The School-Prison Trust
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2. A Name and a World: Refusal Relationality

“WHERE YOU GET YOUR NAME?”

“Huh?” I looked up at Jakes from the notes I was hastily taking. I’d had the brief thought that I was being slow and making him wait too long. And then I realized the empty classroom in which we were meeting was far too quiet. Prison quiet smelled like old, dead dust.

“Your name. Where you get it?” He was leaning back in a too-small chair, and I had the sudden instinct to say Don’t lean like that; you’re gonna fall and hit your head. My face must have said it, because he popped back up, smiling, all four chair legs planted firmly on the ground. He rested his long forearms on his young knees—kneecaps under institutional blue sweatpants, making the shape of smooth stones just beneath the silky surface of a slow stream—and clasped his hands together loosely.

“I mean, you don’t gotta tell me.” He was feigning teenage indifference and being respectful all at once. “Saw-bee-naw.” He grinned.

“That’s actually a funny story. If you want to call it that.” I sighed; one of my least favorite stories to tell, but fair game. “So my mom had picked out some horrible, plain name for me I guess. And my dad said to her, ‘When I was in Mexico’—he hitchhiked there trying to avoid being drafted, even though it doesn’t work that way—”

“Drafted?”

“Yeah, for the war in Vietnam. Against Vietnam. Back—that’s
another conversation, ’k?’” Jakes nodded. “So, he says to my mom, my dad says, ‘When I was in Mexico, I met this amazing nun, this very old nun named Sabina, who was so wise. Let’s name her Sabina. After the nun.’” I smiled, but Jakes just sat attentively still, waiting for the punch line or the plot or the climax.

I had to work on my storytelling. The delivery was clearly lacking.

“Soo, it turns out the nun wasn’t really a nun.” I smiled with the right side of my mouth and made question-mark eyebrows. Jakes didn’t flinch. He just pursed out his lips and squinted a little.

“OK. Cool.” He nodded, sort of casually, the way one does when they have no idea what you’re saying but they don’t want you to feel entirely stupid.

“The ‘nun,’” I said with exaggerated air quotes, “was his ex-girlfriend!” I yelled, chuckling. He sat momentarily impassive.

“I knew it!” Jakes laughed, quickly back on those two inadequate chair-legs, the length of his tall legs a forward anchor, planted in gravity’s ocean.

“What!” I was laughing harder now. “Dude!”

“Psyched you out.” He was delighted with himself. And, for a minute, we both just enjoyed our respective roles in my being entirely fooled.

“But for reals, where’d you get that name? I mean, where’d it come from?” He returned to all four chair legs to the ground.

I was suddenly so aware of the specific place and time of our conversation; the anemic torpor of the four walls around us reverberated with their astoundingly infinite, insistent repetition over so much space and time. And, I was aware because those simple, sweet questions also lifted us off the dimensionless maps of the school–prison trust and made a world out of relationality. Who are you? Who are you to me? Who am I to you? Who claims you?

1. Though the American war against Vietnam is part of the same conversations this book joins, we also acknowledge we can by no means rightly attend to it here.
Who do you claim? A name conveys time and place across the deep river of relations.²

“Mm. Mhm. That’s a serious story,” I said.

“We alright.” And he settled in. Jakes had that quality of the best storytellers—he could get anyone else to tell a story, to stay in it, to stretch it out, to get lost in his total audience. He was gleam and spark in the colorless asphyxia of prison.

“Well, people tell me the name is everywhere,” I said, picturing my name popping up all over a space-time map. “It’s in Spanish and in German and some other European languages—apparently there was an airline but spelled with an e at the end. It’s Russian, Farsi, and so many places, languages, I guess. But where it came from is really a story.” Gray wind whimpered through cracks in the window at the far end of the room.

“You know, when the Greeks in Troy lost the Trojan War, they had to leave. Or escape, obviously. So, a group of men apparently sailed to what is now Italy. In the area of Rome there were Indigenous people called the Sabines.” I paused for an aside—“I guess they, the Greeks, called it Rome for one of those men, Romulus; at least that’s one story”—and then returned to my main story: “They—the Sabine people—lived in the hills around Rome forever. It was their home. Funny, I don’t even know what they called it. The story goes that these Trojan men decided they wanted to steal the place and make it their new home.” Maps began to form on top of maps. Self-proclaimed men—man as human—sailed from one conquered place to another to create new stories and new worlds with new names, or new stories for old names.

Names identify. Names can be overwritten, appropriated, or purposefully forgotten through conquest. Men naming things for men whose names themselves are bereft of reciprocal relationality, whose names celebrate the failure to understand that a name cannot stand in isolation, is the brash marking of cosmologic thievery,

an elision of violence and a proclamation of it all at once. “Things started going wrong,” as Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa writer Louise Erdrich reminds us, “when places everywhere were named for people—political figures, priests, explorers—and not for the real things that happened in these places—the dreaming, the eating, the death, the appearance of animals.”

Maps and Trespasses

“Because for whatever reason they didn’t bring women with them,” I went on in my awkward and partial telling, “they decided to kill all the Sabine men and rape and forcibly marry all the Sabine women of a certain age. So, the Sabine women became the unwilling mothers of Rome.” Name maps and rape maps and conquest maps and time maps and prison maps. And none of them explain how all of this works together. Yet, “Standing at the foot of a map of loss is clarity.”

These vanquished Greeks laid new hemic layers—where perhaps igneous, sedimentary, metamorphic ones once freely cradled time immemorial—on the fecund hills. On Indigenous life. They laid the cold stone of the new story of Rome where the pillars of the Colosseum would be erected, where spectacle and death would be the unstaunched lifeblood of Roman society.

There is no single map of empire. No way to chart its horrendous, dynamic dimension. War is one dimension with so many other dimensions. Balibar writes that, in “the system of competing states,” there is “inescapable impact.” He suggests, “We find it in the form of warfare that has become typical in the era of national states, as ‘total’ wars.” This ostensibly new and total warfare overtly maps a patriarchal notion of the history of nations, one in which nationhood and conquest and conflict are recognized through narrow rubrics. In this Roman city of antiquity, the Sabines—as did the women of the

discovered, new world—most definitely encountered total warfare. What masculinist political temporalities make new so often maps over what women know as very old, indeed ancient, technologies of control: the assault and possession of their bodies, the removal of their collective children, the massacre of their people. There is no single map of empire.

And yet, many empires start this very way—with a single, partial map, full of misty, distorted, blank spots and fantastical sea creatures, where rape, various removals of children, and plunder will give contour and measurement to the conquest topography. Where, as in Rome, humans are made into citizens of empire as they leave their mothers’ bodies and land hauntingly motherless on amnesic cartographies covering Indigenous Homelands. The birth and death of individuals and tribes commingle.

“It’s a heavy story.” I sighed to Jakes, wanting to do right by it, wanting to offer Jakes something meaningful. “Don’t know why you’d e-ver name your kid Sabina. Genocide. Rape. Unwilling mother of Rome. Dark shit to impose on someone for life.” A tiny hole tore open in the space-time map, and I wondered if we’d fall into it. Louise Erdrich describes that puncture: “You cannot feel time grind against you. Time is nothing but everything, not the seconds, minutes, hours, days, years. Yet this substanceless substance, this bending and shaping, this warping, this is the way we understand our world.”6 Time is an understanding.

