Introduction - "Leaving Traces": Decolonial Hauntings and Affective Ecologies

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I come from the nigger[1] yard of yesterday . . .

From the agony of the dark hut in the shadow

and hurt of things;

. . . leaping I come . . . .

To the world of tomorrow . . .

—— Martin Carter, "I Come from the Nigger Yard"

What is it like to exist in the wake of the past: to sleep, to dream, to be roused, to rise, move, think, gather, and commune in colonial history's aftermath? What is it like to go about one's life mundanely, carrying the trace of the past, which appears so vivid, sensorial, and concrete that it feels touchable, audible, alive?[2] Or are colonial hauntings more hazy, shadowy, ephemeral, indistinct? Some of colonial history's hauntings—its damaging legacies—become so insidious, normalized, and routinized that they remain unmarked and unrecognized; this is how we are drawn unwittingly into their dramas and "scenes of seduction" (Hartman 3).[3] By giving attention to the concept of haunting, we attempt to recognize both colonial history's dominant weight as well as its shadowy presence. We are haunted, all of us, by the traumatic heaviness as well as by the unfulfilled potentialities of the past. This haunting shapes us, moves us, and builds us. Suspended between the affective pull of despair concerning the long wait for change and the urgency of hope for Afro-futurist worlds needed now, we contend with the complex embodied registers of colonial hauntings. Our conception of a "brighter future needed now" echoes the work of Andrea A. Davis, which builds on the scholarship of Tina Campt. Accordingly, our

focus on hauntings is neither solely motivated by the "desires of a more hopeful future" nor preoccupied "with an 'idealized past'" (Davis 19-20). Instead, we embrace a temporal (re)alignment, emphasizing the simultaneity of anteriority, contemporaneity, and futurity. In this introduction, we want to explore such diverse textures of haunting that pervade the book reviews, interviews, articles, and tributes in this *JWIL* general issue. Thinking through and with these enriching contributions, we conceptualize decolonial hauntings as those that are aligned with an interrogative interpretive practice that not only acknowledges and interrupts colonial legacies, but also recuperates agency, possibility, and "re-existence" for decolonial subjects (Mignolo and Walsh 3). In this reflection, we are particularly thinking about Indigenous subjects met on their lands by colonialists, but also of the African subjects uprooted from their homelands, the unfair indentureship arrangements for Asians (primarily from India and China), and African subjects who later came to the Caribbean.[4] In sum, we want to explore decolonial hauntings' multiple iterations with respect to affect, pedagogies, epistemologies, and ecologies.

Our contemplation of decolonial hauntings is first inspired by Anita Baksh's interview with poet Rajiv Mohabir, in which the concept of haunting emerges in multiple ways. In framing their conversation, Baksh states: "In his responses, Mohabir reveals the psychic and material costs of storytelling that unearths silences and *hauntings*, and, like his writings, reminds us that we are hybrid beings who are constantly in motion" (emphasis added, 65). Mohabir details how linguistic hauntings emerge in his writing in the present, reigniting cultural histories of the past. It is not surprising, then, that temporality is central to an understanding of decolonial hauntings that emerge through family and queer genealogies in the work of Caribbean diasporic writers Mohabir and Linzey Corridon, both subjects of interviews in this issue. As Ronald Cummings argues, "Corridon also documents in his book of poetry [that] there are queer elders and ancestors awaiting memory and memorials" (82). African Caribbean and Indigenous Caribbean cosmologies often conceive temporal markers between life and death as permeable, rather than fixed. Ancestral presences remain; they inhabit the present by "leaving traces" of themselves in us, as the tributes to Velma Pollard remind us. Even now, Pollard continues to create relationalities across space/time/literature, bringing together diverse peoples, thoughts, ideas, communities, and teaching us the value of care. What is it like to be nurtured by her soul after her passing? Haunting here is pedagogical; we learn how to care and mentor as a lesson in creating avenues for gathering and kinship. From these inspirations, we would like to further meditate on the resonances of decolonial hauntings in this issue of *JWIL*.

Conceptualizing Colonial/Decolonial Hauntings

The concept of haunting has multiple genealogies. One traces it back to Derrida's post- structuralist conception of hauntology in his book *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. In *Specters*, Derrida responds to Francis Fukuyama's

proclamation that, with the formal fall of communism, neoliberal capitalist ideology has won for all time. Fukuyama forecloses the meaning of past communism by claiming it as failed and dead, forever sequestered and buried, never returning to challenge capitalism. Derrida argues that the meaning of the past (or of Marxist thought, in particular) is not fixed but rather always open; the past takes on multiple meanings, forms of relevance, and resonances in the present, and it returns to question, haunt, and disrupt the normative ideologies of the present (123). Hauntology as a post-structuralist heuristic concept, framework, and method thus responds to and resists structuralist tendencies in discrete conceptualizations of time and history.

