

# From Locke to Slots: Money and the Politics of Indigeneity

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High-stakes tribal government gaming in the United States has generated widespread moral and cultural anxiety among non-indigenous Americans since its founding by Florida Seminoles in 1979. That anxiety has concerned the cultural authenticity of Indigenous people(s) and the political legitimacy of American Indian tribal nations.<sup>1</sup> Although debates about slot machines and Indian Country may at first glance seem unprecedented because of their economic scale, historians have shown that pitched controversies about indigeneity and money are nothing new in American public culture (and within Indigenous communities).<sup>2</sup> In such debates, it is impossible to separate the attributed qualities of indigenous individuals from the status of collective rights. What binds them together is the structural exclusion of indigenous peoples from a three-part modern complex of money, property, and government. This exclusion is,

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<sup>1</sup> For discussions of “rich Indian racism” in the casino context, see Cattelino 2008; 2010; Darian-Smith 2002; Harmon 2010; Pasquaretta 2003; and Spilde 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Historian Alexandra Harmon (2010) traced Native and non-Native debate over the meaning of “rich Indians” through several historical episodes when indigenous peoples gained wealth. Those episodes prompted patterned soul-searching about the form, meaning, and boundaries of economic life.

paradoxically, constitutive of modern theories of money and therefore is a type of *constitutive exclusion*.<sup>3</sup>

My first task in what follows is to establish that, and how, the New World Indian has been constitutively present, from the beginning, at the foundation of these theories.<sup>4</sup> The form of presence is as an absence, a foil: indigenous individuals and collectives stand within modern theories of money, property, and government insofar as they were understood to lack money, property, and government. Then, I show how this complex governs anthropological and settler public engagements with indigenous economies to the present, with punishing consequences for indigenous peoples. Money and property are about relationships among people, as anthropologists long have acknowledged; they are also, profoundly, about relationships among *peoples*.

Part I of this article discusses key texts that established modern social theories of money, property, and government by (in chronological order) John Locke, Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Adam Smith and his fellow Scottish Enlightenment thinker John Millar, the early American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan, and, finally, Friedrich Engels (and his collaborator Karl Marx), who drew on Morgan.<sup>5</sup> These immensely influential but diverse (and sometimes divergent) texts frequently deployed the image of New World indigenous peoples as a foil for Europeans' use of money and practice of private property. In doing so, they expressed an emergent bourgeois social formation

<sup>3</sup> See also Byrd (2011) theorizing the "Indian" as supplement. Sincere thanks to a reviewer who saw with clarity the analytical moves I am making here, and who reminded me of Agamben's (1998) term "inclusive exclusion." I opt for "constitutive" over "inclusive" in order to highlight the essential role of indigeneity and in order that it resonate with the extra-constitutional status of American Indians in the United States. "Inclusion," furthermore, has been a mode of de-indigenization in the United States, a way of denying indigenous sovereignty. Whichever the terminology, this type of argument—showing how something seemingly outside, marginal, or superstructural in fact constitutes the center or foundation—is classically deconstructivist. In Part II, attention shifts to the more materialist project of showing how excluded-as-constitutive indigeneity both shapes and, importantly, constrains indigenous peoples' economic lives.

<sup>4</sup> The most insightful scholarship on the importance of American Indians to canonical Western thought includes James Tully's work on Locke and American Indians (1980; 1994) and Anthony Pagden's (1982; 1993) on the ways that Europeans negotiated philosophical, scientific, and other questions through their encounters with the Americas. There is little discussion of money (there is more on property).

<sup>5</sup> Texts considered include John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* from 1690 (1988), Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* from 1748 (1949), published in 1748 and first translated into English in 1750; Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* from 1754 (1987), Adam Smith's *Lectures on Jurisprudence* (1978) and *Wealth of Nations* (1976) from the late 1700s, John Millar's *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* from 1773 (2006), Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society* from 1877 (1964), and Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* from 1884 (1972). Writers such as Locke and Smith relied on earlier travelers' observations of the New World by the likes of Charlevoix and the more ethnological Lafitau. Subsequently, thinkers like Morgan undertook direct observation, while Engels relied upon the ethnographic record established by Morgan and others. I hope that it goes without saying that I do not wish to conflate such intellectually, temporally, and geographically diverse writers, and I recognize the dangers in pulling passages from their texts without sustained analysis.

of money that was racialized.<sup>6</sup> My method in Part I is interpretive. In *The Transit of Empire*, critical indigenous theorist Jodi Byrd (2011) considers indigeneity to be a “transit” through which theory and cacophonous political formations pass. Tracing the reiterative meme of indigeneity in critical and postcolonial theories, Byrd tracks “the elisions, erasures, enjambments, and repetitions of Indianness” (ibid.: xiii), and the “traces of indigenous savagery and ‘Indianness’ that stand a priori prior to theorizations of origin, history, freedom, constraint, and difference” in poststructuralist theory and its reconfigurations (ibid.: xvii). Such interpretive work is political. Sovereignty, Byrd illustrates with a Chickasaw migration story, is “an act of interpretation” (ibid.: xvi); so too, in my own narrower treatment, is sovereignty as read through money and property.

My core finding and provocation is that money’s modern conceptualization has been predicated on—and has been reproduced as an agent of—the exclusion of indigenous peoples. New World colonialism and the money form are inseparable. This is the case not only because the dispossession of New World peoples enabled political economies that continue into the present, but also because Europeans and settlers defined indigenous peoples in part by the absence of money and property (of which money is a special form). In turn, and more to the point here, they defined money and property in part as that which modern non-indigenous people have and use. To be sure, there is nothing new in claiming that European and American social and political thinkers theorized modern forms in sometimes-opposing and sometimes-absorbing relation to New World indigenous peoples. Still, a focus on modern theories of money in relation to indigeneity affords insight into patterned and ongoing crises of indigenous money and wealth in North American settler states.

These are not solely economic matters: the conceptual exclusions from money/property were coproduced with juridical ones insofar as liberal political theories grounded the authority of modern government in private property (and, in turn, money). These theories matter, not only in the library or the university classroom but because they had, and *continue to have*, material effects in the

<sup>6</sup> I do not trace my interest in this article’s subject matter to reading modern theories of money and pondering their relationship to indigeneity and governance. The arrow pointed in the opposite direction: after completing a book about present-day American Indian casino gaming and sovereignty (Cattelino 2008), I pondered the sturdiness of the association of American Indians with poverty and considered the anomaly of indigenous wealth and use of money. I mean anomaly in Philip Deloria’s (2004: 5) sense of something “that defines the unnatural and odd,” insofar as “the naming of an anomaly simultaneously re-creates and empowers the very same categories that it escapes.” Simultaneously, I starting teaching in the great books core curriculum at the University of Chicago, diving into Enlightenment texts I had read years before or, in some cases, never. I was stunned by the prominence of American Indians in those texts, and I began to consider how the modern money form is connected to questions of the political in classic political and social theories.

world by shaping policy as well as public understandings of what money and property are and do. Modernist theories of money express, and facilitate reflection upon, a specific bourgeois cultural politics that pervades American configurations of money, property, and government. This settler colonial bourgeois cultural politics comes into focus—not only, but perhaps especially—through examination of indigeneity.<sup>7</sup>

With reference to Avery Gordon's (2008) sociological theory of haunting, the article's second part traces the money/property/government complex through the classic topics of wampum and potlatch, before returning to casino gaming. To this day, as historian Alexandra Harmon (2010) has shown, indigenous economic practice has served as a testing ground for Native and non-Native efforts, both scholarly and public, to work out the cultural and political boundaries of economic life. As this admittedly mad dash through the centuries suggests, the money/property/government complex perpetuates the eliminatory logic and everyday practices of settler colonialism.

#### PART I: CONSTITUTIVE INDIGENEITY

##### A. *On Money*

Thus in the beginning all the world was America, and more so than that is now; for no such thing as money was any where known.

—John Locke (1988 [1690]: 301)

This famous and powerful passage from John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* begins "in the beginning." Locke refers to the elusive state of nature that so interested European thinkers of his day: that state against and through which civilization could be defined and measured. Although that state of nature was nowhere to be found on Earth when Locke lived, as he acknowledged with the qualifier "and more so than that is now," neither was the state of nature entirely abstracted from life on earth. Rather, it was filled with images taken from travel writings, early ethnographies, and subsequent scholarship on the indigenous peoples of North America.<sup>8</sup> For Locke and others, the state of nature was not (only) different but prior, temporally located in a past time before humans had advanced to higher stages of development and

<sup>7</sup> A viable alternative to a cultural politics analysis would be a materialist one that explained cultural politics as emergent from economic positions. Or, one could offer a cultural history of non-Native images of American Indians and show how stereotype and expectation naturalize white wealth, money, property, and governance. Since Berkhofer (1978), sources on the debilitating effects of stereotype and expectation for American Indians include Deloria 2004; Huhndorf 2001; and Mithlo 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Giorgio Agamben (1998: 36), whose writings on sovereignty often overlook colonialism, cites Locke's "in the beginning" passage to note that, for the political thinkers of Locke's time, the "state of nature" corresponded to the New World. Even some of the most insightful and respected treatments of Locke's writings on money (e.g., McClure 1996: 156–87) discuss the state of nature and of natural agents without grappling with the specificity of New World indigeneity.

thereby situated at the theoretical limits of the social and the civilizational. This was “in the beginning,” and, at that time, “all the world was America” (by which he means indigenous America).

