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# 'Dilemmas' of Coalition and the Chronopolitics of Man: Towards an Insurgent Black Feminine Otherwise

M. Shadee Malaklou

**Abstract** This essay argues that objections to nonblack suffering in Trump's America obscure racism's primary operation as a cut that makes human body from racialized flesh. It returns to Frank B. Wilderson III's argument in "Gramsci's Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society?" (2003) that the civil society that organizes our political and social relationality is necessarily exclusionary to posit a libidinal critique. It adds to Wilderson's intervention a paradigmatic analysis of social and political constructions of time to call not for inclusivity, which Trump betrays as an antiblack praxis, but to call for the exclusivity of the black feminine.

## Introduction

This essay interrogates sympathetic responses to nonblack suffering, specifically, to the violences *Southwest Asian* and *North African or SWANA persons*<sup>1</sup> experience in Donald Trump's America, to reason that Trump's 'hate' weaponizes our altogether typical, that is to say, our altogether *liberal* instincts to brutalize people *of color*—in this case, putatively racialized immigrants. Incredulous responses to nonblack suffering in Trump's America obscure the incalculable and interminable, indeed, the unspeakable and unbreachable abjection typical of the black experience, in the U.S and globally, which is to say, structurally. Hysterical responses to nonblack suffering obscure racism's primary operation as a historical cut that makes human body from racialized flesh—essentially, an antiblack violence that reduces the black body to ungendered flesh. I return to the site of humanism's flesh-making (i.e., black-making) cut to contextualize the new and seemingly extreme ways SWANA persons experience structural violence. I argue that the antiblack violence of humanism's cut underwrites nonblack suffering, too, functioning to position and differentiate the nonblack person of color at the same time as it entrenches the singular and inanalogue wretchedness of racial blackness. Indeed, the occasional and utilitarian violence that reduces nonblack bodies of color to flesh

is propelled and anchored by all the ways in which racially black persons are gratuitously — interminably — available as flesh. Specifically, I argue that the antiblackness of humanism's race/ism or cut induces the historical-racial or *chronopolitical* grammar of nonblack suffering. I enlist Afro-pessimism to contextualize nonblack suffering because as a chronopolitical violence this suffering yokes its grammar from liberal humanism's antagonistic relationship to racial blackness. Rather than concede to a facile reading of Afro-pessimism in which its black/nonblack color-line cannot think about the particularities of nonblack suffering — such a reading reduces Afro-pessimism's *paradigmatic* analysis of antiblack political and libidinal economies to an Oppression Olympics — I elaborate all the ways in which Afro-pessimism testifies to the plurality of our world as a container (i.e., a particular arrangement of space and time) for holding and knowing (and reproducing, and protecting) the human as a white or becoming-white — that is to say, as a not-black — figure. Stated another way, I explain how Afro-pessimism *maps our world*. Its reading of black feminist texts, not least of all, Hortense Spillers' "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book" (1987), pinpoints with devastating precision where and how the continuum of history — as *History* — distinguishes a human body from non- or pre-human (i.e., racialized) flesh. Insofar as Afro-pessimism's map recounts the historical-racial making or *chronopolitical order* of human be(com)ing, it demonstrates how humanism engenders Man — in his many variations, or as Frank B. Wilderson III writes, as "worker, woman, man, gay, lesbian, and so on,"<sup>2</sup> including immigrant-subaltern and native-savage — by naming the human's singular, black Other as a boogeyman that personifies Man's prehistorical or human-animal self. Afro-pessimism generates a study of the philosophical coordinates of the human and the world, including what it will take to radically disarticulate these coordinates. Rather than obscure nonblack suffering, its intellectual project maps our epistemological totality to reveal that even or especially the episodic, contingent, and conditional suffering putatively racialized immigrants experience is sutured by a black/nonblack color-line that is in effect a nonhuman/human binary.

Afro-pessimism tells us how humanism makes body from flesh at the same time as it yields uncomfortable truths about how we might live Otherwise. Wilderson's diagnosis that "antiblackness is the prerequisite for world-making at every scale of abstraction"<sup>3</sup> instructs nonblack persons of color, especially those who seek to foment or abet structural change (i.e., an epistemological catastrophe that will undo the world), to submit themselves to black antagonism and to commit their resources to black fugitivity. Rather than abandon and/or demonstrate a callous indifference to nonblack suffering, Afro-pessimism exhorts us to be strategic about how we mobilize against

this suffering, so that our relief from racialized violence—humanism's violence—is not short-lived. Its recommendation to us as nonblack persons of color is that we might fare better in the long-term if we redistribute the breast-beating of our hysterical responses to nonblack suffering in Trump's America and otherwise to the project of making black lives matter against human-centric odds. This task requires not martyrdom—it does not call on us to 'save' black Others—but the sacrifice of a lifetime; it asks us as nonblack persons of color to give up the human recognition that might make our own lives matter in the immediate present so that we can live Otherwise—as persons *of color*—in what Fred Moten describes as “elsewhere and elsewhere”<sup>4</sup>.

To clarify, my approach to Afro-pessimism, which elaborates the nonblack suffering prompted and sustained by antiblack political and libidinal economies, need not dilute Afro-pessimism's critique as the exclusive study of—the social life of<sup>5</sup>—black social death. I read for the specificity of black social life-in-death to map the contours and to better understand the structure or container of humanism as a race/ism. More specifically, I chart the territory of chattel slave *and* colonial violences, not (just) as coeval levers in the making of Enlightenment modernity, but (also, or especially) as tandem antiblack technologies in the making of a humanist totality. Following Jared Sexton's argument that “blackness is not the pathogen in Afro-pessimism, the world is. Not the earth, but the world, and maybe even the whole possibility of and desire for a world,”<sup>6</sup> this essay enumerates the im/possibility of a space-time in which black lives can and do matter. At the same time, it begins to look for the subterranean possibility of an/Other, non-human becoming that might take its cue from the black maternal as a site of social life-in-death—more to the point, as the site of life-in-stasis and non-movement, outside of humanist constructions of time, or in my summation, its chronopolitical order or Man.