“I guess your dad wasn’t thinking about it too much,” said Jakes. Good storytellers like Jakes are boundlessly generous.

“No, he definitely was not.” No, indeed.

“Yeah, yeah. But like I think it’s dope.” Jakes kind of jumped up in his chair. “Like, look at this: Columbus is Native. And the dude didn’t even know it!” He was deeply delighted, I guess, because he started snort-giggling and tapping his knee with his fist. I was simply

stunned by the beauty and brilliance of his sight; “indian time is a form of time travel,” writes Billy-Ray Belcourt.7

“I mean, check it out, like, the I-talians, man, they great great great great grannies some Native people. That’s some cool shit.” And we both fell into convulsive laughter, while old maps disintegrated or caught fire and smoldered or collided and exploded in atomic light. And something new and very old rolled out. A story. Columbus the Native man. The Sabines’ revenge. The timeless, time-traveling, migratory everywhere power of Indigeneity. “It was the silence of before creation, the comfort of pure nothing.”8 And everything.

Jakes’ time travel is refusal relationality, rearranging dimensions in the spirit of Trickster. For many Indigenous peoples, Tricksters—who sometimes show up and are embodied by Coyote or Raven, or sometimes take another form—create vital didactic problems or render influential lessons, often uncomfortable, disconcerting lessons that upend settled truths. White Earth Chippewa scholar Gerald Vizenor writes,

The tribal trickster is a comic holotrope. . . . The trickster is immortal; when the trickster emerges in imagination the author dies in a comic discourse. To imagine the tribal trickster is to relume human unities; colonial surveillance, monologues, and racial separations are overturned in discourse. . . . The trickster mediates wild bodies and adamant minds; a chance in third person narratives to turn aside the cold litanies and catechistic monodramas over the measured roads to civilization.9

In a singular moment of Tricksterness, Jakes’ I-talian Native grannies story challenges what many have come to take as settled truth: that Columbus was an I-talian.10 Or that Italians are of a nation and

8. Erdrich, Little No Horse, 60.
9. Vizenor, Trickster, x.
10. Columbus is also an archive of merging european forces. Papal bulls functioned as one part of a network of powers (Italian merchants, Portuguese capitalists, Spanish monarchies, etc.) that gave rise to the Portuguese empire—an empire nation deserving more credit for Columbus’s
ancestry somehow immaculately devoid of Indigeneity. Jakes’ story remembers for us that Columbus is the descendant of Indigenous women—it relumes Columbus’ beginning, laying bare an origin story that makes and contains him. And Jakes’ story constructs the didactic problem that Nativeness is therefore not a product of fictive Columbian time (because such a time is now in question), and so the Sabines could be Native. In essence, Jakes’ story forces us to disrupt the beginning by exposing the catechistic monodrama that paved the road of civilization. Reluming is a presencing project and practice, and Jakes relumes a history of the spiritual shadow that was the so-called Enlightenment. Perhaps more importantly, he relumes by reclaiming origins and Nativeness and the power of Indigenous women.

Where you get your name? Relationality inflects and contains refusal and survivance, expressed here in the kernel of a simple question about a name. Where did it come from? What does it mean? How does it carry you to me? Squanto, Columbus, and Sabina are names and ideas and histories. Each has its own stories. Each has its own places. Some of them are contested and contradictory. Others are humorous, tragic, conflicted, violent, and triumphant. They are “a puff of sound” and a world. Names walk with their bearers—sometimes preceding them, sometimes haunting them, sometimes bringing them to us long after the walking body is gone. Names promise to bring us a refusal relationality that crumbles conquest time. Names are always, and forever, relational.

**Origins and Empire**

Within empire—within all its unmappable brutalities and abject possessions, within its lethal insistence on the divine truth of a
singular map—is also the inextinguishability and expansiveness of Indigenous life: relational survivances, refusals, revenges, resurgences, and time travels. In the genocidal conquest of Indigenous life is also the infinite map of empire’s demise and the timeless possibility of return forward. Jakes tells a story, not of Indigenous life locked in a colonial past of total death and erasure, but as swimming in the ontological and viscous blood of I-talians. Pumping their very hearts. These are diasporas that upend colonial space-time. Relationships that refuse the terms of conquest time.

Jakes’ story refashions identities by taking a convenience-store lighter to the flat-earth parchment map of Rome. It repositions historical and contemporary time. “Through imposed spatial ideologies and their narration in popular culture, land and people become seemingly bound and fit into tight containers,” observes Mishuana Goeman. “The danger of identities fixed in time and space is well known to Native people—what becomes elided in the colonial political bind are the histories of movement and mobility of people and ideas.”11 If in Jakes’ summoning of Squanto we see an act of refusal—witty, brilliant, and devastating—in his pulling of the Sabines across time and space into Nativeness and Nativeness into Columbus and Italians, we see refusal in motion—a movement and mobility of peoples and ideas that migrates the conditions of space and time through relationships, rather than the other way around. Notably, Jakes’ stories refuse the entrapment of colonial past-lookingness and land-singularity and bring forward a boundlessness that resists confinement—here, the Sabine women’s confinement as forced, vanished mothers of a nation.12 The supposed end-beginning is always in the present precisely because relationships are the context, the condition, the shape—the dimension—through which time, place, and space emerge, meet, configure, and move. And a name is a home for this dimension called relation.

In their recent essay “On the Development of Terrortory,” Bryan and Jeremiah write that in “the vanishing Native ideology . . . genocide and colonization are presented as foregone conclusions, not ongoing terrors.” Absence works to concoct a blank slate—one on which a beginning might be inscribed. On what remained of the inaugural stone inscription on the Colosseum—(a remnant of practices of etching beginnings in stone)—were these words: “Emperor Caesar Vespasian Augustus ordered a new amphitheatre to be made from spoils.” The “est.”—the inscribed claim to a geologic beginning, the overlay of the sediment of empire—is always an act of war. What were the war “spoils” on which this enormous monument to the most violent relational Roman indulgences were established? Indigenous people, fabricated absent. And absence works to make places of ongoing terrors appear as foregone conclusions. Refusal relationality rouses multiple presences in place, creating an inconclusive tension for empire.

What, then, for refusal relationality and this seemingly impene-trable, immovable terrortorial bedrock of conquest? Relationships of power and domination, repression and race, writes Wynter, “must now be returned to, re-examined, and reclaimed, as the first stage, however then incomplete, of our coming to grips with the real issue (the territory rather than its maps) with which we are now urgently confronted . . . to create now our own Word, by separating discursively as well as institutionally, the notion of human from the notion of Man.” If Man—Roman man, I-talian man—is terror magistrate and mapmaker of the foregone absence, Jakes creates now his own Word, starting in the profoundly reclaiming word: a name. Squanto. Sabines. Columbus. A name moves heavy stone and dusty archived time through the dimensional portals of relation. In Jakes calling names, we hear a way to relume human unities.

Jakes calls names, and we hear possibilities to “(re)map”: Goeman’s survivance-framed method of “spatial decolonization.”

