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Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past: Genres of Geography and Race in Early America

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Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past

Genres of Geography and Race in Early America

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in English

by

Timothy Fosbury

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past

Genres of Geography and Race in Early America

by

Timothy Fosbury

Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

Professor Marissa K. López, Chair

Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past: Genres of Geography and Race in Early America re-historicizes the construction and contestation of colonial racialization processes in the Anglophone Americas from the perspective of Bermuda. This dissertation establishes the understudied archipelago as a literary and material gateway to the hemisphere that profoundly impacted how race and the future were imagined from North America to the Caribbean. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, writers and settlers positioned Bermuda as the enabling condition of their incessant revisions of whiteness, indigeneity, and historical rights of habitation in their projects of conquest and dispossession throughout America. Writers from John Smith to J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur sustained a literary network of supposed English exceptionalism they believed was revealed by Bermuda's uniqueness. Across colonial documents, sermons, poems, letters, early histories, proposals, and fiction, scores of writers

proposed that Bermuda magnified this so-called English extraordinariness and opened colonial and religious futures never before imaginable. Ultimately, colonizers seized upon these aesthetic idealizations of Bermuda to consolidate their power and territorial control in the hemisphere, and, in turn, their narrative hold on who might inhabit America's possible futures.

While *Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past* is about Bermuda primarily, it is not about Bermuda exclusively. In the first two case studies, I employ comparative methodologies to re-center the archipelago in the histories of settlement and race in the English colonization of the hemisphere in the seventeenth century. In the latter half of the dissertation, I excavate how Bermuda's colonial history impacted the development of racialized discourses in the early U.S. nation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this manner, *Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past* shifts the literary and geographic terrains of early American analyses to an understudied location to reject the teleologies of colonial and national triumphs in favor of an anticolonial approach that dismantles the fragile fictions of settler colonialism. This dissertation's historical and methodological unsettlements magnify the glaring incompleteness of the so-called new world's historical record and offer new opportunities for confronting the myths of occupation at the moments of their emergence in colonial and early national narratives.

The dissertation of Timothy Fosbury is approved.

Carrie Hyde

Christopher Looby

Richard A. Yarborough

Marissa K. López, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At long last, *Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past: Genres of Geography and Race in Early America* is completed. It has been a long, winding journey of exploring, starting, stopping, and questioning everything. Along the way, I've learned and grown in ways I never expected. Academic labor by nature is largely solitary but never once did I feel isolated in my research and writing.

My committee members have been an inspiration. I came to UCLA as a scholar of the novel in the early twentieth century. In his "Post-Reconstruction/Pre-Harlem Renaissance" seminar, Richard Yarborough asked me to think a bit more about why Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces* (1900), a novel about Boston at the end of the nineteenth century, begins in eighteenth-century Bermuda. My attempt at an answer became this dissertation, and Richard's probing questions led me here. The GSRM Chris Looby and I completed together on the Massachusetts Bay Colony's relationship with Bermuda convinced me to at last commit to early America. Chris's methodological rigor in historical analysis has been a consistent model of excellence. Carrie Hyde has been an impeccable reader of countless drafts from the prospectus to this final version. Her suggestions on structure, evidence, and language have made me a far better writer than I ever imagined I could be. Marissa López has been the ideal chair. She has spent countless hours helping me work through vague ideas, offering meticulous feedback on my writing, and challenging me to always confront what America even is in the first place. She understands the humanity and precarity of completing graduate studies at this moment in history, and this dissertation would not have happened without her.

My research was made possible by generous financial support from UCLA and several other institutions. At UCLA, two Graduate Summer Research Fellowships, a Graduate Research

Mentorship, and two Dissertation Fellowships gave me the resources to explore my first ideas and the time to finish this project in its latter stages. *Other Languages, Other Americas,* the Summer Seminar in the History of the Book in American Culture led by Kirsten Silva Gruesz and Anna Brickhouse at the American Antiquarian Society, provided the momentum I needed to begin writing. Short-term research fellowships at the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Grace M. Hunt Fellowship, and the American Antiquarian Society brought me to the archives necessary to actually make this thing happen. My year-long residential fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania's McNeil Center for Early American Studies was irreplaceable in my development as an early Americanist and crucial in so many ways to the completion of *Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past*. Portions of the first and third chapters were published as "Bermuda's Persistent Futures" in *American Literary History*. I am eternally grateful to Gordon Hutner for his generous comments and suggestions that gave me the perspective I desperately needed to figure out what is I was saying.

I completed this dissertation under tumultuous historical and material conditions. Trump has come and gone, but the white nationalism he emboldened persists and will likely grow more insidious in the coming years. COVID-19 has irrevocably entered our disease ecology. Environmental apocalypse looms. The academic job market has collapsed, and it is not clear if this profession will exist as we have known it in five or ten years. As a scholar of empire's historical futures, it is not lost on me that we live in a time when the future so often feels disheartening. In all this precarity and turmoil, however, I have been surrounded by friends and colleagues who have offered their unwavering support and made the world a bit brighter every day.

At UCLA, Dan Couch, Sam Sommers, Will Clark, and Jordan Wingate embraced this confused Americanist in his first year of graduate school and showed him the ropes. Jay Jin has been a fantastic friend for years. Our lunches, basketball games, and walks around campus made graduate school so much more bearable. Shouhei Tanaka has probably read more of my writing at every stage than anyone else. He has offered invaluable feedback, but I still won't let him drive left on the court. My friends in the Futures Group, Samantha Morse and Mike Vignola, were there at the beginning and really got my first two chapters moving. When I met my cohort in 2014, it was like we'd been friends our whole lives. Elizabeth, Jessica, Chelsea, Yangjung, Comfort, Becky, Abraham, and Joe, I couldn't have done this without you.

The McNeil Center was where I really became an early Americanist. Many thanks to Dan Richter and Laura Keenan Spero for the opportunity and the enlightening conferences and seminars. Amy Baxter-Bellamy and Barbara Natello were always available to answer my millions of questions. My fellow fellows Zara, Michael, Casey, Liz, Ittai, Kyle, Kellan, Lila, Elise, Ajay, Nicole, Peter, and Simeon were an inspiration every day at the center. I am forever grateful for everything I learned from all of you at official events, in the bro corner, and around the table at our informal happy hours.

In spring 2020, some friends had the brilliant idea for a project that became *Insurrect! Radical Thinking in Early American Studies*. Second to my Ph.D., *Insurrect!* is my most proud professional accomplishment. Liz, Ittai, Kellen, Elise, and Lila, you challenge, motivate, and inspire me constantly. I am a better scholar and person for knowing you and working with you. In everything I write and teach, I now ask myself, "What would my comrades at *Insurrect* do?" It always leads to the right decision. You are all the most innovative and rigorous scholars I know, and you are the future of early American studies.

When I was in college, I attended a gathering with my mother. After learning what I studied, someone there derisively asked what I was going to do with an English major. I was taken aback and stumbled to speak. Before I could, my mother interjected with defensive pride. “He’s going to be a writer,” she said. More than anyone, she understood my passion for literature and offered her unconditional support. To my father, sisters, nieces, and nephews, thank you for your encouragement and patience along the way. Looks like I’m finally done with school. My mother isn’t here for this moment, but I know she would be proud. She taught me that the only thing that matters in life is that we leave the world a little better than when we found it. “Life is too short to be an asshole,” she would tell me, “so just do some good.” My scholarship and my teaching are a small contribution to that mission.

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Selected Conferences

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2019 The Bermudian Centers of New England Settlerism
Society of Early Americanists Biennial Conference
Eugene, OR, March 2019

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Santa Cruz, CA, February 2019

2017 Crèvecoeur's Early American Circuit
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Philadelphia, PA, October 2017

2016 Sailing at the Limits of Progress: Bermuda and the Transnational Politics of History and Mobility
Untold Futures
Chicago, IL, November 2016

Introduction

In a series of essays for *Harper's* in 1894, William Dean Howells considers Bermuda's place in American colonial history. Like many before him, Howells concludes that the 1609 wreck of the *Sea Venture* on the archipelago while on its way to resupply Jamestown was the saving grace of the Virginia settlement after the stranded settlers eventually made it to the colony with food and supplies. Ever since, "Have the Bermudians not always been friends of the Virginians," Howells asks, "and did not they repeatedly aid them [Jamestown] in their early struggles?"[1] There is no history of Jamestown, and thus what is now the United States, Howells insists, without Bermuda, and while the first settlers on those islands may have been a "turbulent and piratical lot,"[2] he believes their generosity and ingenuity made his America possible.

Bermuda inspires Howells to think about the histories and futures of race in the hemisphere. Bermuda's "fifteen thousand inhabitants," he notes, "are more than half black, or rather mulattoes," and he believes "it is obvious that the race is more self-respecting than it is in some other places, and that it has in many ways made progress during its sixty years of emancipation."[3] Howells links his Massachusetts home to Bermuda through the history of Indigenous slavery, and he notes that "New England contributed some enslaved Pequots to the population, and their features, it is said, can still be traced in the colored race."[4] The archipelago also produces some anxiety for Howells about the future of whiteness. "If Bermuda were not a dock-yard and a fortress, one of the stations where the English flag is raised from point to point in the circle of the earth to greet the sun, which expects to find it there," he notes, "it may be

[1] William Dean Howells, "Editor's Study," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 89 (1894), 152.

[2] Ibid., 154.

[3] Ibid., 153.

[4] Ibid., 154.

conjectured that in a few years these lazy islands would contain few white men besides the winter visitors."[5] Howells concludes that fidelity to national identity, global commerce, and a military presence are the socio-cultural obligations of maintaining an imperial sense of whiteness for the colonial ruling class in Bermuda. To Howells, these relations among the land, systems of governance, commerce, and racialized ways of being must be preserved to sustain what Bermuda represents to him as the under-acknowledged foundation of American history.

Howell's Bermudian essays are a condensed example of what I examine in this dissertation: a corpus of texts spanning multiple centuries that speculate upon the Bermudian land, the archipelago's coloniality, and its relation to the rest of the hemisphere. Howells is not alone in his fascination with Bermuda's relation to the rest of American history. What he demonstrates in *Harper's* – a mythologization of Bermudian history as the core of American history – was the norm for scores of writers across two centuries in the hemisphere. To many, Bermuda was an American origin story, a model of historical exceptionalism, and a racial laboratory that made possible the historical futures of colonialism in the hemisphere. Engaging a wide array of texts across form and genre, I reconstruct how settler colonials in America engaged Bermuda in literature and material practice to articulate, disseminate, and enforce their idea of colonial control and race in the so-called new world.

Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past: Genres of Geography and Race in Early America identifies Bermuda as a literary and cultural hub of Anglo settlement projects across all of America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The colonial futures and forms of whiteness and indigeneity imagined in literature about Bermuda impacted English settlers' justifications of territorial expansion and enslavement in places ranging from the Massachusetts Bay to the

[5] William Dean Howells, "Editor's Study," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 89 (June 1894), 313.

Bahamas. Across colonial documents, sermons, poems, letters, early histories, proposals, and fiction, many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers – including John Donne, John Smith, Andrew Marvell, and George Berkeley – proposed that Bermuda magnified a so-called English extraordinariness that opened up colonial and religious futures never before imaginable. Anglo-American writers sustained this literary network of English exceptionalism revealed by Bermuda's uniqueness and colonizers seized upon it to consolidate their power and territorial control in the hemisphere, and, in turn, their narrative hold on who would inhabit America in perpetuity. Bermuda, I show, was the literary and material gateway to the hemisphere and its futurities in the first two centuries of English settlement. As such, writers and colonizers alike imagined the archipelago as the enabling condition of their incessantly improvised colonial modes of being, what we now think of as whiteness and indigeneity, and historical rights of habitation in their projects of conquest and dispossession.

The colonial forms of race are fictions with very real historical and material conditions. These fictions became and remain a lived experience, I argue, in large part due to their containment within and distribution through literature about Bermuda. Angela Calcaterra defines settler colonial aesthetics as primarily a cultural "concern with the sensibilities and forms of connection and collectivity" instigated by the epistemological and historical irruptions of a so-called new world in the European imaginations of the early modern era.[6] As it was received in English literary circles, settlement transformed how writers imagined means of connection and collectivity vis-a-vis themselves, domestic England, invaded lands, and dispossessed peoples as colonization inspired a literary revitalization of self-definition in an ever-expanding global context. Bermuda's natural features, global location, and proximity to other settlements

[6] Angela Calcaterra, *Literary Indians: Aesthetics and Encounter in American Literature to 1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 2018), 2.

established the previously uninhabited archipelago as a vacant training ground for colonial logics of whiteness and indigeneity. These logics were then weaponized throughout the hemisphere to invade and dispossess elsewhere in America. The imaginative literature of Bermuda's apparent exceptionalism contributed to the racialized mentalities developed by settlers to justify and enforce the revised hierarchies of being they believed were necessary for the colonial, commercial, and religious futures they desired for themselves. Race, Gerald Horne argues, is "a pernicious concept that emerged forcefully, coincidentally enough, in the seventeenth century as colonialism was gaining traction,"[7] and Bermuda, we will see, was at the imaginative and material centers of these profound historical shifts instigated by the invasion and settlement of America.

While *Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past* is about Bermuda primarily, it is not about Bermuda exclusively. I employ comparative methodologies to re-center the archipelago in narratives of settlement and race in the English colonization of America, broadly speaking, and the archipelago has about as much to say about somewhere like Massachusetts as it does about itself. My intervention's stakes are geographic and literary. Following the developments of the hemispheric and the more recent archipelagic turns, my excavation of Bermuda's significance to the cultural and literary histories of settler colonialism continues to push early American studies beyond the de-historicized, limiting constraints of contemporary borders and geographic imaginaries. Bermuda is part of what Brian Russell Roberts calls the "'revolutionary topography' of the island landscape" that allows us to push against "more rigid, continental conceptions of

[7] Gerald Horne, *The Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, and Capitalism in Seventeenth-Century North America and the Caribbean* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2018), 17.

national identity" and colonial history.[8] *Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past* also calls for an expanded understanding of what constitutes the "literary" in our studies of American colonization. Centering Bermuda in colonial history makes America look different as it revises our notions of the relations among race, place, narrative, and futurity by necessitating a cross-genre archive of how America was invented, written, and lived between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It does so across conventional and unconventional literatures that together show racial thinking baked into the very forms of America. A poem about Bermuda or a proposal for a university on the islands, I demonstrate, are both speculative means of writing that profoundly impacted how whiteness and indigeneity were understood and practiced by colonizers in early America.

A Brief History of Bermuda in America

For one hundred years, Europeans largely avoided Bermuda. Supposedly first seen by Spanish navigator Juan Bermúdez in 1505, the previously uninhabited archipelago became known as the Devil's Islands. Sailors concluded that Bermuda was unlivable at best and haunted at worst because of its shallow reefs that complicated navigation, its isolation in the Atlantic, and the spooky calls of the Bermuda Cahow seabird that were overwhelming every dusk. This was all true to the English, of course, until the wreck of the *Sea Venture* in 1609 changed their perceptions of what Bermuda might be. That year, the Virginia Company of London struggled to maintain the Jamestown settlement, and so they commissioned a resupply fleet led by the *Sea Venture*. The vessel, however, was separated from the others and wrecked in Bermuda after

[8] Cherene Sherrard-Johnson, "Insubordinate Islands and Coastal Chaos: Pauline Hopkins's Literary Land/Seascapes," *Archipelagic American Studies: Decontinentalizing the Study of American Culture*, Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Ann Stephens, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2017), 232.

encountering a storm. The shipwrecked spent nine months on Bermuda building two new boats, *Deliverance* and *Perseverance*, that eventually got them to Jamestown. During this time, they determined that Bermuda was in fact a quite livable place. They were particularly fond of the islands' temperate climate, genial wildlife, natural fortifications, fecund soil, and cedar trees apparently ideal for shipbuilding.

After the stranded settlers made it to Virginia, English writers produced texts that promoted Bermuda's settlement. By 1610, three members of the *Sea Venture* cohort had written accounts of their experiences with the wreck. They all defended the same premise: the will of God brought the English to Bermuda, and the exceptional character of the English settler would bring glory to God's new American kingdom.[9] In poetry and prose, these early texts highlighted Bermuda's isolation and temperance to imagine the archipelago as a vacant incubator for what they believed had just been discovered - a symbiotic relationship between English bodies and Bermuda that made all of America natural to England. With its settlement now proven to be feasible, the archipelago's possibilities, they urged, were to be built at once. As R. Rich's 1610 verse describes what the *Sea Venture* settlers supposedly accomplished that no other Europeans could, "Let England know our willingness, / for that our worke is good; / Wee hope to plant a nation, / where none before hath stood."[10] Quite suddenly, Bermuda arrived in the early modern English imagination, and it immediately burrowed into many texts that considered the possibilities of an empire, so much so that even Shakespeare was apparently unable to avoid the

[9] See Sylvester Jourdain's "A Discovery of the Barmudas, Otherwise Called the Ile of Divels" in *A Voyage to Virginia in 1609: Two Narratives*, Louis B. Wright, ed. (Charlottesville, VA: U of Virginia P, 2013), 103-116; R. Rich's "Newes from Virginia" in *A Poetical Tract, Describing the Adventures Supposed to Be Referred to in Shakespeare's Tempest*, J.O. Halliwell Esq., ed. (London: Whittingham and Wilkins, 1865); and William Strachey's "A True Reportory" in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlements of America*, James Horn, ed. (New York: The Library of America, 2007), 979-1037.

[10] R. Rich, "Newes from Virginia," ll. 101-104.

imaginative allure of those "bermoothes" in *The Tempest* (1611) not two years after the wreck of the *Sea Venture*.

Bermuda experienced immediate material success that sustained literary discourses of the religious and colonial futures of English dominance in America that the archipelago supposedly portended. By 1612, there were 600 settlers in Bermuda and the small colony economically outproduced Virginia for several years. Prevailing trade winds and Gulf Stream patterns pushed English ships on trans-Atlantic journeys and circum-Caribbean voyages towards Bermuda, making the archipelago essentially unavoidable in the nascent English plantation system in America.[11] Bermuda's quick ascendance served as the material foundations of expansive literary speculation that imagined the conquest of the entire hemisphere from the archipelago outward. By the 1620s, a common narrative refrain in London was that Bermuda had the potential to make all of America a natural English domain.[12] Bermuda was never the Devil's Island, many a writer asserted, and it had only given that appearance until the English were prepared to cultivate its potential. Lewes Hughes suggested in 1625 that "the goodnes of Almight God, in keeping these Ilands secret from all people of the world...til now that it please his holy Majestie, to discover and bestow them upon his people of *England* is so greate as should stiree them up with thankefull hearts"[13] that they now had access to futures once thought unimaginable. Bermuda, Hughes claims, makes the settlement of America a religious obligation for the English - "to praise his holy and greate name, and to send such to inhabit them as feare God, and give

[11] Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783* (Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 2010), 4-5.

[12] In particular, see Nathaniel Butler, *Historye of the Bermudaes or Summer Islands*, ed. Sir John Lefroy (London: Hakluyt Society, 1882); Lewes Hughes, "A Letter sent into England from the Summer Ilands"; Richard Norwood, "The Description of the Sommer Ilands," *The Journal of Richard Norwood, Surveyor* (Asbury Park, NJ: The Schulyer Press, 1945).

[13] Lewes Hughes, "A Letter sent into England from the Summer Illands," 1.

themselves to serve him in holinesse and righteousnesse, that so, that God may love to dwell in those Ilands" – and now that the secret about the archipelago was out, it was time for the English to transfer what they had learned in Bermuda to other locations in the hemisphere.[14]

These supposed "truths" of what was discovered in Bermuda were dispersed via poetry, prose, proposals, natural histories, and proto-ethnographies that, when taken together, produce a meta-narrative of settler colonialism as a historical and providential responsibility for which the English believed themselves to be uniquely conditioned. Writers rarely considered Bermuda's supposed historical truths in isolation, however. The early aestheticians of settlement such as John Smith and Samuel Purchas wrote about Bermuda alongside their treatments of New England, Virginia, and the West Indies. Settlements, in the early years, were not imagined as compartmentalized locations exclusive from one another. They were joined together in a plantation system, and Bermuda was at the center of it all.[15] For Smith in particular, Bermuda was a performative space where settlers enacted an idealized form of colonial cultural practices he hoped could be translated to other American settlements. In *The Generall Historie*, he asks the reader to witness what has been accomplished on the Bermudian stage, "Before we present you the matters of fact, it is fit to offer to your view the Stage whereon they were acted, for as

[14] Ibid.

[15] See especially John Smith's 1624 "The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles" in *Captain John Smith: Writings and Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlements in America*, James Horn, ed. (New York: The Library of America, 2007), 199-670; Samuel Clarke, *A true and faithful account of the four chiefest plantations of the English in America; to wit, of Virginia. New-England. Bermudus. Barbados: with the temperature of the air: the nature of the soil: the rivers, mountains, beasts, fruits, &c.* (London: Printed for R. Clavel, T. Passenger, W. Cadman, W. Whitwood, T. Sawbridge, and W. Birch, 1670); John Ogilby, *America: Being the Latest, and Most Accurate Description of the New World: Containing the Original of the Inhabitants, and the remarkable Voyages Thither* (London: Printed by the Author and Are to be Had at His house in White Fryers, 1671); and B.R., *The English Empire in America, or a Prospect of their Majesties Dominions in the West-Indies: namely Newfoundland, New England, New York, Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Carolinas, Bermuda's Barbuda, Anguila, Montserrat, Domina, St. Vincent, Antigo, Mevis, or Nevis, S. Christophers, Barbados, Jamaica, With an Account of the Discovery, Scituation, Product, and other Excellencies and Rarities of these Countries* (London: Printed for N. Crouch, 1698).

Geography without History seemeth a carkasse without motion, so History without Geography, wandreth as a Vagrant without a certaine habitation."[16] All the world watches Bermuda, Smith concludes, and the archipelago unites geography and history, or the lived expectations of futurity into a way of life lived in the present, in a unique way that portends exceptional things for the English in America.

Seventy years later, the cartographer and publisher Nathaniel Crouch, writing under the pseudonym of Robert Burton, more concretely racialized Bermudian place with an assertation that the archipelago was "the most natural possession for our Nation" because "the Air is sound and healthy, agreeable, to the English bodies, the Soil fertile, well watered, plentiful in Maize."[17] While Crouch was writing in 1698, the English maintained a settlement chain that linked the northeast American continent and Virginia to the Carolinas, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad, and Tobago, among others. Out of all these settlements, Crouch believes, Bermuda is the most naturally English because of its supposed compatibility with the English body. By the end of the seventeenth century, Bermuda's "fertile" and "well watered" soil did not actually produce much in the way of economic revenue. What interests Crouch, then, is not so much the wealth to be extracted from Bermuda but what the archipelago reveals about the English themselves in a manner that allows for the myths of historical and embodied exceptionalisms to be contained within the aesthetic forms of colonization. That is, what is important about Bermuda is not strictly its economic or extractive potentials but what it uncovers of a supposed English character and composition that then allows for an "Empire" to be imagined and enacted in the hemisphere. Many of the Bermudian texts of the seventeenth

[16] John Smith, "The Generall Historie," 523.

[17] B.R., *The English Empire in America*, 127.

century, as demonstrated in the first two chapters, followed similar generic and formal tropes to produce colonial futurities in America.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, literary and historical treatments of Bermuda turned more curatorial as writers attempted to preserve Bermuda's significance to the development of the English empire they inhabited. Many stressed that Bermudian settlers were the first colonizers in settlements throughout the hemisphere. Erstwhile Bermudians were the first in Barbados, Jamaica, Providence Island, St. Lucia, Tobago, Trinidad, and the Bahamas. A significant number of Bermudians, as well, moved to New York City after accepting an offer to settle from the Duke of York following the fall of New Netherlands in 1664.[18] Many colonial roads appeared to lead back to Bermuda, and writers italicized the settlement as the enabling condition of their deterministic inevitabilities of an English empire in America. Most influential was J.H. Lefroy, a former governor of Bermuda, who spent much of the late nineteenth century publishing most of Bermuda's seventeenth-century colonial records.[19] Others focused on Bermuda's print culture,[20] re-narrating the story of the *Sea Venture* to articulate a historical telos of the inevitable rise and success of an American empire,[21] and the aspects of Bermuda's history that they believed explained the perceived cultural, economic, and political hegemonies of an America centered on the United States.[22]

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[18] Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade, 45*-46.

[19] Lefroy began his project in 1877. For the most complete record of his efforts, see *Memorials of the Discovery and Early Settlement of the Bermudas or Somers Islands, 1515-1685* (Toronto, CA: U of Toronto P, 1981). See also, J.H. Lefroy, *Witchcraft in the Somers Islands* (London: s.n., 1875) and *On the Constitutional History of the Bermudas* (Westminster, UK: Printed by J.B. Nichols and Sons, 25 Parliament Street, 1881).

[20] Waldo Lincoln, "History of Bermuda Newspapers," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, New Series, vol. 34* (Worcester, MA: Published by the Society, 1925).

[21] Henry Campbell Wilkinson, *The Adventurers of Bermuda: A History of the Island from its Discovery until the Dissolution of the Somers Island Company in 1684* (London: Oxford UP, 1933).

[22] Wesley Frank Craven, *An Introduction to the History of Bermuda* (Williamsburg, VA: s.n., 1938).

Since the late twentieth century, Bermuda has received limited but innovative attention from scholars in anthropology, history, English, political science, and Native American and Indigenous Studies. These scholars have reassessed Bermuda's significance to American colonial history. Among their many interventions, scholars have established the archipelago as crucial to the construction and expansion of enslaving practices in the hemisphere.[23] Michael J. Jarvis has established Bermuda as the paradoxical peripheral center of Atlantic commerce in the eighteenth century.[24] Bermuda is also perhaps the original site of anticapitalist and anticolonial resistance, as argued by Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh.[25] To others, such as Heather Miyano Kopelson, the settlement also offers a case study for the performances of class, gender, race, and sex in the religious spaces of the colonial Atlantic.[26] Like it was to Howells, Bermuda is the condition of possibility for Jamestown's survival as an English settlement and ultimately the creation of the United States as a nation because of the wreck of *Sea Venture* to many writers.[27] In the environmental humanities, scholars take Bermuda to be an ecocritical problem

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[23] Cyril Outerbridge Packwood, *Chained on the Rock: Slavery in Bermuda* (New York: E. Torres, 1975) and Virginia Bernhard, *Slaves and Slaveholders in Bermuda, 1616-1782* (Columbia, MO: U of Missouri P, 1999).

[24] Michael J. Jarvis has done the most significant work on this front. See, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783* (Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 2010); "The Binds of the Anxious Mariner: Patriarchy, Paternalism, and the Maritime Culture of Eighteenth-Century Bermuda," *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010), 1-43; and "Maritime Masters and Seafaring Slaves in Bermuda, 1680-1783," *William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2002), 585-622.

[25] Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2000), 8-35.

[26] Heather Miyano Kopelson, *Faithful Bodies: Performing Religion and Race in the Puritan Atlantic* (New York: NYU P, 2014); "Sinning Property: The Legal Transformation of Abominable Sex in Early Bermuda," *William and Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (2013), 459-496; and "'One Indian and a Negroe, the first these Islands ever had': Imagining the Archive in Early Bermuda," *Early American Studies* 11, no. 2 (2013), 272-313.

[27] Kieran Doherty, *Sea Venture: Shipwreck, Survival, and the Salvation of Jamestown* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007); Lorri Glover and Daniel Blake Smith, *The Shipwreck that Saved Jamestown: The Sea Venture Castaways and the Fate of America* (New York: Holt, 2008); and Virginia Bernhard, *A Tale of Two Colonies: What Really Happened in Virginia and Bermuda?* (Columbia, MO: U of Missouri P, 2011).

for disentangling the relations between literature and the environment.[28] It is also a laboratory, as Alexander Mazzaferro has established, for the improvised political innovations of the early modern period in America.[29] The once uninhabited Bermuda has also pushed scholars to reconsider how we discuss the history of indigeneity in the hemisphere.[30]

Drawing from these innovations, I position Bermuda as a site of intense literary speculation that inspired myriad re-inventions of being in the imaginative and material practices of English settler colonization. To many writers and colonial officials, Bermuda was an intermediary between the imagination and the implementation of their colonialist desires into material actuality in America. From the Bermudian settlers themselves to John Winthrop and George Berkeley, the archipelago both inspired new fantasies of economic, colonial, and religious possibility, and it appeared to offer the most direct means of bringing such speculations into lived experience. In the literary history of English settler colonization in America, Bermuda's significance can be found in what the settlement made imaginable within the broader colonial projects of rewriting spatial and social relations to justify the occupation of land and recategorize place and ways of being throughout the hemisphere. In forms ranging from poetry to surveys and spiritual narratives, Bermuda inspired fantasies of the American future, gave

[28] Steve Mentz, *Shipwreck Modernity: Ecologies of Globalization, 1550-1719* (Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P, 2015) and "The Bermuda Assemblage," *Postmedieval* 7, no. 4 (2016), 551-564.

[29] Alexander Mazzaferro, "'Such a Murmur': Innovation, Rebellion, and Sovereignty in William Strachey's 'True Reportory,'" *Early American Literature* 53, no. 1 (2018), 3-32.

[30] Christine M. Delucia, *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2018), 289-324; Jill B. Gaieski, et al., "Genetic Ancestry and Indigenous Heritage in a Native American Descendant Community in Bermuda," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 146, no. 3 (2011): 392-405; Rosalyn Howard, *Recollection and Reconnection: Voices of the St. David's Islanders and Their Native American Relatives* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace, DBA On-Demand Publishing LLC, 2015); and St. Clair "Brinky" Tucker, *St. David's Island, Bermuda: Its People, History and Culture* (Winnipeg, MB: Hignell Book Printing, 2009).

meaning to place throughout the hemisphere, and informed how colonizers understood whiteness and indigeneity in American settlements.

Settler Colonialism as Speculative Narrative

Lewes Hughes's assertion that Bermuda should be settled so "that God may love to dwell in those Ilands"[31] and Nathaniel Crouch's belief that the archipelago is "the most natural possession for our nation"[32] both articulate an early ethos of settler colonialism. To them, Bermuda becomes historically and materially natural to England so much so that God kept "these Ilands secret from all people of the world"[33] until the English were prepared to settle them. The colonizers' unique relationship with Bermuda is reflected by their supposed natural compatibility with a place where "the Air is sound and healthy, agreeable, to the English bodies."[34] While it is a material undertaking, settler colonialism is also a textual worldmaking project conditioned by narratives of divine ordination and bodily harmony with the seized environments and landscapes. To justify their permanent presence, settlers present colonization as the natural course of history. Settler colonization is first and foremost concerned with using these narratives of the supposed natural course of colonization to justify the displacement of Indigenous populations from seized lands to make way for European suzerainty.[35] Settlers seek to make occupied territory a domestic space

[31] Lewes Hughes, "A Letter sent into England from the Summer Illands," 1.

[32] B.R., *The English Empire in America*, 127.

[33] Lewes, Hughes, "A Letter sent into England from the Summer Illands," 1.

[34] B.R., *The English Empire in America*, 127.

[35] For more on defining settler colonialism through its relationship to indigeneity, see especially Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P, 2011); Glen Coulthard, "From Wards of the State to Subjects of Recognition? Marx, Indigenous Peoples, and the Politics of Dispossession in Denendeh" in *Theorizing Native Studies*, Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2014); Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Place, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P, 2015); María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given: Racial Geographies*

for themselves through the textualization of newly spatialized hierarchies of being that are bifurcated along lines of ecologically and geographically produced cultural practices, as Hughes and Crouch communicate, that they believe make them the so-called natural inhabitants of the lands they have seized for occupation.

Bermuda, though, had no Indigenous population. There is no archeological or material evidence that prior to the 1609 arrival of the *Sea Venture* humans had ever attempted permanent habitation on the islands. Latching on to this vacancy, writers idealized the archipelago as an aspirational model of what settlement might look like after the total displacement of Indigenous peoples in places like New England or Virginia. In this respect, Bermuda offers a peculiar lens into the literary history of American settlement. Settlers were always moving in and out of Bermuda to trade or settle elsewhere, and, coupled with its vacancy, many settlers saw Bermuda as a perpetually unsettled settlement that could be the fantastical motor through which they would become the hemisphere's "indigenous" presence. Much of early American literature, James H. Cox argues, is marked by a "desire to be relieved of the burden of imagining an Indigenous population,"[36] and Bermuda, to many an Anglo colonizer, presented itself as a material manifestation of what their colonialist desires of a settled hemisphere populated only by the English might look like in the future during the presents of their early settlements. To many, as I demonstrate in every chapter, Bermuda was an exceptional case of colonialism without violence to settlers that presented what empire would look like in its final stages. Paradoxically, then, the vacant Bermuda was utilized to justify atrocities elsewhere in the hemisphere.

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across Mexico and the United States (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2016); Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) and "Where does Colonialism come From?," *Rethinking History* 22, no. 2 (2018), 184-202; and Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (New York: Continuum, 1999).

[36] James H. Cox, *Muting White Noise: Native Americans and European Novel Traditions* (Norman, OK: U of Oklahoma P, 2006), 15.

From the surveyor and natural historian Richard Norwood in the seventeenth century to J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur in the eighteenth, writers produced a set of literary Bermudas to position themselves as the exceptional historical agents of modernity. The sudden appearance of America in early modern European imaginations transformed how the world was confronted and lived for those who would attempt to colonize the hemisphere.[37] As a project of invasion and Indigenous displacement, Ralph Bauer argues, settler colonialism also equates to a power struggle over the production, control, and dissemination of knowledge of what constitutes modernity. Since its invention as a place of European desire and futurity, America has been crucial to what we mean by "modernity," and the literary fabrication of an "America" as a place to be seized and settled produced the defining characteristics of the epoch – colonialism, ethnicity, racism, and the valorization of an always emerging newness weaponized to validate ceaseless land acquisition and wealth accumulation.[38] Colonizers employed what Bauer calls the hermeneutics of discovery to render America as a place always under a process of revelation, and one that did "not reveal the secrets of nature promiscuously but only to the discoverer supplied with the adequate philosophical and instrumental equipment."[39] It is in this respect that settler colonialism is a narrative production. Colonizers wrote and explained a "new world" into existence, one they believed redefined historical epistemologies and ways of being to secure new means of wealth and knowledge production.

[37] Ralph Bauer, *The Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literatures: Empire, Travel, Modernity* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2003), 3.

[38] Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, "Americanity as a concept, or the Americas in the modern world-system," *International Social Science Journal* 44, no. 4 (1992), 540.

[39] Ralph Bauer, "The Crucible of the Tropics: Alexander von Humboldt's Hermeneutics of Discovery," *The Eighteenth Century*, 59, no. 2 (2018), 246.

Across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, writers worked within the emergent colonial genres of authority – shipwreck narratives, travel accounts, natural descriptions, and surveys – to imagine the ideas of historical and embodied exceptionalisms they relied upon into lived experiences. With these literary developments, Bermuda developed into a site of intense literary speculation through which the aestheticians of settlement considered how the material benefits of new world knowledge production and domination might one day be scaled across the entire hemisphere. Bermuda travelled intensively and extensively across English communication and literary networks. Take, for example, William Strachey's firsthand account of his experiences with the *Sea Venture*, "A true reportory." Strachey wrote his manuscript in 1610 while in Virginia. He gave it directly to Sir Thomas Gates, also a member of the *Sea Venture* cohort, who then delivered it in person in London to the Virginia Company. From there, "A true reportory" circulated between elite literary and social circles around the city, with even Shakespeare himself supposedly reading it, and learning of those "still-vexed bermoothes," while writing *The Tempest*. From the seventeenth century onward, Bermuda was in personal letters, it was in boardrooms, it was in narrative manuscripts, and it was on the stage. In each setting it often signaled what the future might hold in America in a way many other settlements could and did not.

A large part of Bermuda's speculative literary appeal was that it was small, isolated, and knowable. The islands were easy to monitor and defend, and, Jeanette D. Black points out, they "were the earliest English colony to be completely surveyed and mapped. The small land area - only about twenty square miles - made a complete survey feasible, and the comparatively rapid growth of the population in the early years of settlement rendered it necessary."[40] Bermuda was

[40] Jeanette D. Black, *The Blathwayt Atlas, Vol. 2* (Providence, RI: Brown UP, 1975), 151.

the first place that the English felt they really "knew" in America. They catalogued, mapped, and partitioned all of its land in less than ten years after their arrival. They kept close tabs on who was there and under what capacity, and the islands' vacancy, they supposed, made the archipelago a special test case for what was becoming the settler colonization of America. Bermuda was a "blank slate"[41] for the English that helped settlers persistently speculate upon the significance of their physical relations to American land in the hemisphere as they imagined settlement as a cultural system over vast swaths of geography.

Bermuda, in this manner, is speculative in colonial writing in two ways. It is a site of literary speculation through which colonizers imagined futures absent of an Indigenous presence. Second, it is speculative in the material sense of giving meaning to land to produce wealth and knowledge. The texts I examine, from Richard Norwood's Bermudian description and spiritual autobiography to George Berkeley's proposed Bermudian university, imagine hemispheric colonial futurities through the aesthetic narration of the place-making practices of land seizure, occupation, mapping, and the lived experiences of everyday life in Bermuda. The American irruption into early modern imaginations produced new histories, new ways of experiencing the world for Europeans, and as this new "modernity" took hold, "the more that demands of the future increase[d]."[42] Bermuda, as both a material place and an imagined colonial entity, I argue across this dissertation, at once enabled these new demands of the future - whether messianic, economic, or colonial - and pointed the way toward their material implementation in the hemisphere. The poetry, sermons, histories, natural descriptions, and correspondence I analyze

[41] Rebecca Ann Bush, *Colonial Transformation: The Cultural Production of the New Atlantic World, 1580-1640* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 93.

[42] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia UP, 2004), 3.

are all akin to what Kristina Bross describes as colonial fantasies, or forms and genres of desire - for wealth, land, and spiritual and corporeal exceptionalism - that imagine across past, present, and future a new, "glorious time to come for England or its people around the world."[43] The texts of early Bermuda form a cross-genre speculative corpus through which colonizers produced their fantasies of new status quos they hoped would be translatable to all of America by nature of Bermuda's supposed uniqueness.

Genres of Geography and Race in Bermudian America

From New England to the Caribbean, early American settlers relied on narratives of an uncultivated, and thus vacant, hemisphere to justify their invasions. The vacancies they fabricated throughout America produced the imaginative capital of the economic and religious futurities they hoped would come to fruition in conjunction with their cultivation of the land. Colonial writers relied upon these proto-Lockean justifications of land acquisition, Lisa Lowe argues, to represent "the lands in the Americas as if they were insufficiently cultivated, or devoid of inhabitants,"[44] regardless of who was living there upon colonizers' arrivals. Yet, total historical vacancy was never a material reality in America outside of Bermuda. Settlers wrote vacancy into other parts of the hemisphere in conjunction with their invention of the "Indian" as a way of being out of time and place, unable to work the land into a cultivated profit-maker. Colonial land seizures, as described by Achille Mbembe, were a matter "of writing, on the ground, a new set of social and spatial relations."[45] The figure of the Indian became one of the central tropes of colonial writing,

[43] Kristina Bross, *Future History: Global Fantasies in Seventeenth-Century American and British Writings* (New York: Oxford UP, 2017), 18.

[44] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continent* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2015), 10.

