter's name, "I own her!"

Dash also renders the kinds of practices that Stephanie Smallwood and Saidiya Hartman document in their scholarship—practices of remembered Black indigeneities. While careful to emphasize the all-encompassing nature of the institution of slavery and the very limited avenues it provided for resistance, Hartman notes that within the constrained spaces available to them, enslaved Africans drew on their cultures of origin to provide themselves "redress" in bondage. One example was patting juba, a practice of song and dance that Hartman calls "a coded text of protest."[52] For Hartman, juba and similar practices are significant not so much as indices of "African survivals or retrievals of Kongo, Fon, Ibo, or Yoruba traces" but in their everyday historicity.[53] She notes their value to enslaved people who practiced them as allusions to a previous time in Africa when they were free.

Similarly, in her book *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*, Stephanie Smallwood documents some of the practices that Julie Dash brings to life in *Daughters of the Dust*. One is the distinction between enslaved people who had been in the Americas for some time and newly arrived "saltwater Africans." Smallwood reports that enslaved peoples did not always transport their customs wholesale into their new environment but adapted them to the nature and demands of that environment. She also calls attention to the roles women played, stating

> areas of knowledge traditionally assigned to women very likely played a crucial role in other specific challenges African immigrant communities faced, from attending to medical needs to re-establishing rituals for mourning the dead and

> communicating with the ancestors. Without the presence and participation of African women in the project of New World settlement, there would be no return to some semblance of normal life . . . the contributions African women made far exceeded the reproductive roles with which those women are generally associated.[54]

At the center of *Daughters of the Dust* is the family matriarch, Nana Peazant, holder of the film's remembered indigeneities. Born into captivity, she believes that the family's ancestors are crucial to the family's survival, and she holds and nurtures the memory of those ancestors—back to the enslaved Africans who were first brought to the island. As one of the men reports, while tracing the family's genealogy, Nana Peazant has carried the old Africans for four generations. He adds, "we must carry them wherever we go." In the course of the film, Nana Peazant repeatedly insists to younger generations of the family the importance of remembering their African ancestors and the lessons they taught. Nana sees remembering as essential to the family's survival.

Her memories include her own and previous generations' work with "the poisonous indigo" as they prepared indigo paste and dyed cloth using one set of the skills enslaved Africans brought with them to the Americas. Decades after the end of slavery and her work on the plantation, Nana's hands are still dyed blue from the indigo. Remembering is also active in Nana's daily visits to the grave of her deceased husband and in the tin can holding "scraps of memories" she carries around with her, defying teasing by younger family members. Nana's active remembering includes transmitted knowledge of the practices that sustain the community, including knowledge of plant medicines that she applies as a healer.

Nana is not the only one who remembers. A recurrent theme in the film is the community's collective memory of the Ibo and their choice of freedom over bondage. Supporting Nana Peazant as the film's spiritual anchors are Eula, wife of Nana's great grandson, Eli, and her Unborn Child, whom Nana Peazant summons from the ancestors to heal the fractures that threaten to tear the family apart on the eve of their departure. Eula, who "saw too much of herself in Nana Peazant," also holds on to the old ways. Eula's marriage is in crisis, as she has been raped, leading Eli to doubt whether the child she is carrying is his. We see her spirituality early in the film when she summons the spirit of her dead mother by placing a glass of water under her bed.

The Unborn Child is not only sent from the ancestors at Nana Peazant's request but also moves easily between ancestral time and 1902. For example, one scene shows her wandering among an earlier generation of enslaved people working on an indigo plantation. She dips her finger into one of the dye pits on the plantation and subsequently plays with the Peazant children in 1902, her fingertip stained blue from the dye. In what seems to be a subtle allusion to the children's spirituality, they see and play with the Unborn Child even as she remains invisible to the adults.

The film is rich with allusions to the persistence and value of the old ways, in the women's natural hairstyles, in older relatives teaching the children fragments of language remembered from Africa, and in the family genealogy traced onto a tortoise shell. However, *Daughters of the Dust* is not a romantic celebration of remembered indigeneities. Dash shows those indigeneities as contested. One person who actively

resists Nana Peazant's insistence on the African ancestors and their old ways is Haagar, who married into the family and cannot wait to leave the island with her daughters, Iona and Myown. Haagar firmly rejects the old ways when she declares, "this is a new world we're moving into, and I want my daughters to grow up to be decent somebodies. I don't even want my daughters to be hearing about that mess [ancestral beliefs and ways]. I'll lock horns with anybody and anything that tries to hold me back." This determination heightens the significance of Iona's choice of life on the island with St. Julien Lastchild over a new life on the mainland with Haagar and Myown.