In a well-known move, early modern thinkers such as Locke and their successors developmentally organized the human differences that colonialism brought forth. This type of temporal distancing has been a persistent characteristic of modern thought and the colonial orders that exemplify it, perhaps especially settler colonialism. It has been the epistemological foundation of much anthropological thought, named by anthropologist Johannes Fabian as the “denial of coevalness” (1983: 31).<sup>9</sup> As the early anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan put it nearly two centuries later, “The history and experience of the American Indian tribes represents, more or less nearly, the history and experience of our own remote ancestors when in corresponding conditions. Forming a part of the human record, their institutions, arts, inventions and practical experience possess a high and special value reaching far beyond the Indian race itself” (1964 [1877]: 7).<sup>10</sup> For Locke, the indicator of this special value was the absence of money. The final clause of Locke’s famous sentence, by which he explained why America stood for the beginning of all of the world, reads: “for no such thing as money was any where known.” The view that American Indians did not use money mattered because Locke and others understood the adoption of money to: (1) reorganize social organization; and (2) reflect and refine the modern qualities of individuals. In turn, these changes produced the political.<sup>11</sup>

First, then, modern theories held that money attenuated certain kinds of relationships while strengthening others: in doing so, it upended social organization. For Adam Smith (1976 [1776]), money overturned forms of social distinction and status that had organized “primitive” society. As such, money promoted freedom. While theorizing human progress and the emergence of social ranks and civilization, John Millar drew on colonial and ethnological

<sup>9</sup> Fabian’s trenchant and influential critique of anthropology traced this denial of coevalness, by which he meant “a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse” (1983: 31). The denial of coevalness, as an epistemological orientation, relied on secular time and pervaded both cultural evolutionism and structuralist as well as particularist traditions.

<sup>10</sup> By placing all humans along a single path to civilization, various authors wrote against declensionist theories that humans were falling from a state of grace or polygenic theories that racial groups had multiple origins (and therefore were essentially, irreconcilably different). Morgan, a materialist, was more attentive than many to the role of “conditions” in producing social organization. For a history of racial constructs in anthropology and their importance in public affairs, see Baker 1998.

<sup>11</sup> I do not aim to enter the debate as to whether indigenous Americans did or did not exhibit avarice, were wealthy or poor, or did or did not use money. For rejoinders to some common assumptions about affluence and the failure of hunters to save, store wealth, and otherwise act in ways consistent with the properties of money, see Marshall Sahlins’ classic essay, “The Original Affluent Society” (1972).

writings of Charlevoix and Lafitau about American Indians to assert that “savages” were preoccupied with filling their present needs and therefore cannot gain refinement (Millar 2006 [1773]: 86).<sup>12</sup> Millar held that with bourgeois opulence, by contrast, personal connections are diminished. People then use money to buy services in lieu of those connections: “Money, therefore, becomes more and more the only means of procuring honours and dignity; and the sordid pursuits of avarice [which he associates with a feudal and aristocratic age] are made subservient to the nobler purposes of ambition” (ibid.: 236).<sup>13</sup> Money buys social status and confers it upon those with noble purpose instead of those who benefit from arbitrary social status. That the use of money reorganizes social organization became a shared assumption within the developmental mode of understanding human difference that outlasted the Enlightenment, dominated emergent American anthropology by the end of the nineteenth century, and continued to influence anthropology via thinkers like Durkheim.<sup>14</sup> What is more, many scholars attributed shifts in a society’s advancement toward civilization in significant part to its *economic* organization.

American Indians occupied a position in this trajectory that excluded them from both modern economic practice and the civilizational qualities of social organization that accompanied it. Especially important for anthropology was Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881), whose research with Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) people in northern New York and comparative studies of kinship resulted in a theory of social evolution that influenced, among others, Engels and Marx. Like their forebears, Morgan and then Engels took money to be a powerful force that upended social organization for American Indians. Unlike Smith and Millar, however, Engels (and Marx) emphasized that money marks and produces class difference and resulting inequality. Engels, for example, thought that societies organized by gens/clan (that is, groups

<sup>12</sup> Thank you to Patrick Wolfe for pointing me to Millar.

<sup>13</sup> Of course, modern thinkers ranged widely in how they understood the desire for wealth. Some viewed it as a calm, rational, foresighted, and abstract project characteristic of civilized man who acts in his interest, not just to satisfy his immediate needs or his passions. Others came to view it as the unleashing of avarice. A. O. Hirschman (1997 [1977]) traced some of this movement in Enlightenment thought as the passions, which previously had been viewed as contrary to reason and requiring constraint, emerged as possible to play against one another and harness for public good. In particular, “interest” (tied to greed, avarice, and love of money) became the term for countervailing and calculated passions. Importantly, Hirschman showed this to have been primarily a political question (of rule) rather than an economic one, with proponents of capitalism making political arguments for its benefits.

<sup>14</sup> For Simmel (1990 [1907]), money corroded social distinctions and thereby opened up modern social and aesthetic life; for Durkheim (1997 [1893]), it facilitated the division of labor and novel, enduring forms of social solidarity based on interdependent differences rather than the mechanical ties of social status. For Durkheim (ibid.: 127), citing Morgan, the closest living example of a society based on mechanical solidarity—the horde—was “the Indians of North America.” Such orders would give way to organic solidarity, which Durkheim understood to promote liberal forms of governance and abstract thinking.

that understand themselves to descend from a common human or non-human ancestor; following Morgan, he took the Iroquois to exemplify a “gentile constitution”) did not have money: “The old gentile constitution for its part knew neither money nor advances of money nor debts in money” (Engels 1972 [1884]: 173). That is, social organization corresponded to economic life, with early stages of society (savagery, lower barbarism) organized by kinship (not politics) and kinship-based non-monetary exchange. In more advanced societies like the Greeks, however, money was coined and began to hold social power. Engels wrote of Athens: “From here the growing money economy penetrated like corrosive acid into the old traditional life of the rural communities founded on natural economy. *The gentile constitution is absolutely irreconcilable with money economy*” (ibid.: 173, my emphasis). Indigenous peoples’ kinship-based social organization could not survive the money form. With these writings, money’s significance for social organization coalesces.<sup>15</sup>

Modern social theories of money concern not only social organization but also money’s effects on the individual. They have contemplated the individual, in notably large part, through discussions of actual—or, more often, imagined—indigenous individuals’ attributes and desires. In the eyes of many modern thinkers, money promoted the development of valuable personal characteristics in its users, including foresight, complex needs, and the power of abstraction. As Locke wrote, men began to want more than they needed to survive upon agreeing that “*a little piece of yellow Metal, which would keep without wasting or decay, should be worth a great piece of Flesh, or a whole heap of Corn*” (1988 [1690]: 294, his emphasis). In prose replete with New World images of corn, wooded wilderness, and Indians, Locke showed how money’s durability and commensurability allowed people to plan and have foresight (ibid.: 299). Because money was lasting and would not spoil, individuals could remove themselves from present needs and extend the temporality of their desires. Temporal extension opened up new economic possibilities (investment, credit and debt, etc.), in this view, but also cultivated an individual sensibility of reason and sober assessment. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who often depicted the state of nature with mention of American “savages,” held that the wants of savages are easily satisfied, because the savage has neither foresight nor curiosity, and he seeks not self-improvement. Although not writing of money per se, Rousseau pegged foresight to commerce (which, in turn, depended on money), and with an indigenous New World

<sup>15</sup> Early anthropologists wondered how societies without states could hold themselves together. The answer, most often, was kinship. Kinship, in turn, governed the rules of exchange, and Lévi-Strauss, most famously, placed the exchange of women (via exogamous marriage) at the very foundation of culture. See Rubin (1975) for a feminist critique both of Lévi-Strauss and Marx/Engels.



foil: “Such is, even today, the extent of the Carib’s foresight. In the morning he sells his bed of cotton and in the evening he returns in tears to buy it back, for want of having foreseen that he would need it that night” (1987 [1754]: 46). Not only do indigenous people belong to a different time, but they are incapable of managing time in ways that accompany the money form.

More broadly, money indicates and enables the cognitive capacity for abstraction (and in this, as well as in commensurability, it often is discussed alongside language).<sup>16</sup> Montesquieu, for one, emphasized the semiotic value of money. Like others, he drew examples of people without money from North American Indians. Montesquieu took money to be a marker of civilization and a sign of value that facilitates abstraction and generalization while obscuring specificity (1949 [1748]: 374–75).<sup>17</sup> In doing so, money produces inequality and calls law into being. In *The Spirit of Laws*, Montesquieu introduced the idea that money is a sign of civilization by telling an Old World story of encounter: “Aristippus, being cast away, swam and got safely to the next shore, where, beholding geometrical figures traced in the sand, he was seized with a transport of joy, judging that he was amongst Greeks, and not in a nation of barbarians.” The maxim follows: “Should you ever happen to be cast by some adventure among an unknown people; upon seeing a piece of money you may be assured that you have arrived in a civilised country” (ibid.: 277). Money indexes an advanced form of signification.