From other genealogies of haunting, particularly from Indigenous cosmologies such as Amerindian[5] ones (see Gabriel Cambraia Neiva's article in this issue), we get a different understanding of haunting that accounts for simultaneity of the past and the present, the living and the dead, the spiritual and the material. In Caribbean Indigenous thought, haunting therefore is not just a framework of analysis, as in Derrida's conception, but rather a deeply embedded worldview and cosmology. The past lives on in the present not just because it is given new meanings but also because, cosmologically, the past, the present, and the future have always been co-existing. Neiva mobilizes Indigenous knowledge systems to show the limitations of the critical reliance on European modernist aesthetics to make sense of Wilson Harris's "radical poetics" (45). He demonstrates the value of Amerindian cosmology providing a transformational interpretive process that takes us "far beyond the reductionist or binary thinking of Western philosophy" (45). The struggle of critics over the years to account for such challenges to "the unity of the individual bourgeois character, the linearity of time and space, and other objective categories such as reality and dream, or imaginary worlds" in Harris's work is relieved by attention to Indigenous cosmology (46). For Neiva, "the study of Amerindian sources and their most transformative aesthetics, present in Harris's fiction, pushes the reader beyond European epistemology, remodelling the critical tradition on Harris and widening the reading possibilities of his oeuvre" (45).

Taking seriously the decolonial praxis of acknowledging "pluriversality" (Mignolo and Walsh 3), we do not privilege any particular genealogy over the other. To us, haunting is both a heuristic concept and a cosmology, a framework through which the binaries of past and present are complicated and questioned, and a way of looking at and being in the world, a way of life itself. Since coloniality threatens Indigenous cosmologies, we find it supremely pertinent to hold on to the particular, local indigeneities within our conceptualization of haunting, those emerging from local Indigenous histories, spaces, and communities. In our decolonial pluriverse, we mobilize different conceptions and explore multiple valences of haunting. For example, we give priority to colonial and decolonial haunting, concepts for which we do not presume to be the founders.

The concept of colonial haunting, we suggest, has implicitly pervaded decolonial thought, from Franz Fanon's analysis of the psychological trauma inflicted upon the colonized subject, to Anibal Quijano's, Sylvia Wynter's, and Maria Lugones's decolonial

theoretical elaborations on coloniality. Colonial haunting, though never explicitly identified as such, is also present in Critical Black Studies' exploration of slavery and its present-day lingerings and effects. Colonial hauntings embody the traumatic *affects* of slavery and racism. So many Black and Brown lives have been lost to the colonial enterprise; our ancestors were transported, enslaved, starved, brutalized, forced to give free labour on plantations and endure victimization during indentureship. That violent history matters profoundly to us in the present. For example, the period after the formal end of slavery, Nies reminds us, is not "innocent" of the legacies of slavery: "the underlying problems of murder and corruption" in the so-called postcolonial post-slavery time of now "trace back to the historical backbone of the region, namely, slavery, conquest, genocide, and indentured servitude" (16). Criminality in the present, she rightly suggests, needs to be traced back to colonialism: "From the original colonial crime of violence and murder—which were then legal (stealing land, killing in warfare and enslavement, and the suppression of economic advancement)—emerge historical effects, as individuals search for safety and security in an insecure environment" (17). Understanding the present from the context of the past's continuing violent legacy, embodied transgenerationally (see Mbembe), is a reparative gesture (see Thomas) and is absolutely essential, because the effects and affects of the Atlantic slave trade and indentureship linger long in the *post*colonial[6] future.

On the continuing legacy of slavery, Saidiya Hartman offers us the concept of "afterlife" as a way of acknowledging the persistence of the past in the contemporary world. In her book, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*, she argues:

> If slavery persists as an issue in the political life of black America, it is not because of an antiquarian obsession with bygone days or the burden of a too-long memory, but because black lives are still imperilled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago. (6)

In other words, Black people in a post-slavery era still live in a time when the effects of slavery stubbornly persist, and Black labour, dehumanization, trauma, and death ceaselessly continue. Hartman, whose paternal grandparents migrated to the United States from Curaçao, declares, "I, too, am the afterlife of slavery" (6), showing the insidious lingering weight of the violent past within us. In her review of *Oh Witness Dey!*, Courtenay Chan shows how Shani Mootoo contends with this colonial haunting: "[I]t foregrounds the tensions of living within structures of colonial extraction—where people are shaped by histories they did not choose yet must continuously negotiate for survival" (153). For Chan, "a pressing question" for Mootoo is this: "What does it mean to inherit histories marked as much by loss as by survival"(153)? These inherited colonial histories not only mark loss but also the new legacies we gained that need to be refused and re-engineered in acts of decolonial survival. Because the past event of the forced journey through the Middle Passage is, in the words of Christina Sharpe, "a past" that is simultaneously "not yet past" and "reappears to rupture the present" (9), we are still haunted by colonial legacies in concrete, tangible,

structural ways. Beyond the formal and temporal markers of the end of colonialism and slavery, the coloniality of power (Quijano 76), knowledge (Quijano 266), being (Wynter 303), and gender (Lugones 27), persist as the "afterlife of slavery" (Hartman 6). Haunting, in decolonial thought, thus becomes a most pertinent metaphor to describe the social, environmental, and epistemological conditions of coloniality's persistence.