[45] Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," trans. Libby Meintjes, *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003), 26.

and it was utilized by settlers to rewrite American space in a manner "tantamount to the production of borders, hierarchies, zones, and enclaves," and, ultimately, "the classification of people to different categories."[46] Bermuda, this dissertation concludes, was a crucial material foundation to how colonial writers wrote within the emergent genres of geography and race because of the unique exceptionalisms they projected upon and beyond it.

Texts like Richard Norwood's *The Description of the Summer Ilands, Once Called the Bermudas* (1622-23) and John Winthrop's inter-American correspondence of the 1630s privileged Bermuda in their hemispheric geographic imaginaries to envision American futures vacated of an Indigenous presence. To Norwood, the previously uninhabited Bermuda offered the opportunity to live the late stages of settlement, in which only the English populated American landscapes, in the first years of English plantation projects. To Winthrop, enslaving the Pequot peoples of New England in Bermuda allowed the Puritans to continuously reproduce the conditions of vacancy in Massachusetts they relied upon to position themselves as providentially exceptional and legally entitled to southern New England land. Settlers utilized their imaginative engagements with Bermuda to fabricate "Indianness" as the "ontological ground"[47] against which they defined themselves and measured the historical progress of their settlements. Whiteness and indigeneity emerge in this manner, Jodi A. Byrd argues, as narrative co-constituents of the structures and systems of governance invented to justify invasion.[48] From the Puritans of New England to George Berkeley and J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Bermuda provided perpetual access to the imaginative capital foundational to the coalescing discourses of

[46] Ibid.

[47] Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*, xix.

[48] Ibid., xviii.

racialized whiteness and indigeneity in the colonial aesthetic networks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

While race was by no means a novel concept in the seventeenth century, English settlers did not arrive in America with the modern conceptions of whiteness and indigeneity already in hand. These ideas, María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo argues, were primarily constructed out of colonial relationships to the land.[49] Settler writings about invaded landscapes, she notes, were often a "metaphorical representation of the entire world as a spectacle of humankind available for description and knowledge production," and, in this way, colonial writings about the land were speculative and imaginative means of policing rights of habitation in America.[50] Settler writers emphasized either the presence or absence of "indians to secure their own expansionist enterprises" and as a means "to consolidate their 'exceptionalist' white character" as they found themselves continuously defending and justifying their territorial occupation.[51] In every invaded landscape, whiteness and indigeneity were re-fabricated by English colonizers across a set of narrative and material place-making processes, and Bermuda, my research establishes, was crucial to how they defined and defended themselves in their pursuit of colonial futurities.

Settlers also did not produce standardized versions of whiteness and indigeneity over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The idiosyncratic Puritan whiteness of the Massachusetts Bay constructed in opposition to the Pequots reads quite differently from the whiteness written against the Powhatans in Jamestown. Yet, both discourses were largely imagined against how writers like John Winthrop and John Smith related to Bermuda. Though

[49] María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given*, 7.

[50] Ibid., 17 and 18.

[51] Ibid., 25.

the specifics of their narratives differ, settlers in America relied upon similar literary tropes and geographic metaphors to continuously reinvent whiteness and indigeneity in new landscapes. Across poems, proposals, natural descriptions, sermons, and correspondence, the racialized discourses constructed from the ground up in colonial aesthetics did not emerge as monolithic meta-narratives of the racialized experiences of colonialism for settlers in every geography.[52] Rather, these discourses were improvisatory and dynamic, often written in response to "the material conditions of specific historical forces" found in individual settlements.[53] Bermuda, though, enabled the fungibility of the racialized discourses found elsewhere as colonizers wrote and lived in relation to a Bermudian settlement that was an idealized version, to them, of what colonization might look like upon its completion.

Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past builds a cross-genre archive of the colonial fantasies that fabricated various forms of whiteness and indigeneity in literary engagements with Bermuda. I intervene in the literary histories of colonization and race by recovering the material foundations, as held in Bermuda, of the emergent colonial genres of authority utilized by colonizers to police ways of being in the lands they invaded. The archive I construct reveals the piecemeal processes of how improvised forms of whiteness and indigeneity emerged, gained momentum, halted, started again, and encouraged and contested what it meant to be a historical subject in American colonization. I join recent work in literary and Indigenous Studies by offering my Bermudian case studies as an investigation of the relations among aesthetics, race,

[52] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, 8.

[53] Ibid., 21.

place, and settler colonialism outside of traditional geographic, historical, and disciplinary borders.[54]

Unsettling Early American Futures

The case studies of this dissertation often establish a connection between what was and what now is, but they do not suggest the inevitability of either or prescribe a model for what will be. Anna Brickhouse calls for an unsettlement of early American literature by defamiliarizing the stories we think we know to signal "not merely the contingency and noninevitability but the glaring incompleteness of the history of the New World as we currently know and write it."[55] In *Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past,* I model one means of unsettlement through my revised genealogy of Bermuda's significance to the development of whiteness and indigeneity as colonized concepts in settler writing. To dismantle the literary legacies of settler colonialism, we must first rethink the origins of their narratives and confront the futures they imagined. Bermuda, I propose, offers an alternative geographic and historical perspective from which we might conduct this crucial work.

In chapter one, "Richard Norwood and the Natural Genres of a Bermudian America," I investigate the natural history, spiritual life writing, and land claim taxonomies produced by Bermudian settler Richard Norwood in the seventeenth century. I argue that his literary corpus was crucial to the development of Bermuda as a site of place- and race-making in the

[54] See Monique Allewaert, *Ariel's Ecology: Plantations, Personhood, and Colonialism in the American Tropics* (Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P, 2013); Moon-kie Jung, *Beneath the Surface of White Supremacy: Denaturalizing U.S. Racisms Past and Present* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2015); Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016); and Aileen-Moreton Robinson, *The White Possessive*.

[55] Anna Brickhouse, *The Unsettlement of America: Translation, Interpretation, and the Story of Don Luis de Velasco, 1560-1945* (New York: Oxford UP, 2015), 2.

hemisphere. Though the modern vocabularies of whiteness and indigeneity were unavailable to Norwood at the time, his cross-genre writings operated as a technology that united English bodies with the Bermudian land in an attempt to naturalize English occupation while his texts contributed to the ideological preconditions of colonized race. In multiple genres, Norwood argues that everything from the natural rock formations of the archipelago's bays to its climate and prickly pears preserve English settler bodies in the hemisphere and prepare them to transition into settling all of America. In this sense, Norwood advocates for Bermuda as the enabling condition for the more expansive settlement of the hemisphere, a relation, he imagines, that will eventually erase all Indigenous cultural practices from all potential American futures.

Chapter two, "No Vacancy, No Future: Writing and Living History in New England and Bermuda, 1637 and 2002," examines how colonizers in New England narrativized and justified their enslaving practices in Bermuda during the middle decades of the seventeenth century. Following the Pequot War, settlers enslaved Indigenous peoples in southern New England in Bermuda. Doing so, they believed, exploited the material vacancy of Bermuda in a manner that produced the existential and legal vacancies in Massachusetts required to recast the entire region as an exclusively English place. John Winthrop's inter-American correspondence of the 1630s, John White's "The Planter's Plea" (1630), Philip Vincent's *A true relation of the late battell fought in New England* (1637), the Treaty of Hartford (1638), and William Hubbard's *The present state of New-England* (1677), I argue, are texts representative of how Puritan settlers believed that a communally constructed Bermuda-New England thoroughfare allowed them to consolidate their territorial control in North America, and, in turn, their narrative power over who would inhabit the future. I end this chapter by engaging the Reconnection Festival of St. David's Island, Bermuda. Since 2002, the Festival has brought together Pequot, Wampanoag,

Mohegan, Cherokee, and Narragansett community members with the Bermudians who identify as the descendants of the Indigenous peoples previously enslaved in the archipelago for a day of ritual and celebration. The Reconnection Festival, I argue, counteracts the textual erasures produced by Puritan colonizers through an embodied performance of Indigenous belonging that does not so much inscribe Indigenous identity as it argues for new ways of framing history and historiography. The event questions how once lost futures and potentials might be reclaimed in anticolonial projects and revitalizes Indigenous presence, without geographic or temporal constraint, in Bermuda and southern New England.

In the third chapter, "The Distant Futures of a Bermudian Eighteenth Century," I turn my attention to imagined eighteenth-century Bermudian futures that never happened. With the rise of the nation state and globalized capital, Bermuda started to represent *what was* more than it represented *what could be*. For writers like George Berkeley, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, and Nathaniel Tucker, Bermuda became a place for an aesthetic encounter with an idealized past they hoped could steady the increasingly uncertain presents of the period and stabilize the colonial forms of subjectivity they desired for the hemisphere. Each of these writers longed for a cosmopolitan settler future made possible by the institutionalization of their colonial fantasies in a Bermudian cultural hub. Berkeley's *A Proposal for the Better Supplying of Churches in Our Foreign Plantations* (1725), Tucker's *The Bermudian* (1774), and Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) and *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain* (1784), I conclude, form a cross-genre archive of eighteenth-century attempts to produce a modern form of Bermudian settlerism out of the archipelago's romanticized past. Though their efforts ultimately failed, what these writers thought could happen still informs the modern practices of race in the hemisphere.

In the epilogue, "Pauline Hopkins at Bermuda's End," I read against the grain of the first three chapters. While the bulk of *Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past* reconstructs how colonizers utilized literary engagements with Bermuda to claim power and land, here I demonstrate how Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces* (1900) confronts that Bermudian past to imagine revitalized forms of international political solidarity in opposition to the forms of power pursued by the writers I investigate in the first three chapters. A novel ostensibly about Boston in the nineteenth century, Hopkins weaves *Contending Forces* in and out of Bermuda between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to interrogate the colonial-national myths of historical progress that inform the late-nineteenth century US nadir against which she writes. *Contending Forces*, I argue, returns to the origins of settler mythmaking in the hemisphere to think beyond the aesthetic and material limitations of colonial literary history in Britain and North America.

Persistent Futures of Bermudas Past demystifies the myths of empire and the nation in America from the perspective of Bermuda. Looking outward from this small, understudied archipelago, I contend, magnifies the fictionality of the colonial archive. Settlement is as much a narrative as it is a material undertaking, and here I engage the forms and genres employed by colonizers to invent the Americas we know today in large part through their relations with Bermuda. Both the past and the future are neither fixed nor inevitable, and my readings in this dissertation redefine the parameters of how we understand the literary history of settler colonialism in the hemisphere while emphasizing contingency over determinism. Each of the case studies I produce looks for an ethical engagement with the past that reveals settler colonialism for what it is, a fiction that can be unread. Reading the past this way amplifies the bias grain of the colonial archive and confronts the settler myth – its coloniality – and unsettles the power settlerism holds over the historical record.

Chapter One
Richard Norwood and the Natural Genres of a Bermudian America

In *The Description of the Sommer Ilands, Once Called the Bermudas* (1622-1623), an account of Bermuda's initial settlement by the English, Richard Norwood invokes latitude and longitude to situate the archipelago globally for a readership likely unfamiliar with its location. The colony, he writes, "hath latitude or elevation (as is aforesayd) 32 degrees, 25 minutes, which is almost the case with the Maderaes, or rather southward."[1] Bermuda, he continues, "lieth in the western ocean, in that part of the world latelie discovered and called America or the New World, vulgarlie the West-Indies."[2] While Norwood can communicate Bermuda's precise location through the language of measurement, or the thirty-second parallel, he auditions three terms that might resonate with his readers to give a bit more specificity and context: America, New World, West Indies. Norwood wrote *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* in a time that lacked a coherent, unified vocabulary or set of generic conventions to describe not where, but what the region Bermuda inhabited might be. This moment exposes the limits of what Norwood can say about Bermuda in relation to the more familiar parts of his readers' world. The known, or the language of latitude and the familiarity of Madeira, collides with the incoherence of the unknown, or the significance of a so-called new world, and the result Norwood's hesitancy in how to best categorize the far reaches of the thirty-second parallel.

On their latitudinal line, Madeira and Bermuda are the only two land masses in the Atlantic between Europe and America. In *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, they are the opposing poles of the familiar and the unfamiliar, the settled and the unsettled. Madeira had been

[1] Richard Norwood, *The Description of the Sommer Ilands, Once Called the Bermudas* in *The Journal of Richard Norwood, Surveyor* (Asbury Park, NJ: The Schulyer Press, 1945), lxviii.

[2] Ibid.

occupied by the Portuguese for nearly two hundred years by the 1620s. As a European colonial possession, it is more familiar and secure in the nomenclature of its location, and thus Norwood expresses confidence in using it as point of orientation. Madeira, to Norwood, is what it is and where it has always been. Bermuda, however, exists on the edge of "that part of the world latelie discovered" that the English had been attempting to settle for not so long. The vocabulary Norwood employs in *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* to describe Bermuda's exact location is emergent, yet to have coalesced into a singular colonial grammar in English intellectual networks. Bermuda might be in America, the New World, and the West Indies all at once, or it might be in only one of them, or perhaps none of them, Norwood's writing intimates, because it is not yet clear where or what distinguishes these terms from one another.

Known best for his contributions to mathematics and seafaring, Richard Norwood spent a large portion of his life in Bermuda and wrote about it extensively. Across five decades, he produced three major works on the initial settlement of Bermuda: an early natural history, the aforementioned *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* (1622-23); a spiritual narrative of his religious conversion while surveying the archipelago (1639); and a taxonomy and description of all English land claims in the colony, the Bermudian "Domesday" book (1663). Norwood's writings about Bermuda, I argue, assert English belonging in America in ways that reflect and contribute to an emerging racialized narrative and political mode we now call settler colonialism. Norwood's writings across genre bring into relief the relationships among textual place-making, colonial longings for a settled future, and the nascent ways of making race in America. Edward Said argues that the "main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it comes to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future - these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time

decided in narrative."[3] Norwood's writings, I demonstrate in this chapter, produce such narratives of claiming, dispossessing, and settling land in an attempt to ultimately own the future as they also reflect the discursive, ideological, and textual foundations of the modern vocabularies of whiteness and indigeneity in emergence at the time of his writing.

Norwood's writing is a technology, I argue, that braids body with land in ways that were foundational to what became a settler consciousness of the early conceptions of English whiteness in America. *The Description of the Sommer Ilands,* the spiritual autobiography, and the "Domesday" book work in the genres of geography, climate, and the body's experiences with the world, as Susan Scott Parrish might describe them, that sought to establish America as a natural place of habitation for English settlers. In this regard, settler experiences with the natural environment, as we see with Norwood's narrative, were "more than a trope (of wilderness or Canaan) that mapped the settlers' place onto natural history; nature was intricately linked to settler identity in a physically experienced and detectable way."[4] The "ways in which national geographies are perceived, imagined, lived, and mapped," María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo reminds us, are "supremely racial," with their roots in how settlers looked for reflections of themselves in the lands they occupied.[5] In Bermuda in particular, the "paths" that led to modern and racialized categories of being "were more winding and varied than an automatic and immediate arrival at an absolute dichotomy between unchanging conditions of *white* and *nonwhite*. These multiple journeys mean conflicting terrain with contours that are harder to

[3] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), xii-xiii.

[4] Susan Scott Parrish, *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 2006), 89.

[5] María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given: Racial Geographies across Mexico and the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2016), 6.

comprehend and follow than an incorrectly single map with a single direct trajectory."[6] Norwood's winding and varied textual and material journeys, I demonstrate here, took him across forms, genres, geographies, and textual networks and into the colonial practices around which settler discourses of whiteness and indigeneity began to coalesce in the seventeenth century.

Norwood's forms of writing were part and parcel to larger colonial processes of invention and becoming that were foundational to the settler logics that claimed an exceptional body justified in acquiring any land it desired. In *The Description of the Sommer Ilands,* Norwood imagines that the English presence in America is a naturally produced order, rendering the small colony, in the process, as a point of entry for the subsequent diffusion of English bodies across the entire hemisphere. This supposed symbiotic relationship between English bodies and Bermuda, Norwood asserts in his description, both begins and justifies the displacement and erasure of Indigenous cultural practices from the hemisphere. Norwood employs his spiritual narrative to both assure himself of his own election and to use his experiences surveying Bermuda as a test case for how the English body might perform in Bermuda and America more broadly. Finally, Norwood's "Domesday" book, which catalogues all land claims in Bermuda, attempts to secure the potential of the Bermudian futures of an American plantation system by reading the collective settler body in a totalized and unified, officially-sanctioned practice that stands alone in history as an exceptional unit.

As others have demonstrated, the so-called discovery of the new world reformed discourses of knowledge and being in Europe. From drama and poetry to natural histories and

[6] Heather Miyano Kopelson, *Faithful Bodies: Performing Religion and Race in the Puritan Atlantic* (New York: NYU P, 2014), 272.

legislative texts such as the Barbados Slave Codes or the 1662 Virginia Slave Acts, officials and writers worked across forms and genres to define America while they attempted to imagine, disseminate, and enforce the parameters of being they sought to impose upon the hemisphere. Norwood himself works within a set of murky emerging genres. *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* is at once an advertisement for Bermuda's colonization and something close to what we might call a natural history - a scientific inquiry, as Norwood positions his writing, into why Bermuda was destined for English possession. His spiritual autobiography attempts to claim his own spiritual and corporeal exceptionionalism while positioning Bermuda as a conduit between God and the elect. The "Domesday" book totalizes all English land claims in the colony in order to establish a permanent English presence in the hemisphere as an unalterable state of affairs. Norwood's writing, then, might be described as part of the prehistory of settler vocabularies and colonial genres of authority in America. The vocabularies and forms he deploys to describe Bermuda and America are emergent, malleable, and one way in which place and race were first written in America.

Norwood's genres are speculative genres he uses to claim the future. In one respect, Norwood offers his Bermudian texts as explanatory models for their respective presents. In *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, the spiritual narrative, and the "Domesday" book, Norwood reconstructs recent pasts, whether of his own life or the broader projects of settling Bermuda, to establish and defend a burgeoning status quo he believes will stand in perpetuity. For Norwood, the pasts he reconstructs in these texts are not so much about what happened as they are about what these recent events might portend. Norwood's writing rehearses and performs the previous within the varying conventions of the emerging genres of colonial authority to uncover and justify what will come to pass with a permanent English presence in America.

Norwood's genres perform the past in writing to position Bermuda as the empirical basis for his fantasy of what America might hold for the English across all possible futures. We should treat Norwood's texts, as David Scott suggests we approach all historical writing, "as embodying not only the reconstruction of a given past, but also the interrogation of a single present, and the projection of expectations about a hoped-for future."[7] Norwood's ways of writing claim all three historical threads - past, present, and future - to assert English suzerainty in the hemisphere through the textualization of settler experiences with Bermuda's natural features. Norwood's writings are often speculative futures in the economic and financial senses as well. *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* and the "Domesday" book, especially, are concerned not just with territorial acquisition in service of God's plans for the salvation of the English settlers in the hemisphere, but also the vast material wealth Norwood hopes the English stand to gain by establishing a permanent presence in America. Norwood writes at a time when the boundaries between mercantile and providential epistemologies and futures are quite porous. When such epistemologies and futurities collide, inform, and contradict one another, Norwood's writing demonstrates, we begin to see the rise of racialized discourses within the expansion of empire in America.

Norwood never once describes himself as white in any of these texts. Neither does he describe the arrival of the English in Bermuda as a settler colonial project. Norwood writes himself as a Christian first, Englishman second, and an arrivant in a world "latelie discovered" with the intention of planting a successful economic venture third. While we may now describe Norwood and others in Bermuda at the time as white settlers, such concepts and grammars were not available to him when he wrote. Norwood's texts, then, can be described as processes of

[7] David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2004), 4-5.

becoming, as molding the foundations for the modern vocabularies of race and the cultures of settler colonialism at the ground level. Bermuda was a key laboratory for settlers' early ideas about the relationship between ways of being in America and the future. Norwood's textual engagements with Bermuda across genre, I argue, produce totalizing impulses within each text to claim American geographies and the future by invoking new vocabularies of subjectivity that he believes will allow the English to partition the hemisphere into sites of so-called justified habitation and possession. Norwood might not describe himself as white, or even imagine he possesses what we would now call a race, and he may not self-consciously assert his position as something called a settler, but his chosen ways of writing, I argue here, reflect how the preconditions for such thinking were circulating in Bermudian and Atlantic networks during this period.

Bermuda operates as the empirical and material basis for Norwood's own particularized fantasies of the English presence in America. Bermuda in these works is a multifaceted, transitory ideal with the potential to preserve and diffuse English ways of being, as well as open futures never before sustainable, or in some cases even imaginable to someone like Norwood. Jodi A. Byrd argues that colonial impositions of ways of being move in a transient nature from site to site as settlers transition from seized geography to seized geography. Invaders and settlers, Byrd argues, invented the category of Indian, and its inverse whiteness, as a means through which "empire orients and replicates itself by transforming those to be colonized into 'Indians' through continual reiterations of pioneer logics."[8] Bermuda's lack of an Indigenous population, Norwood asserts in his writing, enables the perpetual diffusion of what Byrd describes as the

[8] Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P, 2011), xiii.

transit of empire to elsewhere in America. Bermuda, that is, in Norwood's estimation allows colonials to export their modes of representation and being to North America and the West Indies in a set of rhetorical and textual practices that were constantly inventing and revising indigeneity and whiteness as justifications of colonialism. "[T]ransit as a concept," Byrd continues, "suggests the multiple subjectivities and subjugations put into motion and made to move through notions of history, grievance, and grievability"[9] when settlers begin to deploy their own paradigms of being, and notions of indigeneity and whiteness in particular, to bring their own colonial fantasies into realization. As such, "Racialization and colonization should be understood as concomitant global systems that secure white dominance through time, property, and notions of self."[10] Here, I argue that Norwood's writing offers one way of tracking the transit of empire, and the processes of racialization these types of texts ultimately put into motion, in the first years of English settlement in America.

Discovering a Naturally English Bermuda

After completing his second survey of Bermuda in 1616, Norwood wrote *The Description of the Sommer Ilands, Once Called the Bermudas* (1622-1623).[11] Norwood employs his description of

[9] Ibid., xxi.

[10] Ibid, xxiii.

[11] *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* was first published by Nathaniel Newberry during 1622-23 in a now lost edition. That first edition was reprinted in the fourth volume of *Purchas his pilgrimes* under the title "Relations of Summer Ilands taken out of M. Richard Norwood, his Map and Notes added thereto, printed 1622" (Norwood lix). John Smith copied portions of the *Purchas* edition for *Generall Historie of New-England, Virginia, and the Summer Islands* (1624). Pieter van der Aa translated the *Purchas* edition into Dutch in the 1770s with *Naaukeurige Versameling der zee-en Land-Reysen*. Another edition, taken from a manuscript written in a hand other than Norwood's appeared as *Insularum de la Bermuda detection* in Champlin Burrage's *John Pory's Lost Description of Plymouth Colony* (1918). *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* was collected once more when it was included as prefatory material to Norwood's spiritual autobiography in *The Journal of Richard Norwood, Surveyor of Bermuda* (1945).

Bermuda's natural features and his narrative of the islands' initial settlement to argue for how and why America's future depends on the archipelago. In his search for a natural justification of a permanent English presence in the hemisphere, Norwood concludes that Bermuda's climate and geography will enable settlers to preserve their Christian Englishness and bodily health, and, as such, the archipelago would best be used as a point of transition for English bodies on their way to less forgiving Caribbean and continental climates. Norwood makes his natural case for Bermuda as a conservator of English bodies as he covers the colony's founding in 1609, the first infrastructural and concerted planting efforts by the initial wave of colonizers, the natural fortifications offered by Bermuda's bays, and the peculiarities of the archipelago's prickly pears. Ultimately, Norwood believes that the empirical evidence available to him in Bermuda substantiates that all the plantations of America could one day be linked together into a network held by a Bermudian center. Once linked to the rest of the hemisphere, he stresses, Bermuda has the potential to make all of America natural to England. In this sense, *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* attempts to identify the natural description as the ideal genre for communicating and for fashioning America as a space as hospitable to English bodies as England itself.

Also important to Norwood's project is Bermuda's apparent lack of any present or previous Indigenous population. Bermuda's vacancy inspires Norwood's colonial fantasy of a hemispheric future under English suzerainty. Writing of empire and settler colonialism more broadly, Byrd argues that "Indianness has served as a field through which structures have always already been produced."[12] From the beginning, settlers relied upon the invented categories of "Indian" and "Savage" to fabricate hierarchies of being they believed justified the persistent

[12] Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*, xviii.

seizure of land in an ever-expanding colonial project. "The transit of empire, then," Byrd concludes, "depends upon the language, grammar, and ontological category of Indian-ness to enact itself."[13] By the end of *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, Norwood concludes that Bermuda's lack of an Indigenous population enables settlers to dispossess Native lands throughout the hemisphere. A vacant Bermuda, he argues, and its successful settlement establishes the English as the true "discoverers" of America, and, he insists, proves the English to be the hemisphere's natural inhabitants. Indigeneity exists on the margins and peripheries of *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, a topic not directly broached until the document's final pages, yet it informs every word on the page as Norwood projects a colonial fantasy of new ways of being onto the description. Bermuda offers a nearly utopian site of projection to settlers such as Norwood for what the planting and settling of America might look like in its final stages. Bermuda, Norwood suggests, enables the English to discover what the end could be at the beginning of their permanent presence in America.

Discovered is the most important word in the early sections of *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*. Norwood writes: "These Ilands formerlie called the Bermudas, now the Sommer Ilands, shunned by travelers as most dangerous, and seldome seene by anie except against their wills, reputed to be rather a hold and habitation for divells, then anie fit place for men to abide in, were discovered, in the year, 1609."[14] Norwood acknowledges that the English were not the first to see the islands, and neither were they the first to set foot upon them, as Spanish interactions with Bermuda would have gone back over one hundred years by this point. The English had been

[13] Ibid., xxxv.

[14] Norwood, *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, lxviii.

avoiding them for nearly as long, too.[15] Hence, Bermuda was a place consciously shunned by sailors and "seldome seene by anie except against their wills" long before, Norwood suggests, it was apparently discovered by the English in 1609.

When Norwood describes America as "that part of the world latelie discovered," or suggests that Bermuda itself was "discovered" in 1609, he uses the word in an earlier, now mostly obsolete connotation. To him, discovered means to explore what is known and already located, but not mapped or surveyed, and for Norwood that also means uncovering a hidden value that has long gone unacknowledged. Or, as the *OED* suggests, discover in this period also means to "reconnoitre, survey; (more generally) to explore (a region, country, etc)." Discovery, in the context of Norwood's time and writing, is not about the appearance of new knowledge or empirical evidence of the existence of a previously unknown entity or location. "America" and Bermuda had already existed for the English for a significant period by 1609. Rather, discovery is about turning what Norwood perceives to be abstract future potentials into material realities through the discovering act of settling and surveying. Bermuda's irruption into a shared English colonial imagination, these early moments in the text suggest, enabled a new set of futures to be imagined precisely because the archipelago lacks an Indigenous or Spanish presence. Norwood believes that the English have not so much found a place as they have discovered the natural

[15] Named after Spanish sailor Juan Bermudez, who claimed in 1503 to be the first European to see the islands, both the Spanish and English had been exerting significant imaginative energy on Bermuda long before Norwood began his history. Bermuda had appeared in print at least twice in the previous century, first in a 1511 Atlantic map printed by Peter Martyr, where the islands are labeled as "La Bermuda," and then in Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdez's 1526 *La historia general y natural de las Indias*. By the mid-sixteenth century, Spanish sailors had deemed Bermuda unfit for settlement, largely because of its dangerous reefs, and nicknamed it "Devil's Island." No attempts at permanent settlement were made before the English in 1609, with the only sign of a human presence that of the wild hogs left there by the Spanish in case of future shipwreck. By the seventeenth century, it was taken as almost indisputable fact that Bermuda could not be settled.

foundations for English authority and presence in America, or the natural conditions of possibility for imagining the hemispheric futures of a permanent English presence.

In *The Invention of America*, Edmundo O'Gorman argues that the arrival of Europeans in the hemisphere set off several centuries of material and rhetorical inventions through which settlers fabricated something called America, and the attendant ways of being they attached to it, for themselves. The "clue," O'Gorman writes, "to the problem of the historical appearance of America lay in considering the event as the result of an inspired invention of Western thought and not as the result of a purely physical discovery, brought about, furthermore, by accident."[16] O'Gorman suggests further that within the context of America's settlement, the significance of its geography and location on the globe, as well as the actions and ideas of the colonists who arrived after Columbus, are not *a priori* truths that suddenly appeared on the world stage after the fifteenth century. Rather, it is imperative to "understand that the being - not the existence - of things is nothing but the meaning or significance which they are given within the over-all framework of the picture of reality accepted as true at some given historical moment. In other words, the being of things is not something that they contain within themselves, but something that is assigned or granted to them."[17] Norwood's discovery of Bermuda, in this context, is not about arrival or finding. It is about the rhetorical, textual, and material place-making practices of early America that produced colonial knowledge and ways of being from the ground up.

From 1609 onward, Bermuda was a zone of fantasy and projection for Norwood and many other English writers imagining America's potential colonial futures. From the first generation of Bermudian settlers to William Shakespeare and Andrew Marvell, writers attempted

[16] Edmundo O'Gorman, *The Invention of America: An Inquiry into the Historical Nature of the New World and the Meaning of its History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1961), 6.

[17] Ibid., 41.

to articulate Bermuda's place within an expanding geographic imagination and worldview. Was Bermuda the Devil's Island? Was it merely a stop on the way to Virginia? Or, did it portend something entirely new for the English in America? Texts such as William Strachey's *A True Reportory of the Wracke* (1609) or Sylvester Jourdain's *A Discovery of the Barmudas* (1609) narrativized the authors' own experiences with the wreck of the *Sea Venture* that had begun Bermudian settlement to position Bermuda as the saving grace of Virginia, or an obstacle to be bypassed before Jamestown could succeed and Bermuda, in turn, could then be planted. Shakespeare disassociated the material and historical specificities of Bermuda, perhaps based on Strachey's account, to produce an abstracted colonial fantasy about the repercussions of the American irruption in the early modern English imagination in *The Tempest*. Andrew Marvell later repurposed the wreck of the *Sea Venture* to symbolize a potential solution to domestic England's mid-seventeenth-century woes. Regardless of approach and genre, however, each writer seemed to conclude about Bermuda, as Marvell did, that it was as if

> [God] "cast (of which we rather boast)
> The Gospel's pearl upon our coast
> And in these rocks for us did frame
> A Temple, where to sound his name.
> Oh let our Voice praise his exalt,
> Till it arrive at heaven's vault;
> Which thence (perhaps) rebounding, may
> Echo beyond the Mexic Bay."[18]

[18] Andrew Marvell, "Bermudas," *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Andrew Marvell, vol. 1* (New York: AMS P, 1966), lines 29-36.

Though Norwood projects his colonial fantasies of the American future onto Bermudian place, he takes a different approach to narrativizing the English discovery of the archipelago than many of his contemporaries. By 1622, the story of the islands' initial settlement had been largely standardized. In 1609, as the story goes, Jamestown was on the brink of collapse. Fearing ruin, the Virginia Company of London commissioned a seven-ship fleet led by the *Sea Venture* to repopulate and resupply the colony. The ships encountered a storm six weeks into their journey. The *Sea Venture* began to leak and was separated from the others. The sailors and settlers aboard struggled unsuccessfully for several days to pump water from the hull to fix the damage. When all appeared lost, the *Sea Venture* was fortuitously run aground one half-mile from Bermuda without the loss of a single life. The stranded settlers spent several months on the islands before managing to build two small ships that took them to Virginia at last. Jamestown was saved, Bermuda was settled, and the *Sea Venture* ordeal opened imaginative possibilities not even thinkable to English speculators and settlers prior to 1609. These writers and company officials urged that the ability and the ingenuity of the *Sea Venture* cohort to not only survive, but thrive in Bermuda before they saved Virginia, portended a future of boundless successes and riches for the potential English settlers that might one day come to the rest of America too.

The Description of the Sommer Ilands rehearses the wreck, but Norwood does not spend nearly as much time on it as others do. While "it pleased God, by this evill [the wreck], to bring to light a farre greater good," Norwood intimates that the ordeal's significance has been overdetermined. He proposes instead that Bermuda was really discovered with the return of a handful of settlers to Bermuda after they saw the state of Jamestown.[19] With things in Virginia far worse than they expected, the *Sea Venture* cohort sent a ship, led by George Somers, back to

[19] Norwood, *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, lxx.

Bermuda for more food and supplies. Somers fell ill, however, and his ship sailed for England instead of returning to Virginia after his death. Three men from Somers's crew stayed behind on Bermuda, and they later found ambergris on the shore worth, as Norwood estimates, "nine or ten thousand pound sterling."[20] The sailors, after some spirited debate amongst themselves over whether they should keep it for their own personal gain, informed the Company of their discovery, who in turn sold the ambergris and obtained a royal charter for the plantation of Bermuda.

Herein lies the true manner of Bermuda's discovery for Norwood. The *Sea Venture* ordeal is a thrilling tale, that much he admits, but he spends roughly one paragraph with it. He focuses instead on the natural materials to be mined and cultivated, as well as the Bermudian climes hospitable to the English body, that he believes support a permanent English presence in America. Ambergris is at once a rare delicacy that can be sold on its own and an effective preservative for perfumes. As such, the ambergris becomes a metaphor for what Bermuda might be to the English, according to Norwood. The ambergris may not be the first, but it is the most striking and significant discovery of Bermudian potential in his estimation. "This new discovery of the *Sommer Ilands*," as it was "made knowne in *England,* to the *Virginian Company*," reveals the process through which Bermuda, and its English planters, might turn what he takes to be the hemisphere's overlooked and ignored detritus into great wealth.[21] The whale waste that is now "nine or ten thousand pound sterling" suggests that the English are able to do in Bermuda what no Europeans or Indigenous peoples could before, hence this moment's framing as the archipelago's "new discovery," or the realization that this "hold and habitation for divells" was

[20] Ibid., lxxi.

[21] Ibid.

actually a suitable English home.[22] Norwood also insists that Bermuda preserves the essences of the English mind and body. Norwood stresses that the "foresaid three men" who discovered the ambergris "stayed voluntarily, very well," and without the existential threats, in the forms of climate, wildlife, or other Europeans and Indigenous peoples found elsewhere in America.[23] Bermuda, Norwood concludes, propels the diffusion of English bodies into America and new knowledge back to England. For him, it is a motor of discovery and plantation that runs a loop between England and the so-called new world, a relation, he suggests, made possible by what he believes is the unique English ability to appreciate the potential functions of Bermuda's natural features in an emerging colonial system.

Norwood identifies four natural elements he believes guarantee a successful plantation in Bermuda. First, the rock formations of its bays provide security unavailable anywhere else in the hemisphere, "For there is onely two places (and scarce two, except to such as know them wel) where shipping may safely come in: & those places are very well fortified: but within its roome to entertaine a royall Fleet."[24] Second, these same rocks provide ample drinking water because the sea water, "drayning through the sand, or through the foresayd substance, which they call the Rocke, and leauing his salt behind, [becomes] fresh."[25] Third, potential settlers need not worry about the weather because the islands are "cleare, very temperate, moist, with a moderate heate," and there "is scarce any time to be perceiued either frost or snow, nor any extreme heat; for there is almost always some wind stirring, which cleareth and cooleth the ayre."[26] Finally, the lack of

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., lxxix.

[25] Ibid., lxxx.

any "venomous creatures in the Country," along with its "greate store and variety of Fish, and so good as these parts of the World affords the like," will keep the English alive and safe.[27] From the bays and their surrounding rocks, along with the climate and wildlife, then, Norwood writes Bermuda's natural features as the material conditions of possibility for the expansive settlement of America under a permanent English presence. "Now because," Norwood continues, "these Islands may seeme, as well in the strange manner of their discovery, as in respect of their strength and scituation, to be ordayned and reserued by the prouidence of God, not so much for themselues (being small) as for the more easie and commodious planting of other parts of this new World."[28] Norwood thus avers that colonial fantasies of America's potential futures as an interconnected English plantation system are not abstracted, speculative longings but ingrained in and enactable through the materials of Bermuda's natural elements.

"The rhetorical problem confronting colonial writers," Jim Egan has suggested, was to depict America's planting "in such a way that Englishmen remained English even when they were no longer living in England."[29] For his part, Norwood insists that Bermuda offers a natural solution to the rhetorical and grammatical contradictions and inconsistencies inherent to a colonizing project. A set of vacant islands that exist "not so much for themselues," in this early colonial fantasy of the American future, but for the production of settling elsewhere in the hemisphere have the potential to link together an extended plantation system that preserves the English cultural practices Norwood hopes will produce a future of permanent presence.

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[26] Ibid., lxxx-lxxxi.

[27] Ibid., lxxxi.

[28] Ibid., lxxxix.

[29] Jim Egan, *Authorizing Experience: Refigurations of the Body Politic in Seventeenth-Century New England Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1999), 8.

Bermuda, he insists, produces and sustains the colonial agency, or what he terms the "commodious planting of other parts of this new World," he hopes will allow the English to remake England in America.

The American future, in Norwood's fantasy, depends upon the abilities of English bodies and senses to build uniquely English plantations out of the ground across the hemisphere. Such futures become the colonial status quo for Norwood upon the arrival of sixty settlers and Bermuda's first governor, Richard Moore, aboard the *Plough* in 1612. Norwood's description credits Moore with laying the bureaucratic and material foundations for Bermuda's success in its early years as a plantation. Because the discovery of the ambergris made a new future imaginable and set off a material chain of events that led to Moore's arrival, Norwood positions Bermuda's settlement as a natural process. The materials of the sea and Bermuda's natural features and the Bermudian climate transform expelled whale waste into material wealth and enable the expansive, sustained planting of the colony. That is, Norwood argues that Bermuda's discovery is not a matter of happenstance, or really even human exploration, but a phenomena as natural as anything else that occurs in the wild, and as such could only have happened as it did.

Norwood argues that Moore's leadership gave material presence and validation to the economic and material futures that became desirable, imaginable, and enacatable after the discovery of the ambergris. Moore's infrastructural projects, Norwood suggests, transformed Bermuda into a profitable space while maintaining the Englishness of its settlers. Moore's leadership, Norwood writes, took the "vnsettled and confused chaos" of an undiscovered Bermuda and allowed it "to become indeede a Plantation."[30] Norwood reconstructs how Moore, a man he describes as "ingenious and careful," concocted the plans to fortify Bermuda and

[30] Norwood, *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, lxxvi.

prepare its settlers to transform its soil and landscapes into something that would appear natural to any Englishman. Moore's three years of leadership emphasized "husbanding the country, planting and nourishing all such things as were found fit either for trade, or for the sustenation and vse of the Inhabitants."[31] Moore and his followers, in this sense, perform the colonial function of planters to transform Bermuda into what Norwood takes to be the first sustainable English plantation in America.

The description concludes that Moore's projects constructed a Bermuda that felt like a natural English home and inspired a communal investment in a shared sense of futurity. After Captain Tucker succeeded Moore, and followed his blueprint for Bermudian development, Norwood recalls, the settlers "built for themselues and their families, not Tents or Cabins, but more substantiall houses."[32] This infrastructural base allowed the settlers to plan for the future and they soon "cleared their grounds, and planted not onely such things as would yeeld them their fruits in a yeare, or halfe a yeare: but all such too, as would afford profit after certaine yeares, &c. so that in short time after, euen before the expiration of Captain *Tuckers* gouernment, the Country began to aspire and neerely to approach vnto that happinesse and prosperities wherein now it flourisheth."[33] For Norwood, Bermuda's first years as an English possession are a test case for what we now call settler colonialism on two fronts. First, Bermuda is a successful attempt, for the English at least, to materialize abstract colonial longings for planting the so-called new world into measurable and tradable forms in the early years of their presence in America. Second, the Bermudian test provides new vocabularies for the future. The "substantiall

[31] Ibid., lxxv.

