

The Transnational Consequences of Antiblack Racism and Settler Colonialism on  
Black Women: From Turtle Island to the Jawara Tribe

The Jawara people of the Andaman Islands live under jurisdiction of the Indian government and are recognized as a legal and social ‘Adivasi’ group subject to an ongoing process of colonization that materializes in the form governmental neglect and isolation as well as sexual and monetary exploitation. ‘Adivasi’ is a category that refers to the tribes of the Indian subcontinent in South Asia and is both a legal and social category. While Adivasi also refers to nonblack indigenous peoples under jurisdiction of the Indian government, the Jawara people are phenotypically black and are thought to have left Africa and directly migrated to the Andaman Islands via boats, thus being genetically and culturally distinct from South and East Asians. The Jawara people have history as a hunter and forager fisherman society and have a reputation as warriors and defenders. The Great Andamanese tribes have been depopulated by overuse of alcohol and opium, as well as the process of settlement. The women of the Jawara are subject to rampant sexual violence, and the exposition of the Jawara to outside society has resulted in economic and physical exploitation of Jawara people.<sup>1</sup>

When discussing the struggles of the Jawara people, there are significant similarities demonstrated by the black and native women of Turtle Island. Antiblackness and settler colonialism are global phenomena that influence the lives of black women. While public discourse within Western academia often centers on these modalities of violence within the United States, there are unmistakable parallels between the experiences of the Jawara women of the Andaman Islands and the experiences of black and native women in the continental Americas. These technologies of violence materialize in the forms of geographic and spatial isolation of black native women as well as tropes applied to black women (such as the hyper

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<sup>1</sup> Yoruba, C. (2017, August 31). "We don't need your world": The Jarawa people's fight for self-determination. Retrieved from <https://thisisafrika.me/politics-and-society/dont-need-world-jarawa-peoples-fight-self-determination/>.

sexualization of black women's bodies). These are a couple 'universal' technologies of violence that are globally applicable, and thus important when attending to the application of violence to black women globally. The ability to theorize violence is the first step in the process of developing ways to acknowledge global antiblackness and settler colonialism and decenter U.S. centric narratives that encourage American exceptionalism in public discussion.

Antiblackness and settler colonialism are often posited as co-constitutive antagonisms upon which the United States is founded and are essential systems of power when theorizing the formation of black female gender.<sup>2</sup> The work of Tiffany Lethabo King, particularly *In the Clearing*, understands the initial inception of the United States as a process of 'clearing' (as an action or verb) where the native is subject to genocide to produce space for the plantation as site where the black body experiences gratuitous violence (violence in excess). Gratuitous violence can be understood in conjunction with Fanon's psychoanalytic conception of the human, where white subjectivity is formed through the process of negation (particularly, the negation of blackness).<sup>3</sup> The enactment of gratuitous violence is inherently tied to the process of clearing. It is at that site of settlement – in the clearing – where 'Native space and time is obliterated...and the settler comes to know himself and gains spatial coordinates' and thus is able to gain coherency and subjectivity.<sup>4</sup> Tiffany King theorizes the black female body as the site at which one can theorize the intersection of both slavery and settler colonialism because 'both the Slave

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<sup>2</sup> King, Tiffany. "Settler Colonialism and African Americans." *African American Studies*, 2019, doi:10.1093/obo/9780190280024-0071.

<sup>3</sup> Wilderson, Frank B. *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.s. Antagonisms*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010, pp. 58-9 Print.

<sup>4</sup> King, Tiffany. "Settler Colonialism and African Americans." *African American Studies*, 2019, pp. 39, doi:10.1093/obo/9780190280024-0071.

Master's need for bodies and the Settler's need for space required the production of the Black female slave body as a unit of unending property' that is crucial to the process of making space where white human subjectivity is formulated.<sup>5</sup>

Black feminist studies have provided an intervention into male-centric African American Studies to conceptualize black female bodies as experiencing an impetus for reproduction. Because the black woman's body, sexuality, and reproduction is regulated on the plantation to produce the subjects of labor (children), the black female body is uniquely the signifier for expansion and the development of modernity. As said by Tiffany King, 'When the Settler surveys the Black female body, the Settler can imagine their land, territory, property and spatial coordinates expanding. The construction of the Black female slave body as fungible and a site of accumulation is as much a product of the Settler's imagination as it is the slave masters.'<sup>6</sup> Black feminist studies attempt to grapple with the management of black women's reproduction and sexuality to produce children that can be slaves, thus reconceptualizing how property is understood in context of black women.<sup>7</sup> While *In the Clearing* focuses on grappling with the formation of the United States and Canada (Turtle Island), I believe these analytics are valuable globally, and provide a necessary intervention into Americentric discourses regarding antiblack violence and settler colonialism.