Not “a recovery project,” Goeman configures (re)mapping as making sense of “the theoretical dimensions of power that struggle over geography’s hold.” Mobilizing relationships as the primary dimension, Jakes’ refusal-relationally makes the Word of names, going not back in time nor undertaking a project of recovery but rather reminding us and perhaps himself: Squanto is here, now, and there, then; the Sabine women are here, now, and there, then. And in this reminder is the relational (re)mapping of what we might frame as the tense distinctions between origins and beginnings. (Re)mapping through the refusal-relational relumination of the name not only challenges conquest dimensions but reveals and revels in others.

What we have come to hear as Jakes’ avenging, slipstreaming, (re)mapping refusal-relational story (the Sabines to Native women in the Americas, among other relationships) forges an origin story that accounts for empire and its intrinsic demise. How do we think of origins? Are they the same as beginnings? For many Indigenous peoples globally, origins are stories of emergence. From the earth. Water. Sky. For all Creation. Peoples emerge from somewhere, invited or challenged or fooled into reciprocal relationships that span and make time immemorial—a time that is neither singular nor isolated. A time that does not reign over others. Origins relume timeless unities of peoples and places in perpetual relationships. And those relational emergences are a dimension through which time and place should move in alignment: the life-giving sacrifice of the creature weakest in body but strongest in heart, sharpest in mind, greatest in courage; the necessity of interdependence—an anatomical reciprocity—in generating futures. Origins and their dimensions are an inextricable, sustained swirl of love, trickery, loss, and giving.

All origins are beginnings, in a way. Conquest beginnings, however, signal something else entirely. They are not, cannot be, rooted in a reciprocal relational emergence. They are a lie enforced as a

truth with its retelling and reenacting. When is the beginning of the so-called United States? What is the function of a plaque that reads “Est.”? What is a year? A date? An era? An age? How are beginnings weaponized through their singularity, their extortionist requirement to be the only, to erase, eradicate, absent, abandon, and discard competitors? Worse, how do they thrive through their bloodthirsty drive to defile and exterminate coexistence, to posit it as dangerous and vile? How are such beginnings coterminous with ends, and what kind?

The barrels, gaskets, springs, calibers, wheels, and jewels of the watch that ticks off the time of empire move in captive, uniform, unyielding, redundant synchrony. Unmoved by the sun or moon, by seasons, untouched by love or grief, unwarped, unbent, unforgiving, the watch tracks a beginning—the beginning—and each fiendishly unwavering second that follows, in an uninterrupted line toward the end. The watch demands obedience and pinches every last bit of life into its confining, unnatural tick, tick, tick, tick, tick.

Refusal Memory

As if directly visiting Anishanaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor’s characterization of survivance, Jakes’ story takes up the praxis that “Native sovenance is that sense of presence in remembrance, that trace of creation and natural reason in native stories . . . not the romance of an aesthetic absence or victimry.”17 In it we hear memories inflected with creation and myriad presences. Yet we hear a relation to imagined Columbian time, space, and being, in brilliant dialectic with Vizenor, who writes,

The Indian has no native ancestors; the original crease of that simulation is Columbian. . . . The Indian is a simulation, the absence of natives; the Indian transposes the real, and the simulation of the real has no referent, memories, or narrative stories. The postIndian must waver over the aesthetic ruins of Indian simulations.18

17. Vizenor, Fugitive Poses, 15, emphasis added.
18. Vizenor, 15, emphasis added.
But Jakes’ story writes all that is ostensibly Columbian a fiction. Without ignoring its abiding brutality or undermining the experience of its ravages, his story also brings it to its epistemic and ontologic knees. He confounds the Columbian as evanescent identity and resurrects it as a lost and perhaps sociopathic child. The Italian colonizer, the Roman descendant, the Columbian, always fresh from some defeat, is the conqueror and mass murderer, the rapist, the maker of single maps and the keeper of unforgivingly linear clocks—and also the one who does not get to determine time, place, or being. He is the discoverer who is unknown to himself and so is fundamentally incapable of discovering anything. An effete explorer. And, he is the one who is unwillingly, unwittingly ancestrally Native. Not simply Indigenous. Native. In repudiating dominance, Jakes’ story challenges Vizenor’s “post,” moving it across continents and back and forth in time. Origins migrate resurgently across time and place. In ultimate refusal relationality, Jakes’ story offers the possibility of making Columbian time irrelevant.

It is the specifics of this story that matter in two key ways worth considering for their relation to the contemporary school–prison trust. First, why is Jakes able to recognize the relationship of Indigenous Sabine women to their great great great great grandchildren, as he sees it? In part because, we suspect, he can understand Native women as mothers¹⁹ to future nation citizens, both of the colonial United States and of the Tribal. As a child held captive by Trust powers, he is caught between those nations, as war

¹⁹. We use the terms mothers and women in multiple ways. In these terms we certainly reference people who self-identify this way and who understand their role in relation to specific generations this way. We also use these terms to reference groups of people self-, family-, community-, socially, and state-identified in these ways, which of course do not always overlap. We know exclusions and inclusions occur across these dimensions of identification. When we are describing mothers who were and are the target of conquest assault, we mean that states and allied citizenries imagine Native women as mothers or potential mothers, and the individual specificity of their lives is irrelevant to conquest.
ransom against the power of Native women to create anticolonial citizens, sovereign citizens, dual citizens, and so in effect anticitizens of empire.

Trust in this way is an extortion of Native women, their motherhood a threat to the always-in-crisis hegemony of conquest. Each successive generation is a fleshy, breathing insurgence to imposed absence. Each young person a thrilling divestment of possessory logics. Each Native child is a political, genealogical threat to empire. Each a refusal. Trust provides one apparatus of containment, not of children—in the disembodied, unnamed, extricated categories of law and logic—but of mothers who, as an undifferentiated whole, symbolically and/or bodily are understood to make young life, new generations, and self-determined futures that cross asymmetrically warring nations. So perhaps Jakes could easily remember, could recover the memory of Sabine women as essential to the existence of Rome and as such an eternal threat to its conquest purity. The contemporary school–prison trust finds its roots in the Sabine hills of pre-Rome as much as it does in the Doctrine of Discovery or the Marshall Trilogy.

What we understand as Jakes’ memory also relumes and (re)maps diaspora. Diasporic frames in some ways reify conquest, and Columbian time. What if, as in Jakes’ world, Nativeness was not only of a “new world” but also of an “old world”? What if it boarded the ship of a Native-descended mercenary I-talian explorer, traveled across the latitudes of ocean, and did nothing to temper the violence of conquest but did everything to make swaths of europe impetuously itinerant? What if this story makes european nation-states squatters?

So, the second specific of the story that relates to the school–prison trust, and somewhat following, is that Jakes’ memoried Romanization of Columbus and Columbanization of early Rome unzips not only temporal linearity but also western ideological and social linearity. Or, colonialism’s revisionist history and labor’s gender amnesia. “The obliteration of the African past from European consciousness was the culmination of a process a thousand years
long and one at the root of *European historical identity,*”\(^{20}\) writes Robinson. That obliteration of Indigenous African centrality to European life, we submit, synchronized with an equal obliteration of European Indigenous past at the root of Europe’s dominant historical identity. It was, as we’ve described, mutually imbricated in other forms of thought that were squeezed out—the multiple forms of thought that at one time vied not for ascendancy but space. The thought that won out in Europe was not its only and shouldn’t be its last. Because obliteration is clumsy and stupid, it leaves behind traces. A trace can be relumed and, even in its ghostly form, can be re-membered and studied. Upon study, the erasure, the obliteration, of the Sabines suggests a fatal flaw in conquest European epistemology: it destroys its own beginnings and so cannot survive.