In their confrontation with the spectres of coloniality, these decolonial thinkers implicitly conceptualize what we in this introduction singularly refer to as decolonial haunting. Though none of them name their thinking via the term "haunting," Avery Gordon's *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* explicitly names and theorizes haunting as a framework to think about and illuminate the routine, everyday violence and traumas in the present. Gordon explains haunting "as a way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts *felt* in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with (slavery, for instance) . . ." (Gordon xvi; emphasis added). Here she uses affective embodiment as a register of decolonial hauntings. Engaging in decolonial praxis, she brings to light the often imperceptible yet material ways coloniality and its processes still haunt us. She writes, "Haunting is a frightening experience. It always registers the harm inflicted or the loss sustained by a social violence done in the past or in the present. But haunting . . . is distinctive for producing a something-to-be-done" (xvi). The "frightening" haunting that Gordon writes about is the colonial haunting to which we refer; being aware of coloniality in the now and bringing its living, breathing, haunting ghost into our awareness can propel us into decolonial actions and can produce a "something-to-be-done" (xvi).

Techno-colonial Hauntings

Colonial hauntings are also present in the technologies we use and deploy in the present. Kris Singh's article in this issue, "Artificial Intelligence, Tyrannies, and Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber*," excavates the coloniality of technologies such as AI and critiques its techno-utopianism. It is a necessary decolonial praxis to examine critically the genealogies of the technologies we use, paying particular attention to the colonial epistemologies and hegemonic relationships that they reproduce. Singh suggests that AI not only "threatens the capacity for collective collaboration" (27) and expansive inter-relationalities between decolonial subjects but also envelopes us epistemologically in the colonial/modern teleological and totalizing narrative of technological progress and revolution, and limits our capacity to imagine decolonial alternatives and futures (24). The Caribbean is particularly pertinent for this colonial-technological critical engagement because, as Singh points out, the Caribbean is quite "familiar with the deployment of technologies that promise freedom while rendering populations more exploitable" (27). Singh thus turns to Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber*, a Caribbean sci-fi text, for a decolonial "political ethos that is skeptical of totalizing narratives of revolution, whether they are in relation to the digital, the Caribbean or both" (39). Inspired by Singh's contribution, we conceptualize our decolonial politics not

as a journey towards a definite revolutionary decolonial event that might free the world from the yoke of coloniality but rather as a collective, collaborative, and relational process/praxis towards decolonial horizons and futures. This process and praxis is necessarily incomplete.

Decolonial Wake Work

Nevertheless, what if there existed a haunting that was not a traumatizing yoke but rather a nurturing exercise? What if there were ghosts who are our own ancestors who care and are gentle? What if these ghosts are not just the ghosts of the "abusive systems of power . . . supposedly over" but the dehumanized people and the exploited nature who were oppressed by the "abusive systems of power" (Gordon xvi) and want to be heard in the now? What if they want to teach us and guide us? The past has agency; the past has a pedagogy; the past has a voice that demands a decolonial future, a "then and there" (Muñoz 1) in the here and now. In her book, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, Christina Sharpe conceptualizes the "afterlife of slavery" (Hartman 6) as living "in the wake" (Sharpe 5). She elaborates on the multiple coexisting meanings of the term "wake": it is "a track left on the water's surface by a ship" (3), the water's ripple as sign of a legacy; it is "a watch or a vigil beside the body of someone who has died," as ethical care for those who passed away (10); and "wake means being awake, and, also, consciousness" (21), of the myriad ways Black people live "in the valley of the shadow" (Stevenson 307) of "Black death" (11), contend with "Black suffering," and engage with "re/seeing, re/inhabiting, and re/imagining the world" (22).

We want to focus specifically here on wake work as care work; care is how we ethically respond to colonial hauntings, by mourning those we have lost, by being aware of the violent legacies of coloniality, and by countering that legacy with affective sustenance. Wake work also implies a process of ethical engagement with the past, and with the dead if, as Sharpe argues, "memorials materialize a kind of reparation (repair) and enact their own pedagogies" (20). We consider "an ethics of care" as an approach to life that privileges affective power as a counter to the coloniality of power—violent, dominating, and oppressive. Affective ethics engenders "relationships that are based on *consent*, *reciprocity*, *respect* and empathy" (Davis 13; emphasis added). Further, by ethical, we mean a kind of reparative accountability regarding past colonial atrocities that restores what Mignolo and Walsh call a "re-existence," "the redefining and re-signification of life in conditions of dignity" (3), countering colonial "thingification" (Césaire 42). This definition of "re-existence" implies learning new epistemologies and embracing dialogical and generative pedagogies of human and social relationships, borne from the "enforced Atlantic Crossing" as M. Jacqui Alexander argues (2). Privileging decolonial hauntings as pedagogical, we build on Alexander's insight that "*Pedagogies* functions as an archive of empire's twenty-first-century counterpart, of oppositions to it, of knowledges and ideologies it summons, and of the ghosts that haunt it" (2). Thinking with Alexander and Sharpe, we conceptualize the term decolonial hauntings to attend to these voices of the past in the now from a space of care,

as oppositional, and as dialogic pedagogies.[7] Through decolonial haunting conceived as a pedagogy of wake work, we ethically and carefully listen to the ghosts of the past, converse with them, and are moved by them towards decolonial futures and horizons.