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<sup>5</sup> King, Tiffany. "Settler Colonialism and African Americans." *African American Studies*, 2019, Abstract, doi:10.1093/obo/9780190280024-0071.

<sup>6</sup> King, Tiffany. "Settler Colonialism and African Americans." *African American Studies*, 2019, Abstract, doi:10.1093/obo/9780190280024-0071.

<sup>7</sup> King, Tiffany. "Settler Colonialism and African Americans." *African American Studies*, 2019, pp. 23, doi:10.1093/obo/9780190280024-0071.

Within public discourse, theorization of antiblackness and settler colonialism are often discussed in U.S. centric contexts. Discussions of race in the United States often begin from a query into the ‘current state of America’ as even the acknowledgement of racial bias attributes the existence of antiblackness and settler colonialism to the origins of the United States. While it is certainly true that the foundational history of the United States is crucial to the discussions of antiblackness in America, these discourses often theorize racism and colonialism as unique to the United States, creating an ‘American Exceptionalism’ that fetishizes other nations – especially those outside of Europe- as utopian countries without the pervasive ‘race problem’ that the United States has. This is demonstrated by the proliferation of jokes and earnest sentiments about ‘moving to Canada’ after the presidential win of Donald Trump in 2016 who quickly became a signifier among liberals as representing the ‘worst of America’ due to his overt racism and patriarchal values that he held.<sup>8</sup> U.S. exceptionalism in conceptions of race exceeds the constraints of mere jokes, resulting in the issuing in visas rising. Between 2007 to 2016, the number of student visas granted to Americans increased from 6,033 to 7,045. The week that Trump was elected, Google searches for “college in Canada” spiked substantially from 25 to 100 million hits.<sup>9</sup> This presumes that Canada does not ascribe to the same antiblack and settler colonial values that shape the process of policy making within the United States.

Afropessimism has been criticized as only being able to theorize the consequences of the Middle Passage on the West, as well as the interactions of slavery with settler colonialism in

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<sup>8</sup> Schwab, Kristin. “These Americans Moved to Canada for Political Reasons. They Don’t Regret It.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 19. April, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Cain, Patrick. “About 2,000 More Americans than Normal Have Moved to Canada Since Trump’s Election.” *Global News*, Global News, 21 Aug. 2018.

context of Turtle Island.<sup>10</sup> I find this to be problematic and incorrect, especially due to the extent that Afropessimism depends upon scholars like Fanon and Césaire who are speaking in context of Algeria and Martinique respectively.<sup>11</sup> The inability to recognize Afropessimist theorization as not confined to the United States is not only patronizing but dangerous and dismissive, creating conditions of U.S. exceptionalism that prove unable to understand the United States as merely another nation within a global antagonistic structure of antiblackness and settler colonialism.

Despite the constraints of societal and academic imagination, I argue that the black feminist theorization is globally applicable outside of the contexts of Turtle Island. It is of importance to discuss the ways in which tropes of black women are continuous, and how they subsequently overdetermined the scripting of black women globally. The application of black feminist understandings of power to global indigenous and black movements provides the possibility of fostering acknowledgement and formulation of linkages between black indigenous folks around the world. Theorization of antiblackness and settler colonialism as a question of identity politics compartmentalizes ‘black woman’ and ‘native woman’ as separate identities, erasing these subjectivities of those who occupy multiple positions and obfuscating the ways in which settler colonialism and antiblackness work together to create conditions of violence. Through analyzing these systems as structures that exist globally, we can provide a discursive shift that understands racial capitalism, settler colonialism, and antiblackness as structural conditions that influence our societal consciousness, while helping us attend to subjectivities that are often neglected both domestically and abroad. This is not an attempt to dismiss the

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas, Greg. "Afro-Blue Notes: The Death of Afro-pessimism (2.0)?" *Theory & Event*, vol. 21 no. 1, 2018, p. 282-317. *Project MUSE* [muse.jhu.edu/article/685979](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/685979).

<sup>11</sup> Wilderson, Frank B. *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010, pp. 58-9 Print.

importance of domestic analysis when theorizing black feminism. Particularly, the violence that black native women experience on the Native reservation is an important analytic to look at the application of violent tropes that are applied to black and native women in the continental United States.