But we are in the midst of conquest’s putrid indulgence and empire’s gross decay. So we wonder what we can learn about the school–prison trust now. When European racialism is understood through various dimensions of its internal conquest labor formations, it is understandable to imagine its evolution in particular ways. We wonder if, in addition to those understandings, there is one that configures the ideological and material labors of establishments, beginnings, and conquest as relationally racialist. For instance, while scholars have distinguished Romans and Greeks from later Europeans by asserting that those two societies did not exercise or consider racism or racial prejudice in relation to Africans, which is debatable, Romans founded the very blood and architecture of their Romanness on the exploited, forced, enslaved reproductive labor of Indigenous women—a system and habitue requiring very specific prejudices, and ones which wound their way with formidable reliability through and with other stark ideological shifts in European consciousness.

As Robinson points out, that region of the world was rife with numerous contestations of power and empire, including slavery. “For

\(^{20}\) Robinson, *Black Marxism.* 82, italics added.
perhaps a thousand years or more, western European world historical consciousness was transformed into theosophy, demonology, and mythology. And, indeed, in a most profound sense European notions of history . . . negated the possibility of the true existence of earlier civilizations. The perfectibility of mankind, the eschatological vision, precluded the possibility of pre-Christian civilization having achieved any remarkable development in moral law, social organization, or natural history.”

Among the stunning collection of decimating transformations to knowledge and knowing undertaken over these centuries in Europe is the way in which eschatological time itself came to be the only time available and that it laid a vast and suffocating blanket over the European version of the world. Notably, eschatology quite literally means the study of the end. It presupposes absolute linearity, along with the values of that arc and its relationship to the melioristic or pinnacle end, from individual to heavenly. “Time catches up with kingdoms and crushes them, gets its teeth into doctrines and rends them.” And in this empire of ideology and structure, eschatological time is doctrinal time, a fatal flaw that precludes history.

Part of its fatal flaw is that, as with prevailing European thought, eschatology is gendered and dualistically, vertically so. This feature has reach far beyond our purview here. However, for thinking about Trust in the context of conquest capitalism as a function of war, we posit that because racialism in Europe’s labor formations was gendered, and gendering is racialized, these are inextricable elements of the developments that bring us to this moment. And in this moment, while prisons and the school–prison trust are systems and relations

21. Robinson, 86. We note that an attention to racial formations beyond the limited historical scope of the United States generatively troubles analyses of white supremacy and racial versus political identities within the social, political, and legal boundaries of the United States. The European racism and racialism to which Robinson and others refer were formed and shaped in the political construct of controlling or decimating what might look like ethnic or Indigenous nations.

of containing, criminalizing, and controlling human beings across gender who are made surplus in capitalist relations, we understand the systematic assault and murder of women as similarly a brutal system of handling surplus. In the case of Native women (who might be raced in a number of ways), this is a conquest capitalist system—a labor warcraft—for handling human beings who are simultaneously surplus, surplus labor (unrecognized in the formal schema), and surplus citizens whose presence and absence ensure and threaten conquest capitalist state and citizen power blocs.

European conquest had a model not only in its racialism, exploitation, plantations, and more but also in its epistemic structuring of its own beginnings: empty lands full of conquerable surplus and essential women for myriad labors. The European blueprint to est. a beginning is drawn on a map of Indigenous women. Colonization as we currently know it (an active conquest capitalist world order) is modeled on having women already there, and there in abundance—a resource and a technology. Conquerors have to rape to start. And the start has to be reenacted endlessly to sustain the war powers and the capital circulations of conquest statecraft.

“A Complex Thing”

History itself is a cacophony\(^{23}\) of contested—and a chorus of symbiotic—narrations and systems. In other words, it is a sensibility of time that does not correspond to eschatological, European time. History is an eschatological impossibility. And so, as contemporary narration praxes of decolonization or anticolonialism express, how do they suture or undo conquest time as we currently know it? Central to the doing of refusal is to tell stories that shake up the space and time fixations of both colonization and its resistance, to tell stories that draw identity-making out of the carcass of those borders and onto a dimensional chorus of pliable maps. To guard

\(^{23}\) Byrd, *Transit*. 
against the shake-up falling sedimentary to the bottom of the river and clotting its flow, but instead to stay shook. How do they both resist and speak outside of the dissolve of European historical identity. These stories find tellers who remember and retell. Jakes is such a storyteller.

Storytellers take your story and make it ours. They give intrepid witness to the vastness of human suffering and then pluck from it the most exquisite sparkle. They know the limits of cartography and the tininess of explanation. From the pulverized dust of conquest maps and the debris of single theories, in the face of unstoppable death, they form a contradictory, fraught, uncontainable story big enough for the bigness of life. That bigness forms time through historical relationality, to actual histories. Instead of the primary time-constructing relationship being colonialism, and its rejection, the primary relationship is peoples and ideas.

There is no retrospective relation. In its place is human relation time, which need not overtly reject elimination narratives, because those, too, are eschatological. If there is a beginning, middle, or end, if before and after are human historical truths (and we’re not certain), they are at the very least not definitive. Said differently, Indigeneity defined by discovery and conquest is captive to a singular and supremacist past. Indigeneity, as we hear through Jakes’ story, is infinite and connected to liberatory love of peoples. Relational time then upends conquest systems embedded in and tethered to Trust.

The end of Trust from the state, through termination, ends trusteeship by rejecting the relational and simply severing the state’s asserted responsibility to Indigenous peoples. But the end of Trust

24. McClintock, “Angel of Progress.” This relational/temporal tension is not new. Writing in 1992, Anne McClintock presciently challenged the use of prefixes to the word colonial and its derivations as reifying temporal orientation that “reduces the cultures of peoples beyond colonialism to prepositional time. . . . [and] confers on colonialism the prestige of history proper; colonialism is the determining marker of history” (86). Colonialism is an effect, an experience, and an epiphenomenon of history, not its maker.
also ironically ends the conquest state—a material, legal irony that exposes Trust as a multiply eschatological implement. The individual termination (or sustained threat thereof) of Trust and therefore the Tribal Nation in question reinforces the very real fear of the loss of trusteeship and entrenches eschatological time as a fact of relations.

Wholesale termination of codified sovereignty would simultaneously terminate the state, which requires the objects and subjects of its conquest and control for its own existence. This irony exposes what Barker and Alfred remind us: that the United States and Canada acquire their sovereignty through an ongoing derivative process from Native sovereignty.25 Identifying a dependent sovereignty in Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, Marshall misconstrued the direction of reliance: a colonial state is not a sovereign state without the colonial subjects and Nations whose forced, coerced, and otherwise-made treaties, terms, and relations give that colonial state its definition. A conquest state cannot exist without peoples against which to war.