As for American Indians, Montesquieu first establishes that they enjoyed sociopolitical equality, and then he connects that observation to the individual and the objects with which the individual interacts. Without money, there is equality, but this is because people have such simple wants: “The people who have no money have but few wants; and these are supplied with ease, and in an equal manner. Equality is then unavoidable; and hence it proceeds that their chiefs are not despotic” (ibid.: 278–79). Sameness and transparency prevail. For Montesquieu, money is an abstract sign that conceals the specificity of objects and people: “In countries where they have no specie, the robber takes only bare movables, which have no mutual resemblance. But where they make use of money, the robber takes the signs, and these always resemble each other. In the former nothing can be concealed, because the robber takes along with him the proofs of his conviction; but in the latter it is quite the contrary” (ibid.: 278). Before there is money, the robber cannot hide; money, however, reconciles the differences between objects. Lack of differentiation, then, is ascribed to North American Indians as individuals and in their relations to

<sup>16</sup> Anthony Padgen (1993: ch. 4), among others, notes that questions of commensurability and abstraction characterized Europeans’ writings about the New World, especially with regard to language and the “savage.”

<sup>17</sup> See also Brander Rasmussen (2012: 29) on the civilizing narrative of abstraction, with reference to colonial narratives that overlooked evidence of indigenous American writing systems in the establishment of a hierarchy of mind.



the things that surround them. As we shall see, this attribution becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy of colonial dispossession.

To say that indigenous peoples lacked the capacity for abstraction was not simply a philosopher's insult. For these thinkers, money simultaneously offered semiotic evidence of its users' capacity for abstraction and also rendered objects and people(s) commensurable.<sup>18</sup> Thus, money was theorized both as: (1) an indicator of indigenous-civilized difference; and (2) the force that corroded such difference along the human march away from a shared primitive past and toward civilization. Indigenous peoples, as such, had no place in the present or future semiotic and civilizational order, for which money stood as a sign and force.<sup>19</sup>

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For these (and other) thinkers, money was a force and indicator that differentiated peoples from one another along a trajectory of development, both at collective and individual levels. One can rightly read these texts as producing specters of indigeneity. However, it is also critical to read them as generating immensely influential theories of money in which indigeneity figures as its supplement (see also Byrd 2011 on the "Indian" as supplement). The point is not that such thinkers held prejudicial views of indigenous peoples, or even that American Indians served as a foil for European self-reflection (both true). More significantly, a survey of these texts shows the (constitutive, inclusive) exclusion of indigeneity, paradoxically, to rest at the foundation of modern theories of money and of the modern organization of capital. Thus, as we shall see below, that exclusion haunts the cultural politics of money in the United States to the present.

### *B. On Property*

Money is a special form of property that brings into relief its essential qualities. While money's origins long have been subject to scholarly debate, and anthropologists and historians have debunked the modern myth that money emerges out of barter-based economies (Maurer 2006; Graeber 2011; Park 2016), many

<sup>18</sup> Marc Shell's (1995) fascinating history of the shared representational logics of art and money in Europe overlooks colonialism but rightly points to the politics of adequation that money provokes. Also see Maurer's (2005) analysis of anthropology's fixation with adequation and the distinctive dilemmas of deploying anthropological method and theory to study money.

<sup>19</sup> Patrick Wolfe's (1991: 203–5) analysis of the discourse of the "Dreamtime" in the anthropology of Aboriginal Australia calls attention to another way—assessments of spirituality—that settler theorists established an ambivalent gap between scientific empiricism (or, more broadly, modernism) and romantic idealism. Following anthropological theorists of animism (most notably Tylor), the anthropologists of the "Dreaming" commented on Aboriginal peoples' relative lack of abstraction and propensity for fetishism. From here it is but a short step to linking animism/fetishism to the commodity fetish, a move that allowed Marx to criticize capitalism on its own terms by unmasking its enchanted misrecognitions (on colonialism in Africa and the fetish in anthropological theory, see Pietz 1985).

of its modern theorists agreed that money became necessary and powerful with the onset of private property. Developmentalists of all stripes marked the shift to private property—which they presumed to be universal and unidirectional—as a turning point for civilization and, especially, government. They generally agreed that, as Morgan put it, “It is impossible to overestimate the influence of property in the civilization of mankind” (1964 [1877]: 426). And they were quick, like Morgan, to assert that North American Indians lacked property in land.

Indigenous exclusion from private property was not merely good to think. As political theorist James Tully (1994) has argued, Western theories of property contributed directly and indirectly to the dispossession of American Indians. They also limit the extent to which indigenous demands for justice can be adjudicated today. As Tully effectively demonstrated, property was central to the modern Western project whereby “conceptions of modernity were defined in contrast to, and in supersession of, the Aboriginal peoples they displaced in practice” (1994: 166).<sup>20</sup> Moreover, as Paul Nadasdy (2005), Glen Coulthard (2007), and Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015) have argued, regimes of recognition based on property have perpetuated settler domination in Canada, Australia, and beyond.<sup>21</sup>

Again, to begin with John Locke. Locke held that Indians knew no enclosure but instead were tenants in common who held rights to property in their own persons, but not in land (1988 [1690]: 287). He famously departed from theories of property based on occupancy to one based on labor: “Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that nature hath provided, and left it in, hath mixed his *Labour* with, and joynted to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his Property” (ibid.: 288).<sup>22</sup> Throughout the *Second Treatise*, American Indians are Locke’s key examples of people who live on uncultivated land that is not owned. He finds there is no better counterexample of labor being the greater part of value “than several Nations of the Americans” (296), who are rich in land but poor in comfort. Money plays a key role in

<sup>20</sup> Tully is the leading source on Aboriginal property and Western political theory, and he systematically presents: the premises about indigenous peoples that were common among Western theorists (with Locke as the focus); the development of these by political theorists otherwise often understood to establish distinct traditions (e.g., Kant); and twentieth-century political theorists’ unexamined uptake of these presumptions (e.g., Nozick and Rawls). Tully is less focused on money or the intertwining of political theory with ethnology and related social theory.

<sup>21</sup> The question of property with regard to the figure of the culturally traditional Native who is necessarily poor invites comparison with writings about possessive whiteness or, as legal scholar Cheryl Harris (1993) puts it, “whiteness as property.” It also resonates with the maintenance of inequality via a political economy of resentment over “uppity” Blacks, Asians, and Jews (differently) over-associated with money (see also Day 2016).

<sup>22</sup> A caveat: scholars including legal historian Stuart Banner (2005) have suggested that the labor theory of property was less widespread in the United States than, for example, in Australia, where the doctrine of “terra nullius” dominated. My focus is on the logic of the money-property-government complex and its uneven effects.

Locke's story in part because productivity increases once land is cultivated, so owners gain surpluses that must be exchanged or go to waste, and money makes this possible. For Montesquieu, too, agriculture necessitates money: "The culture of lands requires the use of money" (1949 [1748]: 277).

Where is the problem for American Indians? It is twofold. First, Locke associates land use that is not structured by private property ownership with waste. This renders indigenous lifeways wasteful and positions them outside the civilizational domain of productive economy. He positively compares the value of ten acres of land in Devonshire to a thousand in the American West because the latter are, in his view, not put to good use. This is a cultural politics of property. Locke observed the following about the wasteful state of the land among a people who lack money: in America there are "great tracts of ground to be found, which (the inhabitants thereof not having joyned with the rest of mankind, in the consent of the use of their common money) lie waste, and are more than the people, who dwell on it, do, or can make use of, and so still lie in common. Tho' this can scarce happen amongst that part of mankind, that have consented to the use of money" (1988 [1690]: 299). Indians, unlike money users, are wasteful.

Second, Locke justifies indigenous dispossession on the grounds that it will replace said waste with productivity. Productivity is the key to indigenous dispossession. As scholars including Onur Ulas Ince (2011) have explained, this was the case not only because Indians allegedly were wasteful but also because money helps get Locke out of a moral quandary about justifying private property accumulation under the provisions of natural law. The quandary is that property must be used without waste, and must not exclude others from the land they need. Unlike crops, money does not spoil, so it helps dispense with the waste problem. As for the second provision, no one has a right to endless private property, but if money facilitates productivity at scale, without waste, then settlers are justified in taking land. After all, that land now (unlike in the past when cultivating vast acreage would lead to immoral spoilage) will be cultivated in ways that, supposedly, improve the common lot of all people. Thus, Locke and so many others concluded that Europeans were justified in settling, cultivating, and thereby owning presumed-to-be-uncultivated lands without aboriginal consent.

And so it went. The famous 1823 Marshall Court case *Johnson v. McIntosh*, which is a staple of first-year law school property courses in the United States, outlined the Doctrine of Discovery in the United States whereby settler polities held title and dominion even as they recognized Indian polities to be occupants with "impaired" title. The court opinion regarded productivity and use as matters of civilizational difference. Indians, the court asserted, gained subsistence from the forest, and, as such, "To leave them in possession of their country was to leave the country a wilderness" (*Johnson v. McIntosh*, 590; see Wilkins 1997: 27–35; Williams 2005: 54). American jurists and others

justified and enacted indigenous dispossession while building the foundations of American property law, and they did so partly by (re)aligning indigenous peoples' position with regard to property and, indirectly (via spoilage), money.