The under-theorization of black native women in the United States – both on and off the reservation- is a political decision that is justified by the clearing. White ‘human’ subjectivity gains coherency via the assimilation of the Native to make space for the plantation, where black women’s bodies are viewed as a source of labor, sexual pleasure, and as a site of gratuitous violence.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it is consistent with the processes of settler colonialism and antiblackness that Afro-Indian societies are denied from the archive for analysis and interrogation.<sup>12</sup> While I do not attempt to fully explain the erasure of Afro-Indian communities by academia, legalism, and public discourse, the treatment of black native women on the reservation is essential when theorizing geographic and spatial isolation as a technology of settler antiblack violence. One of the biggest issues discussed within Native scholarship is the treatment of Native people – particularly Native women – on the reservation. It is acknowledged that alcoholism, suicide rates, and health issues such as obesity and infant mortality (three times the national rate) are significant concerns for Native people on reservations.<sup>13</sup> The suicide rate in particular is twice the national rate, and teen suicide on the reservation is 4 times the national rate. Former residents of the Salt River reservation recount that their tribe “has the highest rate of diabetes in the world,

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<sup>12</sup> Jones, Rhett S. “Orphans of the Americas: Why the Existence of Zambo Societies Has Been Denied.” *Journal of African American Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2004, pp. 3–17., doi:10.1007/s12111-004-1010-4.

<sup>13</sup> “Native Americans Who Grew Up On Reservations Share What It's Really Like.” *BrainJet.com*, [www.brainjet.com/world/1723372/native-americans-who-grew-up-on-reservations-share-what-its-really-like/](http://www.brainjet.com/world/1723372/native-americans-who-grew-up-on-reservations-share-what-its-really-like/).

or at least it did when I wrote my capstone research paper on it for nursing school. We spend a lot of money on hemodialysis.”<sup>11</sup> Statistics are consistent with these narratives. Diabetes is eight times the national rate, and it is estimated that 50% of the population over 40 has diabetes.<sup>11</sup> In addition to rampant health concerns, the unemployment rate on the Buffalo County South Dakota Reservation is between 80 and 90%, and per capita income is only about 4 thousand dollars a year. Drinking abuse is estimated to be as high as 80%, and 1 in 4 infants is born addicted.<sup>14</sup> There are also high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, unique to Natives who live on the reserve. Children growing up on the reservation remember seeing SWAT team shoot-outs, cops performing manhunts, and even the brutal murder of animals.<sup>11</sup> The geographic isolation of the reservation is acknowledged to be a proximate cause of this violence that enables these issues to be neglected by white suburbia, with children who grew up on Arizona reservations noting that “There are far more issues on a reserve than say, 2 miles down the road in white suburbia”.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, living on the reservation is accepted to be difficult and a source of poverty and hardship with austere living conditions that are further enabled by the isolation and sequestration of indigenous peoples from the broader communities of the United States. Indigenous peoples are given legal sovereignty over the reservation, resulting in judicial and legislative justification for the neglect of people on the reservation. The resulting guise of indigenous sovereignty manifests in the form of underfunding indigenous police departments and social services. The native reservation is often used by modernity to create illusions of indigenous self-determination, demonstrating how the isolation of indigenous peoples is used as a technology of anti-indigenous violence. On reservations, electric companies often pull electric meters during the winter before snowstorms, while local grocery stores sell rotten produce.

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<sup>14</sup> “Disparities: Fact Sheets.” Newsroom, [www.ihs.gov/newsroom/factsheets/disparities](http://www.ihs.gov/newsroom/factsheets/disparities).

Children who grew up on the Standing Rock reservation recount having to “drive sometimes up to 3 hours away to fill up water tanks”.<sup>11</sup> The system of racial capitalism also influences these conditions, where outsiders come into reservations and start up businesses with inflated prices.<sup>11</sup> Thus, poverty and structural disparity is further enabled by the conditions of isolation. On a reservation in Buffalo County, South Dakota (home of the Hunkpati Dakota Siouan Natives) most Natives do not have vehicles necessary for transport outside of the reservation, nor do they want to leave – the history and ongoing project of colonialism disincentivizes that movement. The physical isolation of the reservation makes it almost impossible to obtain jobs that are economically feasible, due to the cost of gas and a vehicle that a lot of Natives on the reservation do not have.<sup>11</sup> This experience of geographic isolation is not unique to the Hunkpati Dakota Siouan Natives. On the Salt River and Gila River reservations near Phoenix, Arizona, Native children recounted that they only saw one small gas station/grocery store and smoke shop.<sup>11</sup>