Tributes as Wake Work

The tributes celebrating Caribbean writer, thinker, and educator Velma Pollard in this issue demonstrate how "wake work" moves from concept to practice, becoming concrete ethical "care work." In the historical context of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in which rituals of mourning were denied, to initiate the ritual of a wake or vigil now is to intentionally revitalize and restore mourning ceremonies as decolonial care work. In recent times, celebrated Caribbean writers have been memorialized by other writers and by literary critics through a kind of digital wake of video recordings that virtually reproduces what Kelly Baker Josephs names as a "digital dead yard," "a virtual space for healing mourning and memory" (Josephs).[8] These tributes to Velma Pollard, wake work as ethical care work, not only emphasize Velma's academic, creative, or scholarly accomplishments, though there is plenty to acknowledge;[9] they also recall her ethical work of care, the affective impact of resonant well-being that continues to be felt in this moment and beyond. Like a revenant, Velma visits with us, not just as a mental conjuration, but as someone whose voice, touch, gestures of nurture and kindness are lodged and recalled through the sensory channels of our bodies; such feelings of goodwill and grace leave traces of sweet affective vitality tingling along our spines. Kezia Page, in her tribute to Velma, imagines a wake-gathering of such generosity from Velma's artistic and academic community that even Victor Chang, her former Chinese-Jamaican student, comes back from the dead—visiting as if the portals of life and death are negligible and porous—to bring rice for the gathering. In this wake work, Velma Pollard convenes a gathering from across the globe, recreating community, but also providing another example of decolonial haunting as both loss and a memorialization of an ethics of care. For Page, amid the pain of loss, we all savoured goodness: "And tears was flowing an laughter like when sweetness mix wid bitter but it taste good" (139). As Maureen Warner-Lewis summarizes for us: "No wonder the repercussions of her passing have been felt far and wide, as she was extroverted, generous with intellectual help, and made lifelong friends everywhere, even among people much younger than herself" (98).

Re-existence and Relationality

Wake work (of mourning and healing) as decolonial haunting ensures that we give attention to the politics of affect and "postcolonial intimacies"[10] (Antwi et al. 2) that centre around "re-existence" and "relationalities" emphasized by Mignolo and Walsh in their decolonial praxis. In terms of the coloniality of dehumanization, Mignolo and Walsh insist upon not so much rehumanization, but on what they call "re-existence" (3). In this regard,

they emphasize the importance of reimagining Black and other subaltern humanities from decolonial epistemologies that offer a revisioning of and an expansion beyond the humanist and rationalist foundations of coloniality. From Ronald Cummings's interview with Linzey Corridon, the ability to find beauty in ugliness can be read as a strategy of re-existence: "The content of this book is preoccupied with queer Caribbean lives. A large part of that history, that documented history, is a history of violence. It is a history of unspoken ugliness" (84). For Corridon, his collection of poems *West of West Indian* "is interested in the kind of beauty in things that are gritty and sometimes talked about as ugly" (83). According to Corridon, "In paying attention to these lives, *that are seen as less than*, there is a kind of love that emerges" (83, emphasis added). An ethics of care in Corridon's memorialization of the value of queer lives begins to counter the fungibility and expendability of these lives, thereby producing a "re-existence" of these subjectivities. Wake work as love-letter eulogies and elegies (Cummings 83) re-frames dehumanized lives through beauty, tribute, and celebration, rather than through pathology, dispensability, and abjection. Corridon, in this way, engages a poetics of what Rex Nettleford calls "smaddification" (Girvan 258), consequently countering colonial "thingification" (Césaire 42) in what we view as a strategy of re-existence.

Decolonial Hauntings and Affective Pedagogies

The hegemonic machinery of coloniality violently enforced fractured relationships among subaltern subjects, against which emerged responsive pedagogies (Alexander 2), that we would argue also include decolonial intimacies (2). For Lisa Lowe in *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, the violence of colonialism mired in "liberal universality" insisted on "racial differences and distinctions [to] designate the boundaries of the human" (7). Lowe points out, much like Hartman and Sharpe, that, "We see the longevity of the colonial divisions of humanity in our contemporary moment" (6). Yet, importantly, we should also pay attention to the ways in which intimacies can provide a crucial lens through which to recognize the strategies of subjugation of peoples deemed less than human, but also to recover pedagogies of "re-existence" as a decolonial response. Decolonial hauntings turn us to affective pedagogies! For Lowe, "the colonial divisions of humanity" work alongside "a colonial division of intimacy" (18). For example, she argues, "[T]he intimacies of desire, sexuality, marriage, and family are inseparable from the imperial projects of conquest, slavery, labor, and government" (17). However, if intimacies are not only related to "the sexual" and "the romantic" of residual colonialism, but may include "'close connexion,' that is . . . implied [in the] less visible forms of alliance, affinity, and society among variously colonized peoples" (Lowe 19), then we might begin to see how decolonial intimacies help in restoring re-existence. Against and in relationship to colonial "residual intimacies," Lowe sees decolonial "emergent intimacies" as "the variety of contacts among [enslaved], indentured, and mixed peoples" (34), "as well as the intimacies of captured workers surviving together, the proximity and affinity that gives rise to political, sexual, intellectual collaborations, subaltern

revolts and uprisings" (35). In addition to strategies of dehumanization, the divide and conquer management of various oppressed groups within the clasp of coloniality, and the archival and representational erasures and recastings of subaltern history, resistance, and agency, decolonial intimacies emphasize a horizon towards re-existence.