[32] Ibid., lxxvii.

[33] Ibid.

houses" built by the first wave of arrivants and the crops that would only "profit after certaine yeares" allowed colonials, Norwood suggests, to approach posterity as a lived practice in their early improvisations that resulted in what we now describe as coloniality and settlerism.

Norwood's history focuses on geography and natural history as producers of the future as much as the settlers themselves. As he covers everything from rock formations to air temperature and weather patterns, Norwood takes pains to demonstrate how the climate, flora, fauna, and landscapes of Bermuda all determined the early successes of English settlers on the islands. Bermuda would have remained in a state of "vnsettled and confused chaos," the history suggests, if English bodies had not discovered the potential futures made possible by its natural features. *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* organizes itself around a fabricated teleology that suggests Moore and Tucker's infrastructural projects could not have done anything but happen with great success. The exceptional nature of the islands creates the historical and material conditions for a "genius," as Norwood is so fond of the term, like Moore or Tucker to transform Bermuda into a natural habitation for the English.

The Description of the Sommer Ilands reflects the rhetorical, textual, and material place-making practices that were cohereing into what we now might call settlerism, or the cultural ways of living a colonial project for those seizing land, in the early seventeenth century. Norwood's attempt to justify how Bermuda did "become indeede a Plantation" reflects the processes of becoming through which early settlers attempted to articulate the "vnsettled and confused chaos" they projected onto the American lands they invaded and occupied into a tangible sense of futurity and posterity. For Norwood, central to such a transformation was melding the Bermudian land and settlers' bodies into a unified actor under the banner of "Country." He insists that the English discovery of Bermudian potential and the first successful

infrastructural projects created the historical conditions in which the Bermudian "Country," meaning the social collective of its occupants and the natural features that appeared to support their colonizing project, "began to aspire and neerely to approach vnto that happinesse and prosperities wherein now it flourisheth."[34] The future, in this sense, appears to stem from what Norwood takes to be a symbiotic relationship between Bermuda's land and settler bodies that he is able to articulate as "discovery" in an early colonial genre of authority.

The English Body in the System

Colonial desires for new land were often at odds with planters' fears of how American climates and geographies might affect their bodies. In a period influenced by humoral theory, many settlers "negatively imagined their bodily, mental, and cultural metamorphosis - their creolization - in the New World."[35] To writers and settlers like Norwood, America presented itself as both a site of potentially boundless wealth and knowledge and as a dire existential threat to their corporeal existence. In response, writers increasingly turned to a set of emerging generic conventions focused on geography and climate, and which eventually became the more discernible forms of natural history and natural science, to assuage fears that America would transform an Englishman into something other than English. By the time Norwood was writing, colonial speculations focused less on providential ordinations of American habitation for the English and more on the supposed empirical evidence found in the material world that justified the occupation of American land. "When natural science such as geography replaces God in providing authority for English land claims," Jim Egan argues, "some form of writing is needed

[34] Ibid.

[35] Parrish, *American Curiosity*, 16.

to render what the Europeans claim to have seen in a readable form."[36] The result was "the cultures of natural history in the Anglophone Atlantic world,"[37] or the genres of geography, climate, and the body's experiences with the material world that established America as a natural place of habitation for the English. In this regard, settler experiences with the natural environment were never entirely metaphorical, but the grounds for the textual articulations of new identities in America.[38]

Everywhere the English went, they imposed reflections of themselves onto the lands they occupied in an attempt to render settlement as a naturally produced and sustained process. Settler place-making and identity fashioning soon turned mutually constitutive. As Egan suggests, "to take a body born on English soil out of England was to break the tie between place and person. Losing your place meant, quite literally, losing your identity."[39] Braiding body with land through the conventions of natural writing enabled authors to demonstrate their belief, as Norwood does in *The Description of the Sommer Iland*, "that English bodies adapted better to alien environments than did any other body type."[40] These emerging genres latched on to any natural elements they could to suggest that "the improved body was no less English than before. To retain its national identity, though, that body must become English in an entirely new way,"[41] either by finding itself in the land or defining itself against the Indigenous population it sought to

[36] Egan, *Authorizing Experience*, 111.

[37] Parrish, *American Curiosity*, 19.

[38] Ibid., 89.

[39] Egan, *Authorizing Experience*, 17.

[40] Ibid., 23.

[41] Ibid., 24.

replace. Early colonial writers' focus on English bodies as a collective entity reflected in the lands they occupied was ultimately a form of proto-racialization in America utilized by settlers to justify the acquisition of more territory. Saldaña argues that "Racial geography is a technology of power, and when used as an analytic and theory of spatial production, it indexes the series of techniques used to produce space in racial terms."[42] If, as Saldana reminds us Linda Peake has already argued, "'space and identities are co-produced,'" the natural elements of settler colonial writing were foundational to how "'the places people occupy...are constitutive of identities, and spaces are given meaning through the social practices of groups that repeatedly occupy them.'"[43]

Norwood finds the prickly pear to be the best reflection of the English in America. Norwood spends a great deal of space on these "*prickled-peares*, which are a fruit growing in these Ilands, in such places as one Scarce fit for anything else, namely, vpon rockes and cliffes, and commonly by the Sea-side, as if the salt water did some-what helpe to the generation and nourishing of them."[44] The resiliency of the prickly pear, or its ability to grow and thrive where no other life can as well as its potential for commodification in colonial trade circuits strikes Norwood. The fruit, he points out, lends itself to both nourishment and the production of dyes, a malleability that will sustain settler bodies and produce wealth for them. A member of the fig family, the pear also suggests the reproducibility of sustenance and commodification throughout America. In the West Indies, "the *Indian* Figge called, as it seems by the *Indians*, in some place, *Tuna*, in other *Nuchtly*, exactly agreeth with that fruit which in the *Sommer Islands* we call the *prickled Peare*: Neither is there any such difference as can make them appeare to be of diuers

[42] Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given*, 17.

[43] Ibid., 21.

[44] Norwood, *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, lxxxv.

kindes. I vnderstand that the like fruite is also growing in *Virginia*."[45] The prickly pear, for Norwood, represents the ideal settler body - one that can survive, and also thrive, where no other can while producing great material wealth in a relation to the land that can be reproduced anywhere that body resides. While the prickly pear might be found throughout America, these conjectures on their importance are only available to Norwood after the English discovery of Bermuda in 1609, centering the archipelago, as it were, in the significance of the pears' agricultural and commercial viability, as well as their metaphorical utility in imagining the future of the English in America.

Norwood determines that the prickly pears are representative of the English body's relation to the American hemisphere, and the Bermudian land makes such knowledge able to be articulated in the early genres of colonialism. Geography appeared to be a vital material source of what we would now call racial identification for the English in America. The movement of English bodies across and through a new colonial system in the hemisphere rendered natural descriptions, such as Norwood's, the textual testing grounds for how experiences with unfamiliar lands impacted or revealed essential qualities of being to settlers. Colonials often placed "material engagement with the local landscape and its inhabitants,"[46] or in the case of Bermuda, the lack of an Indigenous population, "above a connection based on shared European ancestry, indicating the contingency of colonial identity on particular situations rather than such abstract cultural categories as 'European' or 'Indian.'"[47] Planter impositions of their own reflections onto the lands they occupied underscored "colonial identity formation as a complex process resulting

[45] Ibid., lxxxviii.

[46] Angela Calcaterra, "Locating American Indians along William Byrd II's Dividing Line," *Early American Literature* 46, no. 2 (2011), 241.

[47] Ibid.

from daily interactions on a specific landscape."[48] Bermuda's particular situation, Norwood stresses throughout *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, verifies for him the exceptionalism of English bodies and ways of being in a manner that is as natural to the world as the archipelago's rock formations and prickly pears.

In this regard, colonial writers like Norwood employed emerging natural genres to fabricate settler exceptionalism as revealed by the materials of the American environment. As Parrish argues, "Before the foundation of the nation with its investment in anatomically based polarities of race and sex and its pursuit of territorial immensity, knowledge making about American nature took place across inchoate, and, hence, permeable boundary lines."[49] Seventeenth-century natural genres, in this sense, were a webbed network of European place-making in America that laid the groundwork for the more explicitly racialized discourses of empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Bermuda allows Norwood to scale his vision for the archipelago's futures up to the entire hemisphere. For him, Bermuda is an aspirational geography, one that enables him to project his colonial fantasies onto an ever-expanding network of plantations. Norwood suggests that Bermuda essentially began the process of linking English settlements to one another in this regard. The colony, then, becomes both a conceptual and material broker of the entire hemisphere's futures by the end of *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*.

Bermuda's planting, Norwood notes, "open[ed] a passage, and ma[de] the way more safe to many parts of this New World, and especially to Virginia."[50] Norwood anticipates that

[48] Ibid.

[49] Parrish, *American Curiosity*, 22.

[50] Norwood, *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, lxviii.

Bermuda will be an incubator and transition point for English colonials on their way into an emerging colonial system. Bermuda, he suggests, enables the discovery of other geographies' potential, and, as such, a Bermudian center of America will guarantee triumphant plantations wherever the English expand into the hemisphere. He writes, "I say therefore the Countries being free to bee possessed, affording things meete for household provision and trade, and being also healthfull and agreeable to the constitutions of our Coutnry-men; all of which of the one I know and can affirme, and of the other understand no less,"[51] America should then be settled from Bermuda outwards. With the hemisphere "being free to be possessed," Norwood argues that Bermuda holds a colonial center because the English have discovered the natural justifications for American settlement on its islands. If Bermuda was to be used as the transition point for the movement of English planters further into the hemisphere, it would "adde much to the strength, prosperities, and glory of this Kingdome, would prove a singular benefit to the native Inhabitants of *Virginia*; and also to such as our Countrymen as should goe over, and in all tend to the glory of God."[52]

Bermuda, Norwood asserts, would circulate the riches so desired by his countrymen and render the entire hemisphere natural to England in the process. Bermuda could be the colonial clearing house through which a potentially "infinite treasure," as Norwood calls it, of "Currants, and other fruit, Oyles, Gummes, Cottonwool, Sugar, Rich-Furres, Caviary & Cordye, Masts Plancks, Boards, Pitch, Tare, Pot-ashes, and sope-ashes, Hempe, Flax, Iron, Salt, Silkes, Woad, Mudder, Indico, and other drugges for Dyes, and Physike"[53] would flow back to England.

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[51] Ibid., xc.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid., xci-xcii.

Bermuda would produce very few of these commodities, he concedes, but it would be the geography that sustained the Atlantic carrying trade, ensuring a future of limitless commercial growth for the English. Importing these goods from rival countries, Norwood observes, costs "this Kingdome yearely many Millions of wealth"[54] in taxes and fees. To offset financial waste, Norwood centers the archipelago as the enabling and sustaining condition of inter-colonial trade that will eliminate England's need to import anything from other European nations.

Because Bermuda supports planter bodies, and allows them to maintain their Englishness as they spread across the hemisphere, Norwood believes these conditions will have a reciprocal effect on the American goods that flow back to England, transforming them "as it weer" into "the naturall commodities of our owne Countrie."[55] Commodities will not, or even could not, according to Norwood, become natural to England until America itself had become a natural English space. That transformation, he argues, starts with recognizing that the planting of America is a natural phenomenon that begins and expands from Bermuda outwards as it makes all that it encounters natural to England. Thus, Norwood asserts, Bermuda becomes a two-way point of entry into Englishness. In one sense, it renders America English by directing planter bodies to new geographies. In another sense, it renders the material goods that flow back to English ports from America domestic when these geographies are transformed into natural English spaces upon their discovery by planters. As Norwood suggests, "It is not vnknowne that amongst other things wherein God hath prospered our Nation, this is one: that he hath caused vs to multiple and encrease exceedingly,"[56] and where settlers find natural environments that allow them to survive and prosper, so goes England.

[54] Ibid., xci.

[55] Ibid., xcii.

The successful planting of America, in Norwood's estimations, becomes a matter of getting the right bodies in the right places in the right proportions. The movement of English bodies from Bermuda outwards, he believes, will transform the entire hemisphere into a place now natural to England in all respects, from the soil and climate to its natural resources that sustain English bodies and grow the colonial economy. In this line of thinking, Bermuda becomes not just a conduit for the flow of goods back to England, but the reciprocal movement of English bodies to America that will make the region "naturall," as Norwood employs the term, to the England he believes will absorb the region. Norwood's description concludes that the Bermuda islands do not exist "so much for themselves (being small)" as much as they exist to ignite the larger discovery that America was naturally English all along.

For Norwood, the ultimate endpoint of discovering America through Bermuda is not just wealth, but a future in which the Indigenous peoples of North America and the West Indies will be "reclaimed from their rude conditions, and savage kinde of life, to make more humanitie and knowledge, being instructed in Arts and occupations, and furnish[ed] with sundry Instruments, so necessary in human societies."[57] For settlers like Norwood, a future beyond the complete displacement of Indigenous cultural practices and ways of being is largely unimaginable. For Norwood, what we would now call a settled America would be the end of history itself, or the successful planting and constructing of God's kingdom on earth that brings about the completion of God's covenant with the elect, which itself relies upon the displacement of indigeneity from American geographies, and thus signals the limits of an imagined future. There is nothing to imagine, fantasize about, or speculate upon beyond such a state of affairs in Norwood's writing.

[56] Ibid., xc.

[57] Ibid., xci.

At stake for Norwood is a future, as he desires, in which the entire hemisphere, as conducted from Bermuda, "might be delivered from darkness to light, and from the power and tyranny of Sathan, unto God, by faith in Christ."[58] For Norwood, the process that will lead the hemisphere from what he calls "darkness to light" is both material and textual. The "strange manner" of Bermuda's discovery enabled settlers like Norwood to imagine, build, and write a future in which they were the natural inhabitants of America all along, transforming, as it were, all spaces and natural elements they encountered as natural to England as they supposedly are while ushering the entire globe to the limits of the imaginable future.

Norwood's description of Bermuda's initial settlement and the aftermaths he imagines for the hemisphere participate in what Jean M. O'Brien terms "firsting," or the discursive and textual processes by which settlers assert "that non-Indians were the first people to erect the proper institutions of a social order worthy of notice,"[59] and in doing so they attempted to position themselves as the rightful and natural inhabitants of the hemisphere. Norwood utilizes the description to propose that the English presence in Bermuda is ultimately a project of displacing and erasing indigeneity across America, even when the islands have no Indigenous population of their own. Norwood turns to the emergent colonial genre of natural descriptions and surveys to render the nascent settler project as an accumulative process of insistent discovery and transformation that begins in Bermuda and becomes transferable to other geographies. That is, Norwood intimates, the so-called discovery of Bermuda as a natural habitat for English settler bodies enables him, and those who would follow his lead, to imagine and pursue a future without indigeneity that naturally proceeds from Bermuda through the conventions of natural writing.

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P, 2010), xii.

The discovery of the symbiotic relationship between Bermuda and the English, he argues, will ultimately transform all geography, commodities, and life in subsequent settlements into entities as natural to the English and England as Bermuda has apparently always been. Norwood's program meant to inspire material action, as Karen Ordahl Kupperman has argued of early colonial modes of racialized thinking more broadly, imagines an America in which "soon [the English and the Indigenous peoples] would be indistinguishable."[60] Or, Norwood appears to suggest here, a settler system anchored by Bermuda would create an America in which the Indigenous peoples "would naturally seek to transform themselves into Europeans."[61]

In the first few decades of the English presence in America, Norwood saw many of the futures he imagines in *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* come to fruition. Within the first few years, over six hundred settlers came to the colony. It was the first English settlement to construct a plantation economy reliant upon the labor of enslaved people, three years before Virginia. For several years, the much smaller Bermuda outproduced Virginia by far. Prevailing trade winds and dominant Gulf Stream patterns also made the colony unavoidable by ensuring that many circum-Atlantic and trans-Atlantic journeys brought ships within sight of Bermudian ports. One colonial governor estimated that by the 1680s "nine out of ten vessels making Caribbean-European and North American - Caribbean voyages 'passeth unavoidably'"[62] by the colony.

[60] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Presentment of Civility: English Reading of American Self-Presentation in the Early Years of Colonization," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no.1 (1997), 227.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783* (Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 2010), 4-5.

Many English settlements of the seventeenth century can, indeed, trace their origins back to Bermuda. In England, the colonial speculator Earl of Warwick especially relied on Bermudians, "enlisting hundreds of islanders to settle Providence Island (1629-1641), St. Lucia (1635-1637), Tobago (1640), and Trinidad (1642)."[63] Barbados, as well, was first settled by Bermudians, and, in 1658, "the English Commonwealth government enticed two hundred more Bermudians to become newly conquered Jamaica's first civilian settlers."[64] William Sayle, a Bermudian Puritan, led one hundred followers to Eleuthera in 1647 to build a congregationalist utopia, and in doing so created the first English settlement in the Bahamas. Eleuthera's population expanded after Sir Anthony Cooper's "offer of free passage and land enticed more Bermudians to his own colonial projects in the Bahamas and Carolinas."[65] Sayle later relocated to South Carolina, once more founding a settlement with colonists who had previously lived in Bermuda. Finally, "[a]fter New Netherlands fell to the Duke of York in 1664, scores of Bermudians accepted invitations to move to New York City and Staten Island, part of an English effort to swell English numbers in the mostly Dutch colony."[66]

Bermudian settlers did not just provide new populations to the expansive English empire. They brought with them the livestock, plants, and seeds that would initiate many settlements' agricultural industries. They carried with them the knowledge necessary for cultivating and exporting tobacco.[67] They also expanded slavery throughout the hemisphere. Many were

[63] Ibid., 45.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., 45-46.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid., 218.

slaveholders and they brought the practice with them when they moved. The Massachusetts Bay Colony relied heavily on Bermuda for supplies as the settlement struggled in its early years. From this Bay Colony-Bermuda network, a Bermudian-centric circuit of exchange expanded throughout the hemisphere. Bermuda supplied not only the Bay Colony and Virginia, but the West Indies, Bahamas, and Carolinas as well. In 1650, Sayle and his Bermudian followers, now in the Bahamas, sent a shipment of prized braziletto wood to the Bay Colony, valued at over one-hundred pounds that was in turn sold to fund the initial endowment of Harvard College[68], a circuit of exchange made possible again by the Bermudian system of American settlement. Following the wars waged against the Pequot peoples in the 1630s, as I discuss in my second chapter, Puritan settlers forced scores of newly enslaved Indigenous peoples into Bermuda as part of their attempt to erase indigeneity from New England's settler futures.

By its conclusion, *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* distinguishes Bermuda as a settlement of preservation, production, and circulation in contradistinction to one sustained by the displacement of Indigenous peoples from the immediate landscape. The "strange manner" of Bermuda's discovery disrupts the received knowledge produced by the Spanish and English about the Devil's Islands in previous generations. When they believe settlement can be supposedly verified as a naturally produced relation between English bodies and the lands they occupy, as Norwood suggests of Bermuda, settlers and writers like him retroactively ascribe a colonial telos to America - it was always English all along as it waited to be discovered. Bermuda's emptiness, too, verified it as a site of experimentation and preparation for how to settle America, a relation that investors and the English crown sought to exploit by relying on Bermudians to start new settlements.

[68] Ibid. 219.

Early Bermudian place-making, to a large degree, can be read as a form of proto-racialization in America. For writers and officials like Norwood, Bermuda did not present the same conceptual problems for a colonial undertaking, either materially or textually, as in the Caribbean, New England, or Virginia. The climate and weather managed fears about what we would now call creolization. There was no Indigenous population to dispossess of their lands through negotiation, removal, and violence within the settlement itself. As such, settler experiences with the specific landscapes and environments of Bermuda produced the early conditions of race for settlers on the archipelago. This nascently racialized geography enabled the historical telos through which settlers came to see themselves as the first authentic and authorized inhabitants of America. By its second decade, then, Bermudian place came to be understood as an outward-projecting site of preservation for the English and a site of removal of American Indigenous populations from potential futures. For someone like Norwood, Bermuda was the colonial motor that proliferated the settler body across America.

The Settler Body in Textual Practice

More than twenty years after he completed *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, Norwood narrativized his experiences with his first two Bermudian surveys in an autobiographical treatment of his spiritual conversion in 1637. In this story, Norwood treats his own corporeality as a test case of the innate exceptionalism of the English body revealed by Bermudian climes he argued for in the description. Around the midpoint of the narrative, Norwood recounts a near-death experience off the shores of Long Bird Island on the northeastern corner of Bermuda after he had struck out on his own while leading his first survey. Norwood found himself stranded on the island, and to get off he "there cut down a tree and cutting it hollow made thereof a boat, but

so small it was that one man alone could not go in it but it would overset."[69] Norwood soon realized he had made a huge mistake when he struggled to remain afloat in inclement weather. His experiences with his improvised boat, Norwood decides in the narrative, "seemed to me the most tedious and miserable time that ever I underwent in all my life, yea, though I had had experience of sundry difficulties, dangers, and hard conditions before; yet till then I never seemed to understand what misery was."[70]

After five days stranded off the coast of Bermuda, Norwood found himself literally hanging on by a thread. One of the ropes holding the craft together had broken free while Norwood attempted to use a Palmetto leaf as a sail. One rope remained, and if it too broke Norwood knew he would surely drown. Luckily, there was no further catastrophe and Norwood made it back to land, but he worries in the spiritual narrative what he could have done to bring such disfavor upon himself. He came, as he describes it, to have "many considerations as of other my sins so that I conceived I had and did grievously tempt God in going so desperately in such a boat as was scarce worthy to adventure a dog in."[71]

The Long Bird Island experience precipitated a spiritual crisis that took years for Norwood to resolve. In the immediate aftermath, he writes, "I renewed my purpose of new obedience which I had often purposed before"[72] and he re-devoted himself to obeying the will of God. Norwood soon questioned, however, what it even meant to obey in the first place. Nearly drowning in Bermuda in 1616, he suggests from the distance of the 1630s, precipitated an

[69] Norwood, *The Journal of Richard Norwood*, 54.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., 55.

[72] Ibid.

epistemological and theological uncertainty in which he could no longer tell what was truth and what was not. He looks even further back to his initial voyage to Bermuda, where he had first attempted to renew his fidelity to Christ, and he wonders if total conformity to the will of God is even possible because "I questioned with myself how I should know in every particular case what was the will of God, for divers men did take the same word of God diversly in many points, as the Papists one way, and Protestants another, those they call Puritans another, etc. How should I know which to adhere into (especially of the two latter) that I might be sure to go the right way and not be disappointed of my hope?"[73] Norwood concludes that God's will for the world and the wills of men, even when men believe in their hearts that their loyalty and faith are genuine, might not always be one and the same. A conscious attempt to follow Christ's path could, in fact, be a rejection of God's plan. For Norwood, apostasy becomes not just a matter of deliberately refusing the covenant, but it is also an ever-present risk of inadvertently committing the unpardonable sin out of his own ignorance.

Looking backwards in his spiritual narrative, Norwood concludes that he lacked the proper spiritual vocabularies and textual means for articulating the relations among his spirit, body, and God's will during his early years in Bermuda. From the retrospective perch of the late 1630s, where he now feels secure that he is one of the elect, Norwood concedes that his pride and the handmade boat did "grievously tempt God," and in doing so he risked his spiritual relation to Christ. The material danger to his boat and body in stormy Bermudian waters renders to him, however briefly, the precipitous state of his soul and his inability to articulate his relation to God at that point in his life. That is, the collision of Norwood's body with Bermudian history-in-the-making reveals his standing within a broader providential frame at two points in time. In

[73] Ibid., 61.

the past, he recognized his own lack of commitment to the spiritual covenant. In the present of his writing, he can now recognize the spiritual teleology, initiated and propelled by the stormy waters off the Bermuda coast, that led him to the knowledge of his own election that he is now able to articulate.

Norwood reads his own body as a material flashpoint that signals to him where he exists within the providential and the worldly when the two become intertwined for him within the geographic and climatological particulars of Bermuda. He struggles, however, to textualize what he felt, and thus came to know about his spirit, during those five days off the shores of Long Bird Island. How, he seems to ask, can he reconcile having a body on earth with the immateriality of grace after death? Can they be unified under the same vocabularies and ways of writing? Norwood's spiritual autobiography, in this context, employs the conventions of the emergent Puritan genre of the spiritual life in America to look for ways of writing and the specific language that will allow him to survey and discover how and why his previous experiences in Bermuda revealed his favored relation with Christ.

Norwood began his spiritual autobiography upon returning to Bermuda after spending over two decades away from the archipelago. Fearing "that as age come on, forgetfulness would increase upon me,"[74] he wrote every Saturday for a year to measure his relation to God and Christ as he once surveyed Bermuda. Like many other spiritual narratives of the period, Norwood takes account of his past to write the future he believes has been promised to him as a member of the elect. He writes to place himself within the Bermudian center of the hemisphere and as one favored by God who has been chosen for a bountiful spiritual life beyond the end of earthly history. In the record of his spiritual life, Norwood covers everything from his early

[74] Ibid., 3.

education, his desires to travel to the East Indies as a young man, his first seafaring journeys, his two failed pilgrimages to Italy, his failed trade mission to Persia, his innate depravity and inclinations towards sin, and, most important to him, his first two surveys of Bermuda.

In the text, Norwood eschews the top-down, detached analysis of Bermuda he performed in *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* for the intensive self-reflection of a first-person investigation of a life's path to the present. His spiritual narrative is an on-the-ground account of the body's experiences with the natural features of Bermuda's climate and geography, as Norwood suggests in both texts, that reveal the foundations for English suzerainty in the hemisphere. Like the natural history of *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, Norwood's spiritual narrative works within the conventions of an emergent genre. It at once narrates Norwood's knowledge of his relation to God and the vocabularies and ways of being of a planter class that performed what we now call settlerism in America in the early seventeenth century. Working within the relatively standard narrative beats of a Puritan conversion story, Norwood's text performs a settler mode of being predicated upon his body's interactions with Bermuda's climate and geography.

Norwood works through three questions in his narrative: Where do the materials of the natural world and the immaterialilty of the soul overlap? Can the soul be measured just as nature can? How might he put the worldly and spiritual futures of his Bermudian life to the page in a readable form? Ostensibly the story of a life lived globally across several decades, Norwood focuses the vast majority of his spiritual narrative on his first stint in Bermuda. In his opinion, Norwood's measuring methods, along with the colony's geography and climate, equip him to redress what had seemed to be an irreconcilable division between experiencing, knowing, and writing the immaterial and material, the spiritual and the worldly, and, in doing so, he can now

textualize, he believes, how they might be measured and mediated as one. The "love of Christ," Norwood suggests, "has a length and breadth and height and depth"[75] just as the physical world does. In fact, to measure Bermuda was to measure the self as much as the land his body moved across. Spiritual knowledge does not come through abstracted mediation, Norwood suggests here, and it is not deposited in the mind from Christ in an immaterial, pure fashion. Instead, Christ "passeth knowledge"[76] to Norwood through the surveyor's discovering experiences with the natural world. Norwood concludes that his knowledge of his soul's condition comes from his body's movements across the unfamiliar, and often spiritually destabilizing, Bermudian terrain. The spiritual autobiography, in this regard, enables Norwood to investigate the material and immaterial ramifications of his Bermudian natural encounters, or the impact of new climates and geographies on his sense of the world and his soul's relation to God.

Norwood reconsiders what first brought him to Bermuda in 1616. The year he left England, Norwood had been working on a small ship off the English coast when one morning a piece of ordnance fell from the deck. His shipmates could not locate it in the muddy water from the surface, so he improvised a diving bell out of a cask and hogshead, as well as rope, stones, and weights he found in the ship's stores. He was able to breathe underwater until he located the piece and secured it with rope so it could be extracted. For Norwood, who claims to have memorized the diving bell specifications from an unnamed source prior to working on the boat, it was an act of divinely inspired improvisation. He writes, "I am so much the rather to acknowledge the divine providence and goodness in this particular, partly because I never had

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

seen nor heard of any that in these times had put in practice such a thing, but had only read of it but where or in what book I know not."[77]

Norwood recognizes God's helping hand first not in his mind but in his body. Divine intervention "and goodness in this particular" do not show themselves first in Norwood's consciousness, but produce bodily sensations whose significance he must interpret through something like a bodily heuristic. "But I seemed to have a kind of alacrity and assurance of the certainty of it," he writes, "and met with no danger nor inconvenience in doing it, only it was cold, being near Christ-tide, and the air in the vessel being pressed by the water, presseth accordingly against the tympan or skin within the ear, and this if the depth had been great might have been dangerous (for the pressure increaseth proportionally according to the depth) but not exceeding four or five fathoms it was very tolerable."[78] When he builds the diving bell from memory, Norwood performs God's favor with him. The significance of his spiritual essence, however, gets knowable only through physical perception and sensation, and, as such, his body becomes a stage on which Norwood conducts this performance so that it might be known to him and his fellow sailors. For him, it is not so much what he accomplishes underwater, but what the act *feels* like in his ears and on his skin that matters. God's potential favor, in this regard, becomes known and mediated to others through what Norwood's body accomplishes that others are unable to do in the moment.

Norwood recollects further that new futures became imaginable to him once the ineffable relations between the mind, the spirit, the body, and the natural world came into relief for him in the muddy English waters. Bermudian officials got wind of Norwood's accomplishment and

[77] Ibid., 49.

[78] Ibid., 49-50.

invited him to bring his diving bell to the colony to initiate a pearl farming industry. He agreed to go only after he was promised "a large part of whatsoever should by such means be recovered by myself or others."[79] His success with the diving bell produces the knowledge of his potential favor with God, or the immaterial, eternal security that would come with his election, and it also secures for him a privileged position, and potentially immense financial wealth, within the new plantation in Bermuda. History, as it is lived and embodied by Norwood in his texts, moves from the immateriality of the mind to the body to the potential material riches on the Bermudian seafloor through a process of mediation and bodily interpretation. His body performs not just for his future with God, but also for the speculative economic futures potentially found off the shores of Bermuda. Norwood's writing, too, is a form of performative labor commensurable with the way his body comes to perform his supposed election. Norwood's writing in 1639 is the last stage in this process of development, one, in his imagination, that at last allows him to put what his body has long known into a precise spiritual vocabulary within a set of cohering generic conventions meant to simultaneously claim election and justify the settler presence in America.

After recounting the failure of the pearl industry, and reliving his near-death experience off Long Bird Island, Norwood focuses almost exclusively on how he found evidence of his election in his relations to the materials of the earth during the second, and far more successful, survey of Bermuda. In fact, Norwood attempts to write himself out of any contemporaneous relation that cannot be read as a climatological or geographic typology as he retroactively investigates the mystery of his election. Though he was a well-connected interlocutor in Bermuda's early development, the narrative excises any extended treatment of the colony's socio-political life that does not serve the intended purposes of the genre. During his first year in

[79] Ibid., 52.

Bermuda, Norwood witnessed the rat plague that nearly starved the Bermudian settlement to death. The narrative relegates the vermin to just two sentences: "This want [of victuals] came chiefly through a multitude of rats which at first came with a Spanish frigate, laden with meal, taken by Daniel Elfirth as a prize in the West Indies and brought hither. With this came a few rats which suddenly increased that they overspread all over the country, deveouring all that was planted, neither could we by all the means we could use hinder the increase of them, much less destroy them."[80] Here, Norwood reduces the first great crisis of Bermuda's settlement to just two sentences that read the first real threat to English posterity on the islands through the presence of the rats brought aboard a captured Spanish frigate. While a foundational moment in Bermuda's history, Norwood appears disinterested in the rat plague because it reveals little about his body as a direct conduit to God, a general trend that holds throughout much of the narrative. Significant events are briefly mentioned, other actors are gestured to, but it is all done in a fleeting and cursory manner. For the purposes of his text, Norwood appears to only be interested in a Bermuda that is isolated from the world-at-large, despite its centrality within circum-Atlantic settler networks, and that serves as the primary intermediary between his spirit and God.

To the Norwood of the spiritual narrative, Bermuda is more of a mediator between him and God than a socio-political entity within America. The islands work to lay bare, as evidenced by his experiences in his slipshod boat of the shores of Long Bird Island, the illegibility of his devotion beyond the immediacy of bodily sensations. Writing with the assurance of election in the 1630s, Norwood remembers how he had to recommit himself to an intensive textual regimen to prepare himself for a sustained experience of the spiritual knowledge he had felt only briefly on the surfaces of his body in the muddy English waters. In the seven months between his first

[80] Ibid., 53-54.

and second surveys of Bermuda, Norwood "read over the Old Testaments about five times and the New ten, with wonderful solace and delight, which through the grace of God hath been a singular benefit to me ever since."[81] Norwood augmented his reading of the Bible with a strict regimen of Augustine's *Confessions* to construct a textual bulwark against temptation as he prepared his body for more godly experiences. He writes, "For keeping myself constantly thus employed and having frequently such spiritual comforts in my heart [Satan] found little place or entertainment there in comparison of what he wont to have."[82] Bermuda, Norwood takes pains to emphasize, is the only place where he could have undertaken such a theological investigation. His success in removing any "place or entertainment" for Satan through his rigorous reading schedule, coupled with the constant work of the second Bermudian survey, makes Norwood feel as if he has been removed from the world almost entirely. In his estimation, all that existed in the world just prior to and over the course of the second survey was his soul, his body, and the natural Bermudian environment that renders his corporeality a direct conduit to God.

As Norwood sees it in his spiritual narrative, his reading regimen prepared him to receive Christ while he discovered Bermuda through the act of surveying. Yet, Norwood feels that he must put this relation to text for himself within the generic conventions of the conversion narrative so that he might make what he now knows readable to others. To textualize both body and spirit as exceptional, Norwood suggests in his writing, is to place the English Christian at the top of a natural and providential hierarchy. Aileen Moreton-Robinson argues that the modern concepts of settler colonization and whiteness can be sourced in these seventeenth-century colonial projects of territorial possession and expansive land acquisition by European nations.

[81] Ibid., 84.

[82] Ibid., 85.

Racialization, "as the process by which whiteness operates possessively to define and construct itself as the pinnacle of its own racial hierarchy"[83] began, Moreton-Robinson argues, with the first justification of seizing land. The initial waves of English settlers in America, of which Norwood was a part, positioned themselves as seizing land not from Indigenous peoples but from nature itself, and as such they began to see themselves as the culturally, spiritually, and corporeally natural inhabitants of the land they now claimed to possess.

Seizing America from nature relied upon an embodied performance of this self-described exceptionalism through which Europeans positioned themselves as the so-called true inhabitants of whatever land they claimed as their own. As such, Moreton-Robinson continues, "performativity functions as a disciplining technique that enables the white male subject to be imbued with a sense of belonging and ownership produced by a possessive logic that presupposes cultural feeling and commonality applied to social action."[84] When Norwood centers the performances of his body during his surveys of Bermuda, and argues for his own corporeality as an interlocutor with God and signaler of his exceptionalism, he becomes implicated in the early "historical practices through which the performativity of the white male body and its relationship to the environment has been realized and defined."[85]

Indeed, Norwood believes that the physical sensations of the second survey produced the conditions for simultaneous totalizing examinations of his spirit and Bermuda's land. Norwood felt reinvigorated after the Lord "was pleased to give me much watchfulness and great deliverance not only from gross and outward sins but against the corrupt affections and motions

[83] Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Place, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P, 2015), xx.

[84] Ibid., 35.

[85] Ibid.

of my heart"[86] while he completed his work. As he remembers it, the survey was an almost out-of-body experience, or "a very sweet and heavenly condition, wherein I seemed to be carried as were something above the earth, having no outward thing (that I remember) to annoy me or to trace or distract my mind."[87] Freed from all earthly and inward temptations, Norwood finds that "all my business and care was (in a manner) touching the things that were between the Lord and my soul (for the works of my calling were little trouble to me), the Lord (as I have often thought) dealing with me as he did with the Israelites when he brought them out of Egypt...so I had no outward annoyance or distraction for about six months."[88] Here, Norwood finds an equilibrium between his corporeality and the plans God has in store for him. The "great deliverance" of being "carried as were something above the earth" produces what he describes as a physical connection between what he once thought of as an unbridgeable gap between his spirit and body on earth. He finds his survey, or his "business and care," was now "touching the things that were between the Lord and my soul," assuring him that he has at last found the vocabularies necessary to put his newfound spiritual knowledge to text. The brief sensations of the diving bell and the ill-conceived boat have given way to an extended feeling, over the course of the entire second survey, that physical sensations and movements across unfamiliar Bermudian land put him in communication with the ineffable qualities of his spirit in a manner that allows him to at last articulate rhetorically what he asserts his body has long felt.

Norwood's revitalized relations with the self, the textual, and Christ underpin the seemingly out-of-body experience of the second survey. Released, if only temporarily, from the

[86] Norwood, *The Journal of Richard Norwood*, 85.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

vulgar constraints of the corporeal, Norwood accomplishes the two great tasks of his life: his mapping of Bermuda and the final assurance of his salvation. Only Bermuda, he concludes, could have shown him the height and depth and width of Christ's love for him as a member of the elect. The project is a twofold survey in which the materials of Bermuda become imbued with the immateriality of salvation's future for Norwood. Yet, he must come down at some point. When he must prepare to return to England, he recalls how he "began now as it were to be drawn down to the earth, and met with more rough ways and impediments and troubles than before."[89] He worries not, however. The second Bermudian survey, in fusing the material and immaterial together in a singular project of the future's prognosis, assures him that "this hath the Lord been pleased to manifest in me that what he will save shall not perish, and that it is not in him that willeth nor in him that runneth but in God, which showeth mercy."[90] The measurements of such mercy, it would seem, only become legible when searched for across Bermuda.

Norwood's retrospective charting of his spiritual life has much in common with the other Puritan life writing around America in this period. When it became apparent that the English settlements in the hemisphere had lasting power, colonists became increasingly interested in the relationship between their own bodies and the natural world as evidence of their election. Many settlers, just as Norwood does here, attempted to source their own privileged position within God's plan for humanity, and thus justify their permanent presence in America, in the dangerous natural encounters that put their bodies at great risk. The best known would perhaps be Thomas Shepard's own spiritual autobiography and the testimonies of grace he collected in Cambridge during the 1630s and 1640s. The defamiliarizing natural encounter, with water especially, gets

[89] Ibid., 87-88.

[90] Ibid.

cited often as evidence of election. Across Puritan America the body often becomes the site of mediation for the ineffable relations of the spirit and the natural world in the mid-seventeenth century. The generic conventions of the spiritual autobiography, to a large degree, often require an understanding of the body as the means through which historical election becomes known.

Like those of his peers in New England, Norwood's narrative follows the generic rhythms of what Patricia Caldwell calls the "expectable sequence" of the conversion story - "sin, preparation, and assurance; conviction, compunction, and submission; fear, sorrow, and faith."[91] America, in both regions, looms large as both an ideological signifier of great historical and providential promise and as a very real material place of habitation. "If the central symbols of both English and American narratives revolve around the concept of heavenly deliverance," Caldwell continues, "it still must be stressed that the American version of deliverance is imaginatively mediated and substantively affected by a real geographic place."[92] That is, experiences with America, whether in New England or Bermuda, produce the conditions of deliverance, or what Norwood calls his "sweet and heavenly condition." The settlement of America, in this reasoning, becomes integral not to just ideas of election, but also the lived practices of perceived bodily and spiritual exceptionalism that settlers come to believe entitles them to any land they wish to occupy. Shared investment in America as the site of deliverance into election allows for a collective understanding, and lived practice, of Norwood's point that "thus hath the Lord pleased to manifest in me that what he will save shall not perish." Imagined election is not just an individualized experience, as the genre might suggest, but a collective

[91] Patricia Caldwell, *The Puritan Conversion Narrative: The Beginnings of American Expression* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1983), 2.