Similarly, the state cannot incarcerate all Native and/or Black young people. It would then destroy an imperative system through which it insistently plays out its paternal/maternal benevolence claim, its fascist civilizing and democratizing labor and law agendas, its monastic ahistoricism project: its endless conquest war. It would succumb to a swift vertigo, as its first compass—its cardinal combat direction—is foundational, ongoing rape and the structured innocence of it. The school–prison trust, then, represents the state’s inherent inability to be independent and self-determined, its violent reliance on Native young people to make necessary at least its dispossessive maternalism and at most its vast carceral systems: school and prison. To survive, the state must attempt to make conquest infinite, inevitable, and recurring rather than a context or an event. The school–prison trust does this. But just as refusal-relational time

creates a situatedness that recognizes Columbus as both producer of conquest logics and product of conquest logics of the past and Indigeneity, it recognizes Trust as both a producer of subordinate relations and a fatal flaw of a contingent state. Past, present, and future become connected in ways beyond a simple consequentialism. States, as we and others have argued, are both brutal and frail; their attachments are designed to fall apart: wither, explode, and shatter.

In fact, conquest time cannot escape the alinear nature of time, as its own violence animates it. Accordingly, Jakes’ temporal interventions emerge from the lodging of numerous modes of conquest, extending the irony of Trust and conquest itself.

Tribal Nations are a compounded existential internal/external threat to the conquest state’s sovereignty and yet utterly necessary for it and, as such, are an unparalleled crisis around which the United States continues to reformulate—a strikingly eschatological reformulation. Native young people, then, are ungovernable future threats and so the targets of the abrogation of only-ever-imagined liberties by the sustained mergers of militarism, extraconstitutional or warcraft maternalist discipline, and schooling in the contemporary school–prison trust. It is within this complex violence that Jakes feels what it means to be human.

In Trust histories and contemporalities of rape, removal, knowledge desecration, labor exploitation, land usurpation, resource extraction, and the most commonplace capitalist appropriations of Indigeneity, the pattern emerges: from micro to macro, mundane to spectacular, instances of violence supporting relational time and producing context for refusal of feeling.

One of those feelings—a particularly incisive, useful, and beautiful one—is rage. Wrote Baldwin,

To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a state of rage, almost, almost all of the time—and in one’s work. And part of the rage is this: It isn’t only what is happening to you. But it’s what’s happening all around you and all of the time in the face of the most extraordinary and criminal indifference, indifference of most white people in this country, and their ignorance. Now,
since this is so, it’s a great temptation to simplify the issues under the illusion that if you simplify them enough, people will recognize them. I think this illusion is very dangerous because, in fact, it isn’t the way it works. A complex thing can’t be made simple. You simply have to try to deal with it in all its complexity, and hope to get that complexity across.26

Trust Reformulations: Savanna’s Act

“But every so often the government remembered about Indians,” muses Louise Erdrich’s Night Watchman protagonist, Thomas. “And when they did, they always tried to solve Indians, thought Thomas. They solve us by getting rid of us. . . . Emancipated. . . . Freed from being Indians was the idea. Emancipated from their land. Freed from treaties.”27

While rage, joy, and a host of other human affectives might be, in some way, what sovereignty feels like, there is the very present, material power of Trust and the threat of emancipation from it. Emancipation from being.

In this particular moment in the complex history of Trust, we have the sad opportunity to observe the way the state reformulates its Termination—“Missing only the prefix. The ex.”28—power. Plying eschatological time and the ongoing, originary assault on Indigenous women, the state is not only remaking Trust, but also enmeshing it more deeply in a web of repressive logics and apparatuses.

As we write, Savanna’s Act—thwarted by a single member of the U.S. House of Representatives in 2018, reintroduced to the U.S. Senate by Lisa Murkowski, a Republican senator from Alaska, and passed on September 21, 2020, by the House—is being heralded as a long-overdue, important government support aimed at addressing violence against Native women. A celebratory article in the

27. Erdrich, Night Watchman, 80.
28. Erdrich, 90.
Huffington Post proclaims in its first paragraph that the Act will “help law enforcement respond to a horrifying and largely invisible crisis: Hundreds of Native American women are mysteriously disappearing or being murdered.”

Reauthored at a moment when local police forces were encountering the possibility of partial defunding, legal action against their violent conduct, and expanded public scrutiny, this Act begins by entrenching the role, value, and capacity of police agencies (which of course maintain phenomenally diabolic relations with Native people). The Act is one instance of the hegemonic reformulation of the police and so of the state. For this entrenchment project to work—for clarifications, coordinations, and communications to be supported—Indigenous women must continue to be murdered or go missing. Indeed, this Act expanding conquest carceral power requires MMIW, just as Rome required the Sabines, just as boarding schools required “incapable” Native mothers. The state uses a violence it not only inflicts on Indigenous women but in fact, as Simpson details, requires to sustain its political cohesion. It then insists on addressing that violence through the very apparatus that ensures that the trafficking, disappearance, and murder of Native

30. As we know, this was short-lived, and many departments are now enjoying increased funding, as well as post–January 6 sympathy.
31. We spend this section engaging the state’s co-optation of MMIW—a retrenchment of colonial war powers that would recenter the United States even as attempting or pretending to reverse, prevent, or remedy. However, we are mindful of the self-determination of MMIWG2S as people and a movement not only in resistance to state, societal, and interpersonal violence but also as autonomous, agentive, and generative communities. We want to make clear the way MMIW in a conquest frame flattens the systems of violences that are core to the school–prison trust. We remain mindful of the complexities, while recognizing the narrow specificity of our analytic purposes and the limitations of our authorial capacity. For work by Indigenous women on the issue of MMIWG2S, please see Lavell-Harvard and Brant, Forever Loved, and Anderson and Belcourt, Keetsahnak, among many others.
32. Simpson, “State Is a Man.”
women, girls, and two-spirit people is a fait accompli. And in perhaps the most savage conquest tradition, it does so in the oldest of divide-and-conquer strategies. That is, as the world rose up against anti-Black state violence, the state and allied organizations mobilized long-standing forces to devise a heroic need for more policing. We see this particular remaking as noteworthy for its mobilization of tethered conquest systems and sensibilities that are core to the school–prison trust. Echoing boarding school formations, this Act re-members the merger of maternalism, militarism, and missionarism.

Our undertaking here is to draw on the already rich analyses of the state’s production of and collusion in MMIW to make deeper sense of the school–prison trust. How is the apparent act of war in holding young Native people captive to a network of state institutions and ideologies fundamentally an act of war against Native women, and how are these acts intertwined?

**Eschatology and Revisionist History**

Trust and carcerality are legally reshaped and reanchored in Savanna’s Act, while the liberal left mainstream media does the concert work of elevating several horribly false narratives of conquest amnesia and state benevolence and justice:

The measure . . . responds to a devastating situation in which nobody can say, exactly, what is going on. At least 506 indigenous women and girls have gone missing or been murdered in 71 US cities, including more than 330 since 2010, according to a November 2018 report by Urban Indian Health Institute. And that’s likely a gross undercount given the limited or complete lack of data being collected by law enforcement agencies. Ninety-five percent of these cases were never covered by the national media, and the circumstances surrounding many of these deaths and disappearances remain unknown.33

And yet, many can absolutely say exactly what is going on. The circumstances are too well known and terrifyingly visible.34

In “American Arithmetic,” Mojave poet Natalie Diaz35 describes the (mis)use of data and the ways american numbers are an algorithm of (dis)embodiment wielded against Native people:

But in an American room of one hundred people,
I am Native American—less than one, less than whole—I am less than myself. Only a fraction
of a body, let’s say, I am only a hand—

The false absence of numbers is a conquest fugue that inserts convenient massacre ellipses into time. Why do MMIW matter statistically when Native people are made statistically insignificant, irrelevant, elsewhere? And why now? Each woman, girl, femme—every single one comes from peoples. And places. Those peoples and those places can say, exactly, what is going on: the full universe of a life that became a number made insignificant of being registered and recorded or necessary for war projects. That is, until now, as the war strategies shift.