Similarly, in her work *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-De-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship*, Leela Gandhi discusses affective politics by way of friendship intimacies that are formed, especially through what she calls "shared catastrophe," offering another angle of intimacy through which to understand decolonial hauntings (45). She acknowledges with "analytic advantage of historical hindsight . . . the failure of imperial binarism," reminding us of Edward Said's position on the "colonial encounter" as one of "'overlapping territories' and 'intertwined histories'" (3). She attends particularly to those "individuals and groups who have renounced the privileges of imperialism and elected affinity with victims of their own expansionist culture" (1). Gandhi mobilizes the notion of allyship as a counter to coloniality's "hierarchically aligned system of division or binary opposition designed . . . to sequester the West from the psychic contagion of the nonwestern alterity" (2). These friendship intimacies are therefore a kind of "pedagogy of crossing" as Alexander argues (4). Gandhi's book "builds its theoretical claims upon the narrative and historical scaffolding of multiple, secret, unacknowledged friendships and collaborations between anticolonial South Asians and marginalized anti-imperial 'westerners' enmeshed within the various subcultures of late Victorian radicalism" (10). Velma Pollard's care to cultivate friendships as part of her academic and creative involvement provides a model for how to do such decolonial work. As Jean D'Costa says in her tribute to Velma, academic "collaboration is friendship" (92). For Gandhi, "the trope of friendship [is] the most comprehensive philosophical signifier for all those invisible affective gestures that refuse alignment along the secure axes of filiation to seek expression outside, if not against, possessive communities of belonging" (10). In Chan's book review in this issue, she suggests that Mootoo's "collection ultimately highlights our world's interconnectedness, illustrating how the creation and sharing of stories help us forge bonds that transcend histories of violence and separation" (157). In considering the generative pedagogies of decolonial hauntings, our turn to intimacies recognizes the ways in which re-existence is possible for subjects who find themselves in the vice-grip of coloniality's violence.

Lowe's idea of "emergent intimacies" might also include how erotic energies among those in the dehumanizing hold of capitalist colonialism and its violent commercial enterprise provide the basis for re-existence. Before spotlighting intimacies as a productive site of the "pedagogies of crossing" (Alexander 4), we will reflect on the centrality of the Middle Passage—the transportation path of the ships moving human cargo in the most dehumanizing way from Africa to the New World—to discussions of British colonialism in the West Indies, Columbus's misnamed region. Perhaps the most well-circulated critical use of this movement across the Atlantic is Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, which privileges the ship and its passage as sites of Black history, an account

that challenges European accounts of modernity. Edward Baugh, like many others, also sees the Middle Passage as a site of decolonial hauntings. In the poem "Sometimes in the Middle of the Story," Baugh engages in wake-work, dedicating the poem to "*the drowned Africans of the Middle Passage*" (128). In setting up the scenario, Baugh imagines a scene of storytelling, typical of the African Caribbean practice of passing on history through the oral tradition. In this account, he sees Caribbean history as a sonic ghost story that haunts the region, both as a site of horrifying dehumanization and death, but also as an instructional space of revolutionary potential:

> [A]nd we below deck heard only the muffled
>
> thud of scuffling feet, could only
>
> guess the quick, fierce tussle, the
>
> stifled gasp, the barrel-chests bursting
>
> the bubbles rising and breaking, the blue
>
> closing over. (128)

Through a kind of dream-like conjuration, the poetic persona also imagines, in this same moment of Middle Passage horror, the revolutionary reckoning of Toussaint L'Ouverture, who was skilled in "setting science and strategy to trap the emperor" (128). Here, Baugh privileges the ocean pathways in the Middle Passage as a sonic historical source of colonial hauntings and decolonial pedagogies of re-existence and relationalities between both the departed and those left behind: "their souls shuttle / still the forest-paths of ocean / connecting us still" (128). Yet, other thinkers move beyond the genealogical and life/death connections of moments of the now and moments of the past to also imagine decolonial hauntings happening in the Middle Passage that play out as affective pedagogies of intimate relationalities.