I intervene in social and political constructions of humanist time to locate the black maternal as the site not just of the slave's but of our collective freedom. If the suffering nonblack persons of color endure is only possible because of the constitutive exclusion of African-born and -descended persons from Euro-American philosophies of rights and liberalism, then objections to nonblack suffering must return to this primordial site—not as a feat of altruism, but of self-interest. This essay interrogates social and political constructions of time that position nonblack persons of color as “junior partners”<sup>7</sup> in the white nationalism Trump does not induce but emboldens, to elaborate Sexton's suspicion in “Properties of Coalition: Blacks, Asians, and the Politics of Policing” (2010)<sup>8</sup> that it is precisely because nonblack persons of color enjoy 'human' recognition—even or especially in the hour of Trump, they can occupy the nonblack or 'human' coordinates of a black/nonblack *qua* nonhuman/human color-line—that they have access to the politi-

cal deliberation or choice to make themselves the implements of white humanism. Their ‘dilemma’ of coalition<sup>9</sup> evinces Wilderson’s (2010) argument that nonblack minorities are “shuttled”<sup>10</sup> between the polarities of the human proper, typified by racial whiteness – while humanism expands to include nonblack persons of color in its liberal folds of recognition, the prototypical human to emerge from Enlightenment Europe is white (and masculine) – and the human’s object or Other, typified by racial blackness.<sup>11</sup>

My argument builds on Sexton’s and Wilderson’s to reason that the extremes of violence that nonblack minority populations experience, not least of all in Trump’s America, is only episodically analogous to the structural violence that overdetermines black existence, especially (but not exclusively) in liberal America. The dilemma of coalition that nonblack persons of color must reckon with then, not just in (Trump’s) America but in an antiblack world, which is to say, on any given day and in any given context, is the choice to remain a “junior partner” in the political and libidinal economies of antiblackness<sup>12</sup> – a position that demands of the nonblack minority person a pound of her own flesh, too: a total defacing of her ethnic particularities as the price of admission for human community – or to relinquish one’s (contingent and unguaranteed) claims to civil society and to human relationality and to submit to black antagonism, as a black movement to end the human *qua* racist world.<sup>13</sup> That we have a choice in this positioning demands of us a vigilance that, I reason, we have to date betrayed. I figure nonblack suffering in Trump’s America as not a new or unique suffering but one instance of the black Other’s every day to argue that it is not Trump who has betrayed the integrity of the White House or of liberal democracy (better yet, of liberal humanism) but we, the immigrants and the savages – also, the nonblack women and queers, in short, the marginalized and the disenfranchised – emboldened by the knowledge that we who are not fungible are entitled to the protections of a social contract with the state (i.e., with civil society) as the guarantor of human community, who have misplaced our trust in the office of the American president as executor of liberal governmentality. The (bad) faith whereby we seek human protections delivered by the liberal state obscures, in addition to our own inevitable if punctuated exclusion from the social protections of a civil society designed for prototypical (i.e., Western European-descended and male) human subjects, that human recognition *qua* civil rights evade the being of the black.

An historical detour explains the antiblack violence of liberal governmentality in a US context. Saidiya Hartman in *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (1997) – preeminent in the Afro-pessimist canon because Hartman’s study of racial terror elaborates the libidinal economy of antiblackness as the affective lever (i.e., primary site) of its political economy<sup>14</sup> – explains

that at the dawn of America's becoming, specifically, at the hour of chattel slavery's formal abolition, the "feeling and sentiment"<sup>15</sup> of its private institution remained. Antiblack attachments of the heart and mind, which reside in the intimate and private spaces of domesticity, outside the reach of the law, determine(d) the boundaries of America's new social. The "contours of [this new] social," distinct for its racial pluralism, were (are) typified by "an indifference to black misery,"<sup>16</sup> such that the making-free of the slave functioned to entrench the slave's suffering. If, as Hartman notes, the "thirteenth amendment did not confer basic civil rights to the formerly enslaved" because "slavery was not a public relation between the slave and the state but a *private relation* between two persons,"<sup>17</sup> then the slave's inclusion in civil society abridged (abridges) the rights of the master but brokered (brokers) no rights for the freed slave. A libidinal economy thus typifies slavery's afterlife in liberal America—I reason, on a planetary scale—as "the constancy of black subjection...before which the law," irrespective of its changing of guards, "is [...] powerless."<sup>18</sup>

This essay extends Hartman's argument to account for the metaphysical exclusion of racial blackness from liberal claims to human universality. I elaborate the paradigmatic resonances of the American example to demonstrate that the US does more than proscribe black Others from nation and belonging, precluding the slave from membership in a US body politic at the same time as it makes African filiation impossible; the US also executes a metaphysical violence which it inherits from Western Europe's chronopolitical order of Man. If, as Hartman writes, "equality of rights" in post-emancipation America "[depends] on the transformation of former slaves into responsible and reasonable men,"<sup>19</sup> then this transformation is necessarily proscribed for black descendants of the African continent by a European discourse of rights that assigns "responsibility" and "reason"—the rationality of the Cogito—to the Enlightenment human as a being-*intime* who can only ever know himself as what he is not: a black African.