Black Native women growing up on the reservation exist at a unique intersection that is subject to antiblack misogynoir and settler colonial violence. The isolation of black native women on the reservation demonstrates how segregation serves as a material tool of white settler society to maintain the structures of antiblackness and settler colonialism. The subject position is under analyzed and important to theorize the unique process of the clearing. In addition to the conditions experienced of living on the reserve, black women experience ostracization from nonblack native people who also live on the reservation. Roicia Banks, a black and native woman from Arizona, experienced ‘authenticity testing’ of her Native identity, where, as a black native woman, she had to constantly prove she was ‘native enough’ to be considered truly Native

American. Banks grew up on a Hopi reservation.<sup>15</sup> In school on the reservation, she could recall experiencing significant antiblackness. She was accustomed to bullying, where kids would taunt her, saying that she had ‘sheep’s hair’ and call her the N word – both in class and outside of school. Despite the perception of native reservations being spaces with separation from the coloniality of the greater United States, Roicia Banks can recall her school history books and popular culture pathologizing black culture, positing it as inferior.<sup>13</sup> These lived experiences of black native women demonstrate how the native reserve is not a space that can be considered distinct from the colonial atmospheres that are imposed by the co-constitutive systems of antiblackness and settler colonialism. While the geographic isolation of the reserve is portrayed to be a space of refuge or safety for native and indigenous people from the outside world among political liberals and moderates alike, the guise of indigenous sovereignty is demonstrated to be a tool of settler colonialism that enables the United States federal government to move the Native out of sight and out of mind from the collective Eurocentric hegemonic cultural imagination. This geographic isolation is a technology of violence against black native women. Radmilla Cody is a Navajo, Black and Native American singer whose African American phenotype has been subject to scrutiny and violence in the public discussion.<sup>16</sup> As a child, she can recall being ‘singled out’ for her phenotypically black features on the Navajo reservation where she grew up, similar to the experiences of Roicia Banks. She was often asked to choose between her identities, which she refused to do. The experiences of Black Native women are important to consider because in addition to the structural conditions of living on a reservation, Black Native women

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<sup>15</sup> “As A Black Native American, Arizona Woman Had To Prove She Was 'Native Enough'.” *KJZZ*, 13 Mar. 2017, [kjzz.org/content/444529/black-native-american-arizona-woman-had-prove-she-was-native-enough](http://kjzz.org/content/444529/black-native-american-arizona-woman-had-prove-she-was-native-enough).

<sup>16</sup> Jacobsen-Bia, Kristina. “Radmilla’s Voice: Music Genre, Blood Quantum, and Belonging on the Navajo Nation.” *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2014, pp. 385–410., doi:10.14506/ca29.2.11.

experience ostracization from their own communities, as well as the structural conditions of settler colonialism.

However, geographic isolation as a technology of violence cannot be exceptionalized among black women in the United States to only be considered applicable to Black Native women. The geographic isolation of black women as a tool of violence is demonstrated to apply to black non-native communities that are pathologized, which reflects a historic and ongoing trend. Historically, the plantation served as a site of geographic and spatial isolation, where slavery was enacted with practices of capture that reinforced carcerality and the pathologization of blackness via practices of geography.<sup>17</sup> Transatlantic slavery used the processes of constraint and immobilization to capture Africans. Africans were separated on slave ships from their tribes via physical isolation from each other and were forcibly removed from Africa to produce enslavement as a process of natal alienation. The ‘belly of the slave ship’ is a well-known cultural motif that is recognized for the gratuitous violence enacted against the black body who is present. The violence that occurred against the enslaved in the belly of the ship was senseless, where slaves were made to sleep in their own feces and chained for weeks to months on end. Enslaved Africans were thrown overboard if they were not seen as yielding a financial benefit to the enslavers, as exemplified on the *Zong* slave ship, where more than one hundred and thirty Africans were thrown overboard in order for the Royal African Company (RAC) that financed the journey to gain the insurance money on each slave.<sup>18</sup> Even when the enslaved African people

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<sup>17</sup> “Carceral Matters: An Introduction.” *Spatializing Blackness: Architectures of Confinement and Black Masculinity in Chicago*, by RASHAD SHABAZZ, University of Illinois Press, 2015, pp. 1–10. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt16ptnhh.5](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt16ptnhh.5).

