ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Postcolonial Territory and the Coloniality of the State

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Abstract: *This paper argues that the practice and discipline of international relations (IR) shrouds the many ways through which colonial power is institutionalized within the structure of the modern nation-state and the system of states in which nation-states are embedded. By over-valuing modernist assumptions in research and practice, IR ignores the colonial constitution of modernity. This is more than an intellectual blind spot. It has led to universalizing Eurocentric assumptions about 'natural' human development culminating in the acquisition of a nation-state, which has effectively depoliticized the colonial project of state-making in the context of formerly colonized territories. I argue for re-politicizing postcolonial territory by discussing a decolonial approach calling for 'pluriversal' (rather than universal) thinking that chooses to address the continuities of colonialism within the structure of the state and work towards collective decolonization.*

Keywords: Geo-graphing; Modernity/Coloniality; Postcolonial Territory; Pluriversal; Ontology; Lack

> Let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions, and societies that draw their inspiration from it. Humanity expects other things from us than this grotesque and generally obscene emulation … if we want humanity to take one step forward, if we want to take it to another level than the one where Europe has placed it, then we must innovate, we must be pioneers.

> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

Caribbean regional diplomat Sir Shridath Ramphal recently argued that the Caribbean Community, once united in a regional quest for independence under the West Indian Federation, strayed from the path of collective freedom towards the lower hanging fruit of individual state freedom.[1] He observed that, after five decades of individual sovereignty, Caribbean island states have not yet experienced the sovereign power and respect in the community of states that independence promised; instead, they have experienced powerlessness. Consequently:

> West Indian states, unable to exert sovereignty in the rest of the world, have instead exerted it on each other. They have sought refuge in the lowest form of regionalism.[2]

For Ramphal, one pathway out of the problem of powerlessness is a kind of solidarity sovereignty – a bigger state capable of carrying its weight in the existing state system that could (and even perhaps should) incorporate small states beyond the Caribbean region as well.[3] His audience was stirred by this provocation, which included making a case for a kind of extra-territorial regionalism that was not determined by physical place. For a short while, this senior policymaker was able to reclaim the experimental mood of the early independence years and share it with his multigenerational audience. Ramphal's reclamation of experimentation and his distinct willingness to think outside of the box is more important than the details of his proposal if concrete decolonial options are to be pursued in the study and practice of global politics.

In this essay, I propose to take up Ramphal's provocation not by making a case for a Caribbean mega-state or a revamped CARICOM in the future, but by turning to the past to understand some of the reasons why postcolonial states have largely failed to achieve the call for innovation captured in the epithet from Frantz Fanon at the beginning of the paper. I acknowledge that, since the independence era, imperial influences of a subtle and not-so-subtle nature have exerted disciplinary power in terms of punishing postcolonial states for not adhering to the ambitions of American or Soviet worldviews. My aim here is consequently to delve into history to explore the colonial origins of the spatial entity we call the modern nation-state. I want to make visible the connections between postcolonial territorial nation-states and practices of colonial difference, by discussing how these colonial ideas are incubated in both the study and practice of international relations (IR). By

examining the illustrative flipside of modernity - that is, coloniality - the intertwining of deeply entrenched Eurocentric ideas about the linear movement of human history and spatial developments with the modern nation-state as a 'natural' end point becomes clear. The power of this pervasive statist-discourse, I argue, has blocked formerly colonized peoples from charting pluriversal, decolonial pathways that might challenge the universal singularity of the Westphalian nation-state as the only territorial game in town.[4] While critical theory rightly identified the ways through which capitalism in the Global South has served neo-colonial interests, I contend that in addition to capitalism, both the state and the system of states in which we are embedded are symptoms of the broader problem of modernity.

Modern thinking, in the absence of decolonial thinking, masks the movement of colonial power that animates IR. Consequently, mainstream approaches denigrate and make invisible the kinds of creative problem solving that might break our conceptual shackles to territorial units like the nation-state. The first half of this paper considers the colonial and modern origins of the nation-state as well as how territory is depoliticized within IR. The second half seeks to re-politicize postcolonial territory by engaging with ideas emerging from decolonial scholarship and practice, concluding with a discussion of how attention to coloniality in the theory and practice of IR offers new and exciting pathways.

NATIONALISM, SOVEREIGNTY, AND MODERNITY

The state in its broadest conception, a spatial organization in which human societies organize, has developed in different times and place in very distinct ways. The modern nation state as we conventionally have come to understand it in IR, however, is a recent spatial organization that was universalized through the colonial encounter in only a few hundred years, and perceptions of the staying power of this structure arguably reflects our temporal biases.[5] While liberal approaches to state formation tend to emphasize some variation of social contract in which the state emerges organically from the bottom up and interacts through some conception of universal anarchy, Barry Hindess thoughtfully posits that the modern, Westphalian state came into being to stop a many decades long war in Europe. Belonging to a state as a citizen, Hindess argues, is a standard of civilization and one that has a European origin. He inverts the liberal logic that states emerged

out of social contracts from the bottom up, and argues that the governance of states by one another has always occurred at the inter-state level where limits on sovereign action tend to be rules exercised by powerful states to be followed by weaker ones. Hindess's state-from-above model as well as work from postcolonial theorists such as Stuart Hall and Ranajit Guha, shows the centrality of discourses of sovereign 'lack' that historicizes the emergence of modern sovereignty and citizenship as a civilizational category that did not emerge organically in colonized territories in particular.[6]

The relationship between the nation and the state is somewhat contested, though the relationship between the construction of the modern nation state through the colonial encounter in formerly colonized places is not. Within the body of literature in nationalism, explanations for the link between nation and state vary. Some pursue lines of reasoning wedded to economic modernization, such as Ernest Gellner's contention that societies gradually move through stages of economic organization that later produce the ability to develop national ideology to master state territory, or Benedict Anderson's thesis that the nation-state is a limited sovereign territory held together by an imagined and largely symbolic sense of social solidarity that is proliferated by the modern mechanisms of 'print capitalism' and national culture.[7]

In his 1986 book, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World,* Partha Chatterjee argues that nationalism in the colonial world has taken the form of a 'derivative discourse' of European ideas about social progress. He discusses the recurrent theme of relativism and rationalism in social science in the context of the study of nationalism: rationalists normalize their particular epistemic standpoint, accusing relativists of eschewing cross-cultural science, while relativists accuse rationalists of simply asserting that the assumptions they begin with reflect 'reality.' Chatterjee argues that

> this paradoxical situation is in fact an accurate reflection of the spurious philosophical premises on which the [nationalism] debate has been conducted in Anglo-American social science.[8]

He discusses at great length what he calls ' liberal and conservative bourgeoisie-rationalist' approaches to nationalism, as well as their Marxist counterparts. While recognizing Anderson's infusion of the ideational and linguistic as valuable determinants of nationalism, Chatterjee observes that, 'instead of pursuing the varied, and often contradictory, *political* possibilities inherent in this process,