Bringing intrepid clarity to the state’s war on Indigenous women, Audra Simpson opens her mournful article “The State Is a Man: Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders and the Gender of Settler Sovereignty” with “Canada requires the death and so-called ‘disappearance’ of Indigenous women in order to secure its Sovereignty.”36 Speaking specifically of Canada, but with intimate relevance to the United States, she goes on to link the state’s legal determination of Indigenous women’s subjecthood directly with the transfiguration of Tribal Nations and traces that determination forward to the po-

35. Diaz, Postcolonial Love Poem.
political sociology of MMIW as a central component of state projects. *Is this what conquest sovereignty feels like?*

The Indian Act, as with legal moves in the United States, was an “instrument of Indian women’s legal death or redefinition as subjects of white sovereignty.” Through the gendered territory of “out marriage,” in legally disappearing Indigenous women—converting them to “limited” (as women and wives) white subjects—the state not only bolstered its intrusion into land, intervention in sovereignty, and extraction of resources; it also divided Indian women from one another through the subject differentiation of their children (by imposing patrilineal race and political/racial identity) and kidnapped children from Tribes (by making them white) even as they lived with their mothers.

Across north america, extraction, kidnap, and consumption are mobilized by a meticulous assault on Indigenous women. In ongoing conquest, “this sovereign death drive” of the state shapes what “counts as governance itself.”37 And in the state, governance is mechanized through myriad carceral forms of surveillance, exploitation, captivity, and disappearance.

Since the Major Crimes Act of 1885, the United States has asserted its own jurisdictional/juridical power over “major crimes” in Indian Country—including murder, kidnapping, and the thirteen crimes named by federal statute.38 Each new piece of legislation that claims to reduce federal superintendence (from the Civil Rights Act of 1968 to the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010, and now Savanna’s Act in 2020) actually requires Tribes to exercise punitive power in the same carceral manner as the state, resulting in a multipronged, heavily surveilled so-called restoration of rights. In short, to receive this paternalistic *empowerment*, Tribes must consent to relinquishing authority and autonomy over (information on) their citizens and to mimicking certain modes of state rule.

37. Simpson.
Through Savanna’s Act, the state cleaves to colonized groups to reformulate its power and deftly evade the core problem: the constitutive conditions for MMIW work as a vast network of the state’s and allied citizenries’ making. In this schema, the state is not only absolved of responsibility for creating the constitutive conditions, the epiphenomenon requisite for MMIW; it is the arbiter of just response and the voice of remedy. Native women are simultaneously not counted, necessarily counted, cut in half statistically and physically, dismembered, removed, invoked for control, vanished for control, and resurrected as the objects in need of noble state intervention.

However, MMIW is structured into the existence of the state—not an act it undertakes on distinct occasion over the longue durée of its life, not a cluster of crimes on which it intervenes, but rather its structural shape and action, and so the shape and action of some of its private citizenries and institutions, such as the Lovelace Women’s Hospital in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which used the cover of a pandemic to target Native women in labor based on their zip codes. Women in labor whose zip codes matched a master list referred to by staff as the “Pueblos List.” Uncertain numbers of Native mothers and their newborn children were forcibly separated, terrorized through land- or location-based strategies.

Whether it is the Highway of Tears in British Columbia or hospitals in New Mexico or streets and hotels in Alaska where white men

39. Klein, “Survived Abuse.” Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women are a group of people defined by shared devastation, and we cannot even begin to record the grief and trauma visited on women, families, and communities or the urgency of remedy. We want to make clear that we understand that state and individual violence against Indigenous women needs unconditional, resourced attention. The approach to that should center the experiences and concomitant histories of Indigenous women. Our hope here is to contribute to a larger conversation observing how this dynamically violent system is connected to the school–prison trust.

40. Furlow, “Hospital’s Secret.”
from South Africa can find shelter for murder; these are patterned, organized practices in states that mark those places as viable, necessary sites to terrorize Indigenous women, to practice a particular form of terrortory that surfaces its embedded gendered components, to mechanize the murder and disappearance of Native women as a means to plunder and erase place and sovereignty—not only to establish the conditions for this private institution and citizen work but also to invite this work and then occasionally investigate and punish it as a show of both distance from the bloodshed required for the existence of conquest states and the necessary feebleness, or inherent dependence, of Native Nations. States are not dislocated, abstract entities. Their agents and codes work in, on, and through places and peoples.

The meting out of justice in Savanna’s Act is a colonial feedback loop. Justice is a colonial, carceral contrivance—a dependent condition and condition of dependence, to make more conquest, more carcerality, more colonial state. Justice in this sense is not an abstract ideal or transitional practice of and toward self-determination; justice is extracted and reforged as a tool of colonial state power that reifies and deifies conquest powers. And this co-constitution around and through MMIW over euro-political and epistemic millennia can be traced across myriad contextual paths.

Circuitries of Power

In a statement to the Huffington Post, Murkowski proclaimed, “Today is a big victory in our fight to provide justice for victims, healing for their families, and protection for women and children

42. Brayboy and Chin, “Terrortory.”
across the nation.”

Broken motherness (a fiction of the state, foreshadowed by inaugural rape and maternalist movements, a narrow, controlling stand-in for already-narrow womanness: a womb; a reproductive body; a mother of a nation) is an axis of the school–prison trust. And state-sponsored healing is a carceral, missionaristic mechanism, an implement in the ongoing war in which they are coming for the children as a new formulation of inaugural rapes. MMIW must continue for there to be the children of MMIW to protect and heal. But these are not girl-children, who might also be murdered or disappeared. They are completely absent from this formula.

In and across this circuitry of power, the incarceration of Native boys is a signal way in which a conquest nation organized through property relations can claim itself by incorporating sustained sexual assault as a healing practice. Native boys are imagined in this new phase of war as in need of protection—into the maternalist and militarist institutions charading as if designed for child protection: child services, schools, juvenile “treatment” centers, foster care. And they are imagined as lucky for this removal, as they are also maintained as inherently criminal, incapable, uncivilized, and violent offspring of broken mothers. MMIW as the impetus for escalated policing relations and infrastructure are necessary for the continued war against Native boys through mechanisms of state protection.

To legibly lay claim to any recognized rights or resources, or to accept imposed rights in resources in order not to be terminated, Nations that are in a state of perpetual pupilage vis-à-vis their imposed entrustedness to the United States must first partially concede Native women as undifferentiated property and must accept these imposed alliances for the supposed protection of human property—alliances that cement Trust powers through expanded, knitted carceral infrastructure. “For most of American legal history,

rape was framed as a property crime perpetrated against men.45 In Savanna’s Act, this propertization continues, cementing Trust and the wardship of boys. Women are disappeared so property can be made present, and women are disappeared by being made property. The Act enshrines imagined man-state labor through expansion of policing relations, moving people along gendered dimensions of surplus, labor, product, and possession. It is the exuberant fusion of property and discovery.