<sup>18</sup> Burroughs, R. (2010). "Eyes on the Prize: Journeys in Slave Ships Taken as Prizes by the Royal Navy". *Slavery & Abolition*. **31** (1): 99–115. [doi:10.1080/01440390903481688](https://doi.org/10.1080/01440390903481688).

survived the journey to Europe and the Americas biologically, the treatment was austere and dehumanizing based around the physical capture and isolation of the enslaved that was intended to construct the logics of carcerality that are reflected in modernity. These technologies of violence were continued on the plantation via the creation of the ‘big house’, the ‘slave quarters’, the ‘auction block’ and the ‘field’. Slave-owners used tools like ‘iron muzzles’ which fit over the heads of slaves and locked their mouths, making it impossible to speak or eat. The plantation gained its power via its ability to spatially isolate enslaved subjects and make the spaces outside of the plantation places that were illegal for black folks to occupy. This illegality of occupation can be seen today with the formation of primarily white neighborhoods, where black folks are often construed as ‘out of place’ and are subject to greater scrutiny by police and nonblack publics. In 2015, documents were leaked demonstrating the use of an application called ‘SketchFactor’ inviting users to report “sketchy” subjects in the primarily white and wealthy affluent Georgetown shop area.<sup>19</sup> ‘Sketch Factor’ was used as a tool of racial profiling, where black people were usually reported as ‘sketchy’. Comments included phrasing by an American Apparel worker such as “3 female. 1 male strong smell of weed. All African American. Help please.” The artifacts of the group chat reflect the disparate racialization of areas like Georgetown, where only 3.7% of the residents are black. The impetus for the exclusion of black subjects is representative of a racial anxiety for the geographic isolation of blackness under the guise of protecting white people. The product of spatial isolation is a site where black folks

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<sup>19</sup> McCoy, Terrence. “The Secret Surveillance of ‘Suspicious’ Blacks in One of the Nation’s Poshest Neighborhoods.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 13 Oct. 2015, [www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/the-secret-surveillance-of-suspicious-blacks-in-one-of-the-nations-poshest-neighborhoods/2015/10/13/2e47236c-6c4d-11e5-b31c-d80d62b53e28\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/the-secret-surveillance-of-suspicious-blacks-in-one-of-the-nations-poshest-neighborhoods/2015/10/13/2e47236c-6c4d-11e5-b31c-d80d62b53e28_story.html).

experience violence that can be kept out of public discourse by white people and hegemonic narratives of issues considered relevant to society.

Similar to the conditions of the reserve and plantation that experience simultaneous over policing of black and native movement and autonomy and neglect of black and native health and living conditions, primarily black neighborhoods experience that both over policing and neglect display a dismissal of black and native life. This can manifest in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder for children who live in these neighborhoods. Children growing up in Chicago neighborhoods that are primarily black are diagnosed with rates of PTSD that are equivalent to the rates of PTSD seen in war veterans.<sup>20</sup> Geographic isolation thus enables but is not the cause of these conditions of violence that are experienced outside of the reservation, demonstrating how black and native bodies experience antiblack neglect and over policing. This is seen by instances of police brutality, SWAT raids, and the simultaneous medical experimentation and neglect of black women that are troped as experiencing less pain.<sup>21</sup> The systemic murder of black women such as Sandra Bland, Rekia Boyd, and Atatiana Jefferson demonstrate the logics of carcerality by police who perceived of these black women as threats.<sup>22,23</sup> The dehumanization of

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<sup>20</sup> Beckett, Lois. "The Best Reporting on PTSD in Children Exposed to Violence." *ProPublica*, 9 Mar. 2019, [www.propublica.org/article/the-best-reporting-on-children-with-post-traumatic-stress](http://www.propublica.org/article/the-best-reporting-on-children-with-post-traumatic-stress).

<sup>21</sup> Roeder, Amy. "America Is Failing Its Black Mothers." *Harvard Public Health Magazine*, 21 Dec. 2018, [www.hsph.harvard.edu/magazine/magazine\\_article/america-is-failing-its-black-mothers/](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/magazine/magazine_article/america-is-failing-its-black-mothers/).

<sup>22</sup> Crepeau, Megan. "Chicago Cop Dante Servin Was Acquitted of Fatally Shooting Rekia Boyd in a Controversial Ruling. Now He Wants the Criminal Charges Erased from His Record." *Chicagotribune.com*, 14 Oct. 2019, [www.chicagotribune.com/news/criminal-justice/ct-ex-chicago-cop-dante-servin-expunge-charges-20191014-x5jhru6aqbelvfqq2tiiqlwmnq-story.html](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/criminal-justice/ct-ex-chicago-cop-dante-servin-expunge-charges-20191014-x5jhru6aqbelvfqq2tiiqlwmnq-story.html).