Nonblack suffering in Trump's America is thus exceptional only if we ignore the ontologically primary *structural* position of anti/blackness; that is to say, if we sanitize and rehabilitate the promise of liberal America by closing our eyes to the uninterrupted suffering that black persons who are ineligible for rights endure. We who feel ourselves defenseless in the twilight of America's becoming—nonblack minorities—might pause to consider how in the narration of our suffering we refuse to recognize and thus obscure the privilege whereby our suffering is periodized, documented, tracked, and ultimately, mourned. We might further pause to consider how in these narrations we refuse to recognize that the contingent suffering of our nonblack persons is made entirely possible, not least of all in a US context, by the unending and senseless suffering of the black as a *subject-that-is-not-one*.<sup>20</sup>

Catastrophizing the assault on our civil liberties activates a liberal hope that inspires us to believe that we will survive Trump<sup>21</sup> — a hope that requires (bad) faith in the state as a vehicle for the actualization of our freedom. When we as the multiculturalist multitude, as peoples who enjoy human recognition and are eligible for the discourse and protections of civil rights (such that the violation of our persons is legible as just that: a violation) do this, we micro-aggress against black Others. Or rather, we *macro-aggress*, at once intensifying and obscuring the constitutive relationship of terror that makes black Others not contingently vulnerable to structural violence but essentially so, and absolving our own communities (of color) of the antiblack violence we reproduce to simulate the “structural adjustment”<sup>22</sup> of our “borrowed institutionality.”<sup>23</sup> Our hysterical reactions to Trump render incommensurate vulnerabilities irrelevant, revealing how shamelessly absent we who are not fungible have been from organized efforts<sup>24</sup> to disrupt the gross violation of black flesh that is carried out in our names, at the behest of a civil society that can only ever selectively and provisionally incorporate us into its folds, as implements of white supremacist humanism.

In what follows, I map the violences nonblack people of color endure in Trump’s America’s as one articulation of the antiblack violence that is typical of liberal claims to human universality.<sup>25</sup> I lean on a discourse of time to reason that Trump’s presidency does not qualify as an historical node, that is to say, does not signify the end of times or a new time/beginning, but rather, evinces the *longue durée* of black social death. The guiding argument of this essay is that racial blackness as a structural antagonism—social death—exceeds the hold of the slave ship; it finds its origin story in social and political constructions of time or, in my summation, the chronopolitical order of Man generated by Enlightenment philosophy. I suggest that liberalism’s political arithmetic, subtended by libidinal antiblackness, refracts to activate suffering for nonblack minority populations, too. My intervention contextualizes the suffering nonblack minorities experience in Trump’s America as an always already antiblack violence. I close by thinking about how time might function Otherwise to induce an irreverently Black valuation of life. I go in search of different constructions of time that offer not the human world of being-*in-time* but the anti-human (non-)world of being-*out-of-time*, and find this im/possibility in the boundless, gestational time of the black maternal. My final argument privileges black feminist constructions of time that actualize the (Black) social life of (black) social death and serves to underscore the black feminism foundational—indispensable—to an Afro-pessimistic approach.



## Liberalism in Trump's America

President-elect Trump has continued to denounce racism of any kind and he [was] elected because he will be a leader for every American. To think otherwise is a complete misrepresentation of the movement that united Americans from all backgrounds.

Bryan Lanza, spokesperson for President Trump<sup>26</sup>

As a white nationalist, I care for all people. We all deserve a future for our children and for our culture. White nationalists aren't all hateful; we just want to preserve what we have.

Peter Cvjetanovic, white nationalist popularized in Charlottesville photo<sup>27</sup>

Donald Trump's presidency is not the hyperbolic fascism of our mass hysterical claims. His administration does not betray the tenets of liberalism; rather, his tyranny, authorized by the highest office in the land — in all lands — reveals the violence of liberal governmentality as a necessarily fascist praxis. One need look no further than the inclusivity Trump invokes in his November 9, 2016 victory speech,<sup>28</sup> that first lap around the presidential block, for evidence that his reign of terror is no more than a manifestation or epiphenomena of liberal violence. In this speech/act, Trump "pledges" to "bind the wounds of division" his campaign activated so that in the hour of his presidency we might "come together as one united people," he adds — gesturing towards his chest to signal not an empty invocation of the American dream but a personal commitment to count himself as a "president for *all* Americans," as a president of the people and for the people, elected by the people — because national unification is "so important to [*him*]."<sup>29</sup>

If the speaker of Trump's victory speech is not his person or administration but rather, the American machinery of liberal governmentality, then the tyranny of Trump's America is not Trump's but America's. In this and the speech/acts to follow since his win, including statements in which he disavows the Alt-Right's ideological influence over his administration,<sup>30</sup> Trump does not betray liberalism; he outmaneuvers it. Which is to say, his tyranny is a liberal out-doing of liberalism. His divisiveness is backed and bonded by a state willed by popular demand; Trump's sexism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, xenophobia, etc. finds its seat in the Oval Office to puppeteer the continuous violence of the president as manager of liberal American governmentality. His occasional banal nods towards inclusivity, inserted into the political and (as) libidinal arithmetic of American civil society, function to simulate rather than obstruct the protocols of liberal democracy. To put it plainly, Trump's deployment of inclusivity to induce *exclusivity* — a neoliberal move exemplary of the 'inclusive excellence' peddled



by the university industrial complex as ‘diversity’ work<sup>31</sup>—betrays the white supremacy always already operational in civil society as that hegemonic scaffolding not just of the American polity but, I argue next, elaborating Wilderson’s provocation in “Gramsci’s Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society?” (2003), of white-*cum*-human community, or what we might describe, following Hartman’s reasoning, as the social. Like “all lives matter,” a rejoinder that makes white lives matter only or especially, Trump’s (neo)liberalism empties inclusivity of its meaning, outing its operation as always already exclusive, more to the point, as necessarily antiblack.