[92] Ibid., 26.

occupation of the contemporary moment in service of completing the covenant together through the acquisition of land in places of deliverance.

By the middle decades of the seventeenth century, spiritual narratives written by the likes of Norwood in Bermuda and those collected by Shepard in Boston, as well as those produced by someone like Mary Rowlandson, became a textual means of articulating the cultural practices that arose out of primitive accumulation, or the processes of land and enclosure and displacement by colonial forces, across America. Recent work in feminist and Indigenous studies has revised Marx's theories of primitive accumulation in *Capital* into a process not tied to one single time or place, primarily early modern Europe, but as an ever-expanding, unfolding project endemic to colonialism itself. And, these scholars have suggested further, primitive accumulation and territorial acquisition simultaneously produced the material conditions of possibility for global capital and the emergence of gendered and racialized ways of being in the world. "From this viewpoint," Silvia Federici argues that "primitive accumulation has been a universal process in every phase of capitalist development"[93] and it is a process "inherent to the logics of colonization that inevitably must dehumanize and fear those it wants to enslave."[94]

Glen Coulthard suggests further that colonial primitive accumulation "encompasses two interrelated social processes: the resources, technologies, and labor that people deploy to produce what they need to materially sustain themselves over time,"[95] akin to the survey and infrastructural projects Norwood maps in *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, "and the forms of thought, behavior, and social relationships that *both condition and are themselves conditioned*

[93] Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (New York: Autonomedia, 2004), 16.

[94] Ibid., 22.

[95] Glen Coulthard, "From Wards of the State to Subjects of Recognition," *Theorizing Native Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2014), 74.

by these productive forces,"[96] or the spiritual and corporeal exceptionalism Norwood finds and textualizes in the discovering act of his surveys. Conversion narratives, in this respect, are not just spiritual stories. They are historical records of emergent modes of thought, social practice, and territorial occupation through which settlers came to account for their own ways of being in the colonial project. And Bermuda, in Norwood's rendering of it, sits as a site of speculation through which the lived performances of Indigenous displacement and colonial embodiment are fantasized.

Neither Norwood nor his New England brethren employ what we would now identify as the vocabularies of race. At no point in his spiritual narrative does he refer to himself as white. But, as I am arguing here, his writing reflects the circulation of the ideological preconditions of what will become more explicit articulations of race in America. The issues Norwood works through in both the description and the conversion narrative - the longing for the end of history, the fabrication of new subjectivities to defend a permanent planter presence in America, and the search for material evidence of immaterial grace - become endemic to the development of the American hemisphere as an ideological concept and material site of political economy within the long history of its settlement. Through these relations among the future, new American subjectivities, and the material evidence of immaterial favor, the settler logics of whiteness begin to congeal. The spiritual narrative, to some degree, becomes a generic locus for early articulations of what the first generations of Puritan settlers come to see as the historical exceptionalism of English bodies in perpetual motion around the globe, and America in particular, as they move closer and closer to their deliverance. While Norwood might not use the modern vocabularies of race in his spiritual autobiography, we can see these ideas begin to take

[96] Ibid.

shape in how he sees the male planter's body and its movements through the defamiliarizing natural world as the means through which historical election becomes known. Norwood was not, as much as he might have wished it were so, an island unto himself. He was very much embedded in the colonial system he first imagined in *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* and across his chosen genres he contributed to early place- and race-making in America.

The Bermudian "Domesday" Scenario

On the 1626 map that depicts the results of Norwood's second survey, Bermuda sits as the outsized center of America, with each individual plot of land surveyed and assigned a tribe. The Florida, Virginia, Plymouth, and New England settlements stretch across the top of the map, but Bermuda, by far the smallest of these plantations in actuality, expands across them all and into the northern borders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. On the map's southwestern corner, Hispaniola recedes from an imposing Bermuda into the map's borders. The lower left panel frames the wreck of the *Sea Venture* with the motto "Quo Fata Ferunt" ("Wither the fates carry us"). Between all of these elements, the map simultaneously renders the local spaces of Bermuda legible by naming and organizing the archipelago into predetermined sites of settlement and it imagines Bermuda as the point of entry to America, an imposing hemispheric gate to which all other spaces defer. The fate of the entire region, it would now seem if the map is to be believed, has become irrevocably tied to where the fates carry this colony whose significance far outweighs its deceptively diminutive size.

While the 1626 map puts blind faith in "Wither the fates carry us," Norwood's later "Domesday" Book (1663), his last major Bermudian project, taxonomizes the permanence of settler fates on the islands. Like Norwood's need to textualize the knowledge he felt in his body

during his surveys, the "Domesday" book attempts to communicate posterity through the functions of a particular type of media and genre. Working in the tradition of the manuscript record of the survey of England and Wales ordered by William the Conqueror in 1056, which resulted in the original "Domesday" book from which Norwood's text takes its name, Norwood's version of the genre attempts to make permanent the English claims to Bermudian land. The genre takes "Domesday" as its name in direct reference to the Last Judgment; or, as Richard FitzNeal wrote of William the Conqueror's "Domesday" book in *Dialogus de Saccario* (1179), once land claims are catalogued and legitimized by their inclusion in the official record, their "sentence cannot be questioned or set aside with impunity. That is why we have called the book 'the book of Judgment'...because its decisions, like those of the Last Judgment, are unalterable." To write it down, the genre of the "Domesday" text asserts, is to make it so and to make it permanent.

Norwood's Bermudian "Domesday" book begins, as did *The Description of the Sommer Ilands*, by globally situating the archipelago. This book, Norwood writes, results from "A Survey of the Sommer Ilands sometimes called the Bermudas Lying in the West Indies in the Latitude of 32d: 20m namely the northermost part in the latitude of 32 degres 24 ½ minutes and the southermost in 32d: 15m and in Longitude from London neare 64d: 00m with all the Islands and lands there or there unto belonging."[97] The Sommer Islands, once called the Bermudas, here become the Sommer Islands, sometimes called the Bermudas, and whereas Norwood once auditioned the potential descriptors of New World, America, and West Indies to potentially describe the cultural significance of Bermuda's location, the archipelago is now inarguably West Indian. He also orients Bermuda in relation to the gravitational pull of England instead of tying it

[97] Richard Norwood, "Norwood's Book of Survey of 1662-3," *Memorials of the Discovery and Early Settlement of the Bermudas, or Somers' Islands, 1511-1687, vol. II* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1981), 646.

to other European settlements like Madeira. By 1663, Norwood's introduction reveals, England has expanded, the American plantations are more secure in location and permanence, and Madeira and Bermuda are no longer opposing poles of the known and the undescribed. Norwood secures the Bermuda of the "Domesday" book within the geographic and historical specifics of an increasingly discovered English America. Bermuda is a West Indian colony, Norwood asserts, found on a specific latitudinal line with a specific longitudinal relationship to the domestic metropole.

The "Domesday" Book identifies 424 parcels of land that have been claimed and settled across Bermuda's fourteen tribes, akin to modern counties, and common areas. Norwood identifies to whom each parcel belongs, the primary occupants, and the boundaries of each parcel. For example, a typical entry reads: "George Ball of Hamilton tribe. A tenement and two shares of land, namely one share in his owne occupation, and one share in ye occupation of Edward Grazbury, both lying together, and abutting at ye north end vpon ye Little Sound and at ye South end vppon ye two shares of Tho: Hall afforesaid and to ye eastward vppon ye gleabe land."[98] Norwood does the same for each claim in Bermuda. "The names of the Adventurers," he writes, "I have set downe according to the best information I could haue here."[99] Regardless of any errors, as Michael Jarvis points out, the "'Domesday' book stands as the most complete record of a settler presence for its time in America."[100]

In this, his final account of Bermuda after his final survey of the settlement, Norwood focuses little of his attention on how the settlement makes America natural to England or what it

[98] Ibid., 656.

[99] Ibid., 646.

[100] Michael J. Jarvis, "Bermuda's Domesday Book: Richard Norwood's Surveys and the Development of the Somers' Islands, 1616-1663," *Journal of Post-Medieval Archeology* XLIV (2011), 54-73.

might reveal about the state of individual Puritan souls through the English body's defamiliarizing natural encounter with its climate and geography. Instead, he taxonomizes global Englishness in practice by cataloging settler claims to the Bermudian land with almost no interpretative inquiry. How might Bermudians, Norwood asks, legitimize their possession of the archipelago in perpetuity via the colonial projects of categorizing, naming, and building? The "Domesday" book, in this regard, litigates English seizures of American territory as an infrastructural project made legitimate by acquiring land and putting it to work. The "Domesday" book reveals the logics of such an undertaking not through any sort of ideological reading of geography or climate, but through the sheer overpowering force of Norwood's thin descriptions of the land partitions through which individual planters give up the personal in favor of the communal and the taxonomic. The "Domesday" book is a detached document, one that at once removes itself from the surface of Bermuda while simultaneously claiming a totalizing and indisputable knowledge of the land's organization as it attempts to render permanent the settler claims of land ownership.

Indeed, the "Domesday" book eschews the more localized and individualized lenses of the natural description and the spiritual autobiography for the top-down survey of Bermudian settlement in its totality. It is not the individual case study of one discovery or one soul. It is the story of the collective as a unified and immovable front that communally plants Bermuda. The domesday genre, then, emplots order onto space by making place through the textualization of individual claims into a single map. Here, the deluge of such individualized claims renders their uniqueness almost unreadable and all the individualized claims to Bermudian land become one totalized claim to the archipelago. The futures of history in Bermuda, the text suggests, no longer build toward an end, or a culminating event of the strange manner of its discovery. History

simply is in this rendering. The "Domesday" book positions itself as the final authority on what Bermuda is and will be in America, whither the fates have been leading to all this time.

Like Norwood's other chosen genres, the "Domesday" book operates as an early form of race making through place making. In general, the book reflects to Norwood and the colonial officials for whom he wrote it how they see themselves in the Bermudian lands they occupy. The book evacuates the islands of anything but the land claimed and the English bodies who assert authority over it, rendering the enslaved and indentured laborers who are forced to work in Bermuda invisible. Englishness, in this regard, becomes a form of presentable and performable property in and of itself. To possess an English body and identity for these planters is to gain access to what the land can reflect and legitimize. Seeing oneself in the land, as Norwood does across his Bermudian corpus, enables settlers to self-authorize as members of a unified collective entitled to the possession of any land they desire. Such a totalizing impulse of knowledge becomes a precondition for race, and whiteness in particular, because it creates the conditions for the planter beliefs that they naturally acquired the lands they now claim to possess in perpetuity. Something like a domesday book attempts to partition subjectivities into zones of rightful habitation and ownership as it seeks to render, it would claim, the settler land owning body as both historically and materially unique.

The "Domesday" book elides the possibility of a commons or unsettled land in Bermuda through its exhaustive totality. The genre, as Norwood enacts it in the late seventeenth century, imagines and sustains a completely parcelled Bermuda, one claimed, settled, and permanently inhabited by a so-called natural class of discoverers, adventurers, and planters. Land and subjectivity, in this respect, are braided together in Norwood's processes of textualizing perpetual land claims out of writing the results of his surveys. All of Bermuda is planter

property, he suggests, and one must claim a planter body to possess the parcels he has mapped. "[W]hiteness and property," Cheryl Harris argues, "share a common premise - a conceptual nucleus - of a right to exclude."[101] In the colonial era, Harris argues further, "only white possession and occupation of land was validated and therefore privileged as a basis for property rights. These distinct forms of exploitation each contributed in varying ways to the construction of whiteness as property."[102] The parcels of the "Domesday" Book were not deliberately drawn by Norwood across racialized lines, but the status quo they established came to be defended along such lines, as demonstrated by subsequent chapters. And the relations among climate, geography, and form and genre in his writing begin to distinguish, from *The Description of the Sommer Ilands* and the spiritual autobiography to the "Domesday" Book, and circumscribe the early foundations of white possession of land in early America.

"The primary object of settler-colonization," Lorenzo Veracini argues, "is the land itself rather than the surplus value to be derived from mixing native labor with it"[103] and "the logic of this project, a sustained institutional tendency to eliminate the Indigenous population,"[104] sought to make occupied land as natural to settlers as possible. Often, as it does for Norwood here, Bermuda did not present the same conceptual problems for justifying the occupation of land as other plantations in the hemisphere. In fact, many settlers, as I explore in the following chapter, took Bermuda as a mirrored inversion of what settlers could expect to encounter elsewhere in America, a utopian idea of what settlement would look like at the end, as it were. Bermuda's lack

[101] Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993), 1714.

[102] Ibid., 1746.

[103] Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 8.

[104] Ibid., 9.

of an Indigenous population, its temperate climate, and the seemingly fateful 1609 wreck of the *Sea Venture* that made its settlement possible enabled writers to position the islands as a vacant, isolated laboratory for unraveling and realizing the futures of what settlerism could be in America. Bermuda, from Norwood's imagination to John Winthrop's, as will be explored in the next chapter, was not a place where people or ideas stayed long, but it instead was the motor behind an always proliferating settler system in America. Bermuda's value, for many settler writers, was not in what it enabled on its shores but what it enabled elsewhere in America, namely land ownership and the coercive power to displace the Indigenous peoples of the hemisphere.

Chapter Two
No Vacancy, No Future:
Writing and Living History in New England and Bermuda, 1637 and 2002

The St. David's Islanders and Native Community held its first Reconnection Festival at Red Hole, Bermuda in 2002. The festival, now a biennial event, brings together members of the Pequot, Wampanoag, Mohegan, Cherokee, and Narragansett peoples of North America with the Bermudian descendants of Indigenous North Americans enslaved in the archipelago in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[1] Red Hole, where the enslavers' ships often landed, Rosalyn Howard points out in her oral history of the ceremony, "is treated as a sacred place when every other year, libations are poured, prayers are offered, and wreaths are decorated by St. David's Islanders, their US Native American relatives, and other participants during the Reconnection Festival ceremonies."[2] To Howard, the Festival "has provided a physical and psychological space where Bermudians - whose ethnic heritage includes Native American ancestry from North, Central, and South America, and the Caribbean - may freely express and celebrate this Native American part of their identity. They proudly recollect their past, reconnect with their long-lost relatives, and tell their stories in their own voices."[3] The Reconnection Festival makes public what has long been obstructed by the colonial archives and the histories built out of them – the deep connections within and between the communities of St. David's Island and southern New England that the narratives of American settler colonialism and slavery have rarely addressed.

[1] Rosalyn Howard, *Recollection and Reconnection: Voices of the St. David's Islanders and Their Native American Relatives* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace, DBA On-Demand Publishing LLC, 2015), 89.

[2] Ibid., 73.

[3] Ibid., 119.

The Reconnection Festival unsettles the narratives of Bermudian vacancy, espoused by settlers for over four hundred years, that supposedly enabled the displacement and then historical erasure of Indigenous identity throughout the hemisphere.[4] The officially sanctioned archives of Indigenous enslavement in Bermuda - records of transactions, baptisms, marriages, and wills - flatten all experiences, kinships, and identities into universalized categories. From the 1630s to the 1680s, all of the Indigenous men and women who were transported to Bermuda for enslavement were recorded in the official records first as "Indian" and then "Indian-Negro" and, finally, by the 1680s as "Negro" in a rhetorical process that came to equate slavery with Blackness nearly exclusively and, thus, erased the particulars of Indigenous history and identity in Bermuda. Yet, family identity, Native kinship, and cultural tradition have been preserved in the archipelago through generations of oral history and now the publicly-facing ceremony and community offered by the Reconnection Festival. Despite the limits and erasures of the colonial archives, among the Bermudians and Indigenous peoples of the United States who participate in the festival "there is a deeply held spiritual belief in an acceptance of their kinship, regardless of whether tribal affiliation will ever be determined. Without hesitation, both groups affirm their connection and relationship to one another."[5] Together, the Festival participants reclaim the futures and histories that the enslavers of New England and Bermuda once attempted to foreclose when they transported Indigenous peoples to the colony and rhetorically erased their identities in the bureaucratic archives those settlers left behind.

The new historical stories produced by the participants of the Reconnection Festival stand in stark contrast to the narratives of Indigenous slavery in Bermuda traditionally available to

[4] For more on the development of these refrains, see chapter one and Timothy L. Fosbury, "Bermuda's Persistent Futures," *American Literary History* 32, no.1 (2020), 1-21.

[5] Howard, *Recollection and Reconnection*, 90.

scholars. Take, for example, what we know of George, an Indigenous man likely from New England who was forced into slavery in Bermuda in 1644. That year, Captain William Jackson, an enslaving sea merchant, condemned George to labor for Richard Norwood, the surveyor and author of *The Description of the Sommer Ilands, Once Called the Bermudas*. The archives record that "James Witter of the Somer Islands chirurgeon [charging] for and in consideration of the summe of Twenty pounds sterlinge to me in hand payed (the receipt where of I acknowledge by these presents) by Richard Norwoode Gent, have publiquely bargained sold assigned sett ouer and deliuered and by these presents doe fully and clearely sell and deliuer unto the said Mr. Rich. Norwoode one Indian man named George about xxiv yeares, to haue and to hould the said Indian Man."[6] There is very little else about George's life in the colonial archives. At some point, Virginia Bernhard has found, George was transported to the Carolinas, but to comment on whether he was then free or enslaved and what happened to him upon his return to North America would be mere speculation.[7] These archival gaps and omissions left George, as Francis Jennings might suggest, "unknown and unmourned" in the bureaucratic narratives and histories American enslavers and settlers wrote about themselves.[8]

George's kidnapping, enslavement, and eventual disappearance from the archival record are no anomaly for seventeenth-century Bermuda and New England. Following the 1637 massacre of the Pequot peoples by Puritan settlers near Mystic River in what is now Connecticut, John Winthrop and other New England officials forced an unknown number of Pequots from southern New England into slavery in Bermuda and the West Indies. In 1638, William Pierce,

[6] Mason Van Wyck, "Bermuda's Pequots," *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* 39, no. 20 (1937), 616.

[7] Virginia Bernhard, *Slaves and Slaveholders in Bermuda, 1616-1782* (Columbia, MO: U of Missouri P, 1999), 61.

[8] Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (New York: Norton, 1976).

captain of the *Desire*, sailed for Bermuda with seventeen recently enslaved Pequot men and women in the aftermath of the massacre. Pierce, however, missed Bermuda and ended up in Providence Island off the coast of Nicaragua in the Caribbean. There, he became the first person to force enslaved Africans to New England after exchanging the kidnapped Pequots in Providence. Pierce never made it to Bermuda, and we know little else of the seventeen Pequot men and women he condemned to slavery. As others have noted, references to Indigenous peoples who were "sent to the 'Bermudas' or to the West Indies to be sold as slaves" reverberate throughout the New England archives.[9] In fact, Massachusetts enacted an ordinance in 1652 that required any Indigenous peoples captured in war "to be either sold or shipped off to the Bermudas or other parts, or reduced to slavery in New England."[10] Bermudian enslavement was a centralized, bureaucratically administered program that continued through at least King Philip's War of 1675-1676, following which Metacom's wife and son were enslaved somewhere outside North America, and possibly in Bermuda, following his death.[11]

This chapter reconstructs the narrativization of enslaving practices in Bermuda by New England settlers, and it amplifies the contestation of these narratives in contemporary Indigenous communities. I first map how Indigenous slavery in seventeenth-century Bermuda informed the writing and lived practices of history in colonial New England by reproducing the logics of vacancy as the enabling condition of settler futurities. To many early settlers, Bermuda was the site for enforcing the fabricated ways of being they imagined in their writing and attempted to materially impose throughout America. John Winthrop's inter-American correspondence of the

[9] Ethel Bossevain, "Whatever became of the New England Indians Shipped to Bermuda to be Sold as Slaves?," *Man in the Northeast* 21 (1981), 103.

[10] Van Wyck, "Bermuda's Pequots," 618.

[11] Bossevain, "Whatever became of the New England Indians Shipped to Bermuda to be Sold as Slaves?," 103.

1630s, John White's "The Planter's Plea" (1630), Philip Vincent's *A true relation of the late battell fought in New England* (1637), William Hubbard's *The present state of New-England* (1677), and the Treaty of Hartford (1638), I argue, are representative of how New England settlers came to believe that a communally constructed Bermudian imaginary enabled them to consolidate their power and territorial control in North America, and, in turn, their ability to exert power over the narrative possibilities of the future. I end with the Reconnection Festival in St. David's Island. Today, the Festival operates as a platform for unsettling the colonial narratives of inevitability, Indigenous erasure, and permanent displacement upon which the written histories of settler colonialism have long relied. The festival, I argue, reframes the parameters of written history and the limits of the archive, and thus implicitly questions how once lost futures and potentials might be reclaimed in anticolonial projects, by recovering a sense of historical kinship that revitalizes Indigenous presence, without geographic or temporal constraint, in Bermuda and southern New England.

Deborah Bird Rose argues that the structures and ideologies of settler colonialism are best understood as resembling a historical palindrome. Wherever they resided, she suggests, Christian settlers saw all time and history as moving "towards the birth of Christ and then towards his second coming."[12] History, in this sense, begins and ends with two arrivals and two births that, in essence, are one and the same. Settlers must rebuild in the land they have seized what they left behind if the palindrome is to be completed. The settler palindrome, Lorenzo Veracini argues further, relies upon the materiality of place-making to complete this cycle of history. The settler must leave home for the so-called wilderness to rebuild home, and,

[12] Quoted in Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 100.

ultimately, arrive at the same set of material and social conditions he had initially left behind for history to end. As part of its historical palindrome, settler colonialism often quickly develops a set of standardized narrative refrains and generic conventions that measure historical "progress" through "indigenous displacement (i.e. transfer) and ultimate erasure" that are "primarily characterized by indigenous deterritorialization accompanied by a sustained denial of any state-making capability for indigenous peoples."[13] In both the material and narrative senses, Bermuda was the midpoint of the palindrome for the Puritan settlers of North America in the seventeenth century. It was the transition point through which history and the future flowed, and it was the location, I will demonstrate, through which Puritan settlers often measured their historical progress against their ability to displace, erase, and replace the Indigenous presence from the future through their coproduction of place and the narrative refrains of territorial possession and governance.

In every form and genre they employed, the settler writers of New England and Bermuda studied here looked ceaselessly for how they might live as they believed God demanded they should within the social relations and material conditions of the lands they claimed belonged to them. Puritan settlers, within their own palindromic American structure, understood history as a teleological loop that would end where it began after they fulfilled their covenant with God, and to them that process was as textual as it was material. These writers - from John Winthrop and John White to Philip Vincent, William Hubbard, and the crafters of the Treaty of Hartford - wrote speculative texts that attempted to bring their desired futures into fruition through the coproduction of space in Bermuda and New England. These texts are world-building exercises that give colonial meaning to place and attempt to exert power over the narratives of the past and

[13] Ibid., 101 and 105.

future, and, ultimately, what it means to be a settler or Indigenous in colonial America. The archives that remain of the worlds in which these texts were produced often treat their narratives of Indigenous displacement and erasure as irrevocable, indisputable fact and resolute. Bermuda, I contend here, irrupts throughout seventeenth-century New England settler accounts of the period as the conceptual center of an early spatio-racial mapping employed by Puritans to justify the acquisition of land and the violence they waged against Indigenous peoples.

Yet, as the Reconnection Festival demonstrates, the story need not end there. There are other ways of giving meaning to place that recollect and re-write the possibilities of the past and the future. Mark Rifkin argues that the "temporal trick whereby Indians are edited out of the current moment - or cast as inherently anachronistic - emerges out of the refusal to accept the (geo)political implications of persistent Indigenous becoming, the ways that the presentness of Native peoples challenges settler claims to possession now and for the future."[14] The Bermudian Reconnection Festival refuses the archival and narrative limits that settlers have employed to editorialize Indigenous peoples out of New England and Bermuda by reclaiming kinship, identity, presentness, and persistence. In this sense, Rifkin might suggest, reclaiming and performing the new possibilities of a previously foreclosed history through communal action "can be understood as distinctive ways of being-in-time. They emerge from material processes of reckoning with an environment and are open to change while helping provide an orientation and background for everyday Native experience."[15] The Reconnection Festival, by exceeding the limits of written history and the colonial archives, reorients history and opens up new historical possibilities out of both the past and the future.

[14] Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2017), 5.

[15] Ibid., 29-30.

A Bermudian Center for John Winthrop's New England

Beginning in 1636, Puritan settlers conducted a war of enslavement and extermination against the Pequots of southern New England. The origins of the war have long been contested, but several elements have remained relatively consistent for nearly four hundred years. In the years preceding the violence, Anglo settlers looked to expand further into Pequot territory in what is now Connecticut and Rhode Island while they competed with the Dutch for control of the fur trade in northeastern North America. In this conflict, the Mohegans had aligned themselves with the English, and the Pequots with the Dutch. In 1634, John Stone, a West Indian privateer of English descent who had recently been forced out of Boston by the Puritans for a variety of moral transgressions, was killed by a Niantic force, themselves aligned with the Pequots, in retaliation for Stone's kidnapping of two Niantic men. Puritan leaders in Boston demanded that the Pequots turn over Stone's alleged killers for a trial. Their request was denied.

John Oldham, an English trader who had also been recently exiled from the Puritan community for ethical shortcomings, was attacked and killed while on Block Island in what is now Rhode Island in July 1636. No one has ever definitively established the identity of Oldham's killers, but Puritan leaders assumed they had been given safe haven by the Pequots. While both Stone and Oldham had been expelled for violating Puritan ethics, leaders in Boston exploited their deaths as a pretense to expand their territorial control and influence in the fur trade. The Puritans began a series of retaliatory military excursions in August 1636 under the guise of pursuing justice for Stone and Oldham. The conflict reached its nadir with what many consider to be the first genocide committed by English settlers in North America. A Puritan force, led by John Mason and John Underhill, surrounded a Pequot village near the Mystic River

in May 1637 and murdered nearly 500 largely defenseless men, women, and children in a single morning.[16]

John Winthrop recorded the Mystic massacre in his journal. "[O]ur men surrounded the swamp," he begins, "being a mile about, and shot at the Indians and they at them, from three of the clock in the afternoon till they desired to parlay, and offered to yield, and life was offered to all that had not shed English blood."[17] During the brief parlay, the Puritans allowed two hundred women and children to leave the area, "and then the men told us they would fight it on; and so they did all the night, coming up behind the bushes very near our men, and shot many arrows into their hats, sleeves, and stock, yet (which was a very miracle) not one of our wounded."[18] After the violence subsided, the Puritans captured the women and children they had let out in the brief cease fire. Winthrop writes in his journal "that we had slain in all thirteen sachems, and that there were thirteen more left. We had now slain and taken, in all, about seven hundred."[19] Then, "the women and children were divided and sent some to Connecticut, and some to the Massachusetts."[20] More were sent to Bermuda for enslavement and forced Christianization, although, as Winthrop writes, "We sent fifteen of the boys and two women to Bermuda, by Mr. Peirce; but he, missing it, carried them to Providence Isle."[21]

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[16] In addition to Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, for broader histories of the Pequot War see Michael Freemen, "Puritans and Pequots: The Question of Genocide," *The New England Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (1995), 278-293; Alfred E. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst, MA: U of Massachusetts P, 1996); and Mark Meuwese, "The Dutch Connection: New Netherland, the Pequots, and the Puritans in Southern New England, 1620-1638," *Early American Studies* 9, no. 2 (2011), 295-323.

[17] John Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1996), 227.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

In the first decades of the Puritan presence in North America, Bermuda played a significant function in leaders like Winthrop's spatial imaginations of the hemisphere's potential futures. To many, Bermuda quickly became an important enabling condition for the emerging racialized discourses they developed to justify the seizure of Indigenous lands in New England. Bermuda's perceived vacant centrality within a settler system in perpetual motion, as discussed in the first chapter, was vital to how they imagined the future dynamics of place-making in New England. In the 1630s, writers and officials, like Winthrop articulates here in his journal entry, enacted a sustained program of textual and material place-making that, in their imaginations, compartmentalized American spaces into a systematic chain of places with precisely prescribed functions for bringing the covenant with their God into fruition. Southern New England, Winthrop charts here, was for Puritans almost exclusively. He believes that Indigenous peoples should only be allowed to remain in the region if they are not concentrated in dense population centers, with Bermuda reserved for what he deems to be the excess populations he believes must be dispersed throughout the hemisphere to maintain order in New England. Winthrop and his peers wrote New England as a place for performing the social demands of the covenant while they simultaneously wrote Bermuda as a dispossessing geography conditioned to erase Indigenous identity from any potential futures in North America through the corporeal and ontological violence of enslavement and forced Christianization. In this sense, I argue, settler writers collaboratively made Bermudian place in the New England colonial imagination across a textual network of Puritan writing that often emphasized the archipelago within their attempts to enforce who would inhabit the futures of America and in what ways they would do so. While "we sent fifteen of the boys and two women to Bermuda" might appear to be a passing reference

in a journal largely concerned with the internal dynamics of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, it in fact carries significant historical and narrative weight.

Winthrop can only write this line in his journal because of the Bay Colony's already close connections to the settlement in Bermuda. Winthrop and his fellow New Englanders did not formulate their plan to transport the kidnapped children and women to Bermuda for enslavement in isolation. Rather, they cultivated this program meant to create hierarchies of being and circumscribed boundaries of habitation in newly claimed settler territories across broad textual networks. Patrick Copeland, a Bermudian minister, conspired with Winthrop to enact the enslaving plan. In a letter to Winthrop that addresses Captain Pierce's failure to arrive in Bermuda, Copeland writes, "Worthy and Wor[shipfu]ll sir, I perceive by yours your remembrance of vs in sending 12 New-England Indians to vs, which were left at Providence."[22] Copeland reassures Winthrop that "if they [the enslaved Pequots] had safely arrived here, I would have had a care of them to have disposed them to such honest men as should have trained them up in the principles of Religion; and so when they had been fit for your Plantation, haue returned theme againe to have done God some service in being Instruments to doe some good upon their Countrymen."[23] Copeland, in concert with Winthrop, partitions Bermudian place into a site of Indigenous disposal, as he uses the term, that will transform the Pequot peoples into Christians and re-acclimate them for a life in the recently conquered spaces of New England upon their return.

Puritan world-building efforts in the seventeenth century were trans-American textual and material matters. The construction of their new homes was a matter of seizing the natural

[22] "Patrick Copeland to John Winthrop" in *Winthrop Papers, Volume IV, 1638-1644* (Boston, MA: The Merrymount Press, 1944), 157.

[23] Ibid.

environment and simultaneously writing the history of the covenant as it was happening across their hemispheric communication networks. Puritan settlers such as Copeland and Winthrop measured historical progress in Bermuda and New England against two forms of Indigenous displacement - seizing territory through wars of extermination and enslavement and the narratives of the new status quo they used to speculate upon God's plans for the region. Together, the Copeland-Winthrop letters attempt to justify the Mystic massacre as a morally justified good that, in their estimations, would be beneficial to the Indigenous peoples of New England and allow the Puritans to complete the settler palindrome in Bermuda and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Winthrop's journals and his correspondence with Copeland imagine a settler future of geographic spaces compartmentalized into places with specific functions for completing the historical and material requirements of the covenant within the Puritan settler system of the hemisphere - the material and textual creation of a Puritan home in America that would harbor the end of history at last.

Copeland's conditional futurity in his letter to Winthrop reveals the geographic determinism of Puritan settler spatial imaginaries in this period. Climate and the physical organization of space, many came to believe, conditioned how people could act within particular social and religious conditions. Had the Bermuda plan gone as it was designed, Copeland claims, there could have been only one possible result: the pacification of the Pequot peoples, and their eventual conversion to Christianity, in New England through the unique conditions of their enslavement in Bermuda. Copeland stresses that *if* the Pequot peoples "had safely arrived here, I would have had a care of them to have them disposed to such honest men as should have trained them up in the principles of Religion." Copeland reads the Bermuda plan as contingent upon the successful transfer of bodies between locations in a cohering Puritan settler system in the

Atlantic. For him, the Bermuda plan becomes a matter of geographic determinism based upon Bermuda's location and relative position to other settlements in the hemisphere. If Captain Peirce's *Desire* had followed the correct routes, Copeland asserts, he and Winthrop would have seen the future they longed for together, "and so when they had been fit for your Plantation, have returned them againe to have done God some service in being Instruments to doe some good upon their Countrymen."[24] Copeland imagines American futures as informed by the networking of Puritan settlements into a coherent, unified, and navigable system, with Bermuda serving as the clearing house for indigeneity in North America.

It is in this sense that Bermuda was a key geography for Puritan settlers as they attempted to compartmentalize physical space along newly defined hierarchies of being throughout America in the mid-1630's. In their writing to one another, they believed Bermuda conditioned the Indigenous body and spirit for the cultural practices of so-called civilization in a place like New England. While they trusted that Bermuda could transform the Indigenous peoples of North America into "Instruments to doe some good upon their countrymen," and thus displace indigeneity from the landscapes and the future, the Puritan settlers also acknowledged that the system upon which such futures relied had not yet been successfully calibrated. Copeland and Winthrop's correspondence, to a large degree, attempts to write those conditions into existence. For them, if Bermuda is to be the center of Indigenous displacement they long for it to be, then they must write it as so first.

Beginning forcefully in the 1630s, Puritan textual and material place-making projects across America, like those pursued by Winthrop and Copeland here, laid the foundations for their racialization of place in America. This is not to suggest, however, that these Puritans uncovered

[24] Ibid.

some essential, universal "truth" about race through their making of American place. Rather, they exploited the local specifics of New England and Bermuda to construct a narrative and material blueprint for justifying their land seizures and the violence they waged against enslaved and Indigenous peoples, a blueprint, it was, that would be revised across their settlements throughout the hemisphere. In short, race was a historical, material, and theological construction within Puritan communities.[25] Lisa Lowe argues similarly that "Elaborations of racial difference were not universal or transhistorical; they did not occur all at once but were local, regional, and differential, articulated in dynamic, interlocking ways with other attributions of social difference within various spaces and an emerging world system."[26] Moon-kie Jung argues further that the "hierarchical differentiation of space is not about space in itself but about the *politics* of ordering space, it is inextricably, always already about the politics of ordering people."[27] In Copeland's and Winthrop's collaborative New England and Bermuda place-making, the early preconditions of what would become the more easily discernible racialized discourses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries start to emerge - textual territorialization that claims space as a home for a self-proclaimed "elect" population and as a site of alienation and erasure for an excess "other" population, spatialized hierarchies of being, and the strict regulation of the movement of bodies between geographies by those striving for suzerainty.

Other New England settlements soon involved themselves in Winthrop's plan to enslave Indigenous peoples in Bermuda. The archipelago held a wide appeal within the Puritan system that led many to believe that its potential role in policing place could transform the internal

[25] See Richard A. Bailey, *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England* (New York: Oxford UP, 2011), 13.

[26] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2015), 7.

[27] Moon-kie Jung, *Beneath the Surface of White Supremacy: Denaturalizing U.S. Racisms Past and Present*, (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford UP, 2015), 67.

dynamics of their own local communities. Hugh Peters, under the direction of Governor John Endecott, wrote to John Winthrop from Salem in 1637 with a request to be involved in the Bermudian slave trade. "Wee haue heard of a diuidence of women and children in the bay," Peters writes, "and would bee glad of a share, viz.: a young woman or girle and a boy if you think good. I wrote to you for some boyes for Bermudas, which I think is considerable."[28] The "considerable" Bermuda plan, Peters and Endecott suggest in their letter, will enable them to manage the Salem population. For them, Bermuda becomes a site of disposal, as it is for Winthrop and Copeland, where the excesses of indigeneity will be sent to clear the landscapes for more pervasive Puritan settlement in the region.

Winthrop kept William Bradford of Plymouth Plantation abreast of developments in Bermuda as well. In a July 1637 letter that summarizes the Mystic massacre, Winthrop informs Bradford that the "prisoners were devided some to those of ye river [the Connecticut Colony] and the rest to us. Of these we sent the male children to Bermuda, by Mr. William Peirce, & ye women & maid children are disposed about in ye townes."[29] Bradford must have followed the news of Indigenous enslavement closely. At some point, he updated the letter with his own handwritten note, "But yey were carried to ye West Indies."[30] From the late-1630s to the 1670s, the Plymouth archives have many entries that record Indigenous peoples who were sold into slavery in Bermuda. Bradford and Plymouth did not just follow developments, they were soon imbedded in enslaving Indigenous peoples in Bermuda at a scale likely equal to or greater than any other New England settlement. Winthrop's plan to enslave Pequots in Bermuda was no

[28] "Hugh Peters to John Winthrop," Massachusetts Historical Society Collection IV, vi., 95.

[29] MHS Coll, IV, iii, 360.

[30] Ibid.

anomaly. It was no minor event in early Puritan settler colonialism. And that brief line in Winthrop's journal, so easy to glance over - "We sent fifteen of the boys and two women to Bermuda" - reveals one of the key components of Puritan place-making in early America. The enslavement of Indigenous peoples in Bermuda, these brief references in the archives attest, was a wide-ranging co-production between the authorities of all the New England settlements that lasted nearly five decades and stretched across an intimately linked hemispheric textual network.

This textual network that imagined the possibilities of and sustained the practices of Indigenous enslavement articulates, as Walter Mignolo might describe it, a newly racialized Puritan settler order in America by situating spatialized hierarchies of being within the discourses and practices of global trade. Walter Mignolo argues that "the inception of a new commercial circuit [America], which would be the foundation of Western economy and dominance, goes together with a rearticulation of the racial imaginary."[31] That is, the commercial and material networking of settlements in the hemisphere with each other and Europe, Mignolo suggests, is historically co-constitutive with an early racialized order within settler colonialism. Pierce's actions in Providence situated Massachusetts in the Atlantic slave trade and Hugh Peters, John Endecott, and William Bradford's investments in Winthrop's Bermuda scheme demonstrate how the other New England settlements were willing to show how they "would bee glad of a share" by involving themselves in the enslavement of the Indigenous peoples. Bermuda, as one of the key nodes in the early development of the American commercial circuit, as I argued in the first chapter, was a locus for settlers as they imagined and enforced new modes of being within the developing settler order.

[31] Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2000), 27.

For these settlers, from Copeland and Winthrop to Peters and Bradford, New England was their home-in-the-making and to them Bermuda was an essentially empty space conditioned for rendering the Indigenous peoples of North America into "Instruments" of their local place-making projects. To preserve the proto-racial order they were imposing on New England spaces, these leaders attempted to destabilize the relationships among home, space, and sense of self in Indigenous communities while they self-consciously attempted to establish their own relationship to the lands they occupied as authentically natural. Bermuda, they imagined, was a place where "honest men," as Copeland describes his vision to Winthrop, would "have trained them [the Pequot peoples] in the principles of Religion."[32] These letters intimate that such a transformation could not occur in New England because the North American climate and geography could not sustain such a state of affairs. Bermuda, however, allowed Puritan settlers to live as "honest" men able to encourage the Indigenous peoples of North America to take on a new set of cultural practices. The archipelago enabled settlers to imagine themselves as the natural inhabitants of all of America - they believed they retained their honesty wherever they resided - and thus, they concluded, allowed them to severely limit where and how the Indigenous peoples of New England might live in the American future.