Anderson seals up his theme with a sociological determinism'.[9] Chatterjee specifically takes up the arguments of Gellner and Anderson to conclude that while each takes a different approach, there is little substantive difference between them. It should come as little surprise then, that in *The Nation and Its Fragments,* Chatterjee seeks to 'claim for us, the once colonized, the freedom of our imagination' to reject the modular manifestations of sovereignty exported from Europe.[10]

The trouble with the above lines of reasoning is that territory – the very ground on which a national community might develop – is assumed to be constituted in ways that make sense to liberal world-views today. By this I mean that land is understood to have value based on its natural resource potential for commercial exploitation, or its suitability for various forms of private property. Modernist accounts of the development of national society trivialize the centrality of territory as being merely 'passive spatial recipients'[11] of a state-container that is assumed to have existed prior to discourses about it. Such analyses, I will argue herein, are complicit with the universalization of Eurocentric understandings of how the world operates, which in turn limits the 'freedom of imagination' that Chatterjee, Ramphal, and Fanon all seek to reclaim in distinct ways. There are histories and genealogies of thought predating and persisting alongside allegedly 'universal' Eurocentric ideas throughout the long process of colonialism.

The idea that territory is fundamentally not a commodity but more accurately explained as part of a spiritual realm in which humans coexist with all living things makes perfect sense within many indigenous knowledge-systems. Yet such a proposition is nearly inconceivable within the genealogy of modernist thinking that has constituted itself for many hundreds of years on silencing and erasing the legitimacy of Other systems of knowledge through discourses of 'primitiveness' and 'lack' (to be discussed in further detail below).[12] When Columbus saw Trinity Hills on his third voyage to the Caribbean and chose to name the island he saw 'Trinidad', he was not troubled by the fact that the indigenous population already named it Kairi. Columbus and his men committed genocide against the Taino peoples of the Greater Antilles on earlier voyages and Kairi's indigenous Lokono and Kalina peoples were enslaved by the Spanish to work in stolen and repurposed Taino territories.[13] The oppression and attempted genocide of over 40,000 people of Arawak and Carib ancestry who have been resident for at least 6,000 years was a first step toward

producing what would become the twin island state of Trinidad & Tobago; the second and third step were African slavery and Asian indentureship.[14]

For Columbus and the influential philosophers and colonial administrators that followed in his wake, indigenous people were understood to be a kind of time machine, enabling Europeans to see the 'savage' man prior to civilization.[15] This critical juncture did not only change the indigenous peoples of the region, it changed Europeans, who, over the subsequent two to three hundred years, began reflecting on the reasons why they were, at least in their own minds, superior to all the other peoples of the world.[16] They did not see the complex web of social relations within the indigenous communities they were to conquer, nor were they open to pluriversal understandings of how territory might be constituted. Six thousand years of indigenous stewardship within Kairi and oral traditions do not easily fit into state-centric political history, and too often this has been understood as evidence of unsophistication rather than difference.

THE STATE OF IR: DE-POLITICIZED TERRITORY

The fifteenth century brought more than first contact between Europeans and the various nations of the Caribbean and South America; it was also an important time for early thinking about the nature of territory and nations. Philip Stenberg offers a geographical option for considering the centrality of territory in the early conceptualization of what we know today as the modern territorial state. He maintains that representations of islands on early portolan charts used for marine navigation played an important role in European thinking about territory. They foreshadowed the idea of territorially discrete political entities that were internally homogeneous, a concept that prevailed at the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.[17] By representing islands as singular, homogenous, uncharted obstacles, Steinberg maintains that these early maps foreshadowed the development of Westphalian territorial sovereignty by giving rise to the idea that states function as whole 'containers.' Peter Taylor has charted the legal and historical development of the idea of an all-encompassing 'container' concept of a state that prevails within even critical IR literature.[18] Similarly, John Agnew has warned of the fallacy of oversimplification associated with Waltzian notions of ahistorical,

territorially bounded 'nation-states' operating within imagined discrete state and international levels.[19]

Traditional theoretical approaches to IR wield the significance and role of the state differently: for example, realism's power projection, liberalism's constitutionalism, and the English School's international society. But the narrative of nation-state formation within these schools of thought still either echoes the broad nationalism narratives introduced earlier, or else treats the postcolonial territory as having no distinct characteristics beyond the 'natural resource' advantage or disadvantage it might offer in terms of political and economic power calculations. Even if, as Alexander Wendt argues, 'anarchy is what states make of it,' that 'state' remains conceptually Eurocentric in structure, history, and expectations.[20] Wielding the institutions of the modern, colonial nation-state cannot be understood as making the important break away from colonialism unless colonialism is only understood as foreign rule, which in turn entrenches the ahistorical existence of the territorial nation-state. Not only is the particular spatial manifestation of the nation-state grounded in the colonial encounter, there is good reason to believe that rather than truly ending the regime of colonial rule, it merely changed form. As Hindess argues, liberalism in the post-independence era did not end the paternalistic regime of relations between the former colonized and colonizers. Rather, the regime of colonial improvement shifted to a regime of development; both united in conceptions of formerly colonized people 'lacking' in civilization, development, or democracy.[21]

Democracy itself is a compelling way to see the power of modern/colonial thinking. Touted as freedom incarnate in foreign policy and diplomatic circles, the origin of democracy is arguably more about limiting the amount of control a given person has in the management of their society by creating and elevating elected representatives.[22] This is important, as it represents the global context in which nationalist elites in the formerly colonized world were compelled to act. Fanon describes how nationalization projects amongst elites in the colonies during the transition from colony to state did not actually reorganize the power dynamics in service to the general population:

> For the bourgeoisie, nationalization signifies very precisely the transfer into indigenous hands of privileges inherited from the colonial period.[23]

Self-rule presumes a national self, and the pursuit of self-rule and its requisite national-self has caused major problems across the formerly colonized world as multiple layers of colonial violence (such as genocide, slavery, and indentureship) are put aside in pursuit of a largely imagined national self interest that rests on epistemic and territorial assumptions about the correct way to exist in the modern world.[24]

Disciplinarily, IR has side-stepped challenging ontological assumptions about the territorial nation state as a political-geographic phenomena, preferring oversimplification in theory-building aimed at balancing power, pursuing complex inter-dependence, or developing concepts of world society, *all of which* assume that whatever the process that led to today's nation-states, states are essentially equivalent territorial entities. It is no wonder that theory and practice in IR tends to reflect the existing power dynamics of yesteryear, as understanding the colonial legacies through which power is constituted in the international system is barely even considered relevant in these theorizations.[25]

Of course, some work challenges the Euro-centricity of the nation-state by pointing to how states are embedded in cultures that affect its operation and how western expectations encoded into international organizations continue to exert a neo-colonial force in the 'underdeveloped' global South.[26] While these critical and sociological explanations are more persuasive and make visible the continuity of exploitation in the independence period through the practice of international trade, aid, and development, they stop short of opening up decolonial options in part because they remain disciplined within modernist thinking. In sum, generations of modernist thinking, which has taught us that territory is passive and that the state is a natural container for human society, has effectively de-politicized territory, quite literally colonizing the ground beneath our feet.