### White people

Mine is an argument about liberalism first and Donald Trump second, as its talking head. The speaker in Trump’s speech/acts is not his person or administration but structural antiblackness or liberalism *qua* antiblackness. Trump’s America, which is the America that has always been, that loomed and lurked and minced its words in President Barack Obama’s care, is—according to the liberal lore that founds it—ideologically capacious. In theory, if only as a matter of convenience, liberal America stretches in both directions (presumably, in all directions) to welcome into its political and (as) libidinal folds Alt-Right persons and perspectives *and*, because liberal ideology as an egalitarian social theory engenders pluralism, those peoples whom the Alt-Right would rather see excised from America’s body politic. The latter group’s perspectives, their cultures and (as) their differences are excluded from this invitation. Non-white others are conditionally and selectively incorporated into the folds of liberal America, as guests; their corresponding interests are proscribed, as rather than make room for them as Other, liberalism invites those redeemable—nonblack—persons who can assimilate to do so, absorbing them as instruments in the project for white nationalism. Hence, liberalism practically stretches in only one direction: the (alt) right’s, making but one kind of people legible as subjects of civil society: white people.

It bears pausing to consider, especially in this, our hour of exclaimed white supremacy, for whom America as a white nationalist polity is inclusive, as invocations of white filiation and fragility are inconsistent. Richard Spencer, president of the National Policy Institute and chief polemicist for the Alt-Right movement, explains in an interview with *NewsOne Now*’s Roland Martin that his movement for white life counts nonblack peoples of color as contributing members of white-*cum*-human community.<sup>32</sup> Martin objects to Spencer’s reductionist argument that white people have historically been the only ones to design and build human civilization, specifically, that they are the unique and singular visionaries of monuments that testify to human world-mak-

ing. He names the “genius”<sup>33</sup> native to Africa—in his summation, the birthplace of Man<sup>34</sup>—as a counterargument to Spencer’s position that Western European-descended white peoples are the proper subject of human history. More specifically, Martin cites Egyptians, architects of the pyramids, as a case in point. Spencer, who is characteristically obstinate, claims the pyramids as Western Europe’s-*cum*-America’s—white humanity’s—inheritance, and counters Martin’s argument by naming Egyptians *qua* North Africans as a “white people.”<sup>35</sup>

Richard Spencer: “Those are white people, by the way.”

Roland Martin: “Who [are] white people?”

Richard Spencer: “The Egyptians are not African; I’m sorry.”

Roland Martin: “Do you know where Egypt is?”

Richard Spencer: “Yes, it’s in North Africa.”<sup>36</sup>

Richard Spencer: “Egypt was an amazing civilization. It was not created by black Africans.”

Roland Martin: “Who created it?”

Richard Spencer: “People who are white.”<sup>37</sup>

Spencer does not make this designation because Egyptians as a North African people are natally, that is to say, indisputably and categorically white; nor does he make this designation because he believes that Egyptians as a Middle Eastern and/or Muslim people are white (earlier in the same interview, Spencer demonizes Syrian *qua* Muslim refugees as parasitic to the white societies they emigrate to<sup>38</sup>). Rather, Spencer counts Egyptians—like Syrians, a religiously and ethnically diverse people reduced in the Orientalist landscape that is Spencer’s frame of reference to an indiscriminately Muslim and Arab people—as contingent members of white-*cum*-human community because doing so in the context of claims about Africa/ns serves to comment on the position of “black Africans” as extra-human. Indeed, it is specifically because Spencer moves to entrench the constitutive exclusion of African-born and -descended persons from human community, fortifying what Orlando Patterson describes as their social death: a non-personhood whereby the black African belongs to no social order and in which she is natally and temporally alienated,<sup>39</sup> that he removes Egyptians *qua* North Africans from Africa’s body politic.

Spencer’s move resonates with emic accounts of nation and belonging in nonblack communities of color, not least of all in SWANA *countries and their diasporic outposts*, where “practical Occidentalisms”<sup>40</sup> mythologize *nations* as ethnically white. One need look no further than Iranian-American white nationalist Jason Reza Jorjani, who claims that Arab Muslims committed “white genocide” against Iran’s greater “Caucasian civilization,”<sup>41</sup> for evidence of the firm grip practical Occidentalisms have on SWANA communities. While it is true that

white accounts of imagined community rarely effect the extramural recognition SWANA persons seek, as antiblack filial myths they are powerful self-narratives.<sup>42</sup> They induce a psychic-somatic landscape, specifically, an “interior intersubjectivity”<sup>43</sup> governed by antiblack “energies, concerns, points of attention, anxieties, pleasures, appetites, revulsions, and phobias.”<sup>44</sup> White nationalisms recount blackness as pathology to induce a self-reflexivity that instructs nonblack persons of color to “hallucinate” whiteness<sup>45</sup> by distancing their bodies (of color) from the mark of racialization—that is to say, from the body’s materiality as flesh. Such a move permits them as nonblack persons of color to know the body and (as) the self under the sign of the human. Hence, whether they intend to or not, nonblack persons of color benefit from a parasitic relationship with racial blackness. Antiblackness is the strategy they use to survive a white supremacist world that is also a humanist world, in which multiculturalist pluralism—providing cover for antiblack humanism—compels nonblack persons of color to know the self as not-black (i.e., not-flesh) in order to survive. Sometimes duped by the promise of a universal human imago that is actually a specific and singular imago—one that elaborates the essence of humanness *qua* whiteness as not-blackness—and sometimes merely benefiting from its spoils system, they operationalize what Wilderson describes as “junior partnerships” in the project for planetary white supremacy.