<sup>23</sup> Bleiberg, Jake. "White Fort Worth Officer Resigns after Killing Black Xavier Grad in Her Own Home." *NOLA.com*, 14 Oct. 2019, [www.nola.com/news/crime\\_police/article\\_3c90839a-eea4-11e9-ad20-b36594b356ea.html](http://www.nola.com/news/crime_police/article_3c90839a-eea4-11e9-ad20-b36594b356ea.html).

these black women is enabled by the perception of black women ‘belonging’ in spaces distinct from the spaces that are occupied by white people.

Geographic isolation is a consistent technology of violence that is utilized to subjugate the Jawara tribe of India and is used to enable nonblack settler voyeurism. The Jawara people live on reservations in attempts to geographically isolate themselves to maintain a lifestyle based in tradition and tribal understandings of the world. However, the Indian army simultaneously justifies the neglect and exploitation of the Jawara people by ignoring reports of drugging and alcoholism, while frequently bringing in tourists who wish to observe the tribe for bribes. This further enables the depiction of Jawara as ‘exotic’ and ‘animal’ and can be mirrored to the experiences and orientation of nonblack settlers towards Black Native women on the reservation as well as towards black neighborhoods that are often praised for their art and culture while the white gaze maintains a fetishistic relationship to the cultural capital that is gained via the production of black art. The fetishized notion of geographic regions cannot be considered distinct from the project of racial capitalism that is enacted upon these geographic zones.<sup>24</sup> Legal documents and narrative experiences of tourists on the Jawara reservation recount being charged extremely high prices by police officers and Indian Army officials to shuttle people back and forth to Jawara reservations.<sup>1</sup> Racial tourism is a further demonstration of how white voyeurism is enabled by the geographic and spatial isolation of black communities. While the reservation is often understood among Native studies to be a site of spatial isolation where violence occurs, I argue that this understanding of spatial isolation must be expanded to encompass non-native indigenous communities and black communities. In addition to the reservation as a site of

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<sup>24</sup> Pierce, Joseph, and Katherine B. Hankins. “The City as ‘Dissonant’ Fetish: Urban (Re)Production, Gentrification, and the Conceptual Limits of Commodity Fetishism.” *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, vol. 109, no. 5, 2019, pp. 1529–1540., doi:10.1080/24694452.2018.1545562.

gratuitous violence that is enacted in excess upon Black and Native bodies, the spatial isolation that produces the plantation, the prison, the ghetto, the barrio, and the reservation are sites of simultaneous fetishization through which racial capital finds profit and is able to maintain itself. This is demonstrated through the processes of tourism on the plantation, the reservation, and black neighborhoods. The plantation today is often visited as a historical artifact of the past, but simultaneously hailed as a site of ‘beautiful houses’ and sprawling, gorgeous fields.<sup>25</sup> Often, these discussions do not even include discussions of slavery, and when they do, they evoke feelings of white guilt that are posited as ‘defamatory’ to slave owners and ‘Southern history’.<sup>26</sup> The white-washed romanticization of the plantation is representative of how spaces where black women experience violence can be rendered fetishized, signifying the disregard for black life that experiences gratuitous violence. The romanticization of black geographies is also seen in black neighborhoods with the process of gentrification. Despite the over policing of black communities, black neighborhoods are often posited as ‘cultural’ and with ‘rich history’ rendering them museum exhibits to be observed by outsiders in a voyeuristic process.<sup>23</sup> As Black Wall Street is blown up when black people try to gain economic autonomy, these spaces are reduced to objects for consumption. The descriptor of black neighborhoods is then used to incentivize gentrification, where black women are used as props to represent cultural competency. That is not to make the claim that gentrification can entirely be divorced from the economic structures of racial capitalism. However, it is possible that the psychological impetus

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<sup>25</sup> Eubanks, Caroline, and Caroline Eubanks Caroline Eubanks. “Should We Visit Plantations?” *This Is My South*, 8 Jan. 2019, [www.thisismysouth.com/should-we-visit-plantations/](http://www.thisismysouth.com/should-we-visit-plantations/).