Just like Richard Norwood earlier in the century, these emerging discourses of race in New England Puritan communities are not predicated upon apparent phenological differences or biological determinism and essentialism. Race, in this context, was not an external, objective reality that the Puritans confronted in the so-called new world; rather, Bermuda opened up new conditions of possibility under which Puritan settlers in New England were able to imagine and enforce Indigenous and colonial modes of being in America. These early racial imaginations of

[32] Patrick Copeland, "Patrick Copeland to John Winthrop," 157.

indigeneity and settlerism relied upon a carefully prescribed performance of cultural practices meant to consolidate geographic and cultural control in the American settlements. In this regard, early colonial discourses of being in America conceptualize what we would now call race as more malleable, even transformable. "So close were the Indians to European norms," Karen Ordahl Kupperman argues, that early colonial "commentators assured their readers that only a series of short steps - aimed at the creation of a favorable context - separated the Indians from achieving full civility."[33] For Copeland and Winthrop, Bermuda itself was that "favorable context" that would, as Copeland suggests, instrumentalize the Indigenous peoples of North America into doing "some good upon their Countrymen," rendering, as it were, the settler presence in North America as a natural state of affairs in their estimation. If the Puritans were the natural inhabitants of everywhere they went, and if Bermuda could enable the Indigenous peoples to achieve so-called civility in their estimation, then the logic went that such a favorable context could be extended to anywhere in America.

As race is "performed and contested on the ground," Patrick Wolfe asserts, it "emerges not as singular or unified but as a fertile, Hydra-headed assortment of local practices."[34] Placing such local practices in the context of broader settler systems not just in America but in the world reveals how the ideologies and performances of proto-racial discourses seemed natural to those with the consolidated power of a burgeoning coercive political entity. Copeland actually got the idea for Indigenous slavery in Bermuda from Dutch colonial practices in the East Indies. He reassures Winthrop that they "have gayned many to God in his Truth after this manner."[35] The

[33] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Presentment of Civility: English Reading of American Self-Presentation in the Early Years of Colonization," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1997), 226-227.

[34] Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (New York: Verso, 2016), 10.

[35] Patrick Copeland, "Patrick Copeland to John Winthrop," 157.

Dutch, as Copeland describes it, created a program of theological co-education through the forced removal of Indigenous children from their homes for Christian schooling. In this framework, half the students were Indigenous, half were Dutch, and they were trained together as missionaries to spread Christianity throughout the region. The Dutch, in turn, had learned of the practice from the Jesuits, who, according to Copeland, had used it to great success in Japan. Copeland believes that this model can be translated to the spaces of Bermuda quite easily. He writes, "Thus briefly I thought good to acquiant you with this practice of the Jesuits and Dutch in the eastern parts of the world, which if it be followed by your Preachers and Scholemaisters, through God's blessing vpon their labours I doubt not many of your heathens may be gayned to the Christian faith."[36] By the end of their correspondence, Copeland's and Winthrop's Bermuda plan relies upon implementing its globalized influences - in a geographic imaginary that stretches from England to Holland and the East Indies and Japan and, finally, Bermuda - through the regulated movement of bodies between the local spaces of New England and Bermuda.

Together, Copeland and Winthrop imagine America as a chain of deterministic geographies that, in their estimation, provides the material and ontological conditions for completing the historical palindrome when properly networked. Bermuda, in this conception, would be a place through which bodies would be perpetually moving. At the end of his letter, Copeland suggests sending young Bermudian settlers to Boston for education in concert with the enslavement of Pequot men and women in Bermuda. He identifies one settler in particular as an example, George Stirk, who would benefit from some time in New England: "if there be any good Schole and Scholemaister with you, i could wish with all my heart that hee might have his education rather with you, then in old England."[37] Stirk's education, Copeland hopes, would

[36] Ibid., 158.

initiate a sustained transfer of bodies between the two settlements. Much like Norwood before them, Copeland and Winthrop imagine Bermuda as a place where peoples and ideas do not stay long, a stop on the colonial thoroughfare in which settlers would move from Bermuda to New England and back again, while the Indigenous peoples would follow the reverse route, creating a two-way flow that simultaneously built land-based models of being in New England and Bermuda. To them, the Bermuda-New England relation standardized and maintained the performance of cultural practices grounded in and determined by specific climates and landscapes - New England was where Puritans became settlers, and Bermuda was where Indigenous peoples were forced to live as these settlers desired.

As such, Copeland and Winthrop were imbedded in a larger colonial discourse concerned with the relationships among climate, geography, and the future. Others in America and England advocated for foreign plantations on the grounds that an idealized physical space within a particular climate could sustain the ways of living necessary for the covenant's completion. To the early defenders of settlement, America portended how they might live as God intended them to live by offering, they suggested, the perfect situation for performing the cultural demands of their contract with God. In an early endorsement of American Puritan settlements, *The Planter's Plea* (1630), John White defends Puritan plans to permanently inhabit America by describing colonialism as a natural Christian impulse that brings out the best in God's elect: "Now, that the spirits and hearts of men are kept in better temper by spreading wide, and by pouring, as it were, from vessell to vessell...will be euident to any man, then shall consider, that the husbanding of unmanured grounds, and shifting into empty Lands, enforceth men to frugalitie, and quickneth

[37] Ibid., 158.

invention."[38] By nature, White suggests further, colonial plantations produce moral action because "the setling of new States requireth justice and affection to the common good: and the taking in of large Countrey's presents a naturall remedy against coutousnesse, fraud, and violence, when euery man may enjoy enough without wrong or injury to his neighbour."[39]

White identifies New England's climate and geography as part and parcel to sustaining the Godly relations he believes are the primary purpose of a colonial project. "No Country," he argues, "yeelds a more propitious ayre for our tempre, then *New-England*, as experience hath made manifest, but in all relations."[40] Further, "The Land affords void ground enough to receive more people than this State can spare and that not onely wood-grounds, and others, which are unfit for present use: but, in many places, much cleared ground for tillage, and large marshes for hay and feeding cattle, which comes to passe by the desolation hapning through a three yeeres Plague."[41] The very act of settling a new territory, White suggests, is a natural remedy for the ailments and sins of modernity - covetousness, fraud, and violence - because it forces Puritans to cut themselves off from European decadence and return to what Locke would later describe as the state of nature to begin it all again within idealized climatological and social conditions.

For White, not just any "void ground" or "empty Lands" will do, however. The shared cultural practice of performing the covenant with a like-minded community is only possible under very specific conditions. The "propitious ayre" of New England, he suggests, is just as important as its supposedly empty, expansive land, seemingly limitless in its imaginative

[38] John White, *The Planter's Plea* (Stewart Mitchell Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Box 2, Ms.N. 2202), 4-5.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 23-24.

[41] Ibid., 25.

potential to White, and these conditions will enable would-be settlers to live the covenant as it was designed by God. White acknowledges, however, that the "empty Lands" of New England that enable such a practice exist only because of a "three yeares Plague" that has decimated the Indigenous populations of New England. White capitalizes on the plague to position Puritan settlers as the so-called natural inhabitants of New England. The land itself, he suggests, has cleared itself of the Indigenous population as it prepares to "receive more people," and in doing so, White participates in the textual process of spatializing hierarchies of being, founded as they are upon land-based epistemologies that were employed to justify settler colonialism. That is, White argues that "No Country yeelds a more propitious ayre for a oure tempre, then *New-England*," and it does not do the same for the Indigenous population, as evidenced by the plague that has spent three years traveling through that New England air, thus enabling White to position the region as belonging to the Puritan settlers before they ever even arrived.

While New England offered a particular set of idealized conditions for the lived practices of Puritanism to someone like White, very few considered the region from within a geographic and historical vacuum. For many, New England was just one link in a long and ever-expanding chain of settlements. The preface to the published version of John Cotton's 1630 sermon delivered to Winthrop and his followers before their departure for the Massachusetts Bay Colony, "God's Promise to His Plantation," suggests that the true value of a settled America will be felt by all Puritans but "especially they who any way, at lease by silence...approved the Plantations of Virginia, St. Christophers, Bermudas, this having ends inferior to none of them, and men...promising as much by their usefulness, industrie, love to their Countrie, piety, and other qualifications as those did."[42] This preface to Cotton's sermon denies a privileged position

[42] John Cotton, "God's Promise to His Plantation."

to any Puritan settlement in America. Instead, the first Puritan settlements exist on a latitudinal plane, with each "having ends inferior to none of them," as they work together through industry and piety to enact the end of history. Bermuda, New England, St. Christopher's, and Virginia, the preface suggests, must be thought of as a set of unified place-making projects of equal importance to the performance of Puritanism. As such, the preface concludes, "there is none but will finde cause to approve of the worke, and of them that ingage themselves in it."[43] The preface ends by arguing that the settlements of New England must be supported because they carry on the work of Bermuda and elsewhere, though those settlements have been built largely in silence, and any that would "ingage themselves" in the American place-making project should be celebrated.

Many early colonial settlers believed that the connections between the first settlements produced a unified sense of lived history around the hemisphere. The likes of Cotton, White, and Winthrop believed they could unify their natural and providential justifications for seizing American land into a single narrative refrain that would sustain and unify settlerism across America by giving new meaning to the lands they occupied from within the context of an emerging Puritan network in the hemisphere. In doing so, they attempted to write themselves as both providentially privileged and as the inhabitants of bodies better suited to the North American continent than the Indigenous peoples themselves. White believed that settler place-making was not exclusively for the Puritans themselves, however, and "the greatest advantage must needes come unto the Natives themselves, whom wee shall teach providence and industry, for want whereof they perish oftimes, while they make short provisions for the present, without having respect to times to come."[44] The material and textual co-production of space, White's

[43] Ibid.

argument intimates, imports a revised understanding of history to America. White reads Indigenous cultural practices as historically constrained because, in his mind, they are lived with "short provisions for the present" and with little "respect to times to come." For White, any epistemologies that run counter to the Puritan worldview must be erased through settlers claiming land as their own, and, he believes, the settlers' foremost imperative is to bring the future with them upon their arrival in the hemisphere. White concludes that Puritan settler colonialism is justified both materially and epistemologically, and the displacement of the Indigenous peoples from the landscape and the erasure of their cultural practices from posterity, he argues, are the natural course of history.

To justify the continued invasion of Indigenous spaces across America, the first Puritan settlers relied upon two types of vacancy. The first was the biblical, metaphorical vacancy of a land ordained and cleared for the so-called elect, as reflected in the writing of Cotton and White. Second was the more legalistic connotation of the term. Winthrop had preemptively responded to any future objections to the occupation and seizure of Indigenous lands when he had previously declared in 1620 "that most land in America fell under the legal rubric of *Vaccum domicilium* because the Indians had not 'subdued' it and therefore had only a 'natural' and not a 'civil' right to it. Such natural right need not be respected in the same way as civil right; only the latter imposed obligations of true legal property."[45] Winthrop argued that the Puritans had carte blanche to do as they wished with the American land because they were both the providentially elect and the cultivators, in the context of "subduing" the land to make it work, of the natural environment. Indeed, the Puritans "had no difficulty in classifying land as vacant or virgin when

[44] John White, *The Planters Plea*, 27.

[45] Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 62.

it actually held inhabitants with aboriginal rights of tenure. In the Puritans' rationalization the land had never been made property by English law - or, more properly, provincial - and it was therefore vacant in fact."[46] In practice and in writing, then, the writers studied here were constantly fabricating a so-called vacant America through a continued revision of vacancy's fundamental terms. Both the textual practices of world-building across networks of correspondence, pamphlets, and sermons, through which the Puritans articulated their desires for the possible outcomes of a vacant America, and the violence and enslaving practices they pursued across New England provided the conditions, they seem to believe in their writing, for an America that is at once always already vacant and in the process of becoming even more vacant.

Bermuda, as I have begun to show here, was at the core of such productions and revisions of New England vacancy during the 1630s and beyond. As the only American settlement that was actually "empty," Bermuda was a speculative site for the possibilities of what a Puritan plantation system might hold in the American future. A place of textual longing that presented the possibility of a vacant New England to leaders like Winthrop, Bermuda was also a material site for producing the conditions of vacancy elsewhere. The transportation to and enslavement of Indigenous peoples in Bermuda, Winthrop's writing demonstrates, led many to latch on to Bermuda as a place for imposing across the hemisphere a set of cultural practices that adhered to English customs of residency and futurity. Bermuda, in this sense, was both an enabling and a sustaining condition of how New England place was made and how the possibilities of the future were imagined within the dynamics of early English settler colonialism in North America. The

[46] Ibid., 83.

archipelago, then, was foundational to how history was imagined, written, and lived in New England for Puritan settlers during this period.

Future Histories of the Present in a Bermudian New England

Settlers could draw from as many texts and English traditions as they wanted. However, when Indigenous peoples refused to leave the landscapes the Puritans desired, settlers began to reconceptualize territorial acquisition as an agential, historical undertaking imagined and produced by the Puritans for themselves. By their second decade in New England, Puritan settlers stopped relying primarily on biblical, metaphorical, and legal notions of vacancy and began to supplement these logics with a sustained program of clearing the land of dissent and resistance through physical removal, either by treaty or violence, of Indigenous peoples. These programs came to rely on the emerging and increasingly racialized rhetorics of the American "savage" to displace the Indigenous peoples of the continent from the landscapes and any possible futures. These shifts in approach were matched by the emergence of presentist histories, or written accounts of the new moment meant to justify violence and the new coercive status quo, and, yet, Bermuda was just as important to their notions of colonial presence, dispossession, and vacancy as it was in other forms of Puritan writing.

In the first published account of the Mystic massacre, *A true relation of the late battell fought in New England between the English and the salvages: with the present state of things there* (1637), Philip Vincent sees little visible difference between the Pequots and the Puritans. "Their outsides say they are men," he writes, "their actions say they are reasonable. As the thing is, so it operateth. Their correspondency of disposition with us, argueth to all to be of the same constitution, & the sons of *Adam* and that we had the same Maker, the same matter, the same

mould."[47] What separates the settlers and the Pequots, Vincent suggests instead, are their cultural practices that are the natural outcrops of climate and geography: "But as soyle, aire, diet; & custome make ofttimes a memorable difference in mens natures, so it is among these Nations."[48] Human actions, Vincent suggests, are informed by a sort of behavioral geography that conditions one's constitution, matter, and mould to act and think within a set of prescribed limits. Vincent argues here that all humans are of the same maker, and possess the same fundamental elements of constitution, matter, and mould, yet the environment in which one lives determines the outcomes of how these elements will be lived in everyday practice. Like White before him, Vincent suggests that the Puritan settlers and the Pequots simply respond to the climate and soil of southern New England differently, enabling the settlers to assert a natural claim, he believes, to the entire region.

Similar to his contemporaries Copeland and Winthrop, Vincent attempts to establish a set of land-based futurities that will both naturally and typologically defend the displacement of New England indigeneity through violence and enslavement. The massacre was not a happenstance choice made by New England officials on a whim, Vincent strains to articulate, but the inevitable outcome of two civilizations responding to their newly shared environment in profoundly different ways. He defends the massacre at Mystic as a historically necessary choice in the processes of development he believes will result in complete Puritan control of the region. Vincent suggests that every other American settlement had already gone through something similar. He writes that the "*Bermudas* and *Virginia* are come to perfection from meane, or rather

[47] Philip Vincent, *A true relation of the late battell fought in New England between the English and the salvages: with the present state of things there* (London: Printed by M.P. for Nathanael Butter, and John Bellamie, 1637), 3-4.

[48] Ibid., 4.

base beginnings, and almost by as weake means, beyond all expectations and reason."[49] A perfected present similar to what might be found in Bermuda or Virginia, Vincent claims, begins with the war of extermination that has left "the Peqetans now seeming nothing but a name, for not lesse than 700 are slaine or taken prisoners."[50] He ends by concluding that Pequot cultural practices are best erased in New England through slavery in Bermuda. Vincent wants the Bermudian settlers and his readers to accept that Indigenous enslavement in the archipelago is as natural to the world as the settler presence in New England, and thus not a choice: "Nay, they shall have theose bruites their servants, their slaves, either willing or of necessity, and docile enough, if not obsequious."[51]

A true relation of the late battell, as a history of the present, attempts to justify the material and rhetorical exclusion of the Pequot peoples from the "present state" of New England as the only possible status quo of the late 1630s. Vincent begins his text from the perspective of a shared humanity - "Their outsides say they are men" - but he rehearses the natural justifications of English presence to explain the assertion of coercive power by the Puritans as both scientifically and politically unimpeachable. The initial appearance of likeness in constitution, matter, and mould, Vincent argues, ultimately justifies the divergent, violently policed hierarchies of being the Puritans sought to impose upon New England. Vincent quickly drops any pretensions of solidarity through shared likeness when he begins to refer to the Indigenous peoples repeatedly as "Salvages," "brutes," "cruell," "servants," and "slaves," who, in his imagination, are naturally "obsequious" and exist seemingly as "nothing but a name" in the new

[49] Ibid., 18.

[50] Ibid., 17.

[51] Ibid., 20.

present established after the Mystic massacre. Vincent describes the English settlers, on the other hand, as "well grounded, well followed, and mannaged with great stocks of money, by men of resolution, that will not be daunted by ordinarie accidents."[52] The shared humanity Vincent invokes at the beginning of *A true relation of the late battell* is merely an apparition he dismisses with his pseudo-epistemology of behavioral geography that reveals, as he sees it, a fundamental difference of character and potential between the Indigenous peoples and the Puritan settlers. We are all humans, Vincent appears to suggest, but some are more human than others.

Thus, the shared humanity Vincent acknowledges initially has strict limits within the specifics of localized space in southern New England. On the providential scale of history, the Pequots and the settlers are linked, Vincent concedes to his audience, as "the sons of Adam and that we had the same Maker,"[53] but within the shared spaces of the New England present, however, a strictly enforced hierarchy of being appears to Vincent as both natural and necessary. Such a line of thinking allows Vincent to justify the Mystic massacre and the subsequent war as a paternalistic transformation of the so-called "savage" into the obsequious slave because it is a set of relations, he attempts to sell to his audience, demanded by the land itself. The new present established by the war and the enslavement of the Pequots, Vincent concludes, is neither geographically nor historically isolated. Bermuda and Virginia - "Those two sister lands"[54] - exist within their own set of idealized conditions, and, as such, they present to Vincent a new sense of futurity and the possibility of posterity as a potentially permanent state of affairs.

[52] Ibid., 18.

[53] Ibid., 3.

[54] Ibid., 23.

Together, all three settlements, by informing the present in each other, "lay a sure foundation to their future happiness."[55]

As with Winthrop's journal entries and correspondence, Bermuda has a peripheral yet profoundly impactful presence in Vincent's text. He only mentions the archipelago twice, first as the precedent for how settlement might be perfected out of rough beginnings and second as the only viable site for the transportation and enslavement of the Pequots. Despite its fleeting presence, *A true relation of the late battell* makes New England history against and through a Bermuda that is at once resigned to the past and exists as a repository for the futurities and enslaved peoples through which Vincent hopes New England's status quo will be maintained. Bermuda becomes a brief yet recurrent narrative refrain in Vincent's history that provides a positive, reproducible model of what colonial progression could look like and it seemingly enables his forecasts of what will continue to be in New England's futures. Together in the text, the Mystic massacre and the subsequent enslavement of the Pequots in Bermuda are what Michel-Rolph Trouillot describes as the creation of a historical moment, or the emergence of narrative and rhetorical power that silences ambiguities and counter-explanations of what might have happened.[56] That is, what happened (the indiscriminate murder and enslavement of hundreds of Pequot peoples) gets subsumed by what is said to have happened (the creation of a new present in New England that is easily explained and justified, according to the likes of Vincent). Mystic and Bermuda, then, are founding moments, founding geographies in Vincent's

[55] Ibid.

[56] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995), 29.

history that together allow him to narrativize the exertion of coercive power in New England as the only possible history, both of the past and the future.

There are similar echoes of Bermuda in William Hubbard's *The present state of New-England: Being a narrative of the troubles with the Indians in New-England from the planting thereof in the year 1607, to this present year of 1677* (1677). Widely popular in its own time, and reprinted often well into the nineteenth century, Hubbard's historical narrative of encounters between Indigenous peoples and settlers attempts to explain in exhaustive detail contemporary Indigenous-Puritan relations through an account of their progression from the first moments of contact onward. While ostensibly interested in how Puritan experiences in New England more broadly "did bring to light the knowledge of this western world, called *America*, that in all foregoing times and ages, lay hid in this obscure and remote Region, covered with a veyle of ignorance, and locked up from the knowledge of all the rest of the Inhabitants of the Earth,"[57] he primarily focuses on a presentist history of King Philip's War. A war between Puritan settlers and the Wampanoag followers of Metacom, who had traditionally aligned themselves with the Puritans, King Philip's War was the bloodiest, most violent conflict of early New England. Its conclusion with the Treaty of Casco Bay in April 1678 marked the end of Puritan conversion efforts in the region in favor of the mass enslavement of the Wampanoags and their transportation to the West Indies and Bermuda. After Metacom was assassinated at the conclusion of the conflict, his body was displayed in Salem, and his wife and children were enslaved outside of North America, and likely in Bermuda.[58]

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[57] William Hubbard, *The present state of New-England: Being a narrative of the troubles with the Indians in New-England, from the planting thereof in the year 1607, to the present year of 1677* (London: Printed for Tho. Parkhurst, 1677), 1.

[58] For more on the causes and outcomes of the conflict, see especially Jill Lapore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998); Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford UP, 2006); Christine M. Delucia,

Curiously, however, Hubbard does not organize his history of the present state of New England in chronological order. Instead, he begins and ends the book with the 1636-1638 Pequot War. Within this structure, *Pequod*, as both rhetorical term and identity, becomes a metonym for all indigeneity in New England, a way of being, Hubbard argues, that has always been an existential threat to Puritan ways of life. "The *Pequod* Indians," Hubbard begins, are the "most warlike and fierce of all the Indians in that part of the Country, who had made all the rest of the Indians to stand in awe, having committed many barbarous outrages upon their neighbour Indians, both *Narhaansets* on the east side, and *Mohegins* on the west side of them."[59] The dispossession, displacement, and enslavement of the Pequot population, Hubbard suggests further, was the most direct route for the Puritan settlers to pacify all Indigenous communities in the region for four decades. He writes, "As for the rest of the Indians, ever since the suppressing of the *Pequods* in the year 1637 until the year 1675, there was alwayes in appearance amity and good correspondence on all sides. Scarce an Englishman was ever known to be assaulted or hurt by any of them until after the year 1671."[60] In the book's final section, "A Supplement Concerning the Warre with the Pequods," Hubbard draws a more explicit connection between the two conflicts: "This was the issues of the *Pequod Warres*, which in the day of it here in *New-England*, was then as formidable to the Country in general as the present Warre with *Phillip*, the experience of which because it may administer much matter of Comfort and encouragement to the surviving Generation."[61] By beginning and ending with the war the Puritans waged against

Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2018); Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2019); and David J. Silverman, *This Land is Their Land: The Wampanoag Indians, Plymouth Colony, and the Troubled History of Thanksgiving* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2019).

[59] William Hubbard, *The present state of New-England*, 5.

[60] Ibid., 7.

the Pequot community, the form of Hubbard's history suggests that all Puritan history in New England flows in and out of that conflict. King Philip's War, in this formal reconstruction of the past, does not simply parallel or mirror the Pequot war but instead recreates its conditions, and the very re-experience of that past, Hubbard hopes, "may administer much matter of Comfort and encouragement" to those in his contemporary moment.

Within the structural organization of the Pequot War frame, Bermuda operates as narrative shorthand for a continuous recreation of the conditions of vacancy that the Puritans relied upon to justify their permanent presence in and occupation of New England land. Writing about the war's conclusion, Hubbard notes that "of those who were not so desperate or sullen to sell their lives for nothing, but yielded in time, the male Children were sent to the *Bermudas*, of the females some were distributed to the English towns, some were disposed of among the other Indians to whome they were deadly enemies as well as to our selves."[62] Here, Hubbard invokes a well-known narrative refrain of Puritan history, rendering it as shorthand for the possibly justifiable, in his understanding, actions and outcomes within the resurgence of the conditions of 1637 in 1677. What might have happened, as Hubbard presents it, is not nearly as important as how what is said to have happened is remembered in 1677. Or, as Hubbard puts it, "the more paths hath been taken to search out the broken pieces of that Story and thus put them together before the memory thereof was buried in the ruines of time, and past the recovery and knowledge of the present age, the which though it be here in the last place recoreded, should in the first be remembred."[63] For Hubbard, his history of the Pequot War, and the enslavement and

[61] Ibid., 132.

[62] Ibid., 131.

[63] Ibid., 132.

transportation of the Pequot peoples to Bermuda, together produce a shared historical memory and set of narrative refrains that can be invoked to explain the New England present and sustain the conditions of the futures he and his contemporaries hope to imagine into fruition.

Hubbard's history mirrors the approach of the Treaty of Hartford (1638) that ended the Pequot War. The treaty forced the Pequots from their homes, imposed a tax on Indigenous male infants, and barred any individuals or communities from identifying as or publicly articulating a Pequot identity in the future, forcing them, instead, to now identify as Mohegan or Narragansett. Puritan leaders such as Captain Mason, a Puritan military leader during the war, argued that the evacuation of "Pequot" from New England vocabularies and cultural practices was a measure necessary "to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."[64] Indeed, the "language of the Treaty of Hartford, which stated that none would 'be called Pequots any more, but Moheags and Narragansetts forever,' carried multiple meanings. It not only served as an act of cultural annihilation - robbing Pequots of their tribal name was an attempt to make this Indian tribe 'vanish' from New England history - but also rendered Mohegans and Narragansetts subject to English authority."[65] For the Puritans, the Treaty of Hartford accomplished three things. It formalized, in their understanding, their right to exert coercive control over the New England land, police ways of being in their territory, and, as Hubbard's history and Mason's comments demonstrate, determine the limits, capacities, and parameters of a shared cultural memory in the region. The treaty textualized emerging spatialized hierarchies of being in a document that would govern settler-Indigenous relations well into the future. Above all else, Puritan settlers utilized

[64] Quoted in Michael Freeman, "Puritans and Pequots: The Question of Genocide," *The New England Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (1995), 289.

[65] Andrea Robertson Cremer, "Possession: Indian Bodies, Cultural Control, and Colonialism in the Pequot War," *Early American Studies,* 6, no. 2 (2008), 333.

the treaty to claim an irrevocable right to classify peoples as they saw fit, denying the right of Indigenous peoples to self-identify as members of a specific community. In doing so, the treaty and the histories that followed contributed to the development of the trope of the vanishing Indian, giving the rhetorical toolkit for someone like Hubbard to later suggest that the Pequots were nothing more than a part of the landscape that needed to be cleared.

Across all these texts, at the levels of form and rhetoric, and as central or peripheral to the discussion, Bermuda offers a specific location for putting the displacements and erasures of correspondence, histories, and treaties into a sustained material practice. As a vacant, transitory elsewhere that produced and sustained the conditions of imagining new presents and futures in Puritan New England, Bermuda undoubtedly informed how Puritans in positions of power and influence imagined and built their world. Bermuda, in this regard, was a site of speculation, disposal, and distribution. It was a repository, as Hubbard suggests in his document, for the fantasies Puritans sought to impose on the New England landscapes. On the other hand, as Copeland and Winthrop's correspondence attests, Bermuda was also understood to be a site of instrumentalization. For them, Bermuda was a place for the displacement and complete erasure of *Pequot* as a way of being in the world through the co-fashioning of settler and Indigenous identities in simultaneous, and intimately linked, place-making projects in New England and Bermuda. Yet, as the next section shows, there are other ways of writing and living the histories of 1637 and its aftermath.

New Futures of Bermuda and New England

In "Venus in Two Acts," Saidiya Hartman asks how contemporary scholars might go about telling the stories of the horrors and traumas of colonialism and slavery, and especially "the

violence that produced numbers, ciphers, and fragments of discourse, which is as close as we come to a biography of the captive and the enslaved."[66] Or, she asks further, how might we "rewrite the chronicle of a death foretold and anticipated, as a collective biography of dead subjects, as a counter-history of the human, as the practice of freedom."[67] In the case of Indigenous slavery in Bermuda, and the story of George that opened this chapter, it can be easy to end with violence and disappearance, to accept an incomplete archive as narratively limiting, and reproduce the silences ingrained in the colonial record. In her work, Hartman recommends amplifying the impossibility of narratively complete stories of these histories, and in so doing rearranging "the basic elements of the story, by re-presenting the sequence of the event, to displace the received or authorized account, and to imagine what might have happened or what might have been said or might have been done."[68] The Bermudian Reconnection Festival, I conclude in this section, attempts such work. The festival embraces the impossibility of narrating the history it encounters. It does not attempt to re-write or counter the past, but instead it seeks to amplify it and rectify it from divergent points of view.

The festival begins, Rosalyn Howard acknowledges, from the standpoint of archival impossibility. Indigenous-descended peoples in Bermuda are unable to connect themselves directly to "any specific tribal nation" because of "the generic description of their ancestors as 'Indian' in archival or other documentary sources."[69] Regardless, the Festival fosters what Howard describes as a "sincere feeling of shared cultural heritage and spiritual kinship"[70]

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[66] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008), 2.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 11.

[69] Rosalyn Howard, *Recollection and Reconnection*, 9.

[70] Ibid., 10.

between Bermudians and the Mashantucket Pequot, Narragansett, Cherokee, and Mashpee Wampanoag. The Festival accomplishes as much, Howard suggests, because of the "complex web of knowledge, beliefs, and ways of doing things that evolve from the combination of cultural heritage and adaptation, rather than genetics alone."[71] In this respect, the Festival embraces impossibility and contingency to publicly and communally re-tell a long ignored, almost forgotten history from a revised perspective that at once engages the archives and rejects their constraints. The festival refuses all forms of vacancy - archival, historical, and existential - in favor of presence and persistence, and to do so it must engage with over four hundred years of histories.

The historical narratives of a completely vacant Bermuda that was discovered, planted, and settled by the English has been consistently reproduced since the early seventeenth century. Before ending with the Reconnection Festival, I first want to read several historical and contemporary perspectives on when and why Indigenous peoples first arrived in Bermuda. The English might not have found Bermuda, many of these stories go, but they discovered it and made it inhabitable with their bodies and senses, as Richard Norwood might put it. These narratives often begin with the wreck of the *Sea Venture* off the shores of the archipelago and the triumph of the English settlers who made Bermuda livable on their way to save Jamestown.[72] In *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles* (1624), John Smith suggests, however, that there were two Powhatan men making their way back to Virginia from London aboard the *Sea Venture*. In the book's fifth section, Smith notes that also shipwrecked on Bermuda with the English settlers "were two Salvages also sent from Virginia by Captain Smith,

[71] Ibid.

[72] For more on the *Sea Venture* and its aftermath, see the introduction and chapter one.

the one called Namuntack, the other Matchumps."[73] A year later, Samuel Purchas referred to Namontack's and Machumps's time on Bermuda in *Purchas his Pilgrimes*. In Smith's and Purchas's narratives of the first extended presence of humans on Bermuda, then, the archipelago's vacancy is undone by the simultaneous arrival of English settlers and Indigenous men. Bermuda's potential, in these stories, was not discovered solely by the English but was also potentially a co-production between the settlers and Namontack and Machumps.

After Smith and Purchas, though, Namontack and Machumps are almost completely absent from the colonial historical record. Neither man is mentioned in other early accounts of Bermudian settlement, including Sylvester Jourdain's *A Discovery of the Bermudas* (1609), William Strachey's *A true reportory of the wracke* (1609), Nathaniel Butler's *History of the Bermudas*, or Richard Norwood's *The Description of the Sommer Ilands, Once Called the Bermudas* (1622-23). Namontack and Machumps are rarely mentioned in contemporary historiography, and if so, it is often in passing reference or to question the veracity of Smith's and Purchas's accounts. As Aldon T. Vaughan notes, the absence of Namontack and Machumps in contemporaneous primary documents and today's historiographies has three potential reasons: they simply were not on the *Sea Venture*, authors such as Jourdain and Strachey did not feel the need to report details of what was already common knowledge in the seventeenth century, or they were excluded from the historical record to downplay Indigenous involvement in making Bermuda an inhabitable place.[74]

[73] John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles* in *Captain John Smith: Writings, with other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America* (New York: The Library of America, 2007), 537.

[74] Alden T. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2006), 48-50.

Smith does not include Namontack and Machumps in *The Generall Historie* to celebrate their presence in Bermuda, though. Rather, he tells their story to establish Indigenous incompatibility with Bermuda to re-vacate the islands in his narrative so that the new settlement might be rebuilt as an exclusively English space. The last Smith reports on the two men is that "some such differences fell betweene them, that Matchumps slew Namuntack, and having made a hole to bury him, because it was too short, he cut of his legs and laid them by him, which murder he did conceal till he was in Virginia."[75] Machumps's alleged murder of Namontack comes immediately before Smith transitions to the *Sea Venture* cohort's arrival in Jamestown, and as such it is the last act recorded out of Bermuda in the story of the wreck in his narrative, thus rendering Bermuda as once more vacant, once more free of indigeneity, and a space to be settled and re-populated solely by the English in the future. Purchas reproduces a similar narrative in his brief account of Namontack and Machumps. In Virginia, he suggests, "Murther is scarsly hear of" in Powhatan communities. "Yet *Namantack*," he adds, "in his returne was killed in Bermuda by another Savage his fellow." Like Smith, Purchas intimates that Bermuda is really only compatible with the English, and, as a result, it must be vacated once again in preparation for a permanent English presence in the archipelago.

With Namontack and Machumps fully resigned to the critical and historical margins, the scholarly consensus marks 1616, seven years after the *Sea Venture*, as the arrival of the first Indigenous person in Bermuda. In August of that year, the *Edwin*, upon returning from a Caribbean trading voyage, landed in Bermuda with "one Indian and a Negroe, the first thes Ilands ever had," according to then-governor Daniel Tucker. Both men aboard the *Edwin* were enslaved in Bermuda as pearl divers, and their arrival in the archipelago, many others have

[75] John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*, 537.

already noted, was the first forced transportation of an enslaved African to an English settlement in America, three years before the *São João Bautista* arrived in Virginia in 1619.[76] Since 1616, Tucker's contemporaries and now scholars have largely taken Tucker at his word that this Indigenous man, likely Carib,[77] aboard the *Edwin* was the first Indigenous person to arrive in Bermuda. While the debate over the first arrival of Indigenous peoples in Bermuda likely cannot be resolved, there are stark contrasts between their narrativization.

Regardless of the outcome, in Smith's and Purchas's accounts, both Namontack and Machumps would have been considered free in the eyes of the English, as they made their way back to Virginia after something resembling a diplomatic mission to spread knowledge of America in London. With Tucker's assertion, and the historiography that treats it is unimpeachable, that the "One Indian" aboard the *Edwin* was "the first these Ilands ever had," indigeneity in Bermuda has long been read as always tied to the practices of slavery. After the *Edwin*, there are no mentions of the arrival of Indigenous peoples in Bermuda in the colonial archives until the Pequot War. Across these three moments - the *Sea Venture*, the *Edwin*, and the Pequot War - we find the recurrent emergence and arrival of indigeneity in early Bermuda. When these histories are taken together, Bermuda appears to operate under an uninterrupted process of vacancy, arrival, and re-vacancy, whether materially, narratively, or rhetorically, that acknowledges Indigenous presence before removing it to make way for its eventual re-emergence under settler terms. Across the broad narrative of Bermudian history, when Indigenous peoples arrived in Bermuda often appears less important than how and under what terms they did so.

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[76] Heather Miyano Kopelson, "'One Indian and a Negroe, the first thes Ilands ever had': Imagining the Archive in Early Bermuda," *Early American Studies* 11, no. 2 (2013), 273.

[77] Virginia Bernhard, *Slaves and Slaveholders in Bermuda*, 19.

Whether or not a territory has a visible Indigenous population, Shona N. Jackson argues, settlers almost always end up contending with indigeneity in the narratives they write about themselves.[78] In these histories, reports, and accounts there are often two forms of indigeneity, a premodern way of being that must be abandoned in the production of modernity or a historically produced, racialized form of indigeneity now suited for the settler presence.[79] This tension between premodern and modern forms of indigeneity are at the core of the debates and stories of when Indigenous peoples first arrived in Bermuda. In Smith's and Purchas's accounts, Namontack and Machumps are representative of the premodern indigeneity they believe must be cast aside by self-inflected violence before Bermuda can become the vanguard of English settlements in America. In the histories that begin with the *Edwin*, and then re-emerge in the aftermath of the Pequot War, indigeneity's only condition of possibility within Bermuda is always racialized and always enslaved. Enslavement is the only way for modern settler conceptions of indigeneity to emerge in Bermuda, these narratives suggest, and regardless these divergent understandings of first arrival ultimately arrive at the sample place, the construction of Indigenous presence on settler terms.

Both sets of narratives, both so-called origin stories of indigeneity in Bermuda are more myth than history, as Jackson employs the term, in the sense that they are part of "the *first* imaginative discourses"[80] that emerged in the early modern era as processes of recording, mapping, and writing over what was now America until it was a place for settlers. From Smith onward, many of the texts of Bermudian settlement are more origin myth than they are history or

[78] Shona N. Jackson, *Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean* (Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P, 2012), 30.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., 34.

objective reports meant, variously, to explain how Jamestown was saved, how Bermuda was always empty, or how, for someone like Winthrop, slavery was justified throughout the hemisphere. As such, these narratives stress the formal limits of writing history in America as they work within the parameters of the genres settlers inherited[81] and they become less about what happened and more about what the subjects who write these narratives desire had happened.[82] Smith needs Namontack and Machumps for his story just as Governor Tucker needs the arrival of the *Edwin* to introduce a slave economy in the settlement or Winthrop needs Bermuda to justify the Mystic massacre. These competing narratives, then, have left scholars debating the extent to how and for how long Indigenous peoples have been in Bermuda.

In recent years, scholars, and historians and anthropologists in particular, have challenged both the extent of Indigenous slavery in Bermuda and the claims of ancestry made by the St. David's Islanders. Often, these studies claim that the archive, archaeology, and even genetic evidence fail to uphold the narratives of an extended and sustained Indigenous presence in Bermuda since the seventeenth century. In his re-assessment of New England enslaving strategies, Michael L. Fickes argues that the Puritans attempted to transport Indigenous peoples to Bermuda at a scale far smaller than what has been traditionally accepted.[83] In his argument that geographically restricts Indigenous slavery amongst American Puritans to almost exclusively southern New England, Fickes argues that scholars who reproduce the Bermudian story of Indigenous enslavement have long relied too heavily on narrative, oral history, and tradition; or, as he suggests, the Pequot War's "aftermath, however, has been reported by not

[81] For more, see Joyce G. MacDonald, "Race, Imitation, and Forgetting in Benjamin Tompson's New England Pastorals," *Early American Literature* 46, no. 2 (2011), 207-232.

[82] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 16.

[83] Michael L. Fickes, "'They Could Not Endure That Yoke': The Captivity of Pequot Women and Children after the War of 1637," *The New England Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (2000), 61.

carefully investigated."[84] Fickes does not deny the significance of slavery in the development of New England as a settlement and political entity, but his history does spatially constrain enslavement to the region in a way that reproduces discourses of North American exceptionalism and historical isolation that dismisses the sort of claims and histories made presentable by something like the Reconnection Festival as impossible because they are not reflected in the so-called official record. Narratives, oral histories, traditions, themselves, are forms of evidence that carry significant historical weight. To dismiss them as failing to meet the standards of an archive, as Fickes does, is to rely too much on what the Puritan settlers left us, and that archive is as much of a consciously produced narrative as anything else.