Certainly, some junior partnerships are more dangerous than others, and reports of antiblack violence in SWANA communities are plentiful.<sup>46</sup> Ours is not just a libidinal violence in which we reproduce antiblack viscera, guts, and instincts to remove our own racialized bodies from humanism’s flesh-making project; we also reproduce liberalism’s political-economical violence. The International Organization for Migration reports that the slave auction itself survives in some SWANA countries—like Libya, where African migrants from Senegal, The Gambia, and the Sub-Sahara are kidnapped on their way to Europe (Libya is a major exit point for boat travel to Europe) and sold in public squares to Arab locals.<sup>47</sup> It is the task of this essay to intervene in *how* the junior partnerships Wilderson describes are made—in effect, to jam the fallacious logic whereby nonblack persons of color and especially SWANA persons are incentivized to believe that they share more in common with Spencer et al. than with the black Africans they accumulate and kill, if not literally (as in Libya), then in the realm of the imagination, as a fantasy that coheres their own claims to humanity. Liberalism’s discourse of inclusivity goads nonblack persons of color to make “bad faith” claims<sup>48</sup> to white personhood (i.e., to the supposed universality of a human imago); it sets up antiblack sentimentality as the litmus or naturalization test for the “structural adjustment” that induces their “borrowed institutionality”. Which is to say, it is liberalism’s seemingly pluralistic plentitude that enlists nonblack minority

populations as conspirators in white supremacy. Their junior partnerships activate what Sexton describes as a plasticity in which civil society as the guarantor of social life stretches to invite nonblack minority populations to the seat of human community by “[expanding] the boundaries of whiteness...whose only conditional limitation is the exclusion of racial blackness.”<sup>49</sup> The political-economic violence of antiblackness, proceeded and structured — Hartman teaches us — by antiblack sentimentality or its libidinal economy, is the price of admission for a human recognition in which nonblack minority populations transcend their own racialization, or the body’s designation as flesh. As a “political arithmetic” and (as) “racial calculus,”<sup>50</sup> racial blackness is the constant that allows us to measure Man’s movements, functioning to vest nonblack persons of color with the capacity for movement, or social life.

I argue that the white supremacy Spencer evinces, in which nonblack persons of color can be contributing members of human community, reinforces the constitutive exclusion of racially black persons from the Historical frame. The rub is that Spencer is not wrong. Racially black persons cannot be *in-time* because as pre-human artifacts — the trace of humanism’s race/ism or cut — they bear the weight of Man’s ontological anxieties. The promise of a universal human imago implores nonblack persons of color to make room for themselves not in a vacuum, but in an Historical world (wound) adhered by racial hierarchies, such that by activating the plasticity of racial whiteness as a human recognition, they entrench the constitutive exclusion of racially black minorities from human be(com)ing. To refuse to capitalize on this plasticity, to refuse to reproduce the antiblack sentimentality and violence of Enlightenment Europe would consent to arriving to the table of human civilization too soon — at the dawn of Man, which is how Martin characterizes the African continent — *and* too late, failing altogether to qualify for the recognitions and protections reserved for human subjects of a civil polity. To be sure, civil rights necessitate human recognition because “civil society” is but a placeholder for the discursive and material organization of Man (i.e., Man’s racial myths and legal categories), and because the political economy of liberal humanism is generated within and through libidinal antiblackness.

The episodic and contingent violence that nonblack persons of color experience (for example, in Trump’s America) is the affective lever civil society operates to demand generalized loyalty, obscuring for nonblack minorities the choice whereby they consent to make themselves the instruments of white supremacy. The mechanism through which that loyalty is elicited is not (just) the state’s demand but liberal — libidinal — humanism’s demand for a collective, planetary distancing from and rejection of racial blackness. A white *qua* not-black human imago is at once the subject of Alt-Right claims to exclusivity and liberal

humanism's claims to inclusivity. Ours is a world in which those who enjoy what Frantz Fanon describes as "ontological resistance"<sup>51</sup> (i.e., human *qua* white recognition) experience, in Trump's as in Obama's America, the ebb and flow of human community (i.e., social life), while the excommunicated, or in Wilderson's hauntingly apt analogy for racially black persons, the "cows"<sup>52</sup>—as the raw material that makes and sustains our human world-making—are indiscriminately and senselessly, without stipulation or explanation, "accumulated and, if need be, killed,"<sup>53</sup> in order to cohere the collective unconscious of our human community and to engender its social markers of Man.

### Same shit, different day

I have already suggested that Trump's simulated inclusivity betrays the continuity of the office of the American president and that his arrival to the White/Master's House coheres and testifies to a paradigm sutured by unremarkable and interminable antiblack violence, even or especially as nonblack minority populations experience new violations in Trump's America. The contingent and selective recognition of nonblack persons of color as white-*cum*-human beings absolves—gives cover to—the enduring violence whereby the black as a subject-that-is-not-one is defeated by the protections liberal humanism's political machinery—civil society—erects to safeguard Man in his most vulnerable iterations (i.e., "worker, woman, [...] gay, lesbian, and so on").