Political theorist Robert Nichols (2017: 3) identifies the recursive logic of indigenous dispossession as follows: "Dispossession can be usefully reconstructed to name a unique historical process, one in which property is generated under conditions that require its divestment and alienation from those who appear, only retrospectively, as its original owners." The scandal is not (only) theft of preexisting property as such, but is the taking that, simultaneously, changes the state of what is seized into property per se: "In this formulation, the term therefore names not only the forcible transfer of property but transformation into property, albeit in a manner that is structurally negated for some, i.e., 'the dispossessed.'" The negation is that Indians as such acquire in property, retroactively, only the "right to sell" (ibid.: 13). Here Nichols builds on Vine Deloria Jr.'s discussion of "discovery" in *Custer Died for Your Sins*: "Discovery negated the rights of the Indian tribes to sovereignty and equality among the nations of the world. It took away their title to their land *and gave them the right only to sell*" (1988 [1969]: 30 (Nichols' italics). A logic of dispossession.

While it might be tempting to relegate to the dustbins of history the view of indigenous people as wasteful and of settlers as having the rights to indigenous lands by virtue of productivity, such assessments have endured and recombined during periods of federal policy that include the allotment era of dispossession in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and they have been presumed by twentieth- and twenty-first-century federal efforts to locate nuclear waste disposal, Japanese internment/concentration camps, land-intensive mineral extraction, and other activities on reservation lands.<sup>23</sup> It is not solely indigenous peoples who have been affected. As Barbara Arneil wrote in *John Locke in America* (1996), the natural rights theory of property—an important historical development across Europe and the Americas—grew from historical roots in the English colonization of the New World. This influential theory developed and was promulgated even as Locke and others, Arneil notes, overlooked evidence that American Indians practiced agriculture.

Adam Smith also contrasted fully realized from incomplete forms of property, with indigenous Americans exemplifying lack. Smith held in his *Lectures on Jurisprudence* (1978 [1762–1763]) that, in the early stages of development, property had been confined to what was about one's person. He recounts a

<sup>23</sup> According to Locke, agriculture efficiently limits the human need for lands and thereby liberates unused land for others. Americans would see shades of these arguments in the Dawes Act, which: promoted American Indian agriculture; allotted collectively held landholdings to individual American Indians in fee simple, according to an agricultural calculus of need; and, crucially, thereby produced vast "surplus" lands that the United States expropriated and redistributed to non-Indians (e.g., through Homestead Acts).

curious tale, taken from Charlevoix's travel accounts in North America. A "Canadian" (by which Smith meant indigenous) woman had a string of wampum "which serves for money amongst them," and she "was so extremely fond of it that she can never let it out of her sight." She hung her string in a neighbor's tree while working in a cornfield. Another woman took it. The string's owner demanded it back, the taker refused, and a village chief rendered his opinion that in strict law the string belonged only to the woman who took it off the tree, while the other had lost a property claim to it by letting it out of her possession. However, he said, the taker would be scandalous to keep it. So, she returned it (*ibid.*: 20). Smith here acknowledges indigenous property, but only of the movable kind which, he averred, did not produce the forms of government that would take hold in later stages of development. It might be scandalous—even if strictly legal—for a woman to take unattended property. Was it also scandalous—even if strictly legal, under his view—for settlers to keep land? Smith does not comment.<sup>24</sup> Here, and all too often, settler scandals are sidestepped by assertions of settler-indigenous civilizational difference (i.e., as being less relations among temporal coevals than encounters across the temporally-marked line of civilization itself).<sup>25</sup>

If American Indians exemplified those lacking private property in land, when did private property begin, and with what effect? American Indians, according to Morgan and Engels, occupied various positions within the stage of barbarism, which was the middle stage along the path of human development that progressed from savagery to barbarism to civilization. Morgan and Engels theorized that pastoralism (in barbarism) brought about private property (first in domesticated animals) and the birth of class-based inequality. Millar, too, noted that cattle led to private property and attendant jealousies and desires: out of desire for another's property were born the passions, including love, where mere appetites had been before (Millar 2006 [1773]: 123). As Morgan put it,

<sup>24</sup> Smith's focus on movable property would be fruitful to theorize alongside the issue of repatriation of wrongfully separated indigenous objects. As a manuscript reviewer pointed out, the law in the United States and Canada construes such objects as cultural patrimony that is the rightful property of the collective, not of subgroups or individuals. Repatriation firms up the contrast of individual to communal ownership, but in doing so it overlooks the many and varied regimes by which indigenous peoples recognize property claims (e.g., by clans, extended families, secret societies, etc.; see, e.g., Tweedie [2002] on Makah repatriation implementation in the context of individual and family ownership). On the other hand, the repatriation of "sacred objects" to indigenous polities does not necessarily entail a property rights transfer. Legal scholars Carpenter, Katyal, and Riley (2009) suggest that careful attention to Native American cultural property propels a beneficial shift in property law from persons to peoplehood and from ownership to stewardship.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Pagden's (1982) discussion of how sixteenth-century Spanish jurists turned to Aristotelian theories of natural slavery—based on temporalized differences in kind of person—as justification for New World subordination. Notably, that tradition was not developmentalist, but liberal developmentalism all too easily slips from evolutionary to taxonomic explanations for difference, if only by justifying illiberal actions as appropriate for others who have not "yet" become rights bearers. See also Fabian (1983) on coevalness.

“Commencing at zero in savagery, the passion for the possession of property, as the representative of accumulated subsistence, has now become dominant over the human mind in civilized races” (1964 [1877]: 6).

Property, in turn, alters social organization. Engels adopted Morgan’s anthropological analysis of kinship and family to bind together his theory of the production of the means of existence with that of the production of human beings themselves (1972 [1884]: 71). For Engels, pastoralism had been “The first great social division of labor” (*ibid.*: 218). Regular exchange became possible, cattle acquired a money function as the standard of value, and now men, who had always procured the necessities of life, enjoyed a surplus. Women, by contrast, did not enjoy a part in these new forms of ownership. Because men wanted to pass cattle property to their sons (Engels never asks why they would not want to pass it to daughters), mother right was overthrown, women lost their supremacy in the house, and the monogamous nuclear family arose (*ibid.*: 120). In diverse modern theories of property, American Indian (especially Iroquois) kinship and economic organization, alongside discussions of the Greeks and others, purportedly unlocked the mysteries of human development.<sup>26</sup>

Scholars differed in their interpretations of the personal qualities that came with private property. Millar held that the progression from the savage fulfillment of basic wants to a property regime produced leisure, rank, and distinction, which in turn advanced cultural forms and civilization itself (2006 [1773]: 84). Others were less enamored. For Rousseau, as barbarism (hence private property) developed, the individual dissembled: “It was necessary, for his advantage, to show himself to be something other than what he in fact was” (1987 [1754]: 67). Rivalry and conflict arose: “All these ills are the first effect of property, and the inseparable offshoot of incipient inequality” (*ibid.*: 68). Eventually, said Rousseau, humans become focused outside the self and were evaluated as members of society by a series of judgments that, it should be noted, resemble liberal economic theories of price and value: “the savage lives in himself; the man accustomed to the ways of society is always outside himself and knows how to live only in the opinion of others. And it is, as it were from their judgment alone that he draws the sentiment

<sup>26</sup> Iroquois, or Haudenosaunee, specificity matters, in no small part because of the role that matrilineality played in the analysis. A developmentalist framework helped Morgan, Engels and others explain how it could be that Iroquois women held property and conveyed political rights: this reflected the Iroquois’ earlier stage of development, which would be overturned by patrilineal rule. Engels (1972 [1884]) held that the abolition of private property under communism would bring about gender equality. Lest scholars’ preoccupation with Iroquois matrilineality seem to be solely a matter of academic curiosity, it is important to note that Canada imposed patrilineal descent upon Iroquois and other indigenous peoples, structuring indigenous citizenship and rights by patrilineal descent and disenfranchising Native women who married non-Native men, along with their descendants (Simpson 2014; Goeman 2013). For more on mother-right and property, see Wolfe 1999: 69–105.

of his own existence” (ibid.: 81). That is, within a property regime there is no essential value in the person but rather a kind of assessed value (much as Smith says of the price). Property not only relies on money: remarkably, it is further the case that, with the expansion of private property, money’s qualities become the very qualities of social relations.

In sum, a number of key thinkers theorized private property, with money as its enabler and special form, through developmentalist understandings of American Indian communal living, matrilineal inheritance, means of subsistence, and individual attributes. It followed that, as K-Sue Park (2016) has shown, land became money in its liquidity, new forms of mortgage and foreclosure coalesced that powered the dispossession of indigenous lands, and colonial narratives about indigenous money and property rested on “the substitution of indigenous absence for indigenous difference” (ibid.: 1017). To adequately understand how money and property figure in the settler colonial project—both in initial dispossessions and in the ongoing cultural politics of economic life in the United States—requires one more step: tying property to government.