HEGELIAN WORLD-HISTORY AND THE 'CIVILIZED' STATE

The centrality of the state as a vehicle of colonial improvement earns its philosophical and methodological guidance from G.W.F. Hegel in the early 19th century. Hegel was instrumental in linking colonization to a moral project by positioning the state as a universal hierarchical marker of human civilization. The earlier enlightenment dictum, 'people without writing are people without history' evolved to read people without the *state* are people

without history. The existence of 'the state' became a marker of civilization, understood to be a hierarchal model of social evolution, which enabled the logic of European supremacy to take on institutional forums.[27] That Hegel saw the state as a marker for social evolution makes sense, reading him in the context of growing European imperial power in the late 18th and early 19th century. As Ranajit Guha notes:

> Considered in the light of his evolutionary idea of progress it is a Darwinist theory somewhat ahead of its time, but one with no pretension at all to scientific neutrality.[28]

For Guha, whose work emphasizes Indian history, India and Indians entered Hegelian World-History in 1802 (and by extension, exited the pre-historical world), when a Bengali in the employment of the British East India Company wrote an account of the region that sought to translate the past into historical discourse recognizable to the British East India Company.[29] Liberal historiography was a foundational intellectual and practical expression of British colonial power, the outcome of which was 'history written by Indians themselves in faithful imitation of the Western statist model.' [30]

Here we see the historical pedagogical and epistemic application of Fanon's point, cited at the outset of this article, about mimicry and emulation. Once Indians were brought into Hegelian World-history, state education, and Western academia, they embraced it head on and took up the practice of historiography as a way of proving to the world the worth of 'India' and Indians through a statist lens. Part of the motivation for doing this, especially in the late colonial era, was to show that people of colour could 'play the game' as well or better than the European colonialists, but the downside is that through accepting the 'rules of the game' as established under modern liberal historiography, structures like state sovereignty, territorial homogeneity, and large-scale export agriculture have become markers of political, social, and economic advancement. The colonial ontologies underscoring these values remain under interrogated.[31] Not only does this kind of territorial blinder limit the ability of scholars to understand the past, it silences and erases the very possibility of knowing the past outside of the conceptual lens of statism, a condition James C. Scott has aptly described as our collective hypnosis by the state.[32] The necessity of being a nation in charge of a territorial state in contemporary IR has created havoc across

much of the Global South, producing some of the most pernicious forms of ethno-nationalist violence in pursuit of total territorial rule in recent memory.

Historiography's writing, coopting, and knowing of a 'scientifically' modernist model of the past is a reflection of the ideological power of enlightenment reasoning, which has arguably been one of the most enduring and effective forms of colonial control via epistemology. In the 19th century in particular, European philosophers, bureaucrats, and activists posited that the developing 'science' of political economy and commercial society was the only logical way through which innately superior Europeans could 'improve' the territories of the world's darker peoples, and in so doing, civilize them. As the retired British bureaucrat J.W. Bennet writes in 1843:

> Ceylon, though comparatively but little known, is pre-eminent in natural resources, and abounds in all the necessaries and most of the luxuries that minister the gratification of human nature. Its vast importance in every sense, political, fiscal, agricultural, and commercial, has hitherto been too much overlooked by capitalists; a neglect, which, I would fain hope, has arisen from the want of detailed information, or the pressure of other objects, apparently more interesting, only because better understood.[33]

The modern logic of human society advancing along gradual and linear lines of development grounded in territory was far reaching. In Bennet's preface to his orientalist tome, we see the seeds of connection between linking territory – colonized by principles of liberal political economy based on use-value of land – across the colonial/imperial network of the proto-capitalist, colonially administered world-economy. Indeed, the inspiration for the colonial plantations of South Asia took as its model and inspiration the slave plantations of the West Indies, circulating through published literature as well as managers.[34] Bennet provides meticulous details of considerable worth to would-be investors into Ceylon, including first and second hand accounts of travels and encounters with 'natives,' paintings of fauna, and meticulous records and statistics collected by the biopolitical colonial government of his time.

Writing on debates that were drawing into question the viability of colonialism in *The Colombo Journal* a decade earlier, the author Philalethes writes:

> If, therefore, this Anti-Colonial doctrine be right, the United States *ought never to have been created.* We should have waited until the Aboriginal Indians had, by slow processes, been changed into a civilized nation in the three thousandth year of the Christian era.[35]

In Philalethes one finds faith in the core elements of prevailing territorial and colonial assumptions that remain influential today. He presumes, informed by the enlightenment thinking of his time, that the path to civilization is linear, territorial, and is perhaps scientifically and spiritually pre-determined. Civilization is symbolized by a well functioning nation-state at the end of a linear evolutionary ladder that began with a single, ungoverned savage nation that is hopelessly behind and unable to 'catch up' to the supposedly advanced British ideal without colonially administered 'improvements.' More than just political colonialism and the state are intertwined; the foundation of the capitalist system and Western epistemology is invested in this matrix as well. As Mignolo explains:

> The expansion of Western capitalism implied the expansion of Western epistemology in all its ramifications, from the instrumental reason that went along with capitalism and the industrial revolution, to the theories of the state, to the criticism of both capitalism and the state.[36]

Efforts to justify these processes were philosophically linked to the intellectual project of modernism and the enlightenment, which has had lasting structural effects across the social sciences, empowering discursively produced notions of the rational, European self from the 'profane' Orientalist other.[37]
As Robbie Shilliam notes:

> It is within this context that European scholars of the comparative tradition could assume a universal standard of civilization modeled upon an idealized Western Europe to define modernity *tout court,* and thus relegate all other peoples and cultures in the world to an object of inquiry rather than as thinking subjects of and on modernity.[38]

While efforts to 'provincialize' Europe have been pursued in postcolonial studies,[39] provincialization within a framework of container-states organized by claims to a third image 'anarchic' structure that does not even reflect the *western* genealogy of anarchist philosophy is too little too late. Giorgio Shani draws

attention to the fact that the inter-state system cannot be understood as free from the structural reverberations of the colonial encounter. In an essay concerning the future of international relations theory (IRT), Shani argues, 'the ontological premises of western IRT needs to be *rethought* not merely "enriched by the addition of new voices" from the global South.'[40] Like Agnew's warning to avoid the 'territorial trap,' Shani's point warns of the importance of working through a 'coloniality trap' within the inter-state system.