<sup>26</sup> Brockell, Gillian. “Some White People Don't Want to Hear about Slavery at Plantations Built by Slaves.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 14 Aug. 2019, [www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/08/08/some-white-people-dont-want-hear-about-slavery-plantations-built-by-slaves/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/08/08/some-white-people-dont-want-hear-about-slavery-plantations-built-by-slaves/).

for the co-constitutive fetishization and phobia of blackness is what shapes the ways in which racial capitalism manifests itself. These systems can be extended to explain the occupation of the reservation with processes of tourism that occur on both Native American and Jawara reservations. Tourism often feeds the exoticization of indigenous populations that are considered no different than zoo animals or the landscape, and thus dehumanizes the objects of fetish. Thus, the process of antiblack settler violence must not be understood solely through phobic interactions, but also through philia of both black spaces (geographic regions) and bodies. The Black Native *body* in addition to geographic space uniquely experiences psycho-sexual fetishization. In Franz Fanon's groundbreaking book, *Black Skin White Masks*, Fanon is able to note the moment of epidermalization through which blackness is interpolated. As he sits on a train, he can recall a small white boy point at him, and say "Look, a Negro!" rendering that word a racial slur because of the associations that the child made with his epidermalized – i.e. visual – appearance.<sup>27</sup> This, Fanon explains, is a psychological reaction that is a result of living within the world that overloads the psyche with associations of blackness. The moment of epidermalization is theorized to be the reason why white women cross the street or lock their car doors in the presence of a black man.<sup>24</sup> While this racial signifier is often discussed in phobic terms, there is also a philic component of the white psyche that manifests in the form of exploitation. Philia works in conjunction with racial capitalism to produce psychic and physical violence against black-native bodies and manifests most evidently in context of the body of a black woman.

The hyper-sexualization of the black woman's body is evidenced as a continuous trope applied to black women through examples in both the United States and the Jawara tribe. The

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<sup>27</sup> Fanon, Frantz, and Charles Lam. Markmann. *Black Skin, White Masks*. "The Lived-Experience of the Black Man" Pluto Press, 1986.

trope manifests in the form of exploitation and sexual violence against black women. In 2015, the Jawara tribe was brought to the forefront of discussion within Indian society when a video was leaked that depicted an Indian army official in uniform bribing a Jawara woman to take off her clothes and engage in ‘sexual’ dancing for food.<sup>28</sup> Both the police officer’s desire to see the Jawara woman dance and the societal discourse surrounding the dance of the Jawara woman as inherently sexual represents the process of ‘adultification’ that is imposed upon black women, where black girls are never associated with ‘innocence’ or ‘childhood’ and instead associated with adult-like maturity. This process of adultification is inextricably linked with the hyper-sexualization of black women’s bodies, because while white women are granted a child-like innocence, black women’s bodies are scripted as sexual and ‘more mature’ for their ages to justify sexual exploitation.<sup>29</sup> That process of hyper-sexualization and adultification is demonstrated by the legal and societal treatment of Jawara women by settler nation states such as India as well as the European explorers who first captured Jawara women, and deemed them objects of sexuality and conquest.<sup>1</sup> In 2014, the first public interview with the Jawara was conducted since their initial voluntary contact with outsiders with an unnamed man from the tribe who wished to maintain anonymity for his safety and the safety of those who helped give the interview.<sup>30</sup> The Jawara were described as beginning to come out of the jungle about sixteen

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<sup>28</sup> Jarawa man speaks out against sexual abuse of young women. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/jarawa-man-speaks-out-against-sexual-abuse-of-young-women-43409>.

<sup>29</sup> Epstein, Rebecca, et al. “Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls Childhood.” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2017, doi:10.2139/ssrn.3000695.

<sup>30</sup> Chamberlain, Gethin. “Jarawa Tribe Now Face Sexual Abuse by Outsiders on Andaman Islands.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 1 Feb. 2014, [www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/01/andaman-islands-jarawa-sex-abuse-outsiders](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/01/andaman-islands-jarawa-sex-abuse-outsiders).

years prior to this, and described the sexual abuse of girls from the tribe as systemic, saying that the “outside boys press [the girls] lots...and press them using hands and nails, when the girls get angry.” The interview was notable and was published days after eight Jawara women were kidnapped by men who landed at the shores of Jawara territories and were sexually exploited in 2014. The systemic nature of the sexual abuse by outsiders is emblematic of an orientation towards Jawara women that justifies their sexual abuse and the continuation of that sexual abuse with legal apathy on part of the Indian government.