### *C. On Government*

These are political matters. Since New World colonialism began, money and property have been among the most important measures by which non-Natives have evaluated the presence or absence of legitimate government among Indigenous peoples. Canonical thinkers built theories of law and government via money and property that categorically excluded Native North Americans from the political itself. This exclusion haunts present-day struggles over indigenous sovereignty.

Locke famously tied cultivated property to government. He considered the main source and purpose of government to be the preservation of property (1988 [1690]: 329); it follows that government would not come into being for people without property. Since he considered American Indians to have no money and property, the corollary was they had no government. Locke, as explained political theorist James Tully (1994: 162), claimed that Aboriginal peoples “lack the desire to enlarge their possessions which comes into effect with the introduction of money and markets and leads to disputes over property, and so too the need for institutionalized political and property systems to settle disputes.” Elsewhere, Tully (1980: 150) wrote that “Locke’s analysis of money furnishes the most powerful motive for entering into political society.” Money brought forth the political.

In the *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith wrote of the “native tribes of North America” as nations of hunters, “the lowest and rudest state of society”; he went on to assert that “in this state of things there is properly neither sovereign nor commonwealth” (1976 [1776], vol. 2: 213). Smith, too, charted a universal human path of advancement from pastoralists to agriculturalists to commercial



civilization, and this was a political path: “The age of the shepherds,” which for Smith comes after indigenous lifeways, “is that where government properly first commences” (Smith 1978 [1762–1763]: 202). Property, Smith famously held, calls into being and justifies government. For Smith, “The first and chief design of every system of government is to maintain justice; to prevent the members of a society from encroaching on one another’s [sic] property, or seizing what is not their own” (ibid.: 5). He argued that in North America, in the age of the hunters, there is less government because “theft is not much regarded. As there is almost no property amongst them, the only injury that can be done is depriving them of their game. Few laws or regulations will [be] requisite in such an age of society, and these will not extend to any great length, or be very rigorous in the punishment annexed to any infringement of property” (ibid.: 16, omission in original).

Some critics of overreaching states, such as Thomas Jefferson, lauded indigenous peoples’ supposed lack of government.<sup>27</sup> However, bourgeois theorists generally differentiated ancient independence from true liberty, which had been set free by commerce. Millar, for example, wrote of “savages”:

But their independence, in that case, is owing to the wretchedness of their circumstances.... Wherever men of inferior condition are enabled to live in affluence by their own industry, and, in procuring their livelihood, have little occasion to court the favour of their superiors, there we may expect the ideas of liberty will be universally diffused. This happy arrangement of things is naturally produced by commerce and manufactures; but it would be as vain to look for it in the uncultivated parts of the world, as to look for the independent spirit of an English waggoner among persons of low rank in the highlands of Scotland (2006 [1773]: 243).

The moneyless and propertyless—and, therefore, those without government—might enjoy a certain kind of freedom, but this could not be a fully realized (modern) form of liberty.

If government arises with money and private property, how do societies of people seemingly without money and property hold together? During the late nineteenth century, Morgan and the emergent discipline of anthropology sought an answer. Early anthropologists found that societies lacking money or property did not lack for organization: the difference was in the form of organization.

Morgan wrote that humankind has developed two plans of government. The first, an ancient one, was a “social organization,” based on gentes,

<sup>27</sup> Although Thomas Jefferson, in his 1787 *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1999 [1785]: 98), wrote about Indian peoples as having “never submitted themselves to any laws, any coercive power, any shadow of government,” he found that if the question were “whether no law, as among the savage Americans, or too much law, as among the civilized Europeans, submits man to the greatest evil, one who has seen both conditions of existence would pronounce it to be the last” (ibid.: 99).

phratries, and tribes. The Iroquois and other American Indians featured such kinship-based forms of social organization. The second, which developed from the first, was a “*political organization*, founded upon territory and upon property” (1964 [1877]: 60, his italics). Crucially, the shift from social to political organization hinged on property (which developed during the upper stages of barbarism, as exemplified by Greeks): “Property was the new element that had been gradually remoulding Grecian institutions to prepare the way for political society, of which it was to be the mainspring as well as the foundation” (ibid.: 190). Morgan was fascinated by Iroquois kinship, and, when illustrating how kinship organized indigenous governance, he placed Native North Americans in a pre-political world: “There was neither a political society, nor a citizen, nor a state, nor any civilization in America when it was discovered” (ibid.: 63). Engels (1972 [1884]: 158) followed suit, declaring North American Indians to lack a state.

Influential theories of government were formed through the theorization of American Indian economic action and kinship organization. These theories established the star role of property in government as well as the public-private distinction that organizes modern governance and kinship. Such logics have ongoing unequal effects, including on the indigenous peoples through whom the theories arose. For example, American Studies scholar Alyosha Goldstein (2008) showed how theories of property like Locke’s shape current ideologies of private property and inform disputes over American Indian nations’ land claims in upstate New York. My point is not that American Indians fell outside of the category of politically organized societies by oversight or invisibility, but rather that they have defined the outside (and therefore the inside) of the very category, in constitutive exclusion. They have done so in significant part via racialized understandings of money and property that came to haunt anthropological thought and ongoing struggles over American Indian sovereignty and economy.

## PART II: HAUNTINGS

The patterned connections of indigeneity with the money/property/government complex have had punishing implications for American Indians. Deploying the concept of “haunting” for social analysis, in order to connect these formations across centuries, I follow sociologist Avery Gordon (2008: xv), who aimed “to understand modern forms of dispossession, exploitation, repression, and their concrete impact on the people most affected by them and on our shared conditions of living.” Gordon took haunting to be “an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known,” a state described by “those singular yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done-with comes alive, when what’s in your blind spot comes into view. Haunting raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in time,

the way we separate the past, the present, and the future” (ibid.: xvi).<sup>28</sup> Gordon’s blend of psychoanalysis and Marxism helpfully points to the ways that past contradiction and violence live on in the present, especially the settler colonial present, in the question of whose home this is—this land, dispossessed—and how that order of things is maintained.<sup>29</sup> Haunting is not simply a holdover of the past but rather is a form of mediation, in the present, that links institutions to individuals, social structures to subjects, history to biography (ibid.: 19).

The (categorical and civilizational) indigenous constitutive exclusion in modern political and social theories of money, property, and government has haunted scholarship and American public culture to this day. It structures the cultural politics of indigeneity in contemporary settler societies like the United States. To be clear, *it is not indigenous phantoms but rather this constitutive exclusion that haunts*: the distinction matters, especially given how readily the discourses of indigenous disappearance and death present and reproduce themselves in settler societies. This story of haunting is not a story of dead Indians: Part II is a story of the ongoing and material impact on indigenous peoples by the constitutive exclusion identified in Part I. A survey of such hauntings is beyond the scope of this article but could include, for example, discussions of the repatriation of stolen indigenous ancestral remains and sacred objects, the adjudication of federally mismanaged American Indian trust funds in the \$3.4 billion Cobell Settlement, or land buybacks and public discourse about “reservation shopping” by casino-rich indigenous nations. For now, however, three brief discussions—on public and scholarly controversies over potlatch, wampum, and casino gaming—can suggest the range and depth of such hauntings.

### A. Wampum

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines “wampum” as: “1: beads of polished shells strung in strands, belts, or sashes and used by North American Indians as money, ceremonial pledges, and ornaments; 2: MONEY.”<sup>30</sup> Other major dictionaries concur, both in specifying the material and pluralizing the use, albeit inevitably naming money.

That wampum has functioned as currency, albeit in historically-specific circumstances, is undisputed. Most often associated with and enacted by Iroquois peoples, although manufactured along the Atlantic coast from purple

<sup>28</sup> See also Gelder and Jacobs 1998, on the uncanny and Aboriginal Australian lack and excess.

<sup>29</sup> A limitation of turning to Freud and the uncanny, which otherwise Gordon so nicely deploys, is that the uncanny in Freudian analysis evokes the return of primitive beliefs and marks the object of the uncanny as primitive, a thing of childhood (Gordon 2008 [1997]: 52). I hesitate to run with the uncanny in this paper because the uncanny participates in the very developmentalist-cum-primitivist assumptions that I am analyzing.

<sup>30</sup> See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wampum> (last accessed 27 Nov. 2017).

and white shells by indigenous peoples there and, later, colonial powers, wampum functioned as a currency for exchange between colonial and indigenous peoples and at times among colonists. (It is asserted though largely rejected that wampum functioned as currency in exchanges among indigenous peoples.) Indigenous people received payment from colonists in wampum, especially during the height of the fur trade. Colonial governments recognized wampum as legal, legitimate tender well into the 1600s, exchange rates were fixed, and mass production (e.g., at Dutch colonial mints on Long Island) led to various market fluctuations that one would expect with currency (Graeber 2001: 125). Aside from commercial payment, wampum also served monetarily and brutally as colonial tribute in New England (Ceci 1982; 1993; Graeber 2001: 130; Woodward 1878: 46). Having established these basics, I do not attempt to answer what wampum *is*. Rather, I note that anthropological and related debates over that question have hinged on whether wampum's significance as a diplomatic and ceremonial device renders it something other than money, and whether this is political. These seemingly esoteric discussions matter and take material form, as struggles over twentieth-century wampum ownership indicate.