Rethinking ontology is an undeniably more radical proposition than epistemology, because ontological starting points define the kinds of methods and methodology of epistemology. This is an especially difficult task for IR that is disciplined to see a world trapped in container-like territory as a universal, rather than pluriversal range of possibilities. Returning to Steinburg's consideration of island territoriality, he outlines how early cartographers understood islands as being solid, whole, and otherwise outside the movements of the rest of the world. According to Steinburg,

> islands were conceived of as equivalent but individually unique, organically occurring, bounded spaces that exhibited temporal stability, territorial indivisibility and socio-political homogeneity amidst a world of interaction and movement.[41]

Though he does not dwell on temporal stability in his essay, the belief that aspects of today's social condition such as territorialized nation-states, economic self-interest, or the so-called 'state of nature' have remained static throughout time has impacted the development of the political present.[42] It has affected the *ontological* starting point of most IR theory by treating territory passively and de-politicizing the interconnected ways through which territory has been constituted through the colonial encounter. Representing territory on maps is always fundamentally a political project.[43] Geography, Gearóid Ó Tuathail tells us:

> was not something already possessed by the earth but *an active writing of the earth by an expanding, centralizing imperial state.* It was not a noun but a verb, a *geo-graphing*, an earth-writing by ambitious endocolonizing and exocolonizing states who sought to seize space and organize it to fit their own cultural visions and material interests.[44]

Drawing territory was a practical first step towards mastering, taming, or rendering foreign lands legible such that they could serve a colonial political, economic, and social purpose. Without the genocide and enslavement of the Lokono and Kalina of Kairi, enslaved Africans and indentured Asians would not have been unable to make economically productive sugar cane for plantation owners as Kairi transformed into Trinidad.[45]

Even more generally than the mapping of a particular territory, maps can be understood as powerful statements of political intent. For example, the 1494 Spanish/Portuguese Treaty of Tordesillas divided the 'unknown' world between the two states with the blessing of the Pope.[46] Cartography helps people understand and discipline territory that is too vast to make sense of without a scale of reference. This has never been a benign process because in so doing, maps essentialize and repurpose territories and the peoples within them to conform to the particular view of the cartographer. As Ó Tuathail describes, the project of colonizing Irish space was largely cartographical: it was a process of erasing local space and replacing it by a 'recognizably Elizabethan space'.[47] For this reason, Irish rebels assassinated the cartographer Richard Bartlett who was commissioned to geo-graph Ulster for England.[48] Making territory legible is a crucial component of transforming the social purpose and use-value of land.[49]

RE-POLITICIZING POSTCOLONIAL TERRITORY

Postcolonial territory must be re-politicized in order to see the state as something in fundamental need of de-colonization. One way to start this process is to focus on the colonial constitution of modernity, as the nation-state as we conventionally understand it is clearly a symptom of modernity. As Mignolo argues, modernity cannot be understood separately from what Anibal Quijano has coined 'coloniality'. Understanding modernity/coloniality as being two sides of the same coin intellectually and practically means the colonial matrix is

> a structure not only of management and control of the non-Euro-American world, but of the making of Europe itself and of defining the terms of the conversations in which the non-Euro-American world was brought in.[50]

Following this line of reasoning shows that the development of European territory and nation-states was not separate from, prior to, or dialectically related to the colonized places of the world, rather, the constitution of colonial and colonized territory/place was simultaneously linked in practice. By treating the development of territory and the territorial state as being something that has followed 'a' single, linear historical trajectory, theories of state development based on seemingly benign and 'natural' concepts such as transitioning into agrarian and then commercial society enable a de-politicized story of state development to emerge.[51]

Yet written into the geography of postcolonial place is the centrality of slavery, genocide, and disruptive geographical transformations of indigenous places like Kairi into extractive plantations plugged into the world capitalist economy as servicing satellites to more advanced industrial states.[52] Europe, especially the territorial units of Spain, England, France, Holland, and Portugal, is inconceivable without reference to genocide, slavery, coerced migration, and state geo-graphing over the top of indigenous spatial systems. These processes have given institutional shape to the post-independent territories across the Global South that have been incorporated into the global system of states. Re-politicizing territory necessitates moving outside of modern/colonial paths.

As rain falls and water moves along a particular trajectory, the earth surrounding the moving water erodes, creating grooves, drains, tributaries, and even canyons. Over time, it can be difficult to imagine that water ever ran another way, especially from the temporal scale of reference of a human being who does not experience this historical process completely. Like the natural movement of water, rivers and streams change form and direction over time. But, unlike moving water, the statist 'grooves' in which we find ourselves constricted are not the products of natural human development, but they are rather more closely likened to a colonial damming of free flowing water. These dams have disciplined movement in a way that has provoked an understanding of the state from today's temporal standpoint as being *the* natural way to exist as a human being, but in the *longue durée*, that which appears static is far more fluid.

Recognizing the modern/colonial constitution of territory helps to glimpse the long term from the standpoint of the short term. Yet even seminal works of great importance in IR theorizing remain staunchly wedded to modernist thinking, which allows little

intellectual space for decolonial thinking.[53] This is not to denigrate the importance of these works; rather, it is only to illustrate the ways through which modernist thinking limits the range of possibilities. Post-independence discourses of 'development' and 'modernization' have attempted to separate the states of the Global North and South with scalar narratives that reinforce the imagined discreteness of 'the domestic' level and the 'international' level not just in influential political theory, but also in the practice of international affairs at institutions such as the World Bank, the United Nations, the World Health Organization, CARICOM, ASEAN, SAARC, etc.[54]

By theorizing the behavior of states without due regard for how politics operates at multiple and simultaneous scales (local, national, global) much IR theory – even more complex sociological work - falls into what John Agnew has called the 'territory trap' for failing to work through the complexities of issues such as scale and place.[55] While earlier manifestations of regionalism emerging out of the historic Bandung conference in Indonesia, the West Indian Federation, or the Non-Aligned Movement all had a better understanding of the fundamental link between colonialism and the world system, time has made these connections far less clear than they were in the 1950s. At Bandung, where leaders from the recently liberated regions of Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean met in 1955, a much broader understanding of how colonial power mapped the world was being debated. For example, the Ceylonese Prime Minister, Sir John Kotewala provocatively attacked the Soviet bloc, asking

> if we are united in our opposition to colonialism, should it not be our duty openly to declare our opposition to Soviet colonialism as much as Western imperialism? Finally, if we are against both these forms of colonialism, we must also make it clear that we are opposed to any form of colonial exploitation by any power in the past or in the future.[56]

Although Kotewala's comments were received with contempt from his Chinese and Indian colleagues in particular, his point about the need to be conscious of how colonial power operates 'in the past or in the future' is chilling, as is his call to practice anti-colonialism.