In light of these teachings about decolonial intimacies, we ask what other kinds of affective pedagogies are learned and what sort of "decolonial horizons" (Mignolo and Walsh 125) are imagined from the space of such hauntings? Both Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley's "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic" and Phanuel Antwi's "Grammars of the Black Atlantic" turn to "ship mate intimacies" and queer erotics in the slave ship's hold to stretch and throb new pathways into Black liberatory relationalities and to illuminate new queer horizons (Muñoz 22). The violence and horror of the forced crossing of the Middle Passage included dehumanizing lessons in "thingification"; however, those experiences also produced counter pedagogies of the crossing, so that the enslaved subject's practice of forming erotic, affective bonds reaffirmed their humanity:

> [C]aptive African women created erotic bonds with other women in the sex-segregated holds, and captive African men

> created bonds with other men. In so doing, they resisted the commodification of their bought and sold bodies by feeling and feeling for their co-occupants on these ships. (Tinsley 192)

Building on Tinsley's and Hortense Spiller's work in particular, Antwi develops a theory of cuddling as a site of re-existence and relationalities; shipmate intimacies offer valuable pedagogies of crossing the Middle Passage: "cuddling opens up new grammar[s] for relations in the hold" (57). Like Lowe, Gandhi, Baugh, and Alexander, Antwi sees these affective (and erotic) relationalities as pedagogical, a learning legacy of decolonial hauntings: "This new relational grammar that might have emerged from the coercive gendered horrors underpinning the slave system *haunts* us to this day" (58; emphasis added). This haunting is what Sharpe sees as "the orthography of the wake" (20), which produces "a dysgraphia of disaster" (21), from which emerges pedagogies of self-determining legibility and humanity for the carceral subject of the Black Atlantic. In our decolonial pedagogies of crossing, the very terms on which legibility and humanity are based must be interrogated and revised.

Much like Alexander, and Mignolo and Walsh, Antwi does not position decolonial haunting in a binary relationship with colonialism; he emphasizes by way of Spiller's teaching that "'the politics of intimacy'" is "a dialectical encounter, rather than an antagonism of opposites" (Antwi 59-60). Most significantly, for our purposes, he not only sees the need to find humanizing relations in the cracks of colonialism's violent grammars as an important lesson but also views shipmate (*mati*) intimacies, like cuddling in the hold, as productive pedagogy, and importantly, as decolonial archival methodology: "We need to shimmer the stories out of the record, inventing, reinventing, organizing, reorganizing, agonizing, and recognizing, these are all part of readying ourselves to behold the textual *ghosts of bodies* in the archives" (62; emphasis added).

Exposing the ghosts of colonial histories, part of the "pedagogy of crossing" (Alexander 4) that Antwi offers is a research methodology to interpret and supplement historical archives, not just through structuring practices, but also through affective engagement. The institutional library holds/holdings must confront the funk of the cuddling shipmate holds; decolonial intimacies "account for the 'counterfactual' as a way of [giving validity] to the internal experience of enslaved" (62). Building on L. H. Stallings's *Funk the Erotic*, Antwi illustrates her conclusion that, "[S]exual cultures 'translate, produce and reproduce Black pleasure, pain, intimacy, relationality, individuality, and communality in the face of the historic and ever-changing sexual terror and violence'" (Antwi 66-67).

In Mignolo and Walsh's move to counter colonialism's dehumanization with decolonial re-existence, they insist on centring relationalities in decolonial practice, which becomes so important for our idea of decolonial hauntings. They consider "the ways that different local histories and embodied conceptions and practices of decoloniality . . . can enter into conversations and build understandings . . . and contest the totalizing claims and

political epistemic violence of modernity" (1). Relationality avoids monologic conceptions, cannibalizing "other practices and concepts into our own," and reifying "singular authoritativeness" (1). For Mignolo and Walsh, relationality takes its ethos from what Andean Indigenous thinkers refer to as *vincularidad*, which "is the awareness of the integral relation and interdependence amongst all living organisms (in which humans are only a part) with territory or land and the cosmos" (1). Édouard Glissant's *Poetics of Relation* also inspires us to reject the concept of territory, when considering relationalities to the land. He insists on not viewing land "as territory," because "territory is the basis for conquest," for imposing limits, for leading to "denaturations," ecological imbalance and "landscapes of desolation" (151). The violence of colonial conquests and capitalist priorities of "productivity, taxes, markets, and surplus" demand what Edward Baugh sees as the need to "make new terms with the earth" (Baugh 88). Glissant views the new relation with the earth in affective, aesthetic, and ecological terms. The new aesthetics of the earth is one in which "one gives-on-and-with rather than grasps" (Glissant 144), one risks "passion for the land," and one discovers "the fever of passion for the ideas of 'environment' . . . and 'ecology'" (151). The pedagogy we learn from Glissant's conception of relationalities with/of the earth is one of affective ecology: the "politics of ecology has implications for populations that are decimated or threatened with disappearance as a people" (146). Jean D'Costa's reminiscences of her time as a student with Velma Pollard on the UWI Mona Campus record that kind of disappearance as a kind of haunting: "the sinking shadows of Hope River gorge, full of an unnamed past" (92). The idea of ghostly "shadows" reminds us of Stuart Hall's claim that the Amerindian presence in the Caribbean is a "*ghostly presence* . . . part of the barely knowable or usable past" (qtd. in Misrahi-Barak 309; emphasis added). Indigenous decolonial hauntings in the Caribbean, Misrahi-Barak argues, represent some of the ways in which the "Caribbean struggle[s] against dispossession and disinheritance, possibly offering a new trans–national bond of connection between Caribbean peoples as well as between the land and its inhabitants" (310). Like Neiva's article in this issue, Misrahi-Barak foregrounds Indigenous cosmology as an important pedagogical resource for understanding what we are calling "affective ecologies," significant for discovering old/new epistemologies of being, and new relationalities of being with the earth and all life forces.