In American public culture, wampum often stands symbolically for indigenous commerce; more specifically, it is lauded as an example of commercial *achievement*. In fourth grade classrooms and popular histories, wampum is celebrated as an Indigenous invention, and its currency function is highlighted as a sign of civilization. For fifteen years (until a joint venture with MGM) the massive Foxwoods Casino, which is owned and operated by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, invited regular customers to join its Wampum Rewards program in order to earn extra points and privileges at the casino. Popular and some scholarly articles about tribal gaming in the Northeast frequently deploy the image of wampum to indicate both historical continuity and change; Internet currency sometimes is called wampum, and one digital currency goes by that name (see <http://wampum.org/>).

Most public historical and scholarly discussions of wampum insist that indigenous peoples did not view it as money, but such accounts diverge when identifying the implications. On museum websites, in popular histories,<sup>31</sup> and in scholarship writers emphasize wampum's importance among indigenous peoples for diplomacy and literacy. Birgit Brander Rasmussen (2012) argues, as part of her larger claim that wampum is a form of textuality that indicates literacy, that wampum embodies, communicates, structures, and archives history. Wampum connects past, present, and future. As such, its money character might be questioned by those who, in line with the classic modern theories of money discussed here, hold that money erases history and memory (but see

<sup>31</sup> See, e.g., <http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/edu/f01/edu315-01/liberato/wampum.html> (last accessed 22 Dec. 2015).

Hart 2001, arguing that money is memory). Indeed, current sources often (but not in the case of Brander Rasmussen) strike a tone of elevating wampum above the seemingly crass function of commerce. Such treatments are correcting for popular impressions that reduce the meaning of wampum to money, even as they risk reproducing the civilizational boundary line that often is drawn by the money form.<sup>32</sup>

Earlier sources also argued that indigenous peoples did not use wampum as money prior to colonization, but they came to this conclusion based on their understanding that New World indigenous peoples were insufficiently civilized to circulate money. For example, in his 1878 paper on wampum presented to The Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia, Ashbel Woodward based his argument against the currency function of money not on evidence but on the following assertion: “The barbarian, dwelling in independent isolation, satisfies the majority of his wants by direct effort and not by an interchange of services, nor till civilization has considerably advanced can we look for any general system of exchanges with the mutual dependence and mutual benefits which such a system involves” (1878: 19). Wampum could not have been money, for “the Indian” did not have the capacity to use money.

These are political questions, both in their substance and in their context. Just ask Haudenosaunee who remember 1970s efforts to repossess their wampum. In this episode, we can see qualities of haunting that Gordon identifies: these include dispossession, unresolved social violence, the unfamiliarity of home, and the structuring of distinctions among past, present, and future.

The prominent anthropologist William Fenton penned a 1971 report about a collection of wampum in a New York state museum. He argued (successfully) against the repatriation of these objects to the Haudenosaunee people who had sought their return. Fenton (1971: 437) claimed wampum for all Americans: “The New York State Wampum Collection is truly one of the state’s, if not the nation’s, great cultural treasures. If truly read the wampum belts speak to the whole history of Indian and White relations from colonial days to the present.” Why is this the case? Because, says Fenton, wampum emerged in colonial trade and, therefore, is fundamentally American: “Wampum, as represented in these belts, is a post-Columbian phenomenon, it is a product of the fur trade, and as such it is as American as apple pie, the log cabin, and the splint

<sup>32</sup> To push away the money function of wampum does not necessarily reinforce the modern money-property-governance complex. Brander Rasmussen (2012), for example, argues for wampum as a form of writing and, therefore, writes against the long tradition of European and American scholarship that separates colonial from indigenous peoples by whether they use writing (and, therefore, have the capacity for abstraction much like the money form evidences for the writers considered here). In his earlier work, Shell (1982) theorized the relationships among money, language, and thought that connect this question of abstraction to both the money form and language. For a consideration of various qualities of “money” or “currencies,” see Robbins and Akin 1999.

basket” (ibid.: 437). As a “product of the fur trade,” wampum’s origins for Fenton are in commerce, and *as such* it is an all-American phenomenon, even Americana (apple pie). Wampum is part of American—more than Native American—patrimony, perhaps among the nation’s “great cultural treasures.” Fenton acknowledged the political-diplomatic-legal importance of wampum in the formation of the League of the Haudenosaunee, but he denied that the wampum belts’ political and mnemonic function at the time of his writing would be anything other than to amplify the (presumably illegitimate) “myth-making” of “Indian militants” (ibid.: 437).

Especially remarkable was Fenton’s confidence that Haudenosaunee people would have no ability to read the belts. At best, he figured, a controlled experiment could be conducted to see what various individuals could interpret from the belts, as insights into “how their [Haudenosaunee people’s] memories are structured” (1971: 456). Meanwhile, Fenton with complete confidence marshals his own reading of the belt, deploying X-ray machines to opine on their provenance and period of production. (It remains unclear, however, what insights we can gain from the X-ray use into how white people’s memories are structured!) On the face of it, Fenton’s position might seem to rest on the empirical question of dating, but his dates are imbued with civilizational interpretation that far exceeds their chronological significance. As Vine Deloria Jr. noted at the time of the repatriation disputes (1973: 19–20), these were disputes about sovereignty (see Hauptman 1988: 86–88): political, and haunted, dispossession.

That wampum becomes American insofar as it is money is an assertion that enacts the replacement of indigenous (political and other) with settler power. As he concludes, Woodward reflects on—and creates—this transition: “Thus while the Indian declined in power his simple coinage passed from hand to hand, among his conquerors, in the haunts where unnumbered generations of his ancestors had trafficked it in rude barter, or offered it with solemn ceremonial, their costliest offering, to their country’s gods” (1878: 59). Commenting on decline, he ends by associating the poor-quality beads that Native people of his day called wampum with the poor-quality Native people of that day, in contrast to the valuable wampum and dignified Mohawk of the past. The “haunts” to which Woodward refers are ghosted not by dead Indians or their supplanted ways, as he would have it, but by theories of money and modernity.

The question of whether wampum was/is money and with what significance has held less prominence for present-day anthropologists and critical theorists than the debates about the potlatch that I will discuss shortly. An exception is anthropologist David Graeber, who considers this oversight to be “quite a shame because it seems to me that the study of wampum is of potentially enormous interest to any theory of value” (2001: 118). Graeber, albeit writing in a somewhat antiquarian tone and relying on an unquestioned ethnographic record, argues that wampum is a form of value that creates society

itself. Wampum, Graeber states, not only recorded but also created peace, both in diplomatic and law-giving acts and also in other vitally-important historical and ongoing ceremonies. Wampum's politico-legal prominence is signaled by, for example, the ongoing force of wampum treaty belts, the salience of the Great Law of Peace (which was recorded on a belt), and the flying of the Haudenosaunee flag with its wampum symbols. Still, his primary concern is not the historical and present-day significance of wampum, and the debates over it, for settler valuation in North America.

The aptly-named literary scholar Marc Shell, by contrast, has asked what wampum meant to white Americans and the ongoing legacy of money in this country. Noting that the word "sucker" may have a monetary origin in a joke banknote with a picture of a sucker fish issued by the "Sucker Institution," Shell (2013: 34–35) traces the etymology of the word to an indigenous word for one type of wampum. Whether or not the link is robust, Shell—who in his strange *Wampum and the Origins of American Money* (2013) goes against the grain of current scholarship by accepting without question that wampum functioned as money for indigenous peoples—makes the larger point that colonists did not convert wampum into settler-style money, as if settler money were already a known and fully formed entity. Rather, Shell contends that it was through use of wampum as legal tender that colonists learned lessons of currency that would subsequently lead them to this country's famous reliance on paper money and related financial instruments. That is, wampum may or may not have functioned as money for indigenous peoples, but it became a founding monetary form for the United States. As such, the sometimes-avoided but ever-present question of whether wampum was money always has been, suggests Shell, a question of America's reckoning with its own moral economies: wampum is constitutive of settler money.

For Shell, a knowable thing called wampum haunts the money form and its politics. For me, by contrast, they are haunted by the unstable and often dispossessive politics visible in debates over wampum. Either way, my point is less to identify wampum's constitutive exclusion relative to modern theories of money than to note the dispossessive consequences: Haudenosaunee lost their repatriation claim. In a strange way, Fenton agreed with Shell that "America" had much at stake with wampum. Yet, as the Haudenosaunee wampum repatriation struggle illustrates, the nature of constitutive exclusion is such that pointing to it—for example, to the way wampum made possible the modern American money form—sometimes only furthers the exclusion. It does so by discursively and materially enacting the dispossession and/as incorporation of indigenous peoples.