The other main source of resistance is Viola Peazant, one of two family members who return to the island for the big departure. The other returning member is the mixed-race Mary Peazant, who goes by the nickname "Yellow Mary." Viola has converted to Christianity and white respectability, both of which manifest in her frequent allusions to Jesus and her attempts to teach deportment to the young women of the Peazant family. A dark-skinned woman, she considers herself morally superior to the "ruined" Yellow Mary. She conflates both morality and light skin and betrays her colorism when she says of Mary's complexion, "all that yellow wasted!" For Viola, the old ways are not threatening, as they are to Haagar, they are simply "heathen," a sentiment we find repeated in Eugene, the father from Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. Like Eugene, Viola values the norms of white Christianity over the old ways practiced by Nana Peazant and Eula.

Yellow Mary seems to share a special bond with Eula but, at the same time, seems disdainful of the latter's adherence to the old ways when she teases Eula, calling her a "real backwater Geechee girl" for summoning her mother's spirit. Mary speaks of the need to keep moving, and says, "the only way for people to change is to keep moving . . . you live like savages back over here!" She further declares her own intention to move once more, this time to Nova Scotia in Canada. Yet she makes a surprising choice near the film's end as she defends herself against other family members' disapproval. She says, "I've been on my own for such a long time, I thought I wanted it to be that way. You know that I'm not like the other women here. But I need to know that I can come and hold onto what I came from. I need to know that, the people that know my name. I'm Yellow Mary Peazant and I'm a proud woman, not a hard woman. I want for to stay with you here!" Before Yellow Mary announces her desire to stay, she reveals glimpses of her cosmopolitanism as she answers Eula's questions about the world beyond Ibo Landing. But unlike Haagar, who is eager to embrace that cosmopolitanism, Mary ultimately finds it empty and chooses to stay on the island with Nana and her old ways.

The remembered indigeneities of *Daughters of the Dust* are not direct imports from specific African peoples. By the time of the story in 1902, several generations have passed since the transportation of enslaved Africans who remained and survived on the island and most African practices linger in their traces. The indigeneities of Ibo Landing are as significant in the values they symbolize as in the practices and memories that bear them; that is, they are valuable, as Hartman puts it, for more than their meanings through the practices of specific African peoples. As such, the freedom of the Ibo and the family's enslaved ancestors' will to survive are among the values that remembering helps to retain.

Although *Daughters of the Dust* is a work of fiction, it draws upon the history of a historical group, the Gullah people of the islands off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia who are noted for retaining links to their African origins. While they may be among the most well-known, the Gullah are not alone in this respect. Under the conditions of radical dislocation imposed on arrivants, indigeneity could no longer be a matter of ties to a specific place. Rather, it was a matter of practices of placemaking drawing on remembered and recovered cultural resources.[55] Tiya Miles points to the survival of African cultures in "the exchange and re-creation of cultural forms between Indians and Africans . . . [as] . . . Native people who had been parted from their home communities contributed to the formation of a creolized Afro-Native culture."[56]

Miles further notes speculation by historian Peter Wood and feminist theorist bell hooks that West African concepts of place and the environment, spirituality, respect for ancestors, and the oral tradition paralleled those of Native Americans and "facilitate[ed] the process of cultural synthesis." Ample evidence shows that the elements of African culture Wood and hooks identified survived in North America beyond the context of Afro-Native creolization. There are also indications that their list is not exhaustive. One can add music as well as foods and food ways. As Miles argues, "Cultural production, then, was a form of freedom struggle that affirmed enslaved people's humanity and holistic worth."[57]

Indigeneities of Recovery

All the forms of Black indigeneity discussed so far entail different degrees of remembering. There are also indigeneities of recovery whereby diasporic Africans have supplemented what has survived with what they have actively recovered from Africa, sometimes in the spirit of "Sankofa," a principle from the Akan peoples of Ghana, which literally means "going back to retrieve what has been forgotten." Examples of such retrieval include the adoption of elements of African material culture as symbols of blackness in the United States. In the 1960s and 1970s, Black nationalist struggle included a cultural dimension that reclaimed elements of African culture and traditions as evidence of a distinctive and proud Black American identity.[58] Where civil rights leaders crafted their public personas according to codes of respectability that followed mainstream (and white) US norms of formal dress and hair texture, Black nationalist leaders and members of the movement celebrated their natural hair texture and incorporated the clothing and textiles of Africa into their dress.