The phenomenon of MMIW is also meant to suggest something about Indigenous women fit to be (sexually violently) missing and murdered, which in turn affirms their concocted unfitness to be mothers—an iteratively concocted unfitness essential to the removal of children to boarding schools and the removal of children into the school–prison trust. The murder and disappearance of Indigenous women—inflected with rape both on the individual body and writ large—is fundamental to the conquest-authored, fictive brokenness of Native women and, by extension, Native Nations. Women, positioned as mothers of nations, must be broken for nations to be broken, for nations to be dependent and in a state of permanent pupillage. By its nature as an ideological enactment of conquest, Trust has to be (re)created with nations and with children.

But as with all repressions, the murder and disappearance of Indigenous women cannot be total and be effective. It requires women who do not disappear to make disappearance seem abnormal to colonial values, citizens, and governance (and so, again, something peculiar to Indigenous women). Evidentiary of this is that we cannot point to a policy, as there is not a single, dedicated one, and in fact cannot even reference a name for this practice, as it is well hidden in conquest relations. And Savanna’s Act consolidates this by co-opting MMIW for carceral expansion, by using the phenomenon it makes as the object of its remedy. This type of co-

45. Deer, *Beginning and End of Rape*, 17. And, we might add, only those men capable of owning property—originally codified, but still in the dominant imagination as white, landowning, heteronormative, and so on.
optation is counterinsurgent imperialism and allows the conquest state to evade naming its own design. Moreover, it reveals the very present spectacle of absence the state generates in MMIW. But this maneuver is also very specific to gender. It relies on the privacy, secrecy, and invisibility that are the hallmark of violence against women. By co-opting MMIW for the most patriarchal of efforts, the state declares its misogynist, femicidal conquest efforts. This witless declaration indicates the second reason the disappearance of Indigenous women cannot be total to be effective: the state and its corroborating citizens must maintain present women against whom they can enact the twinned and ongoing practice of removal through school–prison trust mechanisms. The school–prison trust is a carceral-as-healing removal of children as property to maintain their mothers’ necessary unpropertying rape and murder—original, current, and future.

Since long before the Sabines met Roman desecration, children have been systematically focal to conquest nation-making. In fact, nations are built and maintained through the creation of children who will become citizens and noncitizens, free and unfree. Nation-states, however, are confounded by persistently unsurrendered children. They endeavor to make them unfree over and against the fact that the refusal inherent in their unsurrendered condition makes the effort to corral them into the dichotomy of freedom/unfreedom unresolvable and destabilizes conquest sovereignty. The statecraft creation of unfree children is among the most powerfully sinister praxes of total community control and is both predictable and irregular—fed by the immediate desires and crises of the particular conquest state. In this way, among others, the school and the prison are sites in the same network as highways, hospitals, and hotels. If one cannot be assimilated into unfreedom, one will be vanished into unfreedom.

Our point here, with Simpson and others, is that the murder and missing of Indigenous women is not an aberrational pattern or disproportionality. Rather, it is as determined a system as state-issued scalping bounties or child removal. The murder and missing
of Indigenous women as state policy is an iterative, nimble coordination among the murdering state and its citizens, who can do that for it, and, in that spirit, scoop up the children of women who are missing and murdered or might be or are understood as fit to be.

The U.S. theater of this war is specific. If the children of the Sabines weren’t Roman, the women were disappeared. And when their children were Roman, the women were disappeared. They were absorbed as a means of ceasing their existence. Under American Trust, law sustains the nation-state, while school sustains the mask of benevolence in an endless war. So, unlike the Sabines, Native women in the United States cannot exist and cannot cease to exist. Cannot make Native children and must make Native children to be captured, incarcerated, and tortured. Schools need MMIW and need Native women. These contradictions form the sovereignty of the United States, and the school–prison trust ensures that the contradictions are never settled.

However, it’s not quite as easy as saying MMIW are the flip-side of maternalists. Not quite as easy as saying contemporary maternalism—or a nationalist role for professional white motherhood—requires the absence or concocted brokenness of Native women. True, school itself is a morality war project that constantly reestablishes the conquest state in reliance on the conquest of Native women. Something of a more sophisticated technique is happening here. Making Native women’s children protected wards or criminals through the imposed resource of policing as protection for a nation’s women (as property innately disappearable and unprotected through self-determination—otherwise, why use colonial policing?) not only allows the maternalist, militarist state to succeed in a vicious mission of protection; it also positions its war as a necessary, civilizing response directly to Native women. In other words, this state arrangement blames Native women for the war on their children.

The war in the form of the school–prison trust is retaliation for making generations of unsurrendered children. The school–prison trust is a war machine and a maternalist military prison for the
insurgency of unsurrendered children. They are prisoners of that very long war, whose start predates the Sabines, which has been fought across contexts, uninterrupted and largely invisibly, and which catalyzes and confirms the conditions for the murder and disappearance of Native women.

Here we see also that Native women are terrifically threatening to the colonial state. Native women living and raising Native children highlights the failure of the school–prison trust both in its assimilation efforts and purposes and in its genocidal efforts and purposes. Despite the war, Indigenous women are living unsurrendered, self-determined lives. State violence is counterinsurgent to perceived threats. The intensity and scale of counterinsurgency are measures of the felt threat. The state’s murderous citizen bond is a counterinsurgent movement against the insurgent threat that Native women pose in their very being.

The potency of that threat cannot be understated. This insurgent threat derives from Native women understood as mothers of self-determined generations, as mothers of sovereign Nations, and moreover (even if denied) as mothers of Nations who confer sovereignty to the colonial nation. This understanding is a foundational threat to conquest, which secretly understands its own generations as necessarily the human products of inaugural rape, ensuring control of place and land. Indigenous motherhood—again, individual and collective, familial and national, bodily and political—that is not catalyzed by colonial rapes—interpersonal and structural, contemporary and historical—is unmitigated in-

46. There is extensive scholarly and creative work by and about Native women from which our narrow project of beginning to map the school–prison trust draws but cannot represent. For further reading, see the work of Kate Shanley, Joanne Barker, Heather Shotton, Amanda Tachine, Mishuana Goeman, Paula Gunn Allen, Beth Piatote, Gretchen Bataille, Kim TallBear, Tsianina Lomawaima, LeAnne Howe, Cherie Dimaline, Jennifer Nez Denetdale, Leslie Marmon Silko, Cutcha Risling Baldy, Jodi Byrd, and many others.
surrection. Thus, Native women’s murder and missingness is a maintenance of the conquest nation.

_Sedition_

Against undefeated, unsurrendered peoples, acts of Congress are acts of war. Often these acts take the form of antimemory ordnance, decimating histories to make new ones. Savanna’s Act asserts surveillance and law over people in the amnesic attention to missing and murdered Indigenous women, an act of war designed to rewrite the story by making it instead an act of nature or an act of god or an act of social deviance. But most tellingly, a private act. By assuming colonial frameworks for sexual violence—as private, individual, pathological—acts (VAWA, the Violence against Women Act, for instance) are able, in their very assertion, to shield what is an act of war. Conquest is hidden, entrenched, and amplified.

The specificity of this particular act of war matters too. It links to gender contestations fastened to the school–prison trust. Matrilineality means little if its governance is patriarchal, patrilineal, neocolonial nationalism, of any or multiple sorts. Trust encourages nation-to-nation dynamics that can rely on misogynist governance, law, and ideology—nations can be invested in the divestment, control, and dispossession of Native women in this framework.