### *B. Potlatch*

Potlatch is a complex and variously defined political-social-spiritual-legal-economic form that extends along the Northwest Coast of North America



and includes organized and performative distributions of material and immaterial goods. Potlatch has inspired extensive anthropological investigation and theorization. The influential Franz Boas famously studied the potlatch, as have many other anthropologists, and potlatch has been elaborated theoretically by the likes of Marcel Mauss, Jacques Derrida, and Georges Bataille. Potlatch also became celebrated in twentieth-century leftist politics and culture. For example, mid-1900s European anti-capitalist Situationists, led by Guy Debord, named their journal *Potlatch*, which they took to describe a “pre-commercial form of circulation of goods, founded on the reciprocity of sumptuous gifts” (Debord 1959). As with wampum, I do not seek to understand what potlatch *is*. For one explanation, see the U’mista Cultural Society’s website, where Kwak’waka’wakw experts describe it for a broad readership as “a strict law bids us to dance.”<sup>33</sup> Instead of defining potlatch, I identify the haunting money/property/government complex in selected scholarly and policy discussions of potlatch that are far removed from its empirical and epistemological origins, with attention to the material effects on indigenous peoples’ lives and meaningful objects.

Nineteenth-century anthropologists and Canadian officials long struggled to categorize potlatch. They could not decide whether it was an exemplary case of competitive quasi-capitalist accumulation of goods and exchange for interest that showed Native people to share settlers’ own economic principles and promise, or an elaborate system of gift-giving that showed Native peoples to be of a different time and type than settlers, or an even-more-radical spectacle of wanton destruction and waste of property that sealed the argument for indigenous irrationality (i.e., is it a propensity for gambling [Bracken 1997: 37–39, 79], or worse?). Government documents lamented that, while the potlatch proved indigenous groups to be skilled, adaptable, and productive, it also showed why they were not seen “to possess these premium qualities in relation to the proper goals, or to be inspired to them by the proper motivations” (Codere in Sahlins 1993: 436). So much economic maneuvering, all for the purpose of giving things away?

As literary scholar Christopher Bracken has written in *The Potlatch Papers* (1997), settlers’ struggles to define potlatch dramatized Canada’s effort less to understand Native peoples than to understand itself as a certain kind of society that was founded on particular economic principles. Since the time that settler Canadians found “Europe itself” in the exchange practices of the continent’s western edge, an ongoing “uncertainty about whiteness has not ceased to haunt the settler society that grew up in British Columbia” (1997: 2). Modernity itself was at stake. And one of its markers was the money form.

<sup>33</sup> U’mista Cultural Society. “The Potlatch Collection History.” <http://www.umista.ca/exhibits/index.php> (accessed 12 Nov. 2013).

Money is less prominent than property in the anthropological and critical theoretical literatures on potlatch, which is commonly understood to involve the management of social and political relations through the redistribution (or destruction) of property. Still, much hinges on the money-like qualities of potlatch objects and effects. Boas (1897: 344) compared the high-values “coppers” exchanged in potlatch to high-denomination currency; even so, he locates their true value in their destruction. Why might currency come to mind, aside from the lack of utility that Boas attributed to coppers? While many scholars of potlatch (e.g., Mauss, Bataille, Derrida) focused on the form of gift-giving, they sometimes hinted at a money-like quality: potlatches mark social distinction even as they operate in part through commensurability, which is a much-analyzed quality of the money form. As puzzled over by earlier outside observers and analyzed by Christopher Roth (2008), mass-produced objects—from Hudson’s Bay blankets more than a century ago to plastic tumblers and athletic socks today—play the critical role in potlatch of balancing inalienable wealth. Such objects are divisible, standardized, and readily counted as a measure of social recognition. Anthropologist Marshall Sahlins saw blankets as representing “generic powers” that, once “counted and distributed, make it possible to compare on a scale of greatness chiefly names and lineage privileges (*tlogwe*) that are otherwise incommensurable” (1993: 438). Money-like, such exchange objects as blankets, coppers, and athletic socks facilitate the political task of commensurating people (against the backdrop of social differentiation). The mere specter of commensuration across racialized difference, as Bracken (1997) shows, threw into crisis colonial and anthropological presumptions of difference.<sup>34</sup>

The political and personal stakes were high: Canadian and United States governments criminalized the potlatch in the late nineteenth century. Potlatches, policymakers held, were wasteful. A revision to the Canadian law in 1895 banned all Indigenous ceremonies/festivals/dances that involved any exchange of goods. The spirit of Locke guided the policy, which made an explicit exception for any agricultural show or exhibition (Bracken 1997: 120). With a growing global Communist threat, the state increasingly cracked down in the early twentieth century, most famously with raids that landed human participants in jail and objects in museums. First Nations efforts to repatriate masks and other objects confiscated during state raids have continued to the present.<sup>35</sup> It should go without saying that potlatch criminalization undermined First Nation political processes, material wealth, and claims, while repatriation has been a platform for renegotiation of the political relations among First Nations and the Canadian nation-state. As with wampum, we should follow

<sup>34</sup> On why commensuration is political, see Espeland and Stevens 1998.

<sup>35</sup> See the U’Mista Cultural Centre’s summary of this history at <http://www.umista.ca/exhibits/index.php> (30 Dec. 2017).

Byrd and Bracken in emphasizing the political significance of compulsive discursive repetitions such as: Do indigenous peoples have money? Is X practice a gift or commodity exchange? The answers are not empirical, for the questions are not posed in an empirical register (even though ethnology continues to treat them as such). They are political.

This is the case not only for potlatch-related repatriation but also for the adjudication of indigenous peoples' subsistence vs. commercial activities. In the same region in the 1990s, the Makah Tribe sought to revive their whaling tradition based on an assertion of treaty rights. However, they came up against fierce resistance by environmentalists and anti-treaty-rights activists, who had forged an uneasy alliance in decades-long battles over treaty fishing elsewhere in Washington State. The International Whaling Commission carved out an exception to its whaling moratorium for Makahs: they could kill five a year. However, under the exception the whales could not be sold commercially (Erikson 1999; Reid 2015). More recently, global bans on commercial sealskin sales carved out an exception for Inuit "subsistence" hunting, even as Inuit people explained that their sustainable *commercial*, not only subsistence, sealing had become an economic necessity and way of life. The ban precipitated an economic crash in Inuit territories. Even so, as the recent film *Angry Inuk* (Arnaquq-Baril 2016) explains, Inuit claims to commerce simply could not be heard by the world's lawmakers, who were satisfied that they had honored indigenous claims via the subsistence carve-out.

Potlatch criminalization, whaling and fishing, and sealskin commerce are material matters of sovereignty. Even the seeming honoring of a subsistence carve-out is a form of haunted dispossession tied up with ethnological ordering (e.g., of hunter-gatherers as a type, of subsistence vs. commercial activity) that was forged through the constitutive exclusion of indigeneity from the money/property/governance complex.

### C. Tribal Gaming

The strength and specter of American Indian tribal casino gaming has reshaped popular images of American Indian peoples, albeit with by-now predictable debates about money and indigeneity. In 2015, according to the National Indian Gaming Commission, Indian gaming revenues nationally totaled \$30 billion,<sup>36</sup> with the major industry expansion occurring between roughly 1990 and the 2008 economic downturn. Casinos are operated by tribal governments, not individuals, and gaming relies on the exercise and the legal doctrine of tribal sovereignty.<sup>37</sup> Today, gaming permeates popular culture and local

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.nigc.gov/images/uploads/reports/2015\\_Gross\\_Gaming\\_Revenue\\_Trending.pdf](https://www.nigc.gov/images/uploads/reports/2015_Gross_Gaming_Revenue_Trending.pdf), (last accessed 27 June 2017).

<sup>37</sup> For more on the law and policy of tribal gaming and on its relationship to indigenous nationhood, see Cattelino 2008.

political debates about indigenous peoples. Gaming influences and in some cases determines: how state and federal governments formally recognize (or decline to recognize) indigenous polities; how courts rule on tribal sovereign immunity; how local non-Native communities fight or support tribal ventures; how Native nations represent themselves and relate to one another; how popular culture represents Native people; how non-Indian investors do business with Native nations; and, perhaps most importantly, how people relate to one another as neighbors, friends, foes, and families. Despite the facts that American Indians overall remain poor and that gaming revenues are unevenly distributed across “Indian Country,” many issues in and about Indian Country are refracted through tribal gaming. To some extent, the salience of gaming tracks its economic impact. Beyond that, however, gaming has raised basic questions about the relationships among indigenous money, wealth, culture, and sovereignty in what historian Alexandra Harmon identifies as discourse that interrelates “Indian sovereignty and the role of economic culture in Indians’ survival as distinct peoples” (2010: 274). As we have seen, such questions have deep histories, and these histories haunt present-day gaming and, to a great extent, other issues in its shadow.

As others have also documented (Barker 2005–2006; Darian-Smith 2003; Harmon 2010; Spilde 2004: 75–91), there has been a dramatic increase in non-Indian criticism of tribal gaming as an expression of unjust “special rights.” Federal law and policy increasingly treat gaming success as a reason to undermine tribal sovereignty. Spilde (2004: 78), for example, explains that in a U.S. Supreme Court case Minnesota fishermen opposed Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe treaty rights on the ground that tribal members now held casino jobs. A 1998 Supreme Court ruling cited gaming and cigarette sales when suggesting that indigenous commercial success might be cause to abrogate tribal sovereign immunity (Wilkins and Lomawaima 2001: 230–31).