And yet Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, ultimately failed to pursue de-colonial spatial strategies beyond the limits of a single territorial state and the particular coming together of multi-scalar geopolitical influences in the South Asian island produced a 26 year long civil

war out of which a triumphant ethno-nationalist Buddhist politics proudly lays claim to its superior capacity to enforce the writ of the state as they see fit.[57] Even within peace and conflict studies, human security takes second or third tier importance to the significance of state-level interests, and refugee populations are often forced back into unsafe 'home' territories so that tied aid money for national reconstruction projects can be released.[58]

Limiting the spatial and political range of 'practical' solutions to modern/colonial territorial disputes with the Eurocentric nation-state erases histories of overlapping pluriversal conceptions of sovereignty that need to be pursued in research and practice. Fresh spatial and decolonial thinking has much to offer contemporary problems grounded in colonial configurations of territory, including ISIS/ISIL, Israel/Palestine, the Afghanistan/Pakistan border region, resource politics and indigenous autonomy within settler-colonial states like Canada, etc. It ahistorically naturalizes structures and concepts like state territory by treating territory apolitically rather than socially defining value systems that can be re-defined. It continues to shroud the legacy of colonialism within the day-to-day functioning of statehood and errs on the side of maintaining the modern/colonial status quo rather than exploring decolonial possibilities.

THINKING DECOLONIALLY ABOUT TERRITORY

My argument thus far has been predicated on linking our understanding of modern territorial states with a social construction of territory based on Eurocentric ideas of how territory and human history is constituted. Such narratives leave little room for alternative genealogies of thinking about territory today. Modernist narratives woven into studies of nationalism, state theory, and IR theory have given rise to ideas that the state is a natural container for human life, which I have strived to show, is an ahistorical view. In this section, I now seek to explain that territory is itself imbued with colonial assumptions by elaborating upon Anibal Quijano's concept of 'coloniality.' Modernity, and with it, modern (and postmodern) thinking, hides and silences the historical experiences and genealogies of knowledge-production that are outside of this particular trajectory of thought. This hidden shadow of modernity is what is described as 'coloniality.' [59] There can be no modernity without coloniality; the two are mutually constitutive and developed together through the colonial

encounter. De-colonial options, as Walter Mignolo maintains, have always existed alongside colonial/modern ones, however the rule of colonial difference, informed by the 'science' of race in the 19th century in particular, colluded together to silence and denigrate the pluralistic genealogies of decolonial thinking.

De-colonial thinking has a scholarly as well as practical political objective beyond making visible a 'critique' of modernity. Specifically, it is about putting the critique into practice and building new theory that can explain the world without the modernist grooves of Eurocentricity, in the case of this essay, Eurocentricity applied to the state structure itself. It is about the production of new forms of knowledge that are not just 'post-' modern in the sense of continuing to move along some inevitable plane of linear social evolution, but rather, that speak to pluriversal understandings and pathways that are prior to, alongside, but not a part of, modernity. De-colonial thinkers take modern concepts such as race and gender seriously by striving to rethink theory through seeking out genealogies of thought that have been 'subalternized', or denigrated by Eurocentric reasoning. To think decolonially about IR is much more than trying to epistemologically look at IR through a different lens, because applying a new lens implies that what that lens is looking at is already constituted. Decolonial thinking and doing cannot simply look at a pre-existing world through tinted glasses; it needs to restructure the foundations of IR itself.

For example, Shilliam offers one decolonial option, by focusing intellectual energy towards examining the 'hermeneutics of the enslaved' within the Atlantic that will open new pathways of knowledge based on starting from the coloniality side of the coin rather than the modernity side. He focuses on the promises of freedom ensured by 'commercial society' in the development of political economy and demonstrates how from the point of view of the enslaved, political economy's radical 'freedom' is predicated on the radical unfreedom of racialized black bodies. Reading against the colonial archives, he maintains that:

> To the enslaved, freedom was not immanent to commercial society – either progressively or dialectally – but lay outside/ against/ besides/ before it. Additionally, unlike the hermeneutic of common law, the hermeneutics of the enslaved were predicated upon a foundational and direct engagement with the conditions of *radical* unfreedom and freedom.[60]

Shilliam therefore exposes this manifestation of modernity's constitutive dark side through centering his analysis on the thingification and commodification of enslaved African bodies to understand debates within classical political economy. The inversion of logic is central: political economy can be best understood not through the modernist discourses of freedom, but in the lived reality of servitude that constituted the coloniality of those modern discourses. By de-linking from modern discourses, the ideas, theory, and politics of and by colonized subjects become the means through which the world is studied.[61]

The difference between starting with coloniality instead of starting with modernity is of great importance and gets to the heart of the distinction between decolonial thinking and postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory has been criticized for emphasizing mastery of Eurocentric post-structural and post-modern social theory in particular, and using that knowledge to study empirical sites of inquiry in the global south.[62] The intellectual labour in postcolonial thinking, because of its investment in modern epistemology, remains Eurocentric. This creates the uncomfortable but fundamentally important point that simply being from outside the physical geographical limits of the West does not make one's thinking non-western. As Kishore Mahbubhani notes,

> The difficulty lies, not in new ideas but in detaching (de-linking) from the old ones, which ramify, for those brought up with them as most of us have been, into every corner of our minds.[63]

Again, this is not to suggest that postcolonial thinking is inherently wrong or misguided, only that this approach offers a different pathway than decolonial thinking does, even though there is much in common. The different pathways offer different kinds of insights: for the 'doing' of IR, in particular, decolonial pathways will likely offer more concrete ideas about moving outside of the limits of modernity, because the genealogy of global decolonial thinking is not wedded to modernist reasoning in the same way academic reasoning in the English language is.

The coloniality of knowledge systems has blocked decolonial writing from being equally regarded as part of the canon of modern reason. To combat this silencing, Mignolo offers another decolonial pathway by deploying the writing of two subalternized voices in his 'manifesto' of decolonial thinking: the Peruvian indigenous writer Waman Puma de Ayala, and the emancipated slave Otabbah Cugoano, and he situates both as opening a space of de-colonial

thinking whose genealogy could include more contemporary but marginalized thinkers such as Mohandas Gandhi, W.E.B. Du Bois, Amílcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, Gloria Anzaldúa, and the Zapatistas of Chiapas, to name just a few.[64]

The intellectual labour of decolonial thinking includes, then, the reconstruction of Other possibilities that have not been considered alongside contemporaries such as Machievelli, Kant, or Hegel in theorizing the range of possible worlds. In devising decolonial options, the purpose is decidedly not to propose a single corrective lens or approach to trump all others, but to expose the fact that there *are* pluriversal possibilities to how the world might be refashioned outside of the dictates of Eurocentricity, which has been (re-)presented as the only legitimate way of being for the last five hundred years. To my mind, the territorial nation-state and, with it, the motivating norm that demands that strength and respect in the world-system come from exercising total territorial control over that territory by an identifiable 'nation,' enacts a modern/colonial violence that is in need of dismantling if better futures are to be realized.