Similarly, a team of anthropologists from the University of Pennsylvania travelled to Bermuda in 2010 to measure, as they describe it, the extent of North American indigeneity in the St. David's Island Community. These anthropologists hoped to add an empirical element to the history that, while not definitively answering the question, would give some added clarity to the "persistent belief held by many of its residents that they descend directly from indigenous Americans [that] stems largely from a long-standing tradition linked to a complex set of oral narratives, documentary references, and genealogical records."[85] According to their results, the team concludes that the people of Bermuda who claim a North American Indigenous ancestry are "quite distant from Native American populations."[86] While they do not completely deny any Indigenous presence in Bermuda, their project implicitly questions the extent and accuracy of several centuries of tradition and history outside of the colonial archives. Fickes's and Gaieski's

[84] Ibid.

[85] Jill B. Gaieski, et al., "Genetic Ancestry and Indigenous Heritage in a Native American Descendant Community in Bermuda," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 146, no. 3 (2011), 4.

[86] Ibid., 7.

projects, in this sense attempt to remap and reorder the discourse of the St. David's Island community by historically constraining its significance. They are reverse origin stories constrained by and in tension with a strict definition of what constitutes an authoritative archive or evidence, and they risk, no matter their intentions, reproducing new means of Indigenous erasure that have long dominated the histories of colonialism in America.

This is all to say that telling the story of Bermuda has always been a problem of the formal and generic limits of narrating history from an archive perpetually under colonial conditions. From Smith's *Generall Historie* to Gaiseki's team of anthropologists, the historical conversation has often centered on the questions of vacancy and presence, or what it might mean to settle unclaimed, unpeopled lands or to articulate and sustain persistent presence in the absence of archival or empirical data, with the future itself often appearing to hinge on the resolution of these historical problems. Smith relies upon the generic conventions of the report, or eyewitness testimony, that serves as empirical data for knowledge-making in America, going so far as to cite himself as the source of authority on the presence of Namontack and Machumps on board the *Sea Venture*. In doing so, he writes one of the first narratives of indigeneity in Bermuda and contributes to the early colonial knowledge base that informed every aspect of what now gets called the Bermudian archive. Gaiseki employs DNA evidence as a possible way around the archive, but she and her team ultimately arrive again at their point of departure - the impasse of the incommensurable that refuses any definitive answer. Gaiseki and her team acknowledge that "by relying too heavily on genetic methods to measure 'indigeneity,' we may miss the significant impact of cultural practices on the maintenance of this identity." In the narratives and projects outlined so far in this section, the archives and ways of telling that began in the seventeenth century are, to a large extent, the primary conditions of possibility for telling

the story of indigeneity in Bermuda. Yet, as DeLucia argues, the "colonial archive was structured in such a way, in other words, that it habitually erased or subsumed"[87] indigeneity, and to rely on it as a the sole starting point or source of evidence is to always arrive at the same conclusion.

The biennial Reconnection Festival on St. David's Island addresses the problems the colonial archives pose not by writing through them or looking for alternative forms of evidence exclusively, but by confronting the historical record's gaps, omissions, and silences directly and without qualification. Many of the Festival's organizers and participants, Rosalyn Howard establishes, acknowledge that their own "specific Native American origins will be difficult if not possible to confirm."[88] Yet, to many, the Reconnection Festival is not about a definitive confirmation or assessment of their individual identities. Rather, it is about celebrating the possibility that the past might one day be reconciled. Or, as Howard points out further, the Festival creates material and narrative space for participants to celebrate all "aspects of their heritage and [they] are adamant that they will not be swayed by any outsider perspectives that suggest that they must emphasize one over another. The Reconnection to their Native American relatives from the US has been a powerful act of self-definition. Although in many cases their ancestors hesitated to pass down their oral history, what was passed down fits well with the oral history of their US Native American relatives."[89] The Festival, in this regard, is not a counterfactual or revisionist history. It is a new form of historical production that attempts to supersede the limits of an incomplete archive, and the narratives it has persistently enabled, by revitalizing forms of knowledge-making and solidarity. The festival creates new narrative spaces

[87] Christine M. DeLucia, *Memory Lands*, 305.

[88] Rosalyn Howard, *Recollection and Reconnection*, 70.

[89] Ibid., 119.

that seek to reconcile the past, present, and future by communally working towards the reconciliation the histories of the Bermudian archive have long refused to give. There are no answers, the Festival appears to suggest, only historical solidarity and community.

In this way, the Reconnection Festival retrieves, in the words of Hartman, "what remains of the dormant"[90] by offering a collective experience of the lives, connections, and kinships silenced by the archive in a way that anticipates a reconciliatory future of reconnection. The community the Festival has cultivated across nearly two decades produces "expansive understandings" of communal belonging, presence, and history, that "can encompass members in far-flung places, challenging colonial certainties that authentic Indigenous communities must be discreetly bounded, contiguous spaces."[91] While we may not be able to totally escape the ways in which historians of the past "have largely privileged [the] economic, political, religious, and canonical readings of embodied practices resulting from [the] modernist Western frames of processes" that have regulated historical discourses for several centuries,[92] programs like the Reconnection Festival point to how new ways of engaging the past in productive ways, while acknowledging the limits of what settlers and enslavers left us in the narratives of the archive, and produce new ways of confronting the impossibility of really ever knowing beyond the formal limits of those narratives. Yet, amplifying the impossibility of knowing, as Hartman demonstrates, can be a productive endeavour in that it makes possible new ways of telling, new narratives that transform the longings of historical loss into revitalized forms of addressing the violences of the past.[93]

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[90] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 2 and 4.

[91] Christine M. DeLucia, *Memory Lands*, 314.

[92] Pablo F. Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 2017), 8.

The Reconnection Festival, then, is ultimately as much about narrating the future as it is about narrating the past. As St. Clair "Brinky" Tucker reports to Rosalyn Howard, in "2002, at the first Reconstruction powwow, people came in back in droves to reconnect with the Native Americans from the US with their families in St. David's Island. Many US tribes were represented there: Pequots, Qampanoags, Nipmuks, Cherokees, Narragansetts, etcetera. People were just crying and crying. For years they would talk about being from St. David's Island for fear of being ridiculed."[94] To Tucker, the Festival opens up discourses, kinships formations, and ways of being in Bermuda not before practicable, let alone even imaginable to the community. At once, the Festival, Tucker suggests here, addresses the past by opening it and making it visible in the communal spaces of Bermuda. The Festival also sustains a new future of Indigenous community relations in Bermuda and southern New England in a form and set of practices that at once engage the colonial archives, acknowledge their limits, and foster new stories and bonds out of the narrative limits of what the archive has long failed to afford. Or, as Terlena Murphy offers in her testimony to Howard, the Festival "is a way to connect to our past and instill for our future"[95] in that it makes the legacies of the past and the possibilities of the future livable simultaneously.

The seventeenth-century texts examined throughout this chapter attempted to encode the emergence and lived experiences of indigeneity in Bermuda on the terms of Indigenous peoples as both historically and narratively impossible. From Winthrop's correspondence to the first histories of the Pequot War, settlers in the 1630s wrote the Bay Colony as an emergent coercive

[93] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 4 and 11.

[94] Rosalyn Howard, *Recollection and Reconnection*, 96.

[95] Ibid., 104.

power in southern New England, and to do so, they employed Bermuda, both imaginatively and in material practice, as the intermediary between what they imagined, desired, and enacted in pursuit of colonial and religious futures. The differing accounts of when Indigenous peoples first arrived in Bermuda, and to what extent they remained, from John Smith's *Generall Historie* to the contemporary consensus about the arrival of the *Edwin* to recent anthropological approaches to Bermudian history, risk perpetuating the conditions of vacancy and erasure that have long sustained colonial histories of Bermuda and its relation to other settlements in the hemisphere.

The Reconnection Festival does not undo these archives, histories, and narratives, and neither does it attempt to do so. Rather, the Festival is a historical irruption that unsettles the hold these materials have on our contemporary moment by offering alternative ways of living and making knowledge in response to them. Or, as Mark Rifkin might suggest, the collective experiences of reconnection in the Festival sustain communal forms of peoplehood "that do not simply exist at a given moment in time but influence how a people moves to the future."[96] Ethical engagement with the colonial past, Nick Estes reminds us, and especially in regards to the relations between settler colonialism and race, are the natural first step in addressing their hold on our present.[97] The Reconnection Festival, I have sketched here, offers one framework for doing so in a sustained manner. The Festival is a lived commitment to what Gerald Vizenor calls survivance, or "an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry."[98] As such, the narratives produced by the Reconnection Festival develop

[96] Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time*, 32.

[97] Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* (New York: Verso, 2019), 256.

[98] Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln, NE: U of Nebraska P, 1999), vii.

new methods for thinking through the relations among place, race, historical legacy, and how the future might be live.

Chapter Three
The Distant Futures of a Bermudian Eighteenth Century

Sir George Somers, leader of the *Sea Venture* and first namesake of Bermuda, died on the archipelago in 1610 after returning to gather more supplies for Jamestown. Before his body was returned to England for interment, Somers's men possibly removed his heart and buried it in the Bermudian soil. In 1780, the Bermudian settler Capt. B. Joell invoked Somers's memory in a letter to Timothy Pickering, then Quartermaster of the Continental Army, in hopes of involving Bermuda in the ongoing war in North America.[1] Joell includes two hand-drawn maps with his letter, the first of which marks strategic points of interest on Bermuda's largest islands – St. George's, Long Bird, Smith's, and St. David's.[2] On the back of the first map, Joell lists whom he identifies as the "Friends of America" for Pickering, or the network of sympathizers in Bermuda ready to join the Continental Army.

On the second map, Joell focuses on St. George's Island, the political and military center of the colony, to identify loyalist and sympathetic spaces. He marks where the "Friends of America" live with a "+" while identifying the homes of loyalists and the locations of sentry posts in the city. Curiously, Joell highlights in yellow the tomb where George Somers's heart was supposedly buried. Out of all the granular details of potential ways to collaborate, Somers's tomb rests at the center of Joell's plea to Pickering to include Bermuda in the rebellion. To take St. George's for the cause of the Continental Army, these documents intimate, is to take the heart of America itself in the war against the British.

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[1] For an exhaustive account of the debate over Bermuda's potential place in the rebellion, see Nicholas G. DiPucchio, "Conquest for Commerce: American Policymakers, Bermuda, and the War for Independence, 1775-83," *Early American Studies* 18, no. 1 (2020), 61-89.

[2] Capt. B. Joell, *Manuscript Map of St. George's Bermuda (ca. 1780)*, Massachusetts Historical Society.

In this chapter, I turn my attention to the futures imagined but never realized in eighteenth-century Bermudian literature. As I established in the first two chapters, Bermuda was the material foundation of the settler fantasies weaponized by colonizers throughout America in their projects of displacement and dispossession during the seventeenth century. By the closing decades of the eighteenth century, the Atlantic was fracturing under the rise of individual states and the rise of global capital. America was starting to look less like a unified colonial system to Anglo settlers and more like a series of localized geographies. A great deal of speculative literary energy was still spent on Bermuda's potential futures during this period. Like Capt. B Joell's imagined revolutionary Bermuda, however, much of what was desired for the archipelago by colonists did not come to fruition at the close of the century. Here, I investigate a set of texts invested in ultimately unrealized visions of Bermudian futures: George Berkeley's *A Proposal for the better Supplying of Churches in our Foreign Plantations* (1725), Nathaniel Tuckers long poem *The Bermudian* (1774), and J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) and *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain* (1784). Together, these texts demonstrate, I argue, settler colonial history in America has to include what colonizers thought could happen as well as a story of what did happen. Even unrealized colonial futures, I establish, still impacted the material practices of settler colonialism.

Berkeley, Tucker, and Crèvecoeur produced elegiac works that lamented what seemed like the inevitable loss of Bermuda as the center of America. In the late eighteenth century, writers and elites in North America looked more frequently to islands off the continent to distinguish themselves as *the* Americans to stem their fears of creolization from within inter-American commercial and literary networks.[3] As borders, economies, and polities fluctuated,

[3] For more, see Sean X. Goudie, *Creole America: The West Indies and the Formation of Literature and Culture in the New Republic* (Philadelphia, PA: U of Pennsylvania P, 2006).

writers produced new literary Americas in a fashion they hoped would reinvent the hemisphere "as [they] would have liked to discover it during a period preceding" their own.[4] Berkeley, Tucker, and Crèvecoeur all worry about the futures of colonial subjectivities in America, and so they produce abstracted, idealized literary Bermudas to imagine a reinvented America that would sustain their desired forms of colonialism. As American potential was re-discovered by the wreck of the *Sea Venture* for someone like Richard Norwood in 1609, these three approach Bermuda as the last location left able to produce the America they would like to inhabit. The islands, they argue in their own ways across different genres, offer an imaginative and epistemological model of how to best live as a Christian and a colonial subject at the end of the eighteenth century.

In their attempts to reinvent America through Bermuda, Berkeley, Tucker, and Crèvecoeur focus on whiteness and indigeneity as both fixed natural elements of the world and identities enmeshed in processes of transformative change.[5] The historical upheavals of the eighteenth century, Katy L. Chiles argues, were inherently racialized at a time when the "transformable" structured literary form, political discourses, and Enlightenment epistemologies of being.[6] Stricter white / non-white binaries emerge in this period, Chiles establishes, when the supposedly world-explaining epistemologies of colonialism forced settlers to look for new ways of defining race and empire. To the writers examined in this chapter, Bermuda offered a

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[4] Benjamin Hoffmann, *Posthumous America: Literary Reinventions of America at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2018).

[5] For more, see Tony C. Brown, *The Primitive, the Aesthetic, and the Savage* (Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P, 2012); Robert Woods Sayre, *Modernity and its Other: The Encounter with North American Indians in the Eighteenth Century* (Lincoln, NE: U of Nebraska P, 2017); and Jace Weaver, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill, NC: The U of North Carolina P, 2014).

[6] Katy L. Chiles, *Transformable Race: Surprising Metamorphoses in the Literature of Early America* (New York: Oxford UP, 2014).

historical and literary transformation of America that would redefine both their own sense of Christian and colonial ways of being and extend the limits of what could be imagined as the century closed.

The eighteenth-century futures Berkeley, Tucker, and Crèvecoeur longed-for depended upon the standardization of their own epistemologies of whiteness on the shores of a Bermudian cosmopolitan cultural hub. Berkeley and Crèvecoeur built their colonial fantasies out of the materials of Bermudian institutions. Berkeley proposes a university in Bermuda to preserve Christianity in the hemisphere. Crèvecoeur considers Bermudian cosmopolitanism to be the antidote for the century's political and economic uncertainties. Tucker searches for an aesthetic institutionalization for his vision of a completely conquered America in the already accepted formal and generic conventions of British literary culture. Whereas many seventeenth-century settlers viewed Bermuda as a transitory space, this cohort believed that Bermuda should hold the aesthetic and material administrations that would regulate and enforce the changing settler and Indigenous modes of being supposedly necessary for the historical conditions of the eighteenth century. Berkeley, Tucker, and Crèvecoeur, I will demonstrate, imagined versions of a cosmopolitan settler subject who would move insistently throughout America. These writers believed that the production of a set of standardized, centrally administered cultural practices narratively focused on Bermuda could enable the settler class to enforce and perform the rhetorical and social expectations of whiteness and indigeneity that they wrote to themselves. While Bermuda did not become the cosmopolitan cultural hub imagined by Berkeley, Tucker, and Crèvecoeur, the rearticulations of such a possibility across geographies and texts, I argue, offer a revised genealogy of how settler modes of being were imagined, articulated, and enforced within the social and political turmoil of the late eighteenth century. Even what did not quite

happen, in this regard, enables an archeology of the persistent writing and re-writing of spatial and social relations in the narratives of settler colonialism.

On the Prospect of a Bermudian Cosmopolitan Settler

"Westward the course of empire takes its way," George Berkeley announces in "On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America" (1726), the poem he wrote to raise support for the university in Bermuda he had proposed the previous year.[7] In its articulation of a settler telos across the American hemisphere, the poem asserts that with history's "first four acts already past, / A fifth shall close the drama with the day; / Time's noblest offspring is the last."[8] America, Berkeley endorses, is "Time's noblest offspring," and there colonizers will find "happy climes, the seat of innocence / Where innocence guides and virtue rules, / Where men shall not impose for truth and sense / The pedantry of courts and schools" that will allow them to sing "another golden age, / The rise of empire and arts."[9] The trans-Atlantic journey of empire, Berkeley's poem suggests, will transport history to its millennial end, or the second coming of Christ not possible in the current conditions of a decadent Europe.[10]

History's fifth act will not close the human drama, Berkeley, suggests, until its cultural and theological preconditions have been met in the "happy climes" of America. Berkeley's historical vision is messianic, and he imbues his neoclassical verse with what a "nostalgia for an

[7]George Berkeley, "On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America," *Poems of Place*, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, ed. (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1876-79), ll. 21.

[8]Ibid., ll. 22-24.

[9] Ibid., ll. 9-14.

[10] Costica Bradatan, "Waiting for the Eschaton: Berkeley's 'Bermuda Scheme' between Earthly Paradise and Educational Utopia," *Utopian Studies* 14, no. 1 (2003), 45.

earthly paradise."[11] The poem simultaneously yearns to regain aesthetic and narrative control over the past and the future. Berkeley's historical nostalgia yearns for two places Berkeley has never seen or experienced - an Edenic paradise at history's beginning and an America that looks like history's end. To Berkeley, America is the "spatial framework within which something (important) is going to take place, the item of symbolic geography based on which his project is going to be put into practice."[12] Or, as Edwin S. Gaustad notes, "The tides of history moved relentlessly, but they were moving, it appeared to Berkeley, against England"[13] and the American hemisphere was the only stage suitable for regaining the promises of religious histories past and future.

While Berkeley expresses abstract messianic desires, he pursues them through the historical and material conditions of his time. Berkeley's American utopia is a place of material specificity made possible by Bermuda. Several years prior to composing his poem, Berkeley communicated his belief that the archipelago housed the happy climes required to perform history's religious demands. In a letter to Lord Percival, Berkeley announces that "It is now about ten months since I have determined with myself to spend the residue of my days in the Island of Bermuda, where I trust in Providence I may be the mean instrument of doing good to mankind." He suggests further, in another letter, that Bermuda "is the securest spot in the universe, being environed round with rocks all but one narrow entrance, guarded by seven forts, which render it inaccessible not only to pirates but to the united force of France and Spain." Ultimately, though, Bermuda's significance is as a place "where men may find, in fact,

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[11] Ibid., 39.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Edwin S. Gaustad, "George Berkeley and New World Community," *Church History* 48, no. 1 (1999), 8.

whatsoever the most poetical imagination can figure to itself in the golden age, or the Elysian fields." Berkeley had never been to Bermuda, and he never would go. To him, though, Bermuda is the source of a potentially poetic encounter with the world that enables the means of living required to bring about the futures of history's fifth act.

In *A Proposal for the better Supply of Churches in Foreign Plantations, and for Converting the Savage Americans to Christianity; by a College to be erected in the Summer Islands, otherwise called the Isles of Bermuda* (1725), Berkeley advocates for institutionalizing the "most poetical imagination" inspired by Bermuda in a university on the archipelago. As with his poem, Berkeley finds in his proposal that "[i]n Europe, the protestant religion hath of late years considerably lost ground and America seems the likeliest place, wherein to make up for what hath been lost in Europe, provided the proper methods are taken."[14] To Berkeley, America appears both historically and theologically vacant. It is not burdened by the conflicts - political, religious, or economic - that he believes have long plagued European society to produce the modernity he finds so unsettling. America, in this sense, is an entire hemisphere unencumbered by the history Berkeley believes weighs on Europe. In his imagination, Bermuda, as the cultural and theological vanguard of America, becomes the place for reconstructing modernity itself.

America already had several universities - Harvard, William and Mary, and Yale - but Berkeley argues that these institutions are too imbedded in Europe's philosophical and theological shortcomings. America requires a truly American university because "it is nevertheless acknowledged, that there is at this day, but little sense of religion, and a most notorious corruption of manners, in the English colonies settled on the continent of America, and

[14] George Berkeley, *A Proposal for the better Supplying of Churches in Our Foreign Plantations and for Converting the Savage Americans to Christianity; by a College to be erected in the Summer Islands, otherwise called the Isles of Bermuda* (London: H. Woodfall, 1725), 14.

the islands."[15] Or, under the existing institutions and cultural practices, America risks becoming too English or too European, and thus overwhelmed by the historical and theological uncertainty Berkeley worries leads to declension. Berkeley hopes his university will reprogram how to live in the world as Christian, enslaved, or Indigenous. He believes his university will Christianize the white settlers of the hemisphere and pacify those they seek to subjugate by ensuring that the enslaved "would only become better slaves by being Christian" and by subduing the Indigenous peoples to make them the "ablest and properst missionaries for spreading the gospel among their countrymen."[16] A new university in America, and Bermuda in particular, Berkeley concludes, will reset American history, theology, and ways of being in the world.

The aspirational Bermuda written by Berkeley in his proposal reflects his American spatial imaginary, more archipelagic than continental. He envisioned America, Norman Joseph Catir notes, "not as a continent of depth but as a coastal strip of a continent, as a long chain of settlements extending for 1500 miles of seaboard, where inland communications were difficult because of the absence of inns, carriages and bridges, and where in consequence most of the traffic was seaborn."[17] To him, North America was a provincial strip of land with little infrastructure, little culture, and almost impossible means of connecting its disparate settlements with the rest of the hemisphere. The islands of America, and Bermuda in particular, he concludes, are better suited to be the cultural centers of America because they are more stable and better networked. Bermuda, above all others, has a sustainable cultural significance in America. Bermudian sloops can be found in nearly every port, only the Bermudians hold a

[15] Ibid. 3.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Norman Joseph Catir, "Berkeley's Successful Failure: A Study of George Berkeley's Contribution to American Education," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 33, no. 1 (1964), 68.

"general correspondence with the rest" of the hemisphere, and the settlement, being "the nearest approaching to an equal distance from all the rest," would be the easiest to reach from anywhere in the British colonial system. Though small, Bermuda is the gateway to America, its natural cultural center, and the motor behind the proliferation of commerce and settlement.

The Bermudians themselves, Berkeley believes, will be the perfect supporting cast for the transformations he hopes will occur among the colonial class, the enslaved, and Indigenous peoples at his proposed university. Though Bermudians may be poorer on average than other colonists, "they have withal less vice and expensive folly than their neighbors. They are represented as a contented, plain, innocent, sort of people, free from avarice and luxury, as well as the other corruptions that attend those vices." The Bermudian settlers reflect Berkeley's idealized American ways of living, or the lack of sin and greed he wishes to import from Bermuda to the rest of America and Europe. He flattens the archipelago's inhabitants, as he notes, into mere representative embodiments of the utopian vision he has for the world. To Berkeley, it seems as if only the Bermudians are prepared to live as the fifth act of history demands. Ultimately, Bermuda is an abstracted representation of the world Berkeley hopes to will into existence with his university, home more to the "poetical imagination" than real live people or a sense of place, and in writing Bermuda so Berkeley pushes it to a future always just about to arrive.

Berkeley makes the final case for his Bermudian university through the metaphor of an overflowing fountain. The ideal ways of living in the world will pour forth from Bermuda, he concludes, once they are standardized in a brick and mortar institution, transforming the settlers, the enslaved, and the Indigenous peoples of America alike into the actors he hopes they can be. "It will seem natural and reasonable to suppose," Berkeley writes, "that rivulets perpetually

issuing forth from a fountain, or reservoir, of learning and religion, and streaming through all parts of America, must in due time have a great effect, in purging away the ill manners and ill religion of our colonies, as well as the blindness and barbarity of the nations round them." The transformations Berkeley charts and imagines in his proposal are a slow historical process, and not the immediacy one might expect from a purge. This is a future not of the now or the soon but that of "due time." Such will be especially true, he continues, if the reservoir of cultural practices that pour forth are to be sourced from "a clean and private place, where its waters, out of the way of anything that may corrupts them, remain clean and pure; otherwise they are more likely to pollute than purify the places through which they flow." By the end of the proposal, Berkeley isolates Bermuda in two fashions. To him, the islands are materially isolated by their location in a "clean and private place" that keeps them free from corruption and vice. Bermuda is also historically isolated, Berkeley believes, in that it and its inhabitants appear to be one step ahead of everywhere else. This dual isolation, then, elevates Bermuda in Berkley's imagination and enables the historical purge he believes will come in due time.

At its core, *A proposal for the better Supplying of Churches in our Foreign Plantations* is a colonial narrative set on displacing indigeneity. The pouring forth Berkeley anticipates begins with a confrontation between Europeans, Indigenous peoples, and empire in the institutional setting of a Christian. Berkeley hopes that the imperial confrontations of the Bermudian classroom will erase any semblance of indigeneity from American futures by rendering settler and Indigenous Christians performatively, if not ontologically, indistinguishable. After completing their schooling, Berkeley imagines the Indigenous students will return home to continue what had been started in Bermuda by spreading the gospel "among their countrymen, who would be less apt to suspect, and readier to embrace a doctrine recommended by neighbors

or relations, men of their own blood and language, than if it were proposed by foreigners, who would not improbably be thought to have designs on the liberty or property of their converts." The university, as imagined by Berkeley, will divide the labor of colonization between settlers and Indigenous peoples. Colonial relations, as Berkeley advocates for them here, could potentially work best as institutionally administered programs conducted from a centralized location that standardizes how to live in the world for the settlers, the Indigenous, and the enslaved alike.

As a colonial undertaking, Berkeley argues that any means necessary are justified for finding students for his university. To secure Indigenous pupils, he proposes that the "young Americans necessary for this purpose may, in the beginning, be procured, either by peaceable methods from those savage nations, which border on our colonies, and are in friendship with us, or by taking captive the children of our enemies." Berkeley refuses to rule out any method for filling classrooms at his university. He does not distinguish much between violence and peace, or voluntary enrollment and kidnapping. To him, all methods lead to the same ends and, as such, they are all equally justified. In the same way, Berkeley collapses the distinction between "foreigner" and "American" in this section of the proposal. Here, the settlers, who had long thought of themselves as the natural inhabitants of the hemisphere are the "foreigners," and the Indigenous peoples are "Americans," and Berkeley believes his university could purge each group of their identities and refashion them as the new form of "American" he believes necessary to his messianic vision for the hemisphere.

In contradistinction to seventeenth-century concepts of the islands' utility, Berkeley's visions of Bermuda's future rely on the settlement's fullness as a primary condition of possibility for their realization. Bermuda, as Berkeley imagines it from afar, is aesthetically, ideologically,

and performatively overflowing, so much so that in due time its surpluses, he believes, will expand into other settlements once its uniqueness is institutionalized with St. Paul's College. Ultimately, Berkeley's Bermuda, as the settlement did for John Winthrop a century earlier, has the potential to produce vacancy elsewhere in America, but for Berkeley this occurs in more ontological and theological senses than spatial and geographic. Berkeley believes that the Bermudian classroom will vacate American colonials and Indigenous peoples of their identities before transforming them into the idealized actors for history's final stage. Bermuda, he hopes, will evacuate the ill manners and irreligion he believes plague America by creating a shared cultural space of transformative co-education. Both *A Proposal for the better Supplying of our Churches in our Foreign Plantations* and "On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America" are speculative, utopian texts that conceptualize Bermuda as both nowhere, or a place that does not yet exist outside of the speculative imagination, and a distinct place that possesses the historical conditions Berkeley believes to be necessary for his vision to actually happen. Despite the abstracted qualities of both texts, Berkeley does not shy away from the violence of empire. The vacancies he hopes to establish in America, through St. Paul's college, he concludes, rely upon an institutionalized purge that is justified even in kidnapping Indigenous children.

With a little help from Jonathan Swift, Berkeley was able to secure a royal charter for St. Paul's College, but he was never able to raise enough money to begin construction.[18] Berkeley's American vision lived on after his university failed to materialize, however. He redirected the money he did raise to raise to Yale in the form of books, land, and a scholarship for excellence in the classics. The first student to receive the scholarship was Eleazor Wheelock, who would go on

[18] Norman Joseph Catir, "Berkeley's Successful Failure," 69.

to found Moor's Charity School and Dartmouth college, institutions both designed to train Indigenous men as Christian missionaries in their communities in the manner Berkeley imagines in his proposal. While not to the extent Berkeley had envisioned for the entire hemisphere, Wheelock performed the type of settler cultural practices Berkeley believed Bermuda could produce for all of America, and the two schools Wheelock founded provided two alternative institutionalizations of the sorts of programs Berkeley believed would ultimately displace Indigenous cultural practices from American futures. Berkeley's almost-was Bermuda, in this sense, provided significant imaginative capital for institutions that housed settler- imposed cultural practices in an official setting in the American northeast, and, as the next sections on Tucker and Crèvecoeur demonstrate, informed the colonial imagination across the rest of the eighteenth century.

Nathaniel Tucker's Eighteenth-Century Bermudian Giant in Verse

In his 1774 poem *The Bermudian*, Nathaniel Tucker articulates his aesthetic vision of an idealized eighteenth-century settler made possible by Bermuda. *The Bermudian* received substantial attention in the 1770s and it was reviewed favorably in the British press.[19] Originally from Bermuda, Tucker composed the poem in South Carolina, and in it he expresses his nostalgia for his Bermudian childhood and the unsettling affect he feels in imagining a return to the islands. Across the poem's 322 lines, Tucker positions the Bermudian settlers as an individualized, self-contained race unto themselves. The "Bermudian" is, Tucker imagines, at once American and British and a unique synthesis of the two that both embraces and supersedes their supposedly essential differences. Bermuda, for Tucker, is a place of total and complete

[19] Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade*, 307.

ethnogenesis that turns Anglo settlers into Bermudians, a new distinct "native" race of America that, he supposes in his verse, elevates them above all other inhabitants of the hemisphere.

In the poem's dedication to Tucker's brother, he worries about how his poetic "Performance" will be received by the public. He assures himself that a poem of much less merit "than this might possibly meet with a favourable Reception."[20] "As it is an American Production," Tucker informs his brother, "I flatter myself with some Expectation of Partiality from the Western World."[21] Tucker begins *The Bermudian* in this way to appeal to trans-Atlantic and hemispheric kinship in hopes of softening any potential negative criticism before he separates Bermuda from the rest of the hemisphere. Tucker also places himself in the British poetic tradition. He writes heroic couplets in iambic pentameter and the aesthetics and content of his poem, he acknowledges, are "indebted for its Plan to Doctor Goldsmith's Deserted Village."[22] *The Bermudian* is, in Tucker's words, an American production of British verse traditions. He hopes this poem will be an aesthetic and formal bridge between American and British cultural practices. Tucker employs familiar literary conventions to announce the existence of the Bermudian race on the world stage. At the level of form and content, Tucker writes poetry not only to imagine the Bermudian settler as an Anglo-American ideal, but he also does to so to announce a new exceptional cosmopolitan subject able to move freely and fluidly between cultures and geographies in a manner reflecting, in his imagination, a new way of being "native" to America.

[20] Nathaniel Tucker, *The Bermudian: A Poem* (Williamsburg, VA: Purdie & Dixon, 1774), i.

[21] Ibid., ii-iii.

[22] Ibid., i.

Tucker's Bermuda is pastoral, a nurturing island of perpetual summer free from want, vice, and conflict. It is "Nature's Darling Spot!," an "enchanted Isle! / Where vernal Blooms in sweet Succession smile! / Where, cherish'd by the fostering sea-born Gale / Appears the tall Palmetto of the Vale."[23] "While genial Summer," he continues, "who, approaching fast, / Claims to disperse the short-liv'd wintery Blast, / O'er the green Hill and Cedar-bearing Plain / Boasts, undisturb'd, a long protracted Reign."[24] For Tucker, Bermuda's "long protracted Reign" is made possible by its natural features. Summer is always about to arrive in Bermuda, and the cedar-bearing plains of the archipelago not only give fruitful and protracted life to its flora and fauna, but also to the settlers who call the islands home. The fortunes are almost embarrassed by Bermuda's idyllic nature - "Here blushing Health descend[s] from above" - and like Berkeley before him, Tucker imagines Bermuda as a utopian space that exists beyond the supposed vulgarities of elsewhere in Europe and America.

Unlike the other writers addressed in this dissertation, Tucker was born in Bermuda. The archipelago was the "Parent of [his] early Days."[25] It was in "thy bless'd Clime," he addresses Bermuda directly, "secur'd from instant Harms" that the islands "taught my lisping Accents how to flow, / And bade the Virtues in my Bosom glow."[26] Tucker believes that the Bermudian land and climate constructed his supposedly virtuous character, and this productive geographic determinism, he believes, is universal to Anglo-European experiences with the archipelago. Any settler born in this "Too happy land" would find "His Dwelling peaceful, and serene his Mind, / With independence bless'd could sit him down, / In Age secure from niggard Fortune's

[23] Ibid., ll. 9-12.

[24] Ibid., ll. 19-22.

[25] Ibid., l. 1.

[26] Ibid., ll. 3, 7-8.

Frown."[27] To Tucker, race, as he begins to articulate here, is an embodied performance of land-based ontologies determined by prolonged physical interactions with the natural features of an individual's local environment. Bermuda, Tucker suggests throughout the poem, constructs an entirely new way of being in the world for the settlers born on its shores that distinguishes them as something different from Europeans and the settlers of elsewhere in the hemisphere. Tucker insists that Bermuda taught him how to speak, it gave him his independence, and brought his inherent virtues to the surface by way of the distinctive nature of its climatological serenity. In this way, Tucker imagines, Bermuda distinguishes the islands' colonials as a new aesthetic form of an embodied American exceptionalism.

Bermudians are British in form and distinctly American in cultural practices, and thus offer, Tucker wants to establish with his poem, new ways of interfacing with the economic, historical, and social demands of the hemisphere they seek to occupy permanently. In just under two centuries, Bermuda has produced "a Race of Giant Form / Whose Souls at Peril mock and brave the Storm. / At honest Labour's Call, with fruitless Pains, / Are far dispers'd o'er Britain's wide Domains."[28] According to *The Bermudian*, the archipelago's exceptionalism is required elsewhere for the empire to work. As such, Bermudian settlers are often "early torn reluctant from their Home" to bring their ways of being to the rest of the hemisphere. Tucker engages the vacancy long central to discourses of Bermuda's function within wider imperial systems. Bermuda is at once home to the exceptional, Tucker claims in his verse, and it is a transformative site of an entirely new way of being in the world, but it is also in a perpetual state of vacating itself. That process, it seems throughout the poem, is what Tucker takes to be the key to

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[27] Ibid., ll. 29, 32-34.

[28] Ibid., ll. 37-40.

Bermuda's rise to exceptionality within the dynamics of American colonialism. He concludes that the islands are special because they are always at once full and in a state of emptying. This dual state, then, is what keeps "Britain's wide Domains" settled and running.

Bermuda's production of historical exceptionalism, as conceptualized by the poem, initiates a transactional relationship with America that entitles the archipelago to material wealth. May the "Eternal Blessings," Tucker writes, "with Profusion smile, / And crown with lasting Bliss my Parent Isle."[29] To Tucker, Bermuda's "Eternal Blessings" take the form of what he identifies to be the primary goals of empire in the hemisphere – territorial expansion, commerce, and natural resource extraction made possible by the subjugation of other peoples through enslavement and the violence of dispossession. As he writes, "For thee may Commerce to the Southern Gale / Successfully expand her swelling Sail. / And from Peruvian Mines, the Slave for thee, / With Treasures load the Wave-dividing Tree."[30] Tucker believes that one day the "far dispersed" Bermudian race will return home, and there "May thy lost Children, to their Friends restor'd, / Taste every Blessing Fortune can afford."[31] Empire, in the sense that Tucker conceives of it, is a circuit that loops in and out of Bermuda. By necessity, Bermuda exists in a perpetual state of filling and voiding. Its reward for producing its own vacancy by sending settlers elsewhere, Tucker suggests, is the wealth made possible by international commerce and slavery. The rewards for those Bermudians who travel elsewhere, like Tucker himself to South Carolina, are to one day return to Bermuda to horde the material wealth they made possible through colonization and the expansion of slavery throughout America.

[29] Ibid., ll. 41-42.

[30] Ibid., ll. 45-48.

[31] Ibid., ll. 53-54.

The Bermudian conceptualizes Bermuda in a fashion similar to the dominant discourses that had been proliferating since the archipelago's 1609 re-discovery. To Tucker, Bermuda is the center of America. It is a paradoxical never-to-be settled settlement that enables the permanent presence of British colonials elsewhere in the hemisphere because it is constantly exporting its own settlers. Tucker's verse stands apart from previous discourses, including Berkeley's, that considered Bermuda to be interdependent with America, indistinguishable within the colonial system. In *The Bermudian*, Bermuda stands on its own as an individualized, exceptional location that serves other settlements out of obligation. Or, in other words, whereas Bermuda and America had once been synonymous here it is Bermuda and then America. America, for Tucker, is a chain of particulars and Bermuda distinguishes itself in opposition to the rest of the hemisphere as something else entirely. Tucker more frontally separates the Bermudian settlers from all other groups in the hemisphere. They are resolutely Bermudian and "Bless'd," as he repeats throughout the poem, in a manner unlike all other cultural groups in the hemisphere.

Empire in *The Bermudian* becomes a matter of ebb and flow that eventually folds the riches of the empire into Bermuda. The significance of these colonial processes, as Tucker understands it, is not in what they can do for a unified America, but in what they can do for Bermuda. The "Slave for thee" and "with Treasures load the wave-dividing Tree," Tucker writes as he distinguishes and partitions Bermuda from the rest of the hemisphere in a way that both settles the entire region and makes Bermuda the center of slavery and wealth extraction in America. To him, the future is Bermudian, not American, and the ultimate goal, then, is an expansive restoration of Bermuda that will one day allow "thy lost Children" to return home. Bermuda must be emptied of its settler population so that it might be filled with the wealth made

possible by enslavement and natural resource extraction before the Bermudians may return home to claim what they have made possible elsewhere.

Ultimately, what concerns Tucker most out of these processes is how he might recover his own sense of Bermudian self. Throughout, Tucker overdetermines his Bermudian identity in an attempt to claim a sort of colonial indigeneity for himself that he believes was partially lost when he left his home. At the poem's conclusion, Tucker speculates upon what a return to Bermuda might hold. In this scenario, Tucker looks fruitlessly for other Bermudians of his generation in his imagined return: "For these, alas! I search a distant Land; / And with a Sigh behold their vacant Place."[32] Tucker feels lost at the poem's conclusion. "Though CAROLINA, skilled in social Lore, / With open Arms receiv'd me to her Shore" and "Though (Thanks to all my Guardian Powers!) there I found a Brother and a Friend sincere," he accepts that "Still, for 'tis natural, Affections Tide / Flows where my honour'd Parents both reside."[33] Wherever he might live outside Bermuda, Tucker will never be of the land. Bermudians, he suggests one last time, are an exclusive race resigned to vacating the geography and climate that produced their character so that they might support places like the Carolinas. In response, Tucker's verse suggests "For ever blotted be the Fatal Day / That tore me from their circling Arms away, / When the tall Ship, regardless of my Pain, / Call'd me reluctant to the founding Main."[34] Tucker defines himself in contradistinction to the "founding Main," or the North American continent that has become itself a cultural center of Anglo colonialism in the hemisphere. Tucker

[32] Ibid., ll. 292-294.

[33] Ibid., ll. 295-296, 299-302.