The exoticization of Jawara women is part in parcel with the project of adultification, where young Jawara women are denied the perception of innocence and childhood, which is replaced with the simultaneous depiction of Jawara women as ‘tribal’ and ‘primitive’ for their hunter-gather lifestyles characterized by a refusal of technology- thus incompetent and unintelligent- but as both sexual and constantly desiring sexuality. There is a distinct paradox within the simultaneous hyper sexualization and framing of the black indigenous woman as ‘primitive’ and ‘unintelligent’ that exposes the gratuitous violence against the bodies of black women: while the hyper sexualization of the bodies of black women is associated with the process of adultification (as the sexual is a realm restricted as synonymous with ‘adult’ within society) the framing of the black indigenous woman as primitive and unintelligent, in need of guidance from the modern western world imposes a child-like and paternalistic imposition onto the bodies of black women, demonstrating the infantilization of black indigenous women. This paradoxical orientation begs the question of what it means for black indigenous women to be infantilized, while they are also denied the perception of innocence. The fetishization of someone who is deemed to be a child, is a logic of sexual violence because these are subjects who – under the logic of modernity – are not capable of consent. Thus, the sexual violation of black

indigenous women is normalized and desired by nonblack subjects. The Jawara tribe's exoticization is exploited by the Indian Army and other entities outside of the Jawara reservation, as demonstrated by the societal perception of the Jawara. Because of the phenotypically dark features that Jawara people display as a result of their direct African heritage, that is often a direct object of discussion within the public discourse of Indian society. Photographs of Jawara women are sold as postcards outside of the Jawara reservation that depict half-naked Jawara women as "iinen chadda" which translates to "shed of the fair skinned". With this imagery, the Jawara woman is rendered an object of fascination and desire, due to their black appearances and tribal lifestyles.<sup>31</sup>

The philia of blackness cannot be separated from the treatment of black women globally as museum exhibits that are denied the right to their own narratives and tellings of the world. The first accounts of Africans by European colonizers who sought out African populations for enslavement displayed a curiosity towards the African and the tribal lifestyle deemed 'primitive' in contrast with European ideals. 'Black' as a color was already associated with demonic, and 'white' was a signifier for angelic. Blackness was scripted onto the African body as a signifier, but the hyper sexualization of black women's bodies is evident even in those initial European accounts that focused on the buttocks and breasts of African women and described them as large. This initial fascination with the bodies of black women continued with the enslavement of Sara Baartman who was kidnapped and displayed in museums for the purpose of white enjoyment. When she died, her body was preserved for science and stored in a museum. The dehumanization of black women with the process of adultification is based around the same philic desires to

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<sup>31</sup> Halder, Debarati, and K. Jaishankar. "Online Victimization of Andaman Jarawa Tribal Women: An Analysis of the 'Human Safari' Youtube Videos (2012) and Its Effects." *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 54, no. 4, 2014, pp. 673–688., doi:10.1093/bjc/azu026.

observe and sexualize the bodies of black women, and is demonstrated in the United States today. This can be observed through the high rates of black girls being forced into sex trafficking and high rates of sexual violence against black women where black women are 2.5 times more likely than their nonblack counterparts to experience sexual violence.<sup>28,32</sup> It cannot go unmentioned that as the black-native women of Turtle Island systemically go missing from reservations and one in four native women will experience sexual assault, there are parallels that can be drawn to the Jawara reservation, where Jawara women also experience astronomically high rates of sexual violence.<sup>33</sup> This is historically consistent with a history of gendered violence against black and native women on plantations and native reservations alike, where exploitation and sexual violence remains common. The geographic isolation of black women cannot be separated from the hyper sexualization of the bodies of black women and the logic of carcerality that transcends the history of the United States to encompass the world. The objectification of phenotypic blackness puts a ‘target’ on the backs of black women, and the spatial stratification of the spaces produced by the ghetto, the reservation, the prison, and the plantation, produce the grounds for the fetishization of black women.

The United States is founded upon antiblackness and settler colonialism principles that are a result of a process of the clearing, where the native is made invisible to produce space where violence in excess occurs against black people, particularly black women. However, the exceptionalization of this violence as unique to the Western world (or even as unique to the United States) prevents the recognition that this is a global phenomenon. On a precognitive level,

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<sup>32</sup> Hartman, Saidiya. “Venus in Two Acts.” *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 26, 2008, pp. 1–14, doi:10.2979/sax.2008.-.26.1.

<sup>33</sup>“Ending Violence Against Native Women.” *Ending Violence Against Native Women / Indian Law Resource Center*, indianlaw.org/issue/ending-violence-against-native-women.

the bodies of black women are hypersexualized, and the geographic isolation of black and indigenous women globally forwards and enables a logic of carcerality and capture where the bodies of black women are consumed (as demonstrated by the plantation, the ghetto, and the reservation(s) that Native and Jawara women can occupy). The recognition of these technologies of violence and tropes of black women are crucial to the formulation of global linkages between black and indigenous people to develop better understandings of how violence operates.