As I have previously discussed at length (2008; 2010), tribal gaming brings into relief a fundamental double bind that American Indians face at the intersection of economy, culture, and sovereignty. Whereas for many nations, economic power is—and is taken to be—a mark of sovereignty, American Indians must deal with an inescapable double bind whereby they require economic resources in order to exercise and defend their sovereignty, but as they gain economic power that same sovereignty comes under threat in American law, policy, and public culture. That is, when American Indians are economically dependent, their political independence largely goes unchallenged, but once they gain economic independence their political autonomy comes under threat. This takes place on the terrain of cultural politics. So, for example, journalists and policymakers and people of all stripes question the cultural authenticity of indigenous nations who operate and gain wealth from casinos, as I have shown ethnographically in the case of the Seminole Tribe of Florida (2008). In turn, and as scholars of federal recognition and other

federal Indian policy have shown, cultural authenticity is critical for the maintenance of tribal sovereignty, not (only) because Native polities build sovereignty through cultural practice but, as is relevant here, because their sovereignty is judged by the settler state and non-Indian people as an expression of cultural authenticity. If Indians do not seem Indian, their sovereignty comes into question. And one way that they fail the test of cultural authenticity in American public culture, as we have seen, is by using money and becoming rich.

At issue is not only the more obvious matter of wealth but also indigenous peoples' use of money and embrace of finance capitalism (Cattellino 2008; 2010).<sup>38</sup> Gambling, which is a highly monetized and classically nonproductive mode of exchange, often is understood to be animated by the "fantasy" of "acruing wealth from nothing," as Jean and John Comaroff wrote when describing "casino capitalism" (2000: 313–14). Money, as we have seen, is identified by social theorists with an essentialized modernity and is understood to erode or dissolve cultural distinctiveness, non-modern social organization, and individual attributes. Thus, it is no surprise that the most controversial use of casino revenues by Native nations has been their distribution on a per capita basis to tribal citizens. I found that money's fungibility—the quality that most endangers extant social organization and individual distinctiveness in modern theories of money by Simmel, Marx, and others (see Zelizer 1997)—enables Seminoles to selectively separate its source from its use or, alternatively, to connect source to use, and to do so in ways that reinforce the political authority and autonomy of the Seminole polity. To this day, I am often asked whether Seminoles' seeming embrace of money causes them to lose their culture or, in a variant of the question, whether it is an indicator of their assimilation (to what exactly is not specified).

The perception that money threatens cultural distinctiveness is applied especially to those—like American Indians—who, as discussed above, historically and ethnographically have been defined as occupying a relation of opposition to market logics. The reproduction of that application, repeated over time as a kind of meme (Byrd 2011), serves to shore up those same (il)logics, not to mention the meanings and morals of the money form. Sovereignty, still, is at stake in the haunting.

#### CONCLUSION

American Indians were by no means the only example in modern theory texts of "savages" who lacked law because they lacked property and money. Still, I cannot emphasize enough how present American Indians were in these

<sup>38</sup> I am not defending tribal gaming. To the contrary, this section could be read as an expression of solidarity with Native peoples who wish to criticize gaming from an anti-capitalist position but without being forced by the money-property-government complex into a seeming *pre*capitalist one.

writings. As Byrd writes of “savages” in critical theory, they “stand at the site of lack” (2011: 9). They do so not as invisible or ignored, but rather as reiterated, repeated lack. Today, still, the money/property/government complex persists in contemporary theory and American cultural politics, with uneven effects. While I have focused on episodes and economic forms that directly implicate Native peoples, it follows from these arguments that constitutive indigenous lack/exclusion haunts American economic and political life even when Native peoples are neither the subjects nor the objects in question (e.g., in widespread ideologies of money as culture-corroding, or in the structure of foreclosures). Social theories of money—and their instantiations in public culture—can and do partake of settler colonial logics regardless of their empirical referent. This is one way in which we live in a settler colonial society.

In *Magical Criticism: The Recourse of Savage Philosophy*, Bracken (2007) excavates the racialization that inheres in modern Western concepts by tracing the semiotics of “savage philosophy.”<sup>39</sup> This unnerving phrase is a scholarly label for Western philosophers’ failure to distinguish between the real and the ideal among the world’s peoples who were/are ethnographically identified with animism. Showing how this form of racialization shapes theory and politics to the present, Bracken rightly turns the label “savage philosophy” back on its originators. For Bracken, the figures contemplated in such philosophies—such as the “savage” without money discussed here—tell us nothing about Indigenous peoples, and everything about Western people. Such figures are displacements, even projections. The West works out its contradictions and repressed desires on the terrain of indigeneity. There is much merit in such an approach, and it resonates with my own.

At the same time, to address the role of Indigenous peoples in Western modern thought as displacement threatens to write Indigenous peoples—and their knowledge production and economic action—out of the story as forces in the world (including as forces acting on the authors of the texts and policies in question) and as authors of discourse. When settlers figure as agents and primary references, and when analysis passes through indigeneity as a cipher, scholars risk reproducing the very constitutive exclusion that they aim to upend. This is a danger of settler colonial studies as such (see Kauanui 2016); that is, in another turn of the screw, settler colonial studies may displace Indigenous Studies and indigeneity. The money/property/government complex remains dispossessive, but indigenous peoples’ actions, claims, refusals, theories, and ontologies can unsettle—not only serve as grist for the mill of—such settler logics. Byrd’s cacophony builds to a book-concluding call “to imagine indigenous decolonization as a process that restores life and allows settler, arrivant, and native to apprehend and grieve together the

<sup>39</sup> Thank you to Logan Mardhani-Bayne for pointing me to this book.

violences of U.S. empire” (2011: 229). Insofar as the money/property/government complex haunts, the uncanny that is thereby produced leaves an opening for the unsettling of the settler “home” and its economic logics.<sup>40</sup>

My point is not to reflexively or politically privilege the material over the discursive; to the contrary, this essay unfolds in part as an argument for the power of discourse to do things. Instead, here I simply note that ideas about the world emerge from—even as they also have the power to transform—social relations in the world. The world and its cacophonies, in Byrd’s sense, pressed on canonical Western theorists, shaping their ideas. These writers engaged with and wrote from burning questions posed by the lived practice of settler colonialism in the New World: May one alienate land without consent and, if so, with what theory of property? What is the significance of radically different family formation and inheritance practices for the organization of society? What is wealth, and how can one explain differences in groups’ economic organization? Are Indigenous governments sovereign and, if so, what can a society built from multiple sovereignties look like? What is the effect of money on human relatedness and intergroup difference?

By answering such questions with theories that relied on stages of development, modern theorists presupposed and then enacted the disappearance of their indigenous object, at least in scholarship. The meme (in Byrd’s sense) of disappearance persists in the present: it is violently enacted in, for example, debates over a national inquiry into the status of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.<sup>41</sup> Avery Gordon turned to haunting in part because, she wrote, the concept focuses one “on the cultural requirements or dimensions of movement and change” (2008 [1997]: xvii). Movement pervades Byrd’s theorization of the transit of indigeneity. There is a politics to haunting and its study, as haunting mediates the individual and institutional and as ghosts return not to settle accounts but rather to unsettle things: to create awareness of that which is excluded from, and/or is lack within, the order of things. Indigenous assertions and refusals—for example, in Seminole tribal gaming, or in the political and ethnographic refusal that Audra Simpson (2014) theorizes in her study of Mohawk membership, sovereignty, and nation—force reconsideration of the settler colonial foundations of modern configurations of money, property, and government. Such assertions and refusals potentially unsettle by forcing us to see and perhaps transform the haunting configurations of money/property/government in anthropology, settler colonial studies, and other scholarship, as well as in present-day economic and political orders.

<sup>40</sup> I have attempted to maintain a distinction between focusing on constitutive exclusion and treating indigeneity as a cipher. Toward that end, Part II turns to ongoing and material issues and conflicts, while the paper as a whole draws from indigenous critical theory.

<sup>41</sup> Gordon (2008 [1997]: 112) writes of disappearance (referring to the disappeared in Argentina’s Dirty War) as those who are not dead (and therefore rendered of the past) but who instead remain into the present.



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Abstract: With ongoing consequences for American Indians, the New World Indian has been a pervasive figure of constitutive exclusion in modern theories of money, property, and government. This paradoxical exclusion of indigenous peoples from the money/property/government complex is intrinsic to, and constitutive of, modern theories of money. What is more, it haunts the cultural politics of indigenous peoples' economic actions. In Part I, I establish that, and how, indigeneity has been constitutively present at the foundation of modern theories of money, as Europeans and settlers defined indigenous peoples in part by the absence of money and property (of which money is a special form). In turn, and more to the point here, they defined money and property in part as that which modern non-indigenous people have and use. These are not solely economic matters: the conceptual exclusions from money/property were coproduced with juridical ones insofar as liberal political theory grounded the authority of modern government in private property (and, in turn, in money). To show how this formation of money and indigeneity has mattered both for disciplinary anthropology and for American public culture at several historical moments, Part II traces how the dilemmas expressed by these texts haunt subsequent debates about the function of wampum, the logic of potlatch, and the impact of tribal gaming. Such debates inform scholarship beyond the boundaries of anthropology and, as each case shows in brief, they create harms and benefits for peoples in ways that perpetuate the (il)logics and everyday practices of settler colonialism.

Key words: Indigeneity, money, anthropology, wampum, potlatch, casinos, gaming, property, social theory