[34] Ibid., ll. 303-306.

represents himself as a Bermudian first and foremost, or a native of the archipelago forced into an exiled vacancy, and reluctant American second.

Reviewers of the poem also saw Tucker as Bermudian before American. *Gentleman's Magazine* finds themselves satisfied that "The happy island of Bermuda, so highly exalted by Waller, under the name The Summer Island, and since so distinguished by the pious but visionary project, formed by Dean Berkeley, of establishing a college there, has here met with a native to celebrate her praises with all the enthusiasm which the 'natale solum' inspires."[35] The reviewer considers the poem to be the first aesthetic work of note by someone who might be called a Bermudian. Tucker, the reviewer notes, is inspired by his "natale solum" and thus able to write in a voice that others like Waller and Berkeley were not able to achieve in their aesthetic treatments of the islands. The *Critical Review*, too, distinguishes Tucker's identity and poetic voice as both determined largely by his birthplace: "The description of Bermuda which Mr. Tucker, who is a Bermudian, has given us, we have perused with much satisfaction."[36] *Town and Country*, as well, writes that "Mr. Tucker has here given us a poetical description of the island of Bermudas, of which he is a native; and, as a juvenile production, is not destitute of merit."[37] Together, these reviewers suggest that the poem is best understood from the perspective of Bermudian nativeness, both in the sense of the land producing identity and that the Bermudian himself is a native of somewhere other than Britain. These terms are not employed by the reviewers to suggest indigeneity in the way "native" might signal today, but to suggest that while

[35] 44, July 1774, 325.

[36] 38, July 1774, 75.

[37] 5, August 1774, 437.

Tucker himself and his poem might be recognizably British on the surface, he and his work are, in fact, distinctly something different.

Both Tucker and his reviewers take *The Bermudian* to be the aesthetic reflection of a process of Bermudian ethnogenesis that distinguishes its settlers from the colonial metropole. Tucker is, at times, interchangeably a Bermudian native who stands alone and an American colonial subject of the British empire. He is, in his own eyes and those of his reviewers, a poet whose content, form, and voice are determined by, and possibly limited by, his "natale solum." That is, these reviews suggest, and the poem itself appears to agree, Bermuda might be as much the poet as Tucker himself claims to be. Yet, Tucker himself cannot completely dissociate from the American or the British in his poem. Throughout, he identifies alternatively as British and American in addition to Bermudian. The poem pushes all three categories to their limits as it interrogates their significance to an eighteenth-century colonial subject who inhabits the aesthetic and geographic spaces between them. Can Tucker be American, Bermudian, and British simultaneously? Or, as the poem's geographic determinism might suggest, will he ultimately be Bermudian in opposition to or in service of something else?

The Bermudian finds the tensions between Tucker's colonial and national identities at the level of form as well. Tucker writes heroic couplets in iambic pentameter to invoke a British verse tradition often associated with the articulation and standardization of a unified sense of national character. He self-consciously imitates Oliver Goldsmith's pointed critique of economic and social inequities in late-eighteenth century Britain, *The Deserted Village*. Aesthetically and formally, then, *The Bermudian* is very much a "British" text informed by and tied to Britain's late-eighteenth century social milieu. The poem operates in the expected rhythms and timbres of a pretty well-established poetic tradition and it attempts to mirror one of the most popular texts

of the day to situate itself in contemporary thematic trends of British literature. Yet, as Tucker acknowledges in the dedication, he produced the poem under a specific set of historical and material conditions in America and the Bermudian identity his verse strives to articulate is decidedly something beyond a British character simply transported to a new hemisphere. The form of *The Bermudian* reflects what remains largely unsaid in the poem's content. The settler identity in Bermuda is irrevocably an unstable one, at once British, American, and Bermudian but never quite fully any single one of these things. As much as the poem's language might attempt to establish a "Race of Giant form" that stands alone in America, its form does not allow it to completely break away.

In its conclusion, *The Bermudian* focalizes on geographic and historical sentimentality and an abstracted nostalgia for a possible future the poet hopes to regain. As he stands once more in Bermuda, the "solemn Sound" of the departing words of the speaker's parents "still vibrates in my Ear"[38] so many years after he had left Bermuda. "Adieu, my Son!," he remembers them saying, "with Winds propitious go, / Obtain what Knowledge Travel can bestow."[39] Their goodbyes were prescriptive as they implored him to "Let Honour's Rules thy every Act controul, / Nor suffer Vice to bend thy stubborn Soul" and "Let all the Storms of Fortune be defy'd, / VIRTUE they Friend, and PROVIDENCE thy Guide."[40] Here, Tucker's poetic double inhabits simultaneous temporalities. He at once remembers the past and imagines a potential future, and he does it all in the present tense. He is sentimental for his Bermudian youth that he lost with his unwilling departure from the islands, and he anticipates how he might continue, by remembering

[38] Ibid., l. 310.

[39] Ibid., ll. 311-312.

[40] Ibid., ll. 315-316, 321-322.

his parents' words, living elsewhere as an exemplary and exiled Bermudian in South Carolina. As he is torn between places, he finds himself to also be torn between the past and the future. Tucker's Bermudian settler lives in anticipation of one day regaining the past he lost when he was forced to leave his home. But, as the poem suggests here at its conclusion, he will not arrive at such a past or such a future.

In this manner, *The Bermudian* concludes with a note of isolated geographic and historical vacancy. Bermuda, as it is rendered in this imagined return, is a mostly unpeopled place. No one else from the "Race of Giant form" that the poem spends so much space developing joins the speaker in his fantasy of exile's end. The poem's latter portions completely erase the presence of the enslaved and the colonized as well. Indigenous and enslaved peoples receive no presence after they are rendered as a possession to be obtained by the Bermudian earlier in the poem. The existential state of being a Bermudian - or one who performs as colonizer, settler, and enslaver always in service of an elsewhere while exiled from the archipelago - becomes, it would seem for Tucker in these final moments, a form of historical solipsism. To his speaker, the lone Bermudian is the only body that exists in space and time in the poem's final moments. Everyone else is spectral voice or completely erased. With its attempts to supersede the contradictions of being American, British, and Bermudian all at once, the poem finds itself constrained in what it can imagine at the levels of form and content too. Here, Bermuda's vacancy is both a productive condition, as it was in Berkeley's proposal, and the imaginative and conceptual limits of the aesthetics and logics of empire for Tucker.

To be clear, however, the imaginative limits the poem establishes with the isolation Tucker's speaker feels upon his return to a now vacated Bermuda do not undo his commitments to settler colonialism and empire. The poem, although it isolates Tucker away from the material

immediacies of the colonial project, does not suggest that it contains any internal contradictions, whether in content, form, or ideology, that reveal how Tucker's vision of empire might one day undo itself. The poem's aesthetic and historical solipsism is precisely its point. Tucker's form of colonial subjectivity, as performed by his Bermudian, can only think of itself, only recognize and celebrate its own humanity. The poem's final revelations suggest that there is nothing, no place, and no ways of being to imagine outside of an imperial context in Tucker's world. The poem ends with a prescriptive futurity - "Let all the Storms of Fortune be defy'd Virtue thy Friend, and PROVIDENCE thy Guide" - that echoes the historical telos of movement and conquest found in Berkeley's "On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America." Empire, the poem suggests with this push to futurity, is primarily movement and geographic conquest, and the Bermudian subject, as it has been constructed throughout the poem, stands at the center of that unfolding. The future the poem leaves to the reader, then, is one of the metaphysics of proliferation exclusively. This is a future of incessant movement, exile, conquest, and enslavement that produces the imperial ways of being that manifest in Tucker's poetics. They inhabit every line of the poem and leave only one sense of self available to Tucker's speaker in these final moments, that of a settler, like Berkeley's, tied to performing a Bermudian identity to sustain the colonial projects of North America.

Crèvecoeur's Bermudian Limits of America

Berkeley and Tucker are both invested in the transformative construction and performance of colonial subjectivities in their poems and proposal. To them, Bermuda offers a new history and a new set of futures for living, and rendering in aesthetic form, the historical exceptionalisms to which they strive. Their engagements with Bermuda produce the conditions for articulating their

senses of colonial belonging as aesthetic projects of what Berkeley calls the "poetical imagination." J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur takes a similar approach to America, though with a different form, in *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782). Crèvecoeur's text is a fictionalized epistolary travelogue of American colonial life, and across its twelve fictional letters written from the persona of Farmer James to a curious Englishman, Mr. F.B., *Letters from an American Farmer* works as an ethnographic, geographic, and horticultural tour of the British colonies in North America in the years preceding the outbreak of the rebellion. James's letters touch on everything from the social customs of these colonies, their climates, their geographies, their best botanical practices, slavery in the north and south, and life on the northern frontiers to explain life in North America to a curious English-speaking audience. Often, Jeff Osborne notes, critics find in *Letters from an American Farmer* a "Turneresque" historical telos of "the rustic farmer-author doing the hard Enlightenment work of linguistically cultivating, and, thus civilizing in textual form the American landscape."[41] In this section, I am interested in the brief Bermudian moment of *Letters from an American Farmer*, and later the more extended Bermudian sequence of *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain* (1784). In these passages, Crèvecoeur's narrators imagine new histories and ways of being both parallel and in contrast to Berkeley's and Tucker's works. To Crèvecoeur, as it was to Berkeley and Tucker, Bermuda represents the radical possibilities of living a new colonial history while simultaneously constraining such a future's likelihood.

In *Letters from an American Farmer*, Farmer James considers North American colonialism to be essentially completed. Any Englishman that comes to the continent, he decides, "must greatly rejoice that he lived at a time to see this fair country discovered and settled; he must feel a share of national pride when he views the chain of settlements which embellish these

[41] Jeff Osborne, "American Antipathy and the Cruelties of Citizenship in Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*," *Early American Literature* 42, no. 3 (2007), 529.

extended shores."[42] Across the North American settlement chain, James continues, that is "scattered along a coast of 1,500 miles extent and about 200 wide," the colonials themselves are a "people of cultivators scattered over an immense territory, communicating with each other by means of good roads and navigable rivers, united by the silken bands of mild government, all respecting the laws without dreading their power, because they are equitable, we are all animated with the spirit of an industry which is unfettered and unrestrained, because each person works for himself."[43] To Farmer James, the disparate, and at times remote, settlements of British North America are, in fact, a unified chain tied together by an infrastructural network that creates cultural bonds and enables the easy and benevolent governance of colonial subjects who are able to work for their own self-interests without fear of harming their fellow countrymen, a view of the thin strip of British settlements on the continent far different from Berkeley's several decades earlier. In short, Farmer James believes that the British settler system in North America is "the most perfect society now existing in the world."[44]

In just a few textual moments, Farmer James charts entire colonial and nascent national developmental processes. His version of the settlement of British North America, in this fictionalized timeline, moves quickly from discovery to early settlement and then infrastructural development and the "mild" forms of governance that produce semi-autonomous colonial subjects, he imagines, living in complete and total harmony over the course of a single settler's lifetime. These moments, Yael Ben-Zvi notes, construct American place as an "utopian" empire that Crèvecoeur represents as "an aesthetic, open structure where people interact spontaneously

[42] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer and Sketches of an Eighteenth-Century America* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1981), 66.

[43] Ibid., 70 and 67.

[44] Ibid., 67.

over welcoming, extensive spaces."[45] To Farmer James in particular, all of imperial possibility is contained in a life "lived at a time" when such utopian spaces appeared to exist. James, and his fellow colonials, have not inherited the historical transitions from discovery and settlement to new forms of inhabiting American space. They have lived it, and they too, James suggests in these moments, are something totally transformed. The America in Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* confronts several thresholds - geographic, historical, political, and ontological - and James becomes the literary representation of how to live in response to such potential transformative changes.

"What, then, is the American, this new man?,"[46] Farmer James asks. He defines Americans less by what they are presently and more by what they left behind in Europe before they became Americans. American settler identity, in other words, is the cultural performance of a revised mode of being produced by the material, natural, and social conditions of the continent lived in conscious opposition to what the settler once was. "*He* is an American," Farmer James italicizes, "who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds."[47] The American is the product of a procedural fantasy for Farmer James in which the transformation experienced out of the historical developments he maps across the continent are a universally lived constant.[48] "The Americans," Farmer James continues, "were once scattered all over Europe; here they are incorporated into one of the first systems of population which has

[45] Yael Ben-Zvi, "'Mazes of Empire': Space and Humanity in Crèvecoeur's *Letters*," *Early American Literature* 42, no. 1 (2007), 76.

[46] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, 69.

[47] Ibid., 70.

[48] Jeff Osborne, "American Antipathy and the Cruelties of Citizenship in Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*," 70.

ever appeared, and which will hereafter become distinct by the power of the different climates they inhabit."[49] Or, Farmer James intimates here, the "American" appeared on the historical stage quite suddenly as a unified collective out of the expedited processes of development natural to the North American environment. It is in this sense, then, that Farmer James suggests that the "American" is an entirely new race, or mode of being within the British Atlantic empire.

Not surprisingly, race in *Letters from an American Farmer* is malleable and transformable, with its most distinguishing factor being how it might be produced by a local climate. "Men are like plants," Farmer James continues, "the goodness and flavour of the fruit proceeds from the peculiar soil and exposition in which they grow. We are nothing but what we derive from the air we breathe, the climate we inhabit, the government we obey, the system of religion we profess, and the nature of our employment."[50] *Letters from an American Farmer* conceptualizes American settlers as transplanted outgrowths of their native Europe, now far more significant than they could have ever been had they stayed. "Every industrious European who transplants himself here," he notes, "may be compared to a sprout growing at the foot of a great tree; it enjoys and draws but a little portion of sap; wrench it from the parent roots, transplant it, and it will become a tree bearing fruit also."[51] *Letters* concludes that settlers are rendered into the best versions of themselves through the extraction of an essential "American" quality they had already possessed in Europe after having been "wrenched" from the roots of their European homes. None of this is all that novel for late-eighteenth century race thinking. Yet, Crèvecoeur distinguishes himself in *Letters from an American Farmer* by conceptualizing

[49] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, 70.

[50] Ibid., 71.

[51] Ibid., 80.

colonial and racial transformation as an agential, consciously pursued choices. Europeans do not become Americans passively, the text asserts. They instigate the process by choosing to "transplant" themselves to America.

Indeed, Crèvecoeur's sense of Americanness is as much about choice and action as it is about the racial productions of natural environments. The America of *Letters from an American Farmer* is a narrow strip of land on the fringes of a vast continent, and this 1,500 miles by 200 miles chain of settlements becomes the arena for testing the American as a viable way of living in a rapidly changing world. This is why the "American is a new man," Farmer James urges, "who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas and form new opinions. From involuntary idleness, servile dependence, penury, and useless labour, he has passed to the toils of a very different nature, rewarded by ample subsistence. This is an American."[52] On the North American Continent, "individuals of all nations" are universally "melted into a new race of men"[53] through a process that erases European cultural and national differences in a manner, much like Tucker's Bermudian, that at once severs previous identities while maintaining their core sensibilities as American. Katy L. Chiles argues that to Crèvecoeur "Americanness is a racial identity that arises organically from the ground that makes possible a national identity that would eventually come into being - but not a national identity constituted by an unnatural rupture from the mother country."[54] And this racialization of American settlers does not change their skin color, or produce any outward appearing variances, as it makes them "into a distinctive, improved, and still light-skinned American race."[55] The American race, as Crèvecoeur sees it

[52] Ibid., 70.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Katy L. Chiles, *Transformable Race*, 116.

[55] Ibid.

through his Farmer James avatar, is the best possible performance of Britishness, while still learning to live as something entirely new, within the particular conditions of the settlement chain on the North American continent.

To Farmer James, if Americans are the manifestation of an Anglo cultural ideal, then the inhabitants of Nantucket Island are the American ideal. Of the twelve letters in *Letters from an American Farmer,* five are dedicated to exploring the historical, colonial, and ethnographic idiosyncrasies of Nantucket. Farmer James dedicates nearly half of *Letters from an American Farmer* to this exploration in order to "trace [Nantucketers] throughout their progressive steps from their arrival here to this present hour" in hopes of rendering the island as American *par excellence*.[56] Farmer James pays particular attention to how Nantucket settlers "have raised themselves from the most humble beginnings, to the ease and the wealth they now possess; and to give you some idea of their customs, religion, manners, policy and mode of living."[57] Above all else, Nantucketers are ideal Americans, this sequence concludes, because they are always moving and enabling settlement elsewhere - "They yearly go to different parts of this continent, constantly engaged in sea affairs; as our internal riches increase, so does our external trade, which constantly requires more ships and more men: sometimes they have emigrated like bees, in regular and connected swarms."[58] The Nantucket sequence of *Letters from an American Farmer* treats the island as ground zero for the interplay among geography, empire, trade, and new ways of being in America. To Farmer James, the settlement is a historical and geographic

[56] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, 108.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid., 145.

microcosm for the futures the text hopes will be made possible when the Americans have spread "like bees, in regular and connected swarms," over the entire continent.

Letters from an American Farmer treats Nantucketers as the physical embodiments of the American mode of living Farmer James hopes will transform the commercial, political, and religious life of an expansive British Empire. Nantucketers, Farmer James concludes, have the potential to export his idealized form of Americanness to the rest of the settlement chain and eventually the entire globe. Also of great importance to Farmer James is the fact that Nantucket was not settled through violent conquest. "This happy settlement," he assures his interlocutor, "was not founded on intrusion, forcible entries, or blood, as so many others have been."[59] Rather, "it drew its origin from necessity on the one side and from good will on the other; and ever since, all has been a scene of uninterrupted harmony."[60] Nantucket exists in an idealized past and future in Farmer James's conceptualization of it. Its settlers enable Farmer James to register and develop his own fantasy of the colonial future while the settlement's past distinguishes it from the rest of America by disassociating it from the violence of settler colonialism. Nantucket, as Crèvecoeur writes it, is an atypical, unique settlement that reveals to someone like Farmer James what settler colonialism could and should be in the latter decades of the eighteenth century. Nantucket, in this regard, allows Farmer James to imagine a sanitized settler past and future in which "Neither political nor religious broils, neither disputes with the natives, nor any other contentions, have in the least agitated or disturbed its detached society."[61] Farmer James may

[59] Ibid., 108.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

concede that settler colonialism is a swarm across the continent, but he desperately hopes against any and all evidence to the contrary that it was and could always be a benevolent swarm.

Nantucket, as Farmer James comes to see it, is at once unique, a small island completely unto itself in its exceptionalism, and a representative of what everywhere in America could one day become. Like all manifestations of settler colonialism in America, the Nantucket settlement originated with the confrontation between European colonizers and Indigenous peoples. Yet, this "happy settlement," Farmer James stresses, is not one of violence and others do not need to be as well if they follow the island's example. The Nantucket of *Letters from an American Farmer*, in this sense, is pure fantasy, or a geographically specific place evacuated of all of its historical particulars to such an extent that it becomes "utopian in the sense of a perfectly happy society" and utopian "in the literal sense of no place."[62] Ultimately, because Nantucket is nowhere, everywhere, and a uniquely specific place all at the same time to Crèvecoeur, it "becomes a blueprint for mild, beneficial imperial sovereignty," and, like Tucker's Bermuda and Bermudian, Nantucket gets situated as a "fragment, a part of some greater whole from which it is in exile and to which it must be related."[63] Nantucket's idiosyncratic relation to the North American continent makes it specifically suited for the sequence's unraveling of not only how "national identity, masculinity, and environmental concerns are deeply intertwined"[64] but also how their origins in a small island that drives commerce and theories of colonial belonging suits these discourses for exportation to the rest of the colonial system.

[62] Yael Ben-Zvi, "'Mazes of Empire,'" 83.

[63] Ibid., 85 and 83.

[64] James E. Bishop, "A Feeling Farmer: Masculinity, Nationalism, and Nature in Crèvecoeur's *Letters*," *Early American Literature* 43, no. 2 (2008), 376.

Crèvecoeur's Nantucket sounds and feels quite a bit like the Bermudas of the seventeenth century and George Berkeley's and Nathaniel Tucker's works from earlier in the eighteenth century. *Letters from an American Farmer* has Farmer James briefly relate these two islands to one another. Nantucket, he recites, "lies in latitude 41* 10'; 60 miles from Cape Cod; 27 N. from Hyannis, or Barnstable, a town on the most contiguous part of the great peninsula; 21 miles W. by N. from Cape Poge, on the vineyard; 50 W. by N. from Woods Hole, on Elizabeth Island; 80 miles N. from Boston; 120 from Rhode Island."[65] James also notes that Nantucket, in his estimation, is "800 S. from Bermuda."[66] James sketches Nantucket's proximity to the North American continent to orient a reader likely familiar with Massachusetts, but he also defines Nantucket against Bermuda. Though James's geography is way off, Nantucket is not 800 miles from Bermuda, the error becomes a subversive moment in the text. Bermuda haunts the fringes of James's colonial fantasy of Nantucket's past and future. Bermuda is the edge of the empire, or the very limits towards which Nantucket, on the brink of North America, looks. To James, Nantucket represents the upper potential of the British settlement project in North America, yet he does not concern himself with the island's proximity to the London metropole, or other imperial economic hubs like Jamaica, but with the Bermudian point of entry to North America and the West Indies.

More distinctly, this sequence's erroneous reference to Bermuda signals a historical and geographic shift within the imagined futures of British America for Crèvecoeur. In a textual sleight-of-hand that undermines Bermuda's once unassailable imperial privilege as the point of entry into the colonial system, the moment removes Bermuda from its historical and geographic

[65] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, 110.

[66] Ibid.

perch. Farmer James replaces Bermuda with the similar, but more North American adjacent, Nantucket. The entire purpose of the Nantucket sequence is to position the island's inhabitants as the embodiment of a self-perceived exceptionalism oriented westward to the North American continent. Nantucket, in James's imagining of its importance, is the great capitalist counterweight of unlimited futurity to the economic and moral decay of Europe and the imperial fringes: "Here...human industry has acquired a boundless field to exert itself in - a field which will not be fully cultivated in many ages!"[67] These two small islands, traditionally, produce similar colonial futurities and from both settler colonialism looks west from the American archipelago first before it attempts to justify the conquest of North America as a natural process. Although mostly subtext of a fleeting reference, the Nantucket sequence makes Bermuda provincial in a rhetorical and historical shift that attaches the futures of empire and settler colonialism, as Crèvecoeur sees them in *Letters from an American Farmer*, to the immediate proximity of the continent. Bermuda no longer holds the future in this imagining but now marks the boundaries of the imperial fringe.

The Bermudian error is much more than a simple inaccuracy that reveals gaps in Farmer James's geographic knowledge. It serves, instead, an analeptic function through which James, and Crèvecoeur by proxy, reinvents American settlement not as it happened but as he hopes it could have happened.[68] This brief Bermuda-Nantucket interplay sets up an alternative settler mythology that imagines and re-invents colonialism as peaceful, generative, and ethically transformative. Pushing Bermuda to the fringe is more about translating a colonial ethos Crèvecoeur endorses within the text than it is about reporting things as they are and did happen.

[67] Ibid., 164.

[68] Benjamin Hoffmann, *Posthumous America*, 6.

Letters from an American Farmer appears quite invested in the Berkeley-ian colonialism of "Westward the course of Empire takes its way." The text agrees that colonial proliferation begins out of the isolated space of an island, but Bermuda, to Farmer James, is too far away - culturally, historically, and aesthetically - to produce and sustains the futures he desires. Crèvecoeur's project focuses on translating this Berkeley ethos, the historical exceptionalism of a small island, and its discourses of new ways of being and belonging to a distinctly North American context, albeit with the narrative refrains developed in, through, and in relation to Bermuda. Ultimately, Crèvecoeur's America in *Letters from an American Farmer*, Hoffmann argues, "does not designate a country located on the other side of the Atlantic; it refers to an imaginary space the author has recreated in the light of his nostalgia and in which he can only travel by means of memory and writing."[69]

Crèvecoeur takes a similar approach to America and Bermuda in *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain* (1784). Although it was marketed, and today is often still treated as such, as a translation of *Letters from an American Farmer*, this French version reads as an almost entirely different book. Crèvecoeur drops the Farmer James persona entirely. The letters are now addressed to a New York businessman instead of the Englishman Mr. F.B., and Crèvecoeur also expands the geographic reach of the narrative to include the West Indies and Bermuda.[70] Similarly, though, both the English and French narratives take the imperial periphery to be a moral incubator for the settler subjectivities they hope will occupy American futures. The Bermudian fringe leads the French narrator to long for the seemingly lost potential of the

[69] Ibid., 36.

[70] For an extensive treatment of the differences between the English and French versions, see Mary Helen McMurran, "Crèvecoeur's Trans-Atlantic Bilingualism," *Early American Studies* 13, no. 1 (2015), 189-208. For more on the relation between *Lettres d'un cultivateur americain* and the French socio-political conditions of the time, see Christopher Iannini, "'The Itinerant Man': Crèvecoeur's Caribbean, Raynal's Revolution, and the Fate of Atlantic Cosmopolitanism," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2004), 201-234.

unrealized futures of that settlement's past. He does so by addressing the legacy of how America was and might still be imagined through Bermuda. What would have been the impact of Berkeley's university, the narrator asks, on settlements across the hemisphere? Where does the future lie? With the degradations of violence and enslavement that produce great wealth or the seemingly pristine cosmopolitanism of a Bermuda?

The short Bermudian section of *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain*, just over four pages of the narrative, centers on the potential futures lost with the dissolution of Berkeley's plan to build his university in Bermuda. Upon arriving in Bermuda after some time in Jamaica, the narrator remarks on the contrast between the two colonies: "Quel contraste! quelle immense différence! quelle heureuse comparison ne fis-je pas entre la riche & superbe Jamaïque, & ce foible asyle de la pauvreté, de la simplicité & de la santé! J'oubliai bientôt, au milieu de cette tranquille solitude, les scénes désagréables de la première de ces Isles; leurs impressions firent place aux réflexions les plus douces & les plus intéressantes."[71] Like "le bon Evêque Berkeley," who had also been "frappé du chance inexpressible de ces traits séduisans," the narrator becomes enamored with Bermuda's idyllic veneer before reflecting on Berkeley's "project philosophique & humain" to build a university "oú la jeunesse du Continent viendroit s'instruire."[72] Yet, Crèvecoeur's *cultivateur* does not mention Berkeley's plans for the enslaved and Indigenous peoples of America. While Berkeley relied upon a stark Indigenous-settler binary to justify the

[71] "What contrast! What vast difference! What favorable comparison did I not make between the rich and superb Jamaica and this simple sanctuary of poverty, of simplicity, and of health! I quickly forgot, in the midst of this tranquil solitude, the unpleasant scenes from the first of these Isles; their impressions gave way to more pleasant and interesting reflections" (my translation), *Lettres d'un cultivateur* (Paris: Chez Cuchet, 1787), 235. No complete English translation of the French edition is available. However, see Louis S. Friedland's "Lettres d'un Cultivateur Américain," *The Bermuda Historical Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (1946), 201-203 for a previous translation. Unless noted otherwise, all translations of the French edition are mine.

[72] "the good Bishop Berkeley," "struck by the inexpressible charm of these seductive traits," "philosophic and humane project," "where the youth of the continent would come to educate themselves," Ibid.

function of his university, Crèvecoeur's narrator abstracts the university's potential students into simply the "youth of the Continent" with the agency and freedom of mobility to come to Bermuda under their own accord. *Lettres* is beset with worries about the potential kinship lost to an emerging cosmopolitan settler class and performs the displacement of Indigenous cultural practices that Berkeley had advocated as essentially already completed while obscuring the previous proposal's particulars.

The narrator ponders further what was lost with the university's failure: "Sur quelle partie du globe notre jeunesse pourroit-elle trouver un asyle plus propre à l'étude, aux sciences & à la santé; un Séminaire où les moeurs & l'heureuse innocence seroient conservées plus pures? Quel dommage que des difficultés insurmountables se soient opposées à l'exécution d'un plan dicté par la Religion & par l'amour du genre-humain!"[73] The French narrator recasts Bermuda as a colony only hospitable to the white settlers of America. The "youth" he worries about are exclusively the Europeans who have lost their sense of religion in America. The narrator's rhetorical displacement of Indigeneity from Bermuda refuses to even acknowledge the ontological transformation Berkeley's plan would have forced upon the Indigenous peoples of the hemisphere. In taking this approach, the narrator conceptualizes Bermuda as a serene sanitorium unencumbered by the moral quandaries of enslavement, kidnapping, and violence. Berkeley's proposal and Crèvecoeur's fiction are both narratives of fantasy centered on the futures that Bermuda appeared to have once promised. Though they write decades apart and in different forms, Berkeley and Crèvecoeur confront the past in their texts to speculate upon

[73] "On what part of the globe could our youth find a refuge more proper for studying, for the sciences and health; a Seminary where virtue and happy innocence would be kept pure? What a shame that insurmountable difficulties had prevented the execution of a plan dictated by Religion and the love of humanity!," Ibid., 237.

American cultural practices that could have - and to them should have - been institutionalized at the Bermudian center of the hemisphere.

The French narrator, much like Farmer James, finds himself triangulating Bermudian futures against another island, this time Jamaica, and the North American continent. Jamaica might be "rich and superb," but it is still a decadent and brutal place according to the narrator, one that must make many moral compromises with slavery for its economic success. While Bermuda may be a "simple sanctuary of poverty," the narrator finds it to be far more in line with his sense of morality. He plays down the severity of Bermuda's own reliance on an economy of enslavement, and with the cruelties of the institution he at times despises throughout his letters obscured by Bermuda's serene veneer, he pauses and for the first time since he has left North America finds himself giving way to "more pleasant and interesting reflections." Bermuda's climate, he concludes, nurtures the intellects and morals of the Europeans who settle there, making it the ideal center of an inter-imperial cultural system. These tranquil reflections, however, give way to lamentations for what a Bermudian-centered America might have been. Bermuda, he concludes, can no longer compete with the Jamaicas and North Americas of the eighteenth century's new histories. For him, the material reality of Bermuda within the specific context of the late eighteenth-century Atlantic world cannot match his vision of a quiet, vacant Bermuda that might exist outside the contingencies of history.

All semblances of the narrator's longed-for Bermudian America disintegrate quite quickly in *Lettres*. His reflections on the archipelago end with the narrator considering "Quell importante & utile leçon un séjour sur cette Isle ne donneroit-il pas à ces riches & volupteux enfans de la terre, qui, égarés au milieu de leurs plaisirs, repoussés par la satiété, mènent une vie apathique & passive au milieu de leurs palais & de leurs richesses? Ici, tout leur or acquerroit

une heureuse inutilité; ici, ils trouveroient la santé dans la tempérance, la réforme de leurs moeurs dans l'example général; ils y apprendroient enfin la bon-sens de la vie, supérieur à tout l'esprit académique."[74] The narrator looks longingly to what could still be in Bermuda, but his "would" will never become the present or past tense, and he accepts that he now "[déserait] cependant retourner sur un Continent plus étendu & plus assuré, qui ne pût périr que par une explosion générale du globe."[75] "Would," in this sense, simultaneously forecloses and suspends historical possibility. It would happen, but it will not. The narrator's ability to articulate this conditional sense, however, is contingent upon an idealized Bermuda that is unsustainable within the material realities of its historical moment. The future that he believes would prove inevitable is only imaginable by erasing the violence against the enslaved and Indigenous peoples of America from his colonial fantasy of a cosmopolitan cultural hub on Bermudian shores. When Bermuda can no longer support that fiction, or when his desired Bermudian America looks about as likely as the complete destruction of the earth, the narrator transfers his imperial longing to the North American continent out of historical and geographic necessity. As with *Letters from an American Farmer*, *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain* concludes by ceding the new cultural center of settler colonialism and historical potential in the hemisphere to North America.

The English and French editions present two Americas, two Bermudas, and two templates for colonial possibility bifurcated along linguistic lines. Very little gets lost in translation, however, as the logics of colonial place-making proliferate in the folds and gaps of

[74] "What an important & useful lesson would a stay on this island not give to those wealthy & sensuous children of the world, who, lost amid their pleasure, repulsed by gratification, lead an apathetic and passive life amid their palaces and riches? Here, all their gold would acquire a happy uselessness; here, they would find health in temperance, the reform of their lifestyles with the general example; they would finally learn the common sense of life, superior to all academic intellect," Ibid., 239.

[75] "Wanted however to return to a continent more extensive and assured that could only perish by the complete destruction of the earth," Ibid., 240.

both narratives, even in the silences, omissions, and errors of translating imperial longing between geographies and languages. In the English edition, Bermuda gives way to Nantucket as the geographic point of entry for imperial expansion. In the French edition, a diminishing Bermuda can only briefly house the narrator's longings for a burgeoning cosmopolitanism in America at the end of the eighteenth century. Even in their differences, these two versions of what is nominally the same story demonstrate together how the writing of place and space in Bermuda was intimately linked to how America's future was conceived. As with the Norwood, Bermuda's significance comes to rest with what its material specificity portends for elsewhere—Quaker Nantucket or a cosmopolitan settler class around the hemisphere. The French edition ends as a colonial fantasy bogged down by the residues of unrealized potential. Even in failure, however, Bermuda's lost possibilities point to what might be next for the North American continent. This alternative conception was made possible, in part, by the imaginative possibilities opened by Bermuda's discovery, in Norwood's sense, by English settlers in the seventeenth century. The history of settlerism and its discourses in America, then, is not just the history of what happened. Also integral to the stories of settlerism's proliferation across geographies are the histories of possibility and negotiation for what nearly was.

For Berkeley, Tucker, and Crèvecoeur, Bermuda was center stage for their literary performances of what the American future was and might still be. Like their predecessors in the seventeenth century, they believed that the archipelago lent itself to imagining, articulating, and enforcing the parameters of settler, Indigenous, and enslaved cultural practices. In their ideal hemisphere, they claimed across proposals, poetry, and prose, Bermuda would be the center of social control where the cultural practices of settler colonialism would at last be institutionalized and standardized. Yet, the futures that all three attempted to write into existence were quite

precarious in the eighteenth century. Together, Berkeley's utopian vision of a Bermudian America, Tucker's performance of an American produced sense of Bermudian exceptionalism in verse, and Crèvecoeur's final "would" in the Bermudian section of *Lettres* blur the lines of what did happen and what did not. Bermuda may not have become a cultural hub for an emerging cosmopolitan class, but it was treated and performed as such throughout the eighteenth century. It was a site of sustained imaginative longing for the futures of settlerism, and though it may not have become the center desired by Berkeley, Tucker, and Crèvecoeur, it was a key intermediary for the diffusion of late-eighteenth century settler discourses throughout America. The imagined results of Berkeley's university were debated for decades and implemented in other institutions, Tucker articulated a form of supposed American uniqueness that was discussed at length in the British literary press, and Crèvecoeur's multilingual writings transferred similar Bermudian discourses and visions of settler colonialism to North American geographies. While the Bermudian futures all three imagined remained largely abstractions, they had substantial and persistent impacts on the aesthetics, institutions, and cultural practices of settler colonialism in eighteenth-century America.

Bermuda's power rested with what it was able to transfer to elsewhere in America. Ultimately, for each of these writers that was largely a revised imagining of the aesthetics and ways of living colonial subjectivities across the eighteenth century, and such speculations were made possible through Bermuda. For each, Bermuda was the beginning of their projects but it was not necessarily the sole end, and these expansive imaginings of the archipelago's relation to the rest of the hemisphere allowed the easy transference of these aesthetics and discourses to other forms and geographies. Neither Berkeley nor Crèvecoeur ever stepped foot in Bermuda. For them, it was an idealized, abstracted space that existed in theory but not in their actual

practices of everyday life. Bermuda, in this sense, was an immaterial utopian space written second-hand that enabled them to project the futures they desired to the rest of America. Tucker wrote *The Bermudian* in South Carolina, well after he had left his childhood home. To him, Bermuda was a site of nostalgic longing that created a gravitational pull to home that could never be completed. For all three, Bermuda was the enabling factor for elsewhere in America, a small archipelago that was possibly the seed of the hemisphere's futures. These narratives of what nearly was, in this sense, were very easily employed to justify what was actually happening. It was Bermuda, in these imaginings, that enabled North America to become "a continent more extensive and assured that could only perish by the complete destruction of the earth."

Epilogue
Pauline Hopkins at Bermuda's End

The narrator of Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces* observes that the islands of Bermuda possess "A temperate climate, limpid rivers, the balmy fragrance and freshness of the air, no winter – nature changing only in the tints of its foliage" that "have contributed to its renown as a health-giving region."[1] In this novel, the archipelago emerges as a sanitorium and serene paradise suited to healing the ailing bodies of Americans. "Shakespeare's magic island of Prospero and Miranda" provides to any who travel there, the narrator continues in verse, "The spot of earth uncurst, /To show how all things were created first."[2] The novel stresses that Bermuda is an Eden indeed suspended in an idyllic state before the fall. A reader might assume these lines quoted by the narrator come from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, thus giving the novel's assertions of a Bermudian paradise some aesthetic and historical veracity. However, they are from Edward Waller's "The Battle of the Summer Islands" (1645), a mock epic derided by critics in its own time and largely forgotten by the twentieth century. Hopkins's simultaneous referencing of Waller and Shakespeare exchanges the canonical for the unnoteworthy, the Bard for a poet few reading *Contending Forces* would have cared about. These subtle references signal that all might not be as it seems at the level of rhetoric in the Bermuda of *Contending Forces*, and perhaps Bermuda may be more allotopia than utopia.[3]

[1] Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South* (New York: Oxford UP, 1988), 21.

[2] Ibid., 21-22.

[3] Cherene Sherrard-Johnson, "Insubordinate Islands and Coastal Chaos, Pauline Hopkins's Literary Land/Seascapes," Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Anne Stephens, eds. *Archipelagic American Studies: Decontinentalizing the Study of American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2017), 237.

The collision of historical Bermuda and mythological Bermuda, as these two are entangled in the material and literary histories of colonialism and slavery in America, constitutes the foundation of Hopkins's political imaginary in *Contending Forces*. The novel tells the story of the Smiths, a prominent African American family in South Boston, and their involvement in an emerging civil rights movement at the end of the nineteenth century. As many critics have pointed out, *Contending Forces* aspires to a literary blueprint for new forms of political solidarity in response to the historical and material conditions of the post-Reconstruction nadir in the United States. As concerned with the United States as *Contending Forces* is, a fifth of the novel takes place in eighteenth-century Bermuda, and the resolution of its nineteenth-century Boston plot hinges on the Smith's recovery of their family lineage in Bermuda. The archipelago, as it was for nearly three hundred years before Hopkins composed *Contending Forces*, irrupts through the narrative as both the core of hemispheric history and the material gateway to revitalized futurities, in this a case a world responsive to the horrors of racial violence.

In this epilogue, I turn to Hopkins's *Contending Forces* to read against the narratives produced by the authors I engaged in the first three chapters. As I have established already, Anglo-American writers produced literary engagements with Bermuda that imagined colonial futurities of English suzerainty in the hemisphere. Bermudian aesthetics were then weaponized by colonizers on the ground to justify their settlement projects of displacement and dispossession, thus mobilizing representations of Bermuda as the engines of nascent forms of racial capitalism. Hopkins, I contend here, establishes Bermuda as the narrative and historical crux of *Contending Forces* to confront the colonial myths that produced the material conditions of late-nineteenth-century racial violence in the US in the literary geography of their origins. Hopkins returns to the site of the founding myths of American colonialism to challenge them for

what they are, fictions that must be recognized as such if we are to build better futures. *Contending Forces,* in this manner, mobilizes the aesthetic history of Bermuda into a force for justice and offers one model of how we might exchange the supposed truth-making of colonizing texts for their inherent fictionality to unsettle the hold they have on our pasts, presents, and futures.