While political Black nationalism was effectively suppressed by the US state, its cultural forms—from material culture to practices that include ancestor veneration and Kwanzaa celebrations—survive to this day and have become almost mainstream representations of US blackness.[59] Kwanzaa, in particular, is an impressive feat of recovered indigeneity, as it is a festival completely created by Ron Everett, formerly of the Black Panthers, who parted ways with the Panthers to focus completely on cultural nationalism.[60] Adopting the name Maulana Karenga, Everett created the festival of Kwanzaa from African elements adopted mainly from East Africa, incorporating principles expressed in the East African language, Swahili. Despite its strong East African

influences, Kwanzaa celebrations include practices and material culture adopted from across the continent, including Asante kente cloth and Bamana bogolanfini or mud cloth used to decorate the Kwanzaa table. Half a century since its creation, Kwanzaa has become an established part of the African American calendar and is at least acknowledged, if not formally recognized, in mainstream US society.

Remembered and recovered indigeneities are not universal across the African diaspora in the United States, which, as Michelle Wright notes, is not a monolith. Africa is not universally cherished among African Americans or desired as "the Motherland." In addition, for those who return to Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, or other African nations seeking their roots, the return is sometimes marred by the realization that, for the receiving Senegalese, Ghanaians, or Nigerians, the encounter may be more about class than race. In Ghana, African Americans have reported their surprise and discomfort at being addressed by the Twi word, "oburoni," a term with multiple meanings but most strongly associated first with white Europeans and now more generally with white people from Europe and beyond.[61] In those encounters, the term denotes foreignness and aligns African Americans more closely with white Euro-Americans and their privileges of wealth and class than racially with Africans. This disconnect potentially thwarts hopes for alliances across blackness for those seeking to recover lost ties, and may also fuel a diasporic sense of superiority over continental Africans. For some, like Maya Angelou in the 1960s and Catherine McKinley in the early 2000s, an extended stay in an African nation and the establishment of close ties with locals as friends or colleagues enables an engagement beyond these initial barriers and a resolution of tensions they cause.[62]

The relationship between diasporic and continental Africans is also complicated by mediating African states that see economic opportunity in African diasporic desires for recovery and return. For example, the government of Ghana lists among its tourist destinations forts and castles that once held enslaved Africans. More recently, it branded 2019 (the 400th anniversary of the transportation of the first group of enslaved Africans to the British colony in North America) as The Year of Return, attracting a wide range of visitors, from throngs of diasporic Africans to members of the US Congress. At the same time, as it facilitates visits to forts and castles, the government and its representatives suitably mark such sites as places of trauma, and visits as occasions of mourning.

Amid these wider and structural intervening factors between diasporic and continental African desire, are the quotidian practices of recovery that constitute another set of Black indigeneities. These range from annual celebrations of Kwanzaa to African American quilters' use of African and Afrocentric fabric and symbolism in their work to African Americans' widespread adoption of kente cloth as a marker of identity.[63] Acts of recovery also vary in the levels of knowledge and commitment to Africa in which they are embedded. A vendor of African cultural goods cited in my book *The Copyright Thing Doesn't Work Here* distinguishes between knowledgeable African Americans, whom she terms the "cultural community," and less knowledgeable people who may not know the difference between handwoven kente cloth, for example, and roller printed imitations.[64]

The purchasing practices and ideological commitments of people in the two groups have different implications for Ghanaian and other continental African suppliers of such goods. Evidence indicates that members of the cultural community are often keen to ensure that their consumption of African material culture benefits African producers.[65] Those who are less discriminating constitute a lucrative market for African, Asian, and other purveyors of mass-produced imitations of African culture for sale in the diaspora. In addition, African American acts of recovery may direct African culture away from the purposes to which Africans on the Continent apply it, resulting in the difference reported by Betsy Quick between African Americans for whom kente is "anything I want it to be" and Ghanaians for whom it is a royal cloth that must only be put to special uses.[66] As such, the indigeneities denoted by cultural goods like kente in the diaspora do not necessarily map onto those of the continent. In recovering African practices and material culture, then, diasporic Africans may participate in practices of appropriation that harm African producers. Nonetheless, they often also imbue those African practices and culture with new meanings and new ideas of belonging.

The power of such indigeneities was evident in the response to what many African Americans considered an illegitimate use of Black culture in 2020. Following the killing of George Floyd, a Black man, by a white police officer in Minneapolis on May 31, 2020, and the ensuing nationwide protests, there was a rush by ordinary and prominent white Americans to repudiate white supremacy, and taking a knee in protest became the ultimate gesture of that repudiation. Initiated by African American football player Colin Kaepernick in 2014, taking a knee quickly became a polarizing sign of protest. Kaepernick was not only criticized but also effectively barred from continuing to play football when teams refused to hire him. At the same time, athletes from a range of different sports joined in the practice, and it became even more widespread during the protests of 2020. On June 8, 2020, members of the US Congress—most of them white—went one step further with the gesture when they took a knee in the US Capitol with kente stoles draped around their necks. Although Black Caucus member Karen Bass had suggested this act, several African American commentators were outraged at this appropriation of kente, established by 2020 as an important element of African American culture and Black pride, and a marker of Black indigeneity.