Alison Donnell astutely views Pollard's poetry as a poetics of relationality when she says in her tribute in the issue that she remembers Velma's personae as always listening to and learning from the land. For Donnell, "[Pollard's] poetry is rich in acts of listening—to the ancestors, to the hum of the earth, the songs of the birds, and the spirit within" (113). As Mignolo and Walsh suggest, the logic of relationalities is more aligned with Indigenous ecologies than with capitalist economies/economics and emphasizes "relation and interdependence in search of balance and harmony of life in the planet" (1). The post-humanist dimension of relationalities is illustrated in Donnell's reading of Velma's poetry and reaffirms how decolonial hauntings invite ethical listening, helping us to understand the importance of the ethical in care work. Exploring the "relationships between listening and ethics" (176), Lisbeth Lipari teaches us that care for others requires "undoing colonial mastery"

(2) as Julietta Singh conceives, but also involves decentering the self-contained bourgeois subject, as Neiva sees Caribbean Indigenous cosmology doing in Harrisian poetics (44). For Lipari, ethical listening is to engage in "listening otherwise," "plunging the ego into uncertainty" and leading to the destruction of the Descartian, self-contained, unified, rational self: "the dialogic philosophies of Buber and Levinas share with Buddhism an emphasis on decentering the ego, on subordinating the egocentric will to power to the ethical relation with the other" (184). Such an understanding of ethical relationship with others is inspired by Indigenous thought, which Leanne Betasamosake Simpson indicates as an investment in "ideas of reciprocity, consensual attachment, and non-linear relationship" (qtd. in Davis 13). Culled from Indigenous conceptions of relations with the land, "we should give more than we take" (Simpson 9). As Olive Senior writes, exploring Caribbean Indigenous pedagogies learnt from the land, "we cleared just enough" plant life for "our huts / and our pathways," "we made the tiniest scratch / on Mother earth," "we never took more than we needed," and "always gave back to Earth" (Senior 95). Rather than capitalist hegemony, affective ecologies learnt from Indigenous cosmology instruct us in ethical generosity and relationality. Affective ecologies, we would argue, privilege as Simpson suggests "relationships that are based on consent, reciprocity, respect and empathy" (231).

From our meditations on decolonial hauntings, we want to propose affective ecologies as a way of understanding decolonial relationalities. In centring affective ecologies, we move beyond the discreteness of static land available for possession and control by invoking Earth and its fluidity, movements, expansive relationalities, a land with "no limits" (Glissant 151). Here, the affective is conditioned by ideas of the ecological—privileging reciprocity, respectful engagement, inter-dependence, and more expansive post-humanist ideas of connections to more-than-human relationalities that reflect pluriversal conceptions, genealogies, and cosmologies. Affective ecologies engage decolonial intimacies that are always "in search of relational and communal over competition", but also in pursuit of an "otherwise" (Mignolo and Walsh 3), an outside of coloniality that is conditioned by coloniality, even as it wants to shift that paradigm. Is there such a thing as an outside of coloniality? For Mignolo and Walsh, "otherwise" is not "a rejection or negation of Western thought . . . Western thought is part of the pluriverse" (3). We should not forget that there have always been internal critiques within Eurocentrism. Counter to the hegemonic, dominating, dehumanizing, and extractive operations of coloniality, decolonial hauntings as relationalities broaden the conceptions of what bodies and lives matter, recognize and respect the dignity and value of all life force, engage more-than-human connections, and recognize our co-dependence and interdependence with the earth.

Decolonizing Journal Work (Towards a Conclusion?)

Coloniality also haunts us in very insidious ways by seeping into our ways of thinking and producing knowledge. Coloniality haunts us through its pervasively existing

epistemology. If we are not self-reflective enough, coloniality threatens to speak through us, making us its accomplices. Colonial epistemology is everywhere: in museums, archives, records, and documents. The imperial powers labelled, classified, documented, and recorded Indigenous cultures, creating a knowledge industry and a discourse that defined the Other, reduced the Other, and made the Other safe for exploitation, extraction, and consumption. What does it mean for the colonized, the enslaved and the exploited to be classified, labelled, and brought together in the space of a record, an archive, a museum, or a journal? Archival practice, as haunted by coloniality and as the instigator of decolonial strategies of recovering subaltern histories of knowledge production, can be curative work, countering colonial knowledge production which curates through the process of extraction, thingification, and objectification, reducing rich vibrant living cultures to things and objects of study and representing and displaying them as such. For Edward Said, it is through this systematic knowledge creation that colonial power is exercised (40)—or to paraphrase Anibal Quijano, coloniality of power is inextricably epistemological (266).