While racialized violence reduces the nonblack body (of color) to flesh, nonblack persons of color and racially black persons do not occupy comparable space-time coordinates and/or structural positionalities, because humanism's flesh-making project or race/ism is *essentially* an antiblack violence. Afro-pessimism teaches us that racially black persons occupy a structural position analogous, if at all, to non-human animal beings<sup>54</sup>, which like the slave acquire value in/as death—as a meaty carcass consumable/consumed for its parts, including skin, hair,<sup>55</sup> bones, organs, and (the story of Henrietta Lacks teaches us) cells. It is for this reason that Wilderson uses the analogy of a meat-packing plant to replace the "negro question" with the "cow question,"<sup>56</sup> and why Sexton describes the "paradigmatic condition of black existence in the modern world" as "a perpetual and involuntary *openness*"<sup>57</sup> to the tearing apart and looting of black flesh. Hortense Spillers names the hyper-vulnerability of the unsignified/unsignifiable black flesh to remain from humanism's cut as a "hieroglyphics." She clarifies that the "anatomical specifications of rupture" assigned to black flesh invite "the objective description of laboratory prose"<sup>58</sup>—"eyes beaten out, arms, backs, skulls branded, a left jaw, a right ankle, punctured; teeth missing, as the calculated work of iron, whips, chains, knives... the bullet."<sup>59</sup> Surely, this is not the representational regime of a body

typified by cohesion. Wilderson's, Sexton's, and Spillers' interventions are Afro-pessimistic<sup>60</sup> insofar as they dissuade the reader from holding her breath for a political metamorphosis that might finally recognize black humanity. Black fungibility like animal fungibility (perhaps too, like earth-matter fungibility<sup>61</sup>) will abate only after an epistemological catastrophe disorganizes our relational capacities and dissolves every frame of reference, obliterating the *chronopolitical* grammar through which those who can become Man, that is to say, who can ascend to the top of a racial hierarchy that is also or primarily a food chain, do so.

Franco Barchiesi elaborates the Afro-pessimistic position to remind us that "the shift from multicultural liberalism to nationalistic supremacism" in the hour of Trump "is a change only in the form of Black subjugation."<sup>62</sup> Black persons categorically denied human recognition as a fact and not (just) as an inconvenience of their being "do not merely confront [the] violence"<sup>63</sup> nonblack minority populations like immigrants, indigenous persons, and nonblack gender non-conforming persons experience as an event—for example, as a travel ban or the dismissal of marriage and bathroom rights. Rather, black Others as a people forged, Audre Lorde explains, "in the crucibles of difference,"<sup>64</sup> are "actually constituted by [violence] through processes of depredation, coercion, and enslavement."<sup>65</sup> Barchiesi's incisive reading of Wilderson's "Gramsci's Black Marx" (2003) makes it clear that Trump's presidency does not qualify as an historical node, which is to say, does not signify the end of times or a new time/beginning, but rather, evidences the *longue durée* of black social death as a world-ordering structure, more to the point, as the structure for our be(com)ing-human. It is precisely "the inhumanity of Blackness [that] allows White humans"<sup>66</sup> including nonblack persons of color

to build institutions, ideologies of freedom, images of rights, and ethical meditations on democracy. Such political and cognitive capacities posit [black] bodies as their inert, "socially dead," Wilderson writes, yet sentient objects, or outlets of white fantasies of coercion, improvement, imagination, violence, and healing. The inhumanity of [blackness], or the fundamental antagonism between White life and [black] death, is ultimately the condition of existence for the political conflicts, moral dilemmas, and social emergencies of civil society, as well as its aptitude to experience and narrativize history as a succession of events.<sup>67</sup>

To argue that antiblack violence is paradigmatic—a structure and a constant—is to suggest that reforms to civil society will not abate the violence black Others necessarily must endure to make civil society, more to the point, to make or conceive of a social polity—an "us"—in the first place. Wilderson's intervention, abridged by Barchiesi to clarify our present moment as altogether typical, insists that the reorganiza-



tion of civil society's parts will not de-escalate the rates at which black persons are indiscriminately maimed and murdered, because black life is not contingently fungible but essentially so, and because the metaphysics and/as metapolitics of black fungibility are not just essential for the making of a socially dead black Other. They are principally and foremost essential for the making of a non-fungible or white-passing "us".<sup>68</sup> The story of that be(com)ing, of a human subject that is "semantically-neurochemically" programmed to enact antiblack "individual and collective behaviors,"<sup>69</sup> is located in the hearts and minds of those eligible for human recognition, as a libidinal economy.

Insofar as Trump and his henchmen (i.e., Spencer) use liberalism's seemingly capacious parachute to trap the rights of nonblack minority populations, they mobilize not an American nightmare but one instance in the "ongoing disaster"<sup>70</sup> of "the social" that is mobilized by the American Dream. Trump's hate-mongering is our price of admission not just for a model of the social organized by/as civil society, but for the making of human community (i.e., the "social"), that is to say, for epistemology and ontology itself. Recall Hartman's argument that "the very effort to pry apart the Negro question and the social question exposes their enduring entanglements"<sup>71</sup> as a *private relation*. Libidinal interests, untouchable by the law but which determine the law<sup>72</sup>, "[shape] the emergence of the social in the United States"<sup>73</sup> as a racially unified site in which the immigrant and savage find the civil rights that correspond with human recognition. While nonblack minorities in Trump's America are being made to experience, albeit irregularly and provisionally, what Michael Harriot describes as "the America black people have always lived in,"<sup>74</sup> which denies human recognition to revoke civil rights, for the black Other who lives in this nowhere or "sunken place,"<sup>75</sup> it matters not who steers the American ship. Hillary Clinton's presidency like Barack Obama's before hers would have (at best) activated the elasticity whereby nonblack differences (in Obama's America, gay and trans rights especially) are accommodated by entrenching the constitutive antagonism of racial blackness (such that the hour of the first black presidency testified to the fact that black lives don't or *can't* matter).<sup>76</sup>