Conclusion

A lens of indigeneity anchored in historical relations of power and in Black and Indigenous peoples' ongoing practices of self-determination clarifies Indigenous, African, and African-descended peoples' structural relation to each other and to the nation-states in which they live on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. This essay has offered an analytical framework that conceives of Black indigeneities as tacit, latent, overt, remembered, and recovered. It recuperates the contested term of ethnicity not as opposed to, but as a resource for, indigeneity, especially in the African context. The framework also illuminates the potential grounds for aligned struggle by Black

and Indigenous peoples against subjugation by both settler and postcolonial states. It reveals that if Black people on both sides of the Atlantic can insist on "the way things are done," despite the ravages of histories of enslavement and colonization, then that is because of their ongoing work of remembering, recovery, and repair, even when there are few guarantees from the nation-state.

Notes

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30. Hodgson, "Becoming Indigenous in Africa"; Laura A. Foster, *Reinventing Hoodia: Peoples, Plants, and Patents in South Africa* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017).

31. Michaela Pelican, "Ethnicity as a Political Resource: Indigenous Rights Movements in Africa," in *Ethnicity as a Political Resource: Conceptualizations across Disciplines, Regions and Periods*, ed. University of Cologne Forum (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 135–49.

32. Michelle M. Wright, *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 5.

33. Wright, *Physics of Blackness*, 4.

34. MOSOP (Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People), accessed July 29, 2020, http://www.mosop.org/.

35. Chimamanda Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* (New York: Anchor Books/Random House, 2003), 53.

36. A masquerade is a parade of masked figures representing different spirits. Masquerades like the one described in *Purple Hibiscus* form part of the wide array of masking traditions in southeastern Nigeria and southwestern Cameroon. See Eli Bentor, "Warrior Masking, Youth Culture and Gender Roles: Masks and History in Aro Ikeji Festival," *African Arts* 52, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 34–45, https://doi.org/10.1162/afar_a_00445.

37. Government of Ghana. *Customary Marriage and Divorce (Registration) Law PNDCL 112*, 1985.

38. Rosalind Cummings-Yeates, "Akwaaba: A Journey of Welcome in Ghana as Ebony Travels Back to Africa," *Ebony*, December/January 2019, 48–51.

39. MOSOP.

40. Government of Ghana, *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana*.

41. Boatema Boateng, *The Copyright Thing Doesn't Work Here: Adinkra and Kente and Intellectual Property Law in Ghana* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

42. Hodgson, "Becoming Indigenous in Africa"; Dorothy L. Hodgson, *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2011).

43. Foster, *Reinventing Hoodia*.

44. *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Ken Saro-Wiwa," accessed August 5, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ken-Saro-Wiwa.

45. *Britannica*, Ken-Saro-Wiwa.

46. Alfred and Corntassel, "Being Indigenous."

47. Hodgson, "Becoming Indigenous in Africa," 3.

48. Alfred and Corntassel, "Being Indigenous."

49. Hodgson, "Becoming Indigenous in Africa," 5.

50. Hodgson, *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2011), 32.

51. *Daughters of the Dust*, directed by Julie Dash (San Francisco: Cohen Film, 1991). For a detailed discussion of the film's multiple layers of storytelling and photographic technique, see Jacqueline Bobo's essay "Daughters of the Dust," in *Black Women as Cultural Readers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

52. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 70.

53. Ibid., 72.

54. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 198.

55. Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

56. Miles, "Taking Leave, Making Lives," 145.

57. Ibid., 142.

58. Scot Brown, *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization and Black Cultural Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2003).

59. Boatema Boateng, "African Textiles and the Politics of Diasporic Identity-Making," in *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*, ed. Jean Allman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 212–26.

60. Brown, *Fighting for US*.

61. Saidiya V. Hartman, "The Time of Slavery," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2002): 757–77, muse.jhu.edu/article/39111; McKinley, Catherine E. *Indigo: In Search of the Color That Seduced the World*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2012. Hartman and McKinley render the word as "obruni," possibly spelling the word phonetically based on a common mispronunciation. The Twi spelling, "oburoni," is sometimes contracted to "obroni."

62. Maya Angelou, *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (New York: Random House, 1986); McKinley, *Indigo*.

63. Based on observations at African American quilt shows in California over the past two decades and also reported by Kyra Hicks in *Black Threads: An African American Quilting Sourcebook* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2003).

64. Boateng, *Copyright Thing Doesn't Work Here*.

65. Boateng, "African Textiles."

66. Betsy Quick, "Pride and Dignity," in *Wrapped in Pride: Ghanaian Kente and African American Identity*, ed. Doran H. Ross (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 1998), 203–65.