Examples of MMIW as a function of Trust by which some Native women get caught between (extremely unevenly powered) nations are everywhere. One might look at the case of Carmen Tageant, a Nooksak member who was at one point a domestic violence advocate and also a Tribal Council member and whose disenrollment involved complex histories of quantum, census, Trust, resource scarcity, labor competition, and allotment, but were enacted through public sexual harassment and shaming, gendered online abuse, loss of employment, and anti-Filipino racism. Carmen Tageant was

47. Hu, “Disenrollment.”
“dismembered,” disenrolled as a tactic to cut her off from life and limb. It is noteworthy that dismemberment is a practice of femicide. Women are dismembered. Just do a Google search. It is grisly global normativity. The dismemberment of women through disenrollment, exile, banishment, captivity, and otherwise loss of citizenship writ large, particularly as political retaliation scaffolded onto severe sexual harassment and assault, is normal—not aberrational—to contemporary nationalism.

A group of Tobique women who had formed several decades ago to “improve local living conditions for women and children” ultimately organized to dismantle the century of violence engendered by the Indian Act. Mavis Goeres, among their members, said the following of their conditions and their self-determination: “We all knew that no government agency—be it white or be it Indian—was going to tell us we were no longer Indian, when we know we are Indian.”

Not only did Indigenous women suffer disenrollment through an act of war and its shared enforcement across nations; they were also constitutively banished from the collective decision over who makes a community. This wholesale dismemberment, whether or not an individual retains enrollment, is an embargo on being—a very core, private, ontologic disappearance. It has long been the privatization of structural combat against Native women that bricks the armory of the school–prison trust.

In the conquest history of what is called north america, Native children were not only removed as prisoners of war against their mothers and tribes; Native mothers were not only targeted as unfit by military-maternalist orgies of counterinsurgent domination; Native women are not only the targets of the sickening sexual violence and shocking femicidal drives. They also lived at the center of one of the state’s comprehensive racial capitalist experiments,

48. Wilkins and Wilkins, Dismembered.
shielded by the intense gendered privatization strategies of conquest. For instance, some Native women sent their children to residential schools because the collision of “ecocidal” devastation by timber “cartels,” combined with racism in local schools, layered on the widowing devastation of disease emboldened by dilapidated health care, enacted through relegation to reservations and their subjection to poverty, merged with the devastation of seasonal food economies, collapsed with allotments, amplified by fraud and starvation, coupled with coerced and compelled movement into urban areas and houselessness, and entrenched by domestic violence and paternal abandonment, drove Native women into wage labor. This wage labor caused such great poverty that one individual and policy solution was residential schooling, at which children were ostensibly trained in vocational skills—often by doing labor—for further destitute wage labor. “It was widely assumed that vocational education not only suited the ‘native mentality’ but would also help to solve the nation’s so-called ‘Indian problem’ by training the growing number of impoverished and landless Indians for wage labor.” 50 And yet, because that schooling was residential, it was absorbed into the dominant privacy framework and sensibilities of domestic, familial life. This ideology and structure of the residence merged subjugated wage labor, domestic violence, and schooling.

The thrust for wage labor and its ensuing cycle of impoverishment in a devastated conquest context defined a powerful iteration of residential schooling—one that contributes an important blueprint layer for today’s school–prison trust. But it also shows how labor, not only land, is a fundamental and gendered analytic for the school–prison trust. The absenting of labor from the central historical analysis of colonization (and its de-) contributes to a presence in which Indigenous women, in particular, are recognized saliently as bodies, as of nature, and as outside the intensive wage, enslaved, indentured, itinerant, migrant, and convict labor that built vast ar-

eas of what is called the United States. Native women pressed into labor is part of a widespread conquest pattern. For instance, in 1953, Congress passed HCR 108, which terminated 109 tribes. Aspects of removal were tied to labor in the bill. Native people received one-way bus tickets to urban areas across the United States, with promises of well-paying jobs. Once removed, they found low-wage jobs or no jobs, with no way to return home. The confluence of land and labor extraction and exploitation is pronounced, profound, and persistent. Moreover, a rigidly limited, polarizing imagining of Native women relegates what can be dominantly imagined of their labor to conscripted sex work.

The all too familiar trope of a singular focus on land as it relates to Indigenous peoples elides the role of labor in the equation. Extraction drives part of the story. Extracting timber, or gas, or uranium, or coal required not just land from which to take it but also laborers, who would be left with little option but to engage in the high-risk, low-wage work. Land and labor are twinned extraction and exploitation. Removal of peoples and things on and in lands. Boarding or residential schooling was a cost of that labor, a taxation on Native women. And when wage laborers were made surplus, we know that prison expansion mushroomed.51

In the contemporary era of mass surplus labor, Native women are dominantly imagined outside precarious, conquest capitalist economies and so a threat to their very logics and organization. With or without a role in these economies, and despite centuries of assault, Native women have and make self-determined alternatives. What happens when people live aware that conquest capitalism is a contrivance, even if they’re unable to escape it?

The effort to make the conditions for Indigenous women’s suffering is extraordinary. Native motherhood, individual and collective, is conquest sedition.

51. One of the ways Native women in the U.S. go missing and murdered is to be incarcerated in both state and federal prisons, the latter owing often to nation-to-nation relations and causing a removal far from home.
Why does all this matter? We are not writing a book about MMIWG2S or about the complex gender politics of Tribal enrollment. But in a way we are. When women’s citizenship, legal and ontologic, is contingent and threatened, when their very being in an era of advanced racial nationalism and ongoing conquest is always at the will of the sovereign, always in question, and variously an object of war, their children—imagined and real, individual and collective—become proxies for an abject control. Understanding the complex assault on Native women over time and their resistance to it maps the road to the current school–prison trust.

It is a conquest counterinsurgency entangled with and undergirding the school–prison trust, illuminating the ways in which the incarceration of young Native people is a tentacle of the same beast that murders and makes missing their collective mothers. Refusal relationalities and their shared memories and temporalities do not mitigate the bloodthirsty, ruthless impact of Trust, but they do *relume human unities*. They do disclose the lies of Trust. They do reveal that brute force is never smart and only pretends to be through the revisionist, monastic ideological histories, short and long, that support its regime. Trust is perhaps only a *more sophisticated technique* through the violent accidents and deliberate acts that are the hallmark of white supremacy and its clumsy claims to hindsight strategy.

Refusal memory is a practice of self-determination, the making of a world and a word. Refusal memory assumes that time is an agentive subject, one that travels through us, not we through it. Our relationships give it sanctuary and form and welcome it to our intimacies. What enlivens time is the movement of people and ideas. Relational time takes their shape. Conquest time is anchored leaden to conquered place (est. dates, names, inaugural rapes, soundtracks, and monuments), paternalism, patriarchy, and patriotism constituting the *parens patriae* of Trust.

One day when we’re all gone
and you think we’ve disappeared.
You’ll realize we were stolen. The earth
   will continue to split herself open in mourning.

   The morning sun will no longer rise because you failed
to protect those who are so powerful they’re in sync with the moon.

   And soon, hurricane, tsunami high waves will cover the land
in the water you didn’t care to protect because

you thought oil was more precious than life.

—TANAYA WINDER, “We Were Stolen”\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{52} Winder, \textit{Why Storms}, 17.
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