The violent removal of Vietnamese-American doctor and 'model minority'<sup>77</sup> David Dao from United Flight 3411 on April 9, 2017 serves to illustrate what Damon Young of *Very Smart Brothas* describes as the contingent blackification of nonblack minority populations in Trump's America. Young resolves that Dao "wasn't quite [black] for a day," but that he "was definitely *treated* like [he was]."<sup>78</sup> The wanton and senseless nature of Dao's physical beating rendered his body (of color) fungible as an *event*, because this violence defied his treatment otherwise, for example, in Obama's multiculturalist, 'post-racial' America. More specifically, Dao's psychological suffering in the video seen 'round the



globe evokes the psychosomatic terror (*pace* Fanon) typical of humanism's flesh-making project, that is to say, its anti/blackness. The absolute wretchedness whereby Dao cannot articulate his suffering, his demonstration of a "pain [he] can't live inside of and can't live without,"<sup>79</sup> indeed, of a pain which he cannot signify, contain, or cathect with recourse to "the brush of discourse, or the reflexes of iconography"<sup>80</sup> is expressed by the hopelessness with which Dao pleads with his captors to "just kill [him]."

We might pause to ask why the video of Dao's suffering captivated audiences as it did. Certainly, had Dao been black, the violation of his person would not have registered as a scandal. Videos of black suffering have the opposite effect, prompting us to stand not appalled and aghast but agape and mesmerized, chomping at the bit for (*pace* Hartman) more "scenes of subjection" that might (impossibly) satisfy our unabating human appetite for the flesh of the Other. In addition, scenes of black subjection function to reassure us that the human world will continue to make room for nonblack minority populations by discarding with the being of the black. Our absence from fugitive demands for black life—our sheer disregard of black fungibility, such that some of us can claim in the hour of Trump that "this is the first time [we've] protested anything"<sup>81</sup>—further suggests that black and nonblack minority populations do not wade through the muck and mire of racism together. Even as black persons show up to do our work, "[taking] up so many causes not immediately recognized as black," for example, "the rights of Palestinians and Indigenous water protectors,"<sup>82</sup> and even as nonblack minorities like Dao are violated in ways that testify to the interminability of antiblack political and (as) libidinal violence and to the consequences of that violence for nonblack persons of color, it is the black who has had to do the wading—the sinking and the dying—so that we who are not fungible can do the living.<sup>83</sup> What is specific about and underwrites the antiblackness of this moment, if anything, is that audiences view Trump's violence as exceptional, and in lamenting nonblack suffering in Trump's America valorize the protections of the liberal state, obscuring its structural antiblackness.

Let there be no mistake: Dao's suffering—periodized, documented, and mourned—differs from black suffering in significant ways. Do not confuse my argument with the making-similar of black and nonblack positionalities; I aim to clarify the hierarchy of suffering whereby black suffering prefigures nonblack suffering, so that nonblack persons of color might begin to understand that their own freedom requires black fugitivity *first*. The pretext of a common struggle, indeed, of commensurate differences, such that the violence of chattel slavery as an articulation of humanism's violence—a primary cut to the fabric of the flesh—is made analogous to colonial violence and/or dislocation (and further, to sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and

even to ableism, which qualify as secondary cuts) is dangerous. Such a pretext goads the black as a subject-that-is-not-one to exercise a will — a vote — that can only ever materialize as a performance of the coffle<sup>84</sup> and consent to the violation of her own black person.<sup>85</sup> It is precisely this ruse that Colin Kaepernick resists in his public decision not to participate in the democratic process — in his own words, to “show support for [a] system” that “isn’t going to allow [him] to vote [his] way out of [his] oppression.”<sup>86</sup> Black Others have been living in the trenches of Trump’s America when it was still liberal or, better yet, ‘post-racial’ America, surviving in/as the muck and the mire of an unexceptional dereliction. And, they would be living in these same trenches had even Bernie Sanders won the American presidency<sup>87</sup>, hence Kaepernick’s refusal to participate in a system which is not going to let him “vote his way out.”

Kaepernick understands as Wilderson writes that there is no “redemption”<sup>88</sup> for the being of the black in a civil society authored by humanism’s race/ism. Electoral interests and gains or lack thereof reveal incommensurate differences between black and nonblack minority experiences. Wilderson remarks that while “voting is an important performance of dispossession for people of color who are not black,” asked at the polls to choose their method of consumption and pillage, electoral politics for racially black persons is a performance of inhumanity, that is to say, of social death, as “the freedom of all others [...] owes its condition of possibility to the unfreedom (lack of consent) and sexualized violence [of the black].”<sup>89</sup> I would add, it is not the performance but the *performativity* of whiteness that guarantees non-black persons of color the choice of “which way one wishes to die,” materially and metaphysically, including which way one wishes to kill their person *of color* to make room for a white be(com)ing. Wilderson like Kaepernick reminds us that while we can certainly expect a Trump administration to eviscerate the rights of those people with a world/ing to lose — nonblack minority populations who can locate being-*in-time* on a human map — Trump’s management will not change the essential precarity of the always already world-less; except, perhaps, that the exceptional suffering nonblack minority persons experience in the hour of Trump will dislodge media coverage of antiblack violence prompted by the Black Lives Matter movement, returning conversations about structural antiblackness to the custodial hands of the black women who built and will sustain its house of resistance.<sup>90</sup> But this is merely a change in the degree of world-structuring antiblackness. We might recall that black lives were sacrificed to the altar of white supremacy before the dawn of Trump once every 28 hours,<sup>91</sup> to list just the known knowns: deaths recorded as extra-judicial homicides, as murders that have not been covered up as suicides and/or foul play. Their lacerated and containerized bodies, excommunicated from social

recognition and necessarily exposed to an unabating libidinal — a constitutively human — appetite for flesh, occupy the front lines of a resistance effort the multiculturalist multitude is belatedly joining.