There is precedent for thinking and acting outside the limits of the territorially bounded nation-state. The existence of governments-in-exile (GIE) such as the Tibetan GIE, based in India, or the (Ceylon) Tamil GIE scattered across the globe in the aftermath of Sri Lanka's civil war, demonstrates one way of challenging the singular Westphalian norm of total territorial rule through political practice.[65] Another conceptualization could be the territorial organization of religious communities, such as the Roman Catholic 'nation' which has a territorial home in the Vatican, yet its members are expected to be loyal to their other nation-states. Similarly, the Sikh Khalsa Panth has a de-territorialized understanding of a globalized Sikh nation. As Shani argues, the Khalsa Panth actually offers a tantalizing glimpse into what a post-Western IR might look like. Other work in decolonial thinking has taken up alternative conceptions of cosmopolitanism emerging from racialized and Othered communities, such as the Haitian revolution.[66] These are all important ways of subverting the authority of a unidirectional notion of sovereignty, but in many ways (with the exception of the Khalsa Panth*)* all these examples are still organized around some state-centric territorial goal or purpose, whether it be keeping the colonizers out (Haiti), establishing a *de facto* counter-state (Tamil Eelam), or challenging the total territorial claims of China and India (Tibetan GIE).

Nevertheless, each offers a unique way to potentially re-politicize understandings of sovereignty and territory. Although in the absence of a historical, decolonial understanding of the origins of the nation-state, the quest for 'normal' state rule can become an overly seductive goal rather than being a means to a greater, emancipatory end.

Indigenous activists across the so-called Americas have been enacting more explicitly decolonizing politics. Nations across what has been colonially territorialized as 'Canada' have been exercising sovereignty in defense of environmental sustainability, including putting their bodies on the line against the heavily armed and militarized Canadian police and army while fighting hydraulic fracking on their territories as in the case of the Elsipogtog First Nation, to establishing border check-points and patrolling their traditional territories in defiance of planned pipeline projects aimed at transporting bitumen to the Pacific as in the case of the Unist'ot'en First Nation.[67] In Chiapas, Mexico, organized indigenous peasants rose up and seized control over their territory, and though political control has oscillated with the Mexican state, in terms of cultural power and articulating alternative pathways to modernity, the Zapatistas have been a global force. Linkages have been sown and fostered between Zapatista farming collectives, organized around horizontal labour practices, and anarcho-syndicalist organizations in the West with stated political and economic goals of supporting one another's work.[68]

These events are just a handful of recent examples, but emerge out of what Kwakwaka'wakw author, artist, and grassroots activist Gord Hill has characterized as the most recent iterations of over five hundred years of indigenous resistance to colonization in the 'Americas'.[69] There is absolutely nothing new to decolonial organizing and politics – it has always existed alongside colonizing organizing and politics – but disciplinarily, IR has been complicit with modernity and silent on its co-constituting coloniality until very recently. While the examples cited here are far from theoretically pure, in that many cases involve the use of modern conceptions of sovereignty (borders, global trade, etc.) as a tactic, this betrays only the fact that at the practical day-to-day level, the work of decolonial politics is located within the modern 'groove' alluded to earlier in this paper. The challenge of decolonial thinking and politics together is to work in the here and now, and build theory based on charting out the pluriversal possibilities that we are taught to believe are not possible.

CONCLUSION

I have sought to show that the shaping of postcolonial territory cannot be separated from the colonial encounter that has normalized state-centric modernist thinking. The transformation of Kairi into Trinidad is just one example of the colonizing violence that rendered territory legible and usable for commercial exploitation based on silencing and ignoring Other ways of relating to territory and organizing human society. The development of global industrial capitalism was fundamentally a colonial project, indebted as it is to slavery, plantation economics, indentureship, and the ideology of linear human and state development. By historicizing postcolonial territory in this essay, I hope to contribute to the project of decolonial thinking by showing that the coveted status of territorial nation-state carries with it tremendous colonial power which is in need of decolonization if it is to avoid repeating the colonizing violence of the past. Colonialism was much more than a time when Europeans ruled the world; it was also a set of material transformations concerning the fundamental value and purpose of territory, agriculture, natural resources, policing, and bureaucratization. The 'modern' nation state, in other words, exposes the coloniality of the state structure protected and governed as it is in the existing system of states.

Sir Shridath Ramphal's position that members of the West Indian Federation turned their back on collective freedom to achieve individual state freedom can be seen as a plea for a more enlightened regionalism, but I see the goal of collective freedom as having more radical potential than a collective union able to exercise greater sovereignty in a modernist sense of the word. Rather than being stronger within a colonially constituted world order, postcolonial states could instead lead the way in conceptualizing 'anOther' politics, unanchored to replicating the particular spatial manifestation of colonial power that the modern-nation state reinforces.

This is not without precedent. The Caribbean region has been a revolutionary site of anti-colonial praxis since at least the Haitian revolution, which produced the first anti-slavery state run by self-liberated people in 1804. It is compelling to note that slavery, as C.L.R. James shows, ended in the French world because of the actions of a self-liberated man named Bellay whose rousing speech to the revolutionary French National Assembly led to an immediate

vote to end French slavery in 1794.[70] While enlightened thinking
has hidden the simultaneous genealogies of decolonial thinking
that have existed alongside modernity, vibrant and growing
practices of every day resistance around world stands as testimony
to modernity's inability to erase pluriversal politics.[71] The impact
of a few hundred years of colonial modernity has influenced the
way we come to know the past, hiding these histories of resistance
as well as productive imaginaries emerging out of subalternized
perspectives that have always been constitutive of the modern
world system. No longer are international forums concerned with
fundamental questions of decolonization and freedom as they were
in the 1950s; today nation-to-nation conversations focus on
narrow technocratic issues instead of broader questions of how to
live free from oppression. Political independence was of
monumental importance in the mid 20th century, but somewhere
along the line, controlling the reigns of the state became an end
unto itself rather than a means to a greater end of building free
societies; controlling the state has been confused for
decolonization.[72]

If we untether colonialism from a temporal period and examine
its material processes along economic, political, and geographic
grounds, it is clear that independence can be only the beginning of
a much longer process of decolonization that requires
fundamentally rethinking how we constitute human communities. I
do not presume to know how to live free from colonialism,
however, as bell hooks reminds us, theory helps us to understand
the hidden violence of society through exposing tensions and
ruptures through which we might invest collective energies
towards finding resolutions.[73] Understanding the colonial context
through which material practices such as large-scale agricultural
production for export, centralizing political sovereignty, private
property, or elite-level representative government (instead of
participatory democracy) can enliven debates today about what
de-colonization ought to look like in terms of practice as well as
within scholarly debates. Inspiration and leadership on how to
begin de-colonizing our scholarship ought to come from studying
the colonial constitution of modernity through the Other
genealogies of thought that we can excavate, but also through
studying the enactment of decolonial politics in our world as the
examples in the last section identify.

The material practices of colonization – territorial
transformation, singular sovereign rule, large scale cash-crops for

foreign trade, integration into a global system of 'container' states that mirror ahistorical ontological assumptions of linear human progress, and the fostering of nationalism into the history and practice of statecraft – are continued through the practice of being a state. If, however, the ontological faith in the nation-state as the only vessel through which to administer freedom becomes untethered, it offers exciting conceptual opportunities to experiment in questions of structural, democratic reform. With the immediate pressures of Cold War geopolitics behind us, forms of non-national community building at macro and micro societal levels can be supported and pursued.[74] The legacy of colonialism lies not only in history, but in the unquestioned ways through which institutions of colonially administered modernity continue to dictate the limits of what is and is not seen as politically possible.