How do we, as scholars, thinkers, and writers, resist such coloniality? How do we, particularly as editors of this *JWIL* issue, reckon with and resist the colonial legacies of the academic journal form itself? Or put differently, how do we resist its colonial hauntings? As we approach *JWIL*'s fortieth anniversary in 2026, we reflect on decolonial journal hauntings in the context of *JWIL* receiving the 2025 Henry Swanzy Award for Distinguished Service to Caribbean Letters from the Bocas Literary Festival. The award citation acknowledged the "indelible role" the journal played in creating "a vital forum for critic and creative debate, and an archive of research and thought including almost every scholar of note working on Anglophone Caribbean literature over three generations" (Bocas Henry Swanzy Award). We find it of the utmost importance to be engaged in a decolonial praxis, to continue to orient and move the journal in decolonial directions. In our political effort to overcome colonial hauntings, we thus orient ourselves towards decolonial hauntings. What does it mean existentially, academically, emotionally, to be decolonially haunted by the epistemologies, pedagogies, and affects left by our ancestors? We believe that such decolonial hauntings lead us to decolonial horizons. Decolonial hauntings make us think about journal work differently. Recognizing that ideas can be brought together in academic journals in quite an extractive, hierarchical way, enacting coloniality of power, we, affectively haunted by the generous kind soul of Velma Pollard, want to instead bring together ideas in a nurturing, caring way, developing inter-connections, creating relationalities and solidarities. Moreover, we see journal work as "wake work" (Sharpe), as care work, both commemorative and creative, simultaneously. Like wake work, our journal is a space of gathering, remembering, thinking, and creating together; it is fundamentally communal. Communally, we look backward to the past and to those who have passed on, sideward to our colleagues, friends, and communities in the present, and forward to the future that awaits us, all simultaneously to try to imagine decolonial horizons in the now. In this journal volume, the past thus converses with the present about the future; the old and established and the young and the emerging gather and share ideas (as they do in the interviews and in our collaborative work

as co-editors.) Multiple affects are present—from the joy of creation and imagination to the grief of loss and the heavy, exhausting weight of waiting for a freer future.

With this issue, we stretch journal work into a ritual performance of memorializing the dead, who are not fully absent from us, especially when considered from Indigenous cosmologies. Anita Girvan, Makayla Lesann, and Priscilla McGreer reflect on the concept of visitation as a way in which the dead and the living interact across space and time, arguing:

> [A]s Tuck et al. (2022) describe, from specifically Indigenous feminist groundings, the cosmologies that emerge in these practices across different communities suggest that both space and time are implicated in visiting. We note, with Tuck, the resonances of visiting and visitation that link ancestors as presences to be in relation with beyond our individual identities. ("Tracing Era-sures" 343)

Given the violent hauntings of colonial denigration of Black lives and deaths, it is decolonial care work to recognize in this issue the significance of Velma Pollard's life, to preserve her human dignity, to celebrate her impact, to remember her and her contribution to the well-being of so many others and to be moved by her ethics of care, to remember her stories and to remember her in our stories. With Alecia McKenzie, we honor both Velma's care work as well as her lingering presence with us: "her spirit is still here, her voice is still here—with its warmth, enthusiasm, humour, and the inspiration to always be kind" (112).

Notes

[1] Martin Carter's use of this particular word in the poem references the oppressive nature of slavery in the Caribbean, which carries a linguistic haunting of colonial violence. We acknowledge the harm that such words produce. While we do not wish to reproduce this violence here, we want to acknowledge the deep wounds that Carter wanted to convey in his poetry by his use of the word.

[2] The words "leaving traces" come from the title of one of Velma Pollard's collection of poems.

[3] The phrase "scenes of seduction" captures Hartman's idea of how scenes of brutality to the Black body become normalized. Seduction describes "the ease with which such scenes are usually reiterated, the casualness with which they are circulated" (Hartman 3).

[4] We want to acknowledge explicitly the interconnections, relationalities, and solidarities as well as the differences between Indigenous, African, and Asian subjectivities, major groups haunted in the Caribbean by colonial expansion into the New World.

[5] We are aware that the term "Amerindian" has often been used to cover hundreds of distinct Indigenous groups and nations, however, we retain it here because Harris privileges the use of the term.

[6] When we use the word "post" here, we do not mean it as a temporal "after" but rather as a continuation of coloniality beyond the formal end of colonialism, but also of the desire to move away from the structures and epistemologies that support that past.

[7] We employ the term "dialogic" here because oppositional decolonial moves and postures emerge from, respond to, navigate, and oppose colonial structures. Decoloniality is thus often in an oppositional dialogue with coloniality, although opposition is not the only register of the decoloniality invested in other futures and epistemologies that represent the decolonial *otherwise*. See Mignolo and Walsh.

[8] See Josephs.

[9] Velma Pollard's academic contributions are numerous, particularly to the field of Caribbean studies. Her academic publications include, among others, *Dread Talk: The Language of Rastafari* (1994; rev. ed. 2000); *From Jamaican Creole to Standard English: A Handbook for Teachers* (2003); and *Caribbean Literary Discourse: Voice and Cultural Identity in the Anglophone Caribbean* (2014,

with Barbara Lalla and Jean D'Costa). It is important not to erase the breadth of her scholarly and creative accomplishments as has been the case historically with women's writing.

10 Antwi et al. emphasize the potential of affective politics through the concept of "postcolonial intimacies" this way: "'postcolonial intimacies' . . . foregrounds the epistemic decolonizing potential in turning to affect as a basis of exploring injustice, conflict, trauma and reparation" (Antwi et al. 2).

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