In recent years, critics have established how *Contending Forces* engages the generic and formal conventions of popular fiction to imagine the rectification of the insidious histories of racial violence and slavery in the United States. The novel in many ways is concerned with disrupting "the belief that one's biological race heritage determines one's socio-legal designation."[4] *Contending Forces*, scholars have argued, pairs romance with an aesthetic engagement with juridical processes and the social spaces of political activism in Boston to offer an "extraordinary, inclusive vision of twentieth-century possibility"[5] that "optimistically hopes that the shared history of white and black Americans has secured African Americans a place in America's national family."[6] Many agree that *Contending Forces* creates a template for political action in hopes of persuading readers that the most effective means of resisting racial terrorism in the United States is through "aggressive African American agitation" for inclusion in the structures of liberal democracy through community organizing efforts in localized neighborhoods such as South Boston.[7] Or, as Judith Madera has recently argued, *Contending*

[4] Julie Cary Nerad, "'So Strangely Interwoven': The Property of Inheritance, Race, and Sexual Morality in Pauline E. Hopkins's *Contending Forces*," *African American Review* 35, no. 3 (2001), 362.

[5] Laura H. Korobkin, "Imagining State and Federal Law in Pauline E. Hopkins's *Contending Forces*," *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers* 28, no. 1 (2011), 18-19.

[6] Lisa Marcus, "'Of One Blood': Reimagining American Genealogy in Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces*," Jeanne Reesman and Jeanne Campbell, eds. *Speaking the Other Self: American Women Writers* (Athens, GA: U of Georgia P, 1997), 131.

[7] Thomas Cassidy, "Contending Contexts: Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces*," *African American Review* 32, no. 4 (1998), 661.

Forces "proposes a corrective model of local life" in the United States that shapes its primary setting into a new geography of political solidarity and action suited to meet the demands of the coming twentieth century.[8] Hopkins weaves her narrative in and out of Boston to establish the colonial origins of the US nadir and point the way to how the nation's governance and economic sociality can be agitated to produce better futures in the wake of disentangling from colonial mythmaking.

The Bermudian concerns of *Contending Forces* are informed by Hopkins's broad internationalist scope in her fiction and journalism. Across her entire corpus, Hopkins takes a global perspective to imagine international solidarity in political movements against injustice, an approach that cost her professionally. Booker T. Washington fired Hopkins as the editor of *Colored American Magazine* because of her challenges to "the capitalist underpinnings of U.S. nationalism" and for her insistence on "a more collectivist model of international cooperation" among the globe's disenfranchised people.[9] Her journalism emphasizes that people of color and the working classes "are the majority of the world's population and encourages African Americans to 'take a stand with the vast human tide and sink or swim…with the great majority' when the 'great labor contest' inevitably comes about."[10] In *Contending Forces* (1900), *Winona* (1902), and *Of One Blood* (1902), Hopkins places her narratives in transnational and global scopes, and, in these novels, the US is but one potential insurgent geography in the international struggle against Euro-American colonialism, slavery, and racial capitalism. Portions of her novels take place in the US, but they are not constrained by an exclusive attachment to its

[8] Judith Madera, *Black Atlas: Geography and Flow in Nineteenth-Century African American Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2015), 189 and 158.

[9] Colleen C. O'Brien, "'Blacks in all Quarters of the Globe': Anti-Imperialism, Insurgent Cosmopolitanism, and International Labor in Pauline Hopkins's Literary Journalism," *American Quarterly* 61, no.2 (2009), 245-246.

[10] Ibid., 247.

domestic borders. Hopkins's aesthetic catalog rejects exclusively nationalist political frameworks because, as Yu-Fang Cho notes, she believes they "could not adequately contest black disenfranchisement" in the US or anywhere else.[11] Pauline Hopkins – journalist, novelist, and political activist – looks, in this way, interested in the political futures of the US only insofar as such futures are a metric of the commitment of disenfranchised peoples the world over to an internationalist movement for justice and equity.

Bermuda rests at the very aesthetic, formal, and material center of the American history Hopkins engages to imagine her forms of international political solidarity. Cherene Sherrard-Johnson argues that Bermuda contained in *Contending Forces* links the colonial histories of the US and the UK together in a shared third space to establish how liberal abolitionism's contradictions failed to stem racial terrorism in the late nineteenth century, and this is a global problem.[12] The archipelago, Sherrard-Johnson asserts, "serves as a synecdoche for a utopic nation" in the novel's prologue, or an inversion of the contemporary US, that Hopkins then spends the remainder of the narrative undermining in her revisionist fiction of the possible political futures of the twentieth century.[13] The way *Contending Forces* tells its story of the global implications of local concerns rejects the colonial-national myths of historical progress represented by these polities, as Gerald Horne describes such legends, that have long obfuscated the driving forces of settler history in the Atlantic: slavery, white supremacy, and capitalism.[14]

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[11] Yu-Fang Cho, "Cultural Nationalism, Orientalism, Imperial Ambivalence: *The Colored American Magazine* and Pauline Hopkins," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 3, no.2 (2011).

[12] Cherene Sherrard-Johnson, "Insubordinate Islands and Coastal Chaos," 235.

[13] Ibid., 234 and 253.

[14] Gerald Horne, *The Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, and Capitalism in Seventeenth-Century North America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2018), 9.

As Hopkins demonstrates in her art, to re-historicize is to demystify.[15] *Contending Forces* attaches itself to the Bermudian myth to envision revitalized forms of insurrectionist geographies in which internationalist politics can be developed beyond the constraints of the national or the local. State-based frameworks of cultural analysis, Cedric J. Robinson argues, are "more a convenient construct than the historical, racial, cultural, and linguistic entity that the term 'nation' signifies,"[16] and Bermuda offers the novel a release from the limits of the nation as a polity, a unit of historical analysis, and site of cultural solidarity. *Contending Forces* unreads the myth of the Bermudian paradise to divorce that colonialist discourse from the political futures it made possible in Anglo-American empire-building. Hopkins writes against colonizers like Richard Norwood, John Winthrop, and J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur. Whereas to them Bermuda was the aesthetic foundation of their colonizing practices, to Hopkins Bermuda begins the literary undoing of their legacies. In *Contending Forces*, Hopkins briefly reproduces the conventions of the colonialist myth to undercut them and imagine better worlds beyond the material realities built through them in the literary histories of Britain and North America.

A Bermuda Departure

Contending Forces begins in Bermuda in the late eighteenth century. Charles Montfort, enslaver and plantation owner, learns that slavery will be abolished in the British empire. He forcefully moves his family and the people he enslaves to North Carolina, where he plans to continue enriching himself before retiring as a wealthy man in England. There, Montfort signals the threat

[15] Paul Giles, "Antipodean American Literature: Franklin, Twain, and the Sphere of Subalternity," *American Literary History* 21, no.1/2 (2006), 24.

[16] Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC P, 1983), 24.

of abolition and rumors circulate about his wife, Grace, and her potential Blackness. The Newbern Public Safety Committee murders Charles Montfort, destroys his property, and enslaves his sons, Charles Jr. and Jesse. Grace drowns herself before she can be forced into sexual slavery. The prologue ends with Charles Jr. sold to a British mineralogist who brings him to Bermuda to manumit him and with Jesse escaping north after being sent to Boston on an errand, where he is given sanctuary by the Whitfield family, free African Americans living in Exeter, New Hampshire.

The novel then shifts to the end of the nineteenth century, where it follows the Smith family, prominent members of South Boston's African American community, as they manage a boarding house and play significant roles in a cohering civil rights movement. Things begin with Dora Smith, the family's daughter, in a romantic relationship with John Langley, a young lawyer with ambitions to become the City Solicitor of the American Colored League. The family's son, Will Smith, falls in love with Sappho Clark, a mysterious tenant, soon after her arrival from New Orleans. John Langley learns that Sappho Clark was raped and impregnated by Monsieur Beaubean, a Louisiana enslaver, and that her name is actually Mabelle Beaubean, and Alphonse, the young boy on the novel's periphery to whom she has shown great affection, is her son. John Langley threatens to reveal Sappho's past unless she has an affair with him. She refuses and flees to New Orleans. Dora and Will learn of John Langley's machinations. Dora ends her relationship with Langley and marries another man. Will enters Harvard College and begins to gain notoriety in Boston as a political activist. Will meets Charles Montfort-Withington, a British aristocrat, and learns that Ma Smith is the daughter of Jesse Montfort, Charles Montfort's youngest son. To verify that Ma Smith is Jesse Montfort's last living heir, Will and Withington travel to Bermuda to find material evidence in support of their claims. When they return, Ma Smith successfully

sues the United States for her inheritance and the Supreme Court awards the family $150,000. The novel ends with a reunited Smith family – Ma Smith, Dora and her new husband, and Will and Sappho ("now Will's wife") – departing the US for England to visit Withington and "work together to bring joy to hearts crushed by despair."[17]

These plot points occur within an overarching historical discourse of Bermuda's significance to the Americas and the British empire. When Bermuda enters *Contending Forces*, the discourse is of a diminishing myth of Bermudian exceptionalism now being subsumed by the increasingly distant poles of a new US republic staking its economic future on the expansion and preservation of slavery and a United Kingdom moving towards abolition. "Once Bermuda was second only to Virginia in its importance as a British colony," the narrative informs, and "once it held the carrying trade of the New World; once was known as the 'Gibraltar of the Atlantic'; although its history has been that of a simple and peaceful people. Its importance to the mother country as a military and naval station has drawn the paternal bonds of interest closer as the years have flown by."[18] At the end of the nineteenth century, however, things have changed and "Today at the beginning of the new century, Bermuda presents itself, outside of its importance as a military station for a great power, as a vast sanitorium for the benefit of invalids."[19] Bermuda enter *Contending Forces* with the momentum of historical transition, as the center of Atlantic commerce giving way to a stopping point for military powers and ill Americans, and such change implicitly undermines the Bermudian myths the novel engages.

[17] Hopkins, *Contending Forces*, 401.

[18] Ibid., 21.

[19] Ibid.

The literary Bermuda of *Contending Forces* rests somewhere between Shakespeare and Waller. Bermuda, the novel picks up in these early pages, was once the cultural and literary epicenter of Anglo-American settler colonial projects across the hemisphere in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This small archipelago, just as it imagined by the authors I engage in the first three chapters, was a site crucial to the development of colonial futures in America according to *Contending Forces*. This supposedly charmed history "of a simple and peaceful people" reflects the long Anglo-American tradition of engaging Bermuda aesthetically to fabricate their claims to bodily, historical, and theological exceptionalisms. The novel invokes this tradition to briefly indulge the idea that Bermudian history is indeed the source of national extraordinariness in North America and Britain. As Daniel Hack argues, however, Hopkins has a habit of not being "true" to her sources – historical and literary – and her novels often produce reference and allusion to destabilize plot and historical context.[20] When *Contending Forces* invokes *The Tempest*, perhaps the most recognizable text of the Bermudian myth, only to then undercut it with an obscure Waller reference, the novel ironizes the legacies it cites throughout the prologue. Under the drastic material changes of the nineteenth century, the Bermudian center of colonial mythmaking can no longer hold, the novel suggests, and that historical narrative becomes more confused with each subsequent utterance under the conditions of a history that no longer supports it.

The historical citations and literary allusions of *Contending Forces* produce an overdetermined tone that, on the surface, possibly undermines Hopkins's stated goals for writing this novel. As an aesthetic form, the novel, Hopkins states in the preface, is the greatest "record of growth and development from generation to generation," and the historical perspective of her

[20] Daniel Hack, "Contending with Tennyson: Pauline Hopkins and the Victorian Presence in African American Literature," *American Literary History* 28, no.3 (2016), 494.

fiction dwells "upon the history of the past" to imagine a solution to the violent legacies of colonialism and slavery.[21] The novel begins, though, in an archipelago where supposedly, the narrator insists, "slavery never reached its lowest depths" and "a desire for England's honor and greatness had become a passion with its inhabitants, and restrained the planters from committing the ferocious acts of brutality so commonly practiced by the Spaniards."[22] As constructed by Hopkins, the narrator's colonialist perspective represents the rhetorical manifestation of the historical excesses produced by the colonial mythmaking of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The narrator, as the voice of colonialist history, speaks as it does because that is all it can do in the wake of four hundred years of the Bermudian myth. *Contending Forces* confronts the legacies of representations of Bermuda as much as it confronts material history, and it produces the timbres of a narrator we might expect more from Berkeley or Crèvecoeur to tug at the conventions that have long prevented the novel form from becoming a viable site of imagining better futures of international solidarity and justice. Right down to the level of how information is mediated in a novel, then, these moments that introduce Bermuda to the reader are indicative of the "history of the past" the novel feels obligated to address.

Charles Montfort becomes a literary manifestation of the so-called benign colonizers and enslavers the narrator insists are central to Bermuda's past. He exports "tobacco, sugar, coffee, onions, and other products so easily grown in that salubrious climate, from which he received large returns," and he enslaves seven hundred people.[23] To the narrator, Montfort is "neither a cruel man, nor an avaricious one," and he does not hold any racial animosity. In fact, the narrator

[21] Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces,* 13-14.

[22] Ibid., 22.

[23] Ibid.

insists, “there might have been a strain of African blood polluting the fair stream of Montfort’s vitality, or even his wife’s, which fact would not have caused him one instant’s uneasiness.”[24] Though slavery cannot be defended, the narrator excuses Montfort with the suggestion that he has “simply lost sight of the individual right or wrong of the matter” and “he felt that by owning slaves he did no man a wrong since it was the common practice of those all about him, and he had been accustomed to this peculiar institution all his life.”[25] In these moments, the boundaries between narrator and Montfort blur with each hyperbolic assurance of Montfort’s innate goodness while he holds hundreds of human beings in captivity. The narrative perspective of *Contending Forces* amplifies the logical contradictions of Montfort’s position through the overdetermined sincerity of its proclamations that Montfort is a man capable of maintaining any semblance of moral righteousness while he profits from slavery. If the novel form is a “record of growth and development from generation to generation,” then the eighteenth-century narrator, as constructed by Hopkins, demonstrates just how much enslavers and colonizers were constrained by the myths that gave meaning to their material lives.

The narrator and Montfort are entangled together as the aesthetic utterance of the colonial desire to supersede history, to become history itself. The two give each other life in the novel – narrator as speaker of history, Montfort as its lived embodiment – in an ironic production of the settler insistence on determining the contours of historical progress. It is Bermuda, then, that becomes the geographic foundation for the historical ascension the narrator and Montfort imagine to be possible. Montfort anxiously awaits the arrival of the newest “speeches of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Burke and others, together with the general trend of public sentiment as expressed through

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

the medium of the British press," and he does accept that abolition is an inevitability he cannot avoid forever.[26] Bermuda's distance from England and relative isolation in the Atlantic, however, afford Montfort a certain degree of leeway, he supposes, to choose how, when, and where he will live in accordance with abolition's inevitability. He attempts to claim history, with the narrator's blessing, as his own directive. As abolition gets closer to Bermuda, "uneasiness now took the place of his former security; thought would obtrude itself upon him, and in the quiet hours of the night this man fought out the battle which conscience waged within him, and right prevailed to the extent of his deciding that he would free his slaves."[27] Right prevails, but not immediately. As a member of the Bermudian planter class, Montfort has the luxuries of time and mobility, and so he decides to leave for North Carolina and keep seven hundred people enslaved for another twenty-five years so he might enrich himself.

The fragile colonial myths of historical exceptionalism and benign conquest contained in the prologue begin to crumble, however, once the narrative departs for North Carolina. Colonizing enslavers like Montfort, the story assures, will one day follows "that important step forward in the march of progress, which the most enlightened nations are unconsciously forced to make by the great law of advancement."[28] Bermuda's retreat from the narrative geography makes clear that Montfort is not historically transcendent, in the manner initially insisted upon by the narrator, but an anachronism in his own time, a relic of the colonial mythmaking of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There was no plantation economy in late-eighteenth century Bermuda. The islands had not produced the "tobacco, sugar, coffee, onions, and other

[26] Ibid., 23.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 19-20.

products" Montfort relies upon for his wealth at any significant scale, if they ever had, since the middle decades of the seventeenth century. Neither Montfort nor the Bermuda of the prologue could have existed in the period it depicts, and Hopkins produces this anachronism, as she does with her confusion of Shakespeare and Waller, to put historical Bermuda and mythological Bermuda in contestation. The Bermudian myth of colonial exceptionalism is an anachronistic fiction, as represented by Montfort, with very real historical and material conditions that persist at the end of the nineteenth century, as represented by the narrator's difficulty in articulating the past outside the parameters of that fiction. The 1790 of *Contending Forces* did not and could not have existed as it is presented in the novel, but the violence enabled by the fictionalized history of that past is very real. Though the world changes, the novel suggests, the aesthetic representations of the past often do not, and the historical anachronisms of national fiction, as they have been traditionally written, sustain the violence that stands in the way of the law of advancement.

Montfort approaches North Carolina with the hope that he can substitute his former home for a new political geography where slavery "flourished and the people had not yet awakened to the folly and wickedness exemplified in the enslavement of their fellow beings."[29] Montfort comes to North Carolina with a willingness to live as a "good subject or citizen of whatever country [he] may be compelled to reside in" as he exploits enslavement to enrich himself until he decides it is the moment to "bestow on each [of the people he enslaves] a piece of land, and finally, with easy conscience, he would retire to England, and there lead the happy life of an English gentleman of fortune."[30] The move also affords Montfort a sense of cultural and moral

[29] Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces*, 23.

[30] Ibid., 24.

superiority. He believes himself to be awake historically and morally in a way that the enslavers of North Carolina are not. He insists that his continued investment in slavery is not out of folly or wickedness, and that his easy conscience comes from an enlightened self-possession that enables him to navigate the contours of history as he sees fit. As the violence that follows demonstrates, however, Montfort is not someone who has maybe lost the individual right and wrong of the matter so much as he is someone so deeply embedded in living a colonial myth, to the extent that he becomes its embodied aesthetic representation, that he has completely miscalculated the contending forces of history. Once Bermuda departs from the scene, so to do the novel's pretensions of defending the formal renderings of colonial history it reproduces in its opening pages.

A North Carolina Arrival

The ship that carries Charles Montfort, his family, and the people he enslaves appears suddenly in Pamlico Sound just outside Newbern, North Carolina. With it, the narrative perspective shifts. "Just now," the narrative announces, "a ship, which had some time since appeared as a dark spot on the horizon, turned her majestic prow and steered for the entrance of the sound."[31] The Newbern residents are "eagerly intent upon the strange ship, and they watched the pilot climb aboard with all the interest which usually attends the slightest cause for excitement in a small community."[32] This scene unfolds largely from the perspectives of Bill and Hank, two poor white men unsettled by the sudden arrival of a mysterious ship from Bermuda. Bill asks Hank what he knows about the "'Island Queen' from Bermudy. Planter named Montfort on her" who

[31] Ibid., 34.

[32] Ibid.

has come to "Caroliny" because it was "gittin' too hot for him back thar."[33] Bill inquires "with a backward jerk of his thumb in the supposed direction of Bermuda."[34] The mythical Bermuda of the previous chapter transitions quickly to a threatening aberration for men like Bill and Hank. Gone is the Bermuda at the material and literary centers America, and that enabled Montfort to live under the veneer of historical exceptionalism. Now the archipelago is a "supposed place" that signals a potential disruption of the social order in Newbern, North Carolina.

Bermuda becomes Bermudy and Montfort a stranger. With events now unfolding through the voyeuristic gazes of Bill and Hank, Montfort's presence receives significance not from a persistent colonial myth but from the skepticism of his new neighbors. North Carolina is a new political geography with a history of its own, and the sudden arrival of Montfort and the *Island Queen* amplifies the rapidly declining viability of the historical narrative that made Montfort what he thought he was in Bermuda. *Contending Forces*, Judith Madera argues, "is especially notable for the ways it focuses on local geographies of transformation, or the collection of transformations exercised in a place."[35] This is a novel "continuously attentive to movement,"[36] and the ways in which movements between cities and regions or islands and continents produce political and historical significance in fluid ways. Though Montfort approaches Newbern with a willingness to live as a "good subject or citizen of whatever country [he] may be compelled to reside in," this shift in perspective makes apparent that such a thing might not be up to him.

Montfort's arrival, in this way, threatens to undermine the history of Newbern. To Bill and Hank, he signals an impending destabilization of the political status quo by representing a

[33] Ibid., 35.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Judith Madera, *Black Atlas*, 157.

[36] Ibid., 166.

foreign and unfamiliar way of living that suggests the "overseas threat of emancipation and the more local threat of slave uprising."[37] Bill's and Hank's observations of the *Island Queen* are juxtaposed with Hank's reminiscence of a recent lynching, one in which he "jes tuk a few o' them an' strun 'em up for a eggsample to the res.'"[38] The two men worry about how Montfort, who symbolizes the specter of abolition, might disrupt the futures of continued racial terrorism committed with impunity they envision for themselves. Montfort, Bermuda, and the slave ship that sails with "the British flag at the peak and the American flag at the fore"[39] bring two national narratives together and become a "dark spot" on the horizon that portends a new post-slavery future to Bill and Hank, regardless of Montfort's commitment to remaining an enslaver for another twenty-five years. In this moment, two historical pasts and two possible futures collide on a suddenly shared geography. North Carolina, to Montfort, represents the potential of a personal and economically beneficial future pursued outside the historical and material constraints of Bermuda. Montfort and Bermuda, as cultural intruders, threaten Bill's and Hank's abilities to commit unchallenged atrocities in perpetuity.

Across the prologue of *Contending Forces*, Montfort tends to come across as primarily an ideological or rhetorical subject, one whose corporeal being appears almost like an afterthought as he moves through the world. The novel positions Montfort more as a discursive vessel for the ideas and futures contested by British liberalism and US commitments to slavery than a material presence in this story. In this way, Montfort reads as an ironic mockery of masculinist, white Anglo settlerism in the Americas. While Montfort and the early form of the narrator see him as

[37] Beth McCoy, "Rumors of Grace: White Masculinity in Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces*," *African American Review* 37, no. 4 (2003), 570.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces*, 34.

pure history, or a high ideal given life and voice in Bermuda, the narrative switch to Newbern exposes the dangers of such an orientation to the world. Montfort's reliance on the fragile fictions of historical exceptionalism render him incapable of anticipating or apprehending the violence he puts into motion and that will be endured by Grace, his children, and the people he enslaves in Bermuda and North Carolina. To him, race, gender, and class position never enter into the equation. It is never his body being interrogated in public and private spaces, and the possibility of such a thing never enters his perspective. Even in Pamlico Sound, the Montfort observed under the voyeurism of Bill and Hank does not appear as a fully formed, embodied person, but as a threatening idea contained between a "British flag at the peak and the American flag at the fore."

With the limited narrative presence of Montfort's embodied being, the violence that results from his actions and ideas becomes the burden of those around him. Starting in Pamlico Sound, *Contending Forces* constricts its historical and narrative scope until it focuses almost entirely on Grace Montfort. The novel moves away from philosophical meditations on the tides of history, parliamentary debates, and the anxieties of Bermudian planters to a zoomed-in focus in which Grace Montfort must confront the tragedies of the novel herself. Lisa Marcus argues that "Grace's body," in this sense, "becomes a text upon which white men can inscribe their ownership of women, both black and white."[40] The terror at Montfort's North Carolina plantation, as Vanessa Holford Diana reads it, emphasizes "the ongoing brutality of racial and sexual oppression, and the careless shattering of families" through which Hopkins "presents the violation of motherhood as evidence of the nation's moral corruption in allowing the slave

[40] Lisa Marcus, "'Of One Blood': Reimagining American Genealogy in Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces*," 124.

system to persist."[41] Hopkins utilizes the Newbern scenes to particularize the expansive horrors of slavery in the Atlantic world to the localized social relations and material conditions of a North Carolina harbor interrupted by the arrival of Bermudian strangers. Montfort himself cannot recognize these horrors until it is too late. Once the narrative forces him to acknowledge that slavery is not an abstracted economic system populated by raceless and genderless actors but an institution built upon and sustained by a tremendous amount of violence waged, with his complicity, against racialized and gendered people, he has already condemned Grace and the people he enslaves to their deaths.

The violence does not suddenly erupt in Newbern, however. From afar, Grace Montfort initially represents the ideal white Southern woman to Bill and Hank. She "was a dream of beauty," they ascertain, "even among beautiful women...Her complexion was creamy in its whiteness, of the tint of the camellia" and she "completed a most lovely type of Southern beauty."[42] When Grace passes Bill and Hank in a carriage, however, their value judgments shift. "Wall maybe," Bill decides, "Thar's too much cream color in the face and too little blud seen under the skin for a genooine white 'ooman."[43] "You can't tell nothin' 'bout these Britishers," he complains, "I've hern tell that they think nuthin of ejactin' thar black brats, and freein' 'em, an' makin' 'em rich."[44] Grace's movements in the harbor from the horizon to the deck to the gangplank to the carriage suggest the slipperiness of the local relations and conditions that inform the particular valences of national belonging and race. In a matter of moments and lines

[41] Vanessa Holford Diana, "Narrative Patternings of Resistance in F.W. Harper's *Iola Leroy* and Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces*," *Black Women's Intellectual Traditions: Speaking Their Minds*, Kristin Waters and Carol Conaway, eds. (Burlington, VT: UP of New England), 182.

[42] Hopkins, 40.

[43] Ibid., 41.

[44] Ibid.

within the narrative structure, Grace transforms from representing the feminine ideal of the planter class in the southern United States to men like Bill and Hank to threatening the posterity of that fragile social order with her British liberalism and potential Blackness.

The atrocities at Montfort's plantation that follow his arrival, the novel seems to suggest, descend from the collision of myth and history in the lived spaces of a newly shared politicized geography. The historicity of *Contending Forces* takes the law of advancement to be an unopposable force, but it does not expect an easy progression to the political futures it anticipates as inevitable. There will be violence, the novel asserts, and it likely stems from when isolated polities and locations that claim exceptional histories, myths, and origin stories are thrown together. The very idea of particularized national political frameworks as solutions to a global problem breaks down in Bermuda, becomes incomprehensible once the *Island Queen* appears on the horizon, and completely collapses once Grace Montfort alights in Newbern. This is why, Hopkins asserts, the "difference between then and now, if any there be, is so slight as to be scarcely worth mentioning. The atrocity of the acts committed one hundred years ago are duplicated today, when slavery is supposed to no longer exist."[45] Nothing that happens in the post-Reconstruction nadir is new, and the violence that defines the era began with the settlers and enslavers who colonized the Americas. If the political forms of modernity descend from colonialism and slavery, why then should we trust these means of governance to end "these days of mob violence, when lynching is raising its head like a venomous monster"?[46]

The prologue concludes with two historical critiques that will play out over the rest of the novel. First, it indicts the internal ideological contradictions of the slavery apologists represented

[45] Ibid., 15

[46] Ibid., 14.

by Montfort. The overdetermined rhetoric of a narrator that appears to appease Montfort and absolve Montfort of his culpability in racial violence, in fact, exposes a primary impediment to the historical progress Hopkins hopes will gain momentum in the twentieth century. *Contending Forces* rejects the vapid empty rhetorical performances of a ruling class that recites the affects and sentiments of change while steadfastly refusing to divest from the material and structural inequities that enrich the ruling classes. The novel also italicizes Bermuda's significance to American history to address the residues of the historical crossroads of the eighteenth century: the future of a nation that maintains slavery as an economic cultural practice until enough wealth has been accumulated to concede abolition in the British empire, or a United State-based future that establishes racial, gendered, and sexual violence as part and parcel to the social and economic relations of its unwavering commitment to sustaining slavery.

In the 1790s engaged by the novel's prologue, Bermuda was torn between the fracturing relations and divergent futures of North America and Britain. Bermuda was nearly the fourteenth colony to join the rebellion and as the "Gibraltar of the Atlantic," both nations understood its strategic importance.[47] Like the *Island Queen* that arrives in North Carolina under dual flags, the Bermuda of this period is neither quite American nor British, and yet it is subject to the exertion of power by both polities. It is in this sense that Bermuda becomes the natural starting point for *Contending Forces.* The historical forces that bear down upon our everyday lives to produce very real material consequences, Hopkins asserts with this Bermudian beginning, are not localized phenomena relegated to isolation in particular communities or nations. Indeed, the novel suggests that the contending forces of history have always been globalized, and as such they are best understood through the geographies, like Bermuda, that are at once center and

[47] Nicholas G. DiPucchio, "Conquest for Commerce: American Policymakers, Bermuda, and the War for Independence, 1775-83," *Early American Studies* 18, no. 1 (2020), 61-89.

periphery, provincialized and absolutely foundational to how nations and empires understand themselves on a global scale. When turned against its mythmaking self, *Contending Forces* exposes the arbitrariness of regional distinctions as self-contained determinants of political agency and points the way toward a more internationalist politics. The novel elevates Bermuda in American history, just like George Berkeley or William Dean Howells, to recover its significance to the contemporary moment. Unlike previous authors, however, Hopkins does not aestheticize the islands in pursuit of settler futurities. Rather, Bermuda, as it is contained within the novel, becomes an insurrectionist geography through which the atrocities of the early twentieth century can be escaped.

An Imminent Epilogue

The global scope established in the prologue of *Contending Forces* leads to a reconsideration of the national perspectives of the disintegration of the US republic in the 1860s. When we "survey the flotsam and jetsam from the wreck of the Civil War," the narrative announces in its shift to nineteenth-century Boston, "we can deceive ourselves no longer; we must confess that the natural laws which govern individuals and communities never relax in their operation."[48] Progress does not defer to national borders, and the vast human tide of the great labor contest, as Hopkins would later call it, always comes. We must accept that "Nature avenges herself upon us for every law violated in the mad rush for wealth or position or personal comfort where the rights of others of the human family are not respected."[49] Just as Bermuda is not tied to the history of one nation or empire, the Civil War is not just US history. It is but one site of conflict between

[48] Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces*, 42.

[49] Ibid., 65.

the contending forces of the natural laws of history and the aspirations of the ruling classes, who have always situated themselves globally through enslavement and colonialism, and their steadfast refusal to accept that the "fruit of slavery was poisonous and bitter."[50]

Perhaps the atrocities in North Carolina, or even the Civil War, could have been avoided if Montfort, as representative of a global planter class, had accepted abolition as an immediate historical necessity demanded by the laws of nature. The fictions he lived under, produced as they were by hundreds of years of settler mythmaking, rendered it impossible for him to supersede the violence inherent to his position, and thus spare "himself and family all the horrors, which were to follow his selfish flight to save that property."[51] The ruling classes who desire to suppress the rising tide of the labor contest, the novel concludes, isolate themselves in the myths of the national while the movement for justice is global and realist. The expansive scale of the great labor contest, as imagined in the novel, washes away these national myths to make room for international political solidarity.

The porous relations between Bermuda and the US accomplish such a task of exchanging the mythical and national for the international in the Supreme Court case that resolves the novel's plot. The speculative case of *Smith v. The United States* does not adjudicate an internally contained constitutional question, but instead, like the Civil War, it becomes an expansive referendum on what the structures of a single government can hope to address on their own. The court is more of a theater where contending forces produce an affective investment in global solidarity more so than it is a place to interpret the founding document of the US. The Smiths file their case against the government, and then "Detectives went over the ground carefully. The

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[50] Ibid., 42.

[51] Ibid. 65.

records of real estate transfers, chattels, etc., were all found intact among the files of the courthouse at Newberne, North Carolina. Jesse was traced from the time he fled Anson Pollock until he settled in Exeter, New Hampshire, and married Elizabeth Whitfield."[52] The case only succeeds, however, because Withington and Will Smith secure the Montfort family papers on a trip to Bermuda that "completed a perfect chain of evidence" and resulted in the "sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars awarded to Mrs. Smith as the last representative of the heirs to Jesse Montfort. Justice was appeased."[53]

As a work of the imagination contained in a novel, the Smith case speculates upon how a juridical commitment to rectifying historical atrocities might codify the natural laws of history into the systems that govern the lives of a nation's citizens. The juridical impact of historical recovery, though, is but one component of the broader prescriptive affective order that the case inspires internationally. Outside the US, the "case was nine-days' wonder; startled society and all the world - a life drama whose power touched the deep wells of human feeling."[54] The novel never once mentions any specific laws, constitutional clauses, or legal precedents that inform the Supreme Court's decision. *Contending Forces* denationalizes the highest court in the US to redirect its power to a movement not constrained by borders. The affects of historical recovery and reconciliation, and not the laws a nation writes to itself, it would seem in these moments, are where change begins.

As with previous chapters, Bermuda is once again at the center of these possible affective and historical outcomes. The perfect chain of evidence that secures the Smiths their victory

[52] Ibid., 383-384.

[53] Ibid., 384.

[54] Ibid.

against the US begins when Will Smith and Withington meet in Bermuda "Lucy, Grace Montfort's foster-sister and maid,"[55] who fills in the missing details of the Montfort family story. The narrative ties Bermuda's historical significance for the Smith family to Lucy, whom we learn is a "poor, decrepit, half-blind centenarian" who moved to Bermuda after the Civil War and has "lived ever since in a cottage which is almost a hut."[56] In these later moments of the novel, Bermuda exists in a state of historical passivity outside modern progress. Whereas Bermuda was once a colony on the vanguard torn between two potential futures in the novel's eighteenth-century setting, here it rests in a state of limbo between the past and the present, leaving it to be discovered and recovered for the Smith's new political orientation to the future in the lead up to *Smith v. The United States*.

As Laura H. Korobkin reads the Smith case, "by keeping the legal theory of liability and the specifics of the damage claim vague, Hopkins is able to create a lawsuit whose result symbolically acknowledges, in the broadest terms, the wrongs of the past."[57] What the novel does specify, however, is that it considers Bermuda to be a historical repository where not much has changed in the hundred years between the narrative's opening and close. Bermuda enables Will Smith to sort through the flotsam and jetsam of the past to build the case for a better future for himself and his family. Bermuda waits outside history, that is, until Will Smith can arrive to build the archive of evidence necessary for the juridical action and affects the novel hopes will produce large-scale socio-political change in an international context.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Laura H. Korobkin, "Imagining State and Federal Law in Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces*," 16.

In the novel's preface, Hopkins argues that the novel form itself is a crucial site of contestation in the struggle for justice. The literary histories of Britain and the US, she suggests, contributed to the ideological conditions of the post-Reconstruction nadir. Better futures are not enactable until they are imaginable, and Hopkins undertakes the urgent task of revitalizing the aesthetics of justice in the novel, she argues, because "*No one will do this for us*."[58] The crises of the 1890s are nothing new, Hopkins stresses, and the violence and atrocities of the time are part and parcel of the colonial myths of white supremacy present since the early modern era, a problem long "unrecognized by writers of the Anglo-Saxon race."[59] Hopkins employs the novel form, and the romance genre in particular, to make the case for her internationalist politics. She pushes this form and place-based genre that have traditionally been employed in colonial and national mythmaking projects to speak the silences of literary history. This enables Hopkins to dismantle the internal logical contradictions that impede historical progress at the turn of the century and imagine moments of international solidarity, such as the global "deep wells of human feeling" that cohere after *Smith v. The United States*. Yet, as this is a novel produced under historical crisis, these moments appear only in brief, or the "nine-days' wonder" of the case, and the totality of meaning, immanence, and solidarity towards which *Contending Forces* strives remains always on the horizon.

Hopkins confronts colonial and national myths on one of the primary terrains of their modern historical emergence, the novel, to re-politicize the geographies claimed by colonizers and enslavers. As the myths engaged by the novel begin to collapse, however, this leaves the question of where the futures it imagines are to be lived and practiced in the twentieth century.

[58] Hopkins, *Contending Forces*, 14.

[59] Ibid.

The novel ends with Sappho Clark joined by Will Smith on the deck of a steamship bound for England. There, she contemplates "the life of promise which was before her," and not the possibility of a life within the "receding shore" of the United States that the couple watches disappear under the horizon with "hearts filled with emotion too deep for words."[60] The Smiths' newfound wealth affords them global and historical mobility to move beyond the socio-political limitations of the United States. The steamer they take to England orients them to the possibility of a utopian future while bringing the United States past under the curve of the horizon. All geographies recede at the novel's conclusion, but the ideas built out of Bermuda, Boston, and England still hold, and the Smiths depart the narrative space still committed to the life of promise before them. Rejecting the immediate inadequacies of particularized national place, the novel suggests, does not equate to rejecting equity and justice as urgent political commitments. Instead, historical, archival, and material distance, the novel suggests to some degree, are the first steps in reimagining the potentials of history as an internationalist project. The Bermudian past of America, the novel suggests, can offer new modes of resilience and alternative means of confronting the archive that allow us to rethink - across revised geographic scales, other histories, and alternative futures - what might still be in our relation to the past and what might still yet come.

At the story's conclusion, the characters have little trouble "contemplating the life of promise" before them even though the novel cannot completely imagine a port that offers the quarter necessary for such a life. Bermuda is too retrograde, too weighed down by the lingering residue of the tragedy of the Montfort family for the Smiths to move there. The United States is vastly limited in its ability to foster the new futures imaginable to them. New Orleans, where

[60] Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces*, 402.

they are all reunited, is too steeped in the violence and degradations of the past. Even Boston, where once "in the free air of New England's freest city, Sappho Clark drank great draughts of freedom's subtle elixir"[61] still "demonstrates what [the novel] calls 'the force of prejudice.'"[62] Although the steamer points the Smiths to England, the ship never arrives and the narrative instead suspends the Smiths' story in the liminal spaces of the ocean. Neither is Britain, it seems with this conclusion, a place where the future the novel wants might be enactable. England, as a place we never see in *Contending Forces,* becomes, like Montfort, more of an idea or an abstracted setting populated by liberal ideas than an actual geographic space where actual people live. The story ends in a state of geographic indeterminacy, and a better future may be imaginable, as made possible by Hopkins's aesthetic intervention in the history of the novel, but there may be no place to immediately live such a promise until its internationalist scope becomes a lived reality.

Contending Forces writes against nearly three hundred years of colonial mythmaking. The colonialist discourses imagined in relation to Bermuda across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I established in the first three chapters, were foundational to the material practices of settler colonialism throughout the hemisphere. They impacted the revised imaginings of whiteness and indigeneity in the Massachusetts Bay of the 1630s, they produced Nathaniel Tucker's so-called Bermudian race of expansive cosmopolitanism, and they created the ideological foundations of the violence Hopkins intervenes against in her novel. As *Contending Forces* demonstrates, though, an excavation of Bermuda's significance to settler history does not

[61] Ibid., 115.

[62] Francesca Sawaya, "Emplotting National History: Regionalism and Pauline Hopkins's *Contending Forces*" in *Breaking Boundaries: New Perspectives on Women's Regional Writing*, Sherrie A. Inness and Diana Royer, eds. (Iowa City, IA: U of Iowa P, 1997), 72.

need to reinforce colonial power structures. Recovering the Bermudian epicenter of colonialism, Hopkins establishes with her novel, produces new modes of resilience and alternative means of confronting the archive that allow us to rethink what might still be in our relation to the past. Hopkins unreads the aesthetics of settler history to expose the fragility of the colonial myth. This way of reading calls for new forms of political solidarity not answerable to the governing structures undergirded by coloniality. It amplifies the bias grain of the settler archive to confront its fictionality and unsettle the power settlerism holds over the historical record.

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