The success of colonial domination over subject peoples was in being able to convince us all that our freedom ultimately rests in our ability to control the systems of government that were written into the land by the colonizers in the first place. As Fanon observed, 'how could we fail to understand that we have better things to do than follow in that Europe's footsteps?'[75]

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

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NOTES

1 Shridath Ramphal, 'A Conversation with Sir Shridath Ramphal' (public lecture at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago. Lecture at the University of the West Indies Institute for International Relations, October 7, 2013)

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

4 Pluriversal is not the same as pluralistic. While pluralistic implies many discrete possibilities and can be likened to a kind of cultural relativism, pluriversal challenges the modern and Eurocentric notion of universalism, which is little more than the generalization of a particular, European form of relativism. Pluriversal posits that the only way to conceive of a universal concept is through multiple different ways of knowing and being that are entangled with one another in power relations through the ' colonial matrix of power.' For a succinct discussion of this concept, see Walter Mignolo 'On Pluriversality' available online at < http://waltermignolo.com/on-pluriversality/> . For a more detailed discussion of the idea's origins and association with the Zapatista movement, see Walter Mignolo *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011) pp.213-251 .

5 Spivak G.C. (2010) *Nationalism and the Imagination* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp.13-14.

6 Barry Hindess, ' Neo-liberal Citizenship' *Citizenship Studies* 6/2 (2002): pp 127 – 142; Stuart Hall et. Al. *Modernity: An introduction to modern societies* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1996); Ranajit Guha *Dominance Without Hegemony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

7 Ernest Gellner *Nations and Nationalism* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

8 Partha Chatterjee. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986) p.14

9 *Ibid*., p.21

10   Partha Chatterjee. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) p.11

11 Andrea Mubi Brighenti. ' On Territorology: Towards a General Science of Territory' *Theory, Culture & Society* 27:1 (2010) p.54.

12 Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011) p.63

13 Bridget Brereton. ' The Historical Background to the Culture of Violence in Trinidad & Tobago' *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* 4, 2010: pp.1-16.

14 'First People's Presence in Trinidad & Tobago' Trinidad & Tobago National Library and Information System Authority. Accessed Jan. 4, 2014, <http://goo.gl/KgCZED>; Gord Hill, *500 Years of Indigenous Resistance* (Oakland: PM Press, 2009).

15 Stuart Hall, ' The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power' in Hall et. Al. (eds) *Modernity: An introduction to modern societies* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

16 For an excellent discussion of race, specifically of ' whiteness' in the tropics, see chapter three, entitled ' Dark Thoughts: Reproducing Whiteness in the Tropics' in

James Duncan, *In The Shadows of the Tropics: Climate, Race and Biopower in 19ᵗʰ Century Ceylon* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007) pp.43 – 67.

[17] Philip Steinberg, ' Insularity, Sovereignty and Statehood: The representation of islands on portolon charts and the construction of the territorial state' *Geografiska Annaler Series B* 87/4 (2005)*: p.259, pp.261–263.*

[18] Peter Taylor, 'The State as Container: Territoriality in the Modern World-System', *Progress in Human Geography* 18/2 (1994) pp.151–162.

[19] John Agnew, ' The territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory,' *Review of International Political Economy* 1/1 (Spring 1994) pp.53-80.

[20] Alexander Wendt, ' Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics' *International Organization* 46/2(1992): 391 – 425

[21] Barry Hindess, ' Neo-liberal Citizenship' *Citizenship Studies* 6/2(2002): pp.137

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* Richard Philcox, trans. (New York: Grove Press) p.100.

[24] Though there are no shortages of examples for this kind of post-independence violence in the world, the example of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) is illustrative. One of the first legislative acts pursued by the United National Party of D.S. Senanayake was to strip the right to vote from a subset of ethnic Tamils who were seen as being alien to the new Ceylonese nation. The trauma of colonial subjugation manifested in triumphant ethnic Sinhalese and Buddhist nationalism, fuelling an ethnonationalist fire that would gradually subsume the island in nearly three decades of civil war.

[25] Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Colombia University Press 1959); Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc. 1979); Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of World Order in International Politics.* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1977); Barry Buzan, Charles Jones, and Richard Little. *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism.* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1993).

[26] Joel S. Migdal *State In Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Martin Doornbos, ' State Collapse and Fresh Starts: Some Critical Reflections', *Development and Change* 33:5(2002): 797-815; A.G. Frank, ' The Development of Underdevelopment' *Monthly Review* 18/4(1966): 17 - 34 Martin Doornbas *Global Forces and State Restructuring: Dynamics of State Formation and Collapse* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006).

[27] Ranajit Guha, *History at the Limit of World History. (*New York: Colombia University Press, 2002), 41.; Hindess 2002.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Ranajit Guha *Dominance Without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India.* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.) p.182.

[30] Guha 2002, p.45.

[31] This is especially transparent in modernization theory's linear account of social progression, as well as in some accounts of the development of nationalism as well. For example: see W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); Ernest Gellner *Nations and Nationalism* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1983).

[32] James C. Scott *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia (*New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) p.5.

33 J.W. Bennet *Ceylon and its Capabilities: an account of its natural resources, indigenous productions, and commercial facilities* (London: W.H. Allen & Co, 1843).

34 Patrick Peebles, *The Plantation Tamils of Ceylon* (London: Leicester University Press, 2001) p.56.

35 Philalethes, ' Letter IV' *Letters on Colonial Policy, particularly as applicable to Ceylon. Reprinted from the Ceylon Journal* (British National Library shelfmark: 793.m.15).

36 Walter Mignolo, 2002. ' The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference' *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101/1: p.59.

37 Robbie Shilliam, ' Non-Western thought and international relations' in Shilliam, ed. *International Relations and Non-Western Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2011) pp.2-3; 13; Martin Munro and Robbie Shilliam, ' Alternative sources of cosmopolitanism: nationalism, universalism and Créolité in Francophone Caribbean thought' in Shilliam, ed. *International Relations and Non-Western Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2011) pp 159-16; see also Edward Said *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978).

38 Shilliam, pp.2-3.

39 Dipesh Chakrabarty. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference.* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007)

40 Giorgio Shani. ' Towards a Post-Western IR: The *Umma, Khalsa Panth,* and Critical International Relations Theory' *International Studies Review* 2008, 10/4: 723. Emphasis in original.

41 Steinberg, pp.259–260.

42 Assumptions about how humans behaved in the absence of a sovereign (whether it be a democratic state or kingdom) has played a pedagogical role in teaching people that the structure of the state is/was necessary, based on unwritten ' social contracts' that mark a temporal, spatial, and physical separation between modern civilization and a pre-historic lack of civilization where life was ' nasty, brutish, and short.' It is revealing that IR as a discipline has traditionally accepted imaginary stag hunts as theoretical justification for understanding ' anarchy' as the organizing principle for international relations rather than empirically observable phenomena such as slavery, indentureship, or historical and contemporary economic imperialism. See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Seattle: Pacific Publishing Studio, 2012 [1650]); Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1954).

43 John Agnew and Stuart Corbridge *Mastering Space: hegemony, territory and international political economy. (*New York: Routledge, 1995).

44 Gearóid Ó Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics: The politics of writing global space (*Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) p.2. Emphasis in original.

45 Though as Eric Williams has argued, the sugar industry sustained by slavery was never truly economically productive, rather, it was sustained by monopolistic practices and the economic model of mercantilism. It was the shifting alliances of capitalists away from defending slavery in the 18th century to being against slavery on the basis of economic inefficiency that helped to end slavery and promote waged labour on the plantations of the West Indies. See Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944) pp.135–142.

46 Stuart Hall, ' The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power' in Hall et. Al. (eds) *Modernity: An introduction to modern societies* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1996) p.194.

47 Ó Tuathail p.11.

48 *Ibid.,* pp.10-15.

49 A common tactic of enforcing modern-liberal property rights overtop of indigenous understandings of territory was through the legitimizing means of law. In the case of Ceylon, ordinances enacted by the will of the governor included ' Crown Land Encroachment Ordinances' and ' Wasteland Ordinances.' In the case of Wasteland ordinances, land that was surveyed and determined to be economically 'unproductive' (in practice – non corporate land used for subsistence farming and cattle grazing) could be decreed ' wasted' and according to law, would become the property of the crown. To rectify the problem of wastelands, subsequent ordinances enabled Aliens to purchase wastelands from the crown even if not resident on the island. As for Crown Encroachment Ordinances, these were put in place to deal with situations where the colonial government felt that *natives* were encroaching on the newly seized crown lands to pasture their animals. For details, consult: ' Ordinance 5 & 12, 1840: Crown Land Encroachment' British National Library Shelfmark: CO 56/1 ' Ordinance 15, 1848: An Ordinance to Enable Etienne [illegible], an alien, to hold land on the island' ; British National Archives Shelfmark: CO 56/5.

50 Walter Mignolo*, The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011) pp.66-67.

51 Which is a common narrative in much of the literature on nationalism as well as world systems theories and modernization theory. See Gellner (1983) W.W. Rostow (1960); Immanuel Wallerstein., *The Modern World System* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011); Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism Vol. III: The Perspective of the World* trans. Sian Reynolds (London: Williams Collins Sons & Co., 1984).

52 Williams, Eric. *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1964 [1944]) pp.126–154.

53 Even critical Marxist studies of the colonial world economy by influential scholars like Fernand Braudel, Eric Williams, and Immanuel Wallerstein which bring much depth and empirical nuance to the conversation still present narratives that are deeply invested in the relationship between scholarship and modernity. This is not meant as a criticism, rather, as an observation and statement of limitation in terms of how critical scholars have understood the world. Wallerstein has in recent years noticed this trend in his own work and is now actively involved in decolonial projects. See:Braudel 1984; Williams 1944; , Wallerstein 2011

54 The seminal work of Kenneth Waltz 1959 *Man, State, and War* and 1979 *Theory of International Politics* and its subsequent effect in shaping the development of IR theory in English School and social constructivism exemplifies this theoretical point. See Barry Buzan et. Al. *The Logic of Anarchy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) and Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

55 Agnew 1994, p.59.

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60 Shilliam, Robbie, ' Forget English Freedom, Remember Atlantic Slavery: Common law, commercial law, and the significance of slavery for classical political economy.' *New Political Economy* 17/5 (2012): p.606.
61 See also: Nelson Maldonado-Torres, ' On the coloniality of being: contributions to the development of a concept' in Walter Mignolo and Arturo Escobar (eds), *Globalization and the Decolonial Option* (New York: Routledge, 2010) pp 94 - 124
62 Vinay Lal, ' Subaltern Studies and Its Critics: Debates Over Indian History' *History and Theory* 40 (2001) p.147.
63 Cited in Walter Mignolo, *Globalization and the Decolonial Option* (New York: Routledge, 2010) p.14.
64 Walter Mignolo, ' Epistemic Disobedience and the Decolonial Option: A Manifesto' *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1/2(2010): p.53
65 Fiona McConnell, ' De Facto, Displaced, Tacit: The Sovereign Articulations of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile,' *Political Geography* 28/6 (2009) pp. 34–352; F. McConnell, 'The Fallacy and Promise of the Territorial Trap: Sovereign Articulations of Geopolitical Anomalies', *Geopolitics* 15/4 (2010) pp. 762–768; A. B. Murphy, 'The Sovereign State System as Political-Territorial Ideal: Historical and Contemporary Considerations', T. Bierstreker and C. Weber (eds.), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996) pp.81–120.
66 Giorgio Shani, ' Toward a Post-Western IR: The *Umma,* the *Khalsa Panth,* and Critical International Relations Theory' *International Studies Review* 10 (2008): 722 – 734.; Martin Munro and Robbie Shilliam, ' Alternative sources of cosmopolitanism: nationalism, universalism and Créolité in Francophone Caribbean thought' in Shilliam, ed. *International Relations and Non-Western Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2011) p.159.
67 For a good overview of the recent Elsipogtog confrontation and an overview of the policing of indigenous protest, see: Andrew Crosby, ' Shale Gas Showdown' *The Leveller* 6/3. (Ottawa: Nov. 2013). Available online: http://goo.gl/joxWod . For information on the ongoing Unist'ot'en camp, see: <http://unistotencamp.com/> See Also Glen Couthard, *Red Skins White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014).
68 Sofa Gradin. ' Value as Voice: Pre-figuring Post-Capitalist Production Against the Global Division of Labour' (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, London: August 26 – 29, 2014).
69 Gord Hill, *Five Hundred Years of Indigenous Resistance* (Oakland: PM Press, 2009)
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72 Ajay Parasram, ' The Long Road to Decolonization: understanding our political present' in Jai Parasram, *View From the Mountain: Political notes and commentary.* (Trinidad & Tobago: Paria Publishing Co Ltd., 2013).
73 bell hooks, *Writing Beyond Race: Living Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
74 A number of non-elite, non-state level, grass roots initiatives are already underway. While attending the inaugural iWeek at the University of the West

Indies last year, I was told by graduate students that cultural and music-based organizations as well as track II diplomacy has been aggressively underway as ordinary people are dissatisfied with the failures of meaningful cooperation from their national leaders. Students as well as participants more generally did note, however, the concrete importance of being able to foster better and more affordable transportation amongst the islands, which should be a macro-level initiative.

[75] Fanon, Frantz *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004 [1961]) p.236.