### **On the chronopolitics of (the social life of) social death<sup>92</sup>**

Every human problem cries out to be considered on the basis of time, the ideal being that the present always serves to build the future.

Frantz Fanon<sup>93</sup>

At this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the World; it has no movement or development to exhibit.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel<sup>94</sup>

One need look no further than commentary from newly-elected French president Emmanuel Macron, celebrated in the news media as a “staunch defender political, social, and economic liberalism”<sup>95</sup> and as someone who will save liberal democracy for us all (i.e., for the West), to know that Richard Spencer’s comments about “black Africans” are not the inchoate ramblings of a disgruntled, tyrannical white supremacist — or rather, to know that they are, but only insofar as Spencer’s approach to Africa/ns is indistinguishable from liberalism’s. At a press conference for the G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany on July 8, 2017, Macron, who was asked by a reporter why there is no Marshall Plan in place for Africa, described Africa’s underdevelopment not as the result of imperialism and/or plunder, but as a “civilizational” problem unique to Africa/ns.<sup>96</sup>

That Trump’s ascent — and with him, the Alt-Right’s — is not the end of times or a new/beginning time teaches us something, I mean to argue, about social and political constructions of time as the measure or yardstick for our human be(com)ing, or the *chronopolitics* of Man. I reasoned in the preceding sections that it is precisely because we imagine the integrity of American civil society, cohered by the tenets of liberal pluralism, to pivot on a universal humanism to which black persons are necessarily proscribed that we as the multiculturalist multitude can claim ourselves abandoned by this polity in the hour of Trump’s management. I further suggested, following Barchiesi’s incisive reading of Wilderson’s “Gramsci’s Black Marx” (2003), that Trump’s ascent is not an event but a “touchstone”<sup>97</sup> in the *longue durée* of chattel slavery, which is itself just one articulation of the paradigmatic violence of black social death required to make and sustain human community. Central if counterintuitive to this argument is the charge that hysterical

responses to nonblack suffering in Trump's America reproduce a libidinal appetite for unsignified/unsignifiable *qua* black flesh, which the multiculturalist multitude consumes as the raw material of its social making or body (politic). My reading thus impresses that the color-line to emerge from the discursive-material world/ing of humanism's cut—its race/ism—does not pivot on white/nonwhite differences but on black/nonblack *qua* nonhuman/human differences. As Spencer's comments evince, a black/nonblack *qua* nonhuman/human color-line authorizes nonblack minorities to dabble in human recognition, and to claim trespass in those instances in which their humanity is revoked.

In what follows, I reason that Trump's violence as the violence of continuity reveals an ontological distinction between those peoples who can exist *in* time, that is to say, those peoples (plural) who experience the periodization of time, for whom Trump's ascent is meaningful as an event—nonblack peoples of color—and those people (singular) who exist outside of time: racially black people, more specifically, black Africans. If, as Zakiyyah Iman Jackson's reading of Hartman's *Scenes of Subjection* (1997) demonstrates, "Blackness has been central to, rather than excluded from, liberal humanism" insofar as "the black body is an essential index for the calculation of degree of humanity and the measure of human progress"<sup>98</sup>—stated another way, if racial blackness is the constant against which one's "degree of humanity" and "the measure of human progress" (i.e., the forward-movement of History) are assessed—then we must interrogate how human be(com)ing induces Historical alienation for the being of the black. I study the racialization of time to argue that Historical alienation is essential not (just) to racial blackness—that designation born in the ship's hold<sup>99</sup>—but to Africanness. The historicism that produces Africanness outside of time, in a time before time, is the paradigm that makes race/ism out of humanism, scaffolding the structure or integrity of meaning in which everyone else's racial differences and suffering are inserted and computed or compounded. This is the case even or especially as the suffering of the black is singular and inanalogue, since it is precisely the insurmountability and irredeemability of racial blackness that makes human differences between white and nonblack persons of color legible as intramural ethnic squabble (*pace* Spencer).

The Historical *qua* chronopolitical framework I charge with making racial differences out of human ones was introduced and canonized by Enlightenment philosophers like David Hume (1711–1776), Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), and especially Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831). To them, we owe our intertextual ways of being and (as) knowing. Their writings dramatize the saga of *Homo Occidentalis* as a problem for time, engendering the yardstick we have since standardized to measure the inevitable progress of Man.<sup>100</sup> It bears noting that we can measure Man's movements, imposing a boundary between the

human and his object or Other—his constant—not because Hegel et al. define the human as a racially white subject; rather, our measurements are possible because their canonical writings relegate Africa/ns as *timeless*. As Brittney Cooper explains in her TEDWomen 2016 video, time does not belong to the being of the black; more to the point, the being of the black, for whom “a future was never imagined,”<sup>101</sup> cannot access time as a moving marker. Her life, “pitted against time”<sup>102</sup>, is experienced as “perpetual urgency”<sup>103</sup>, regardless of the timely dramas of electoral politics and civil society.

In what follows, I query being-*in-time* using an Afro-pessimistic approach to interrogate the nonblack person of color’s oscillating temporal positionality in liberalism’s political and (as) libidinal economies—more specifically, to examine how the nonblack person of color’s oscillating positionality essentially pivots on (entrenches) the exclusion of the racially black person from human recognition. I draw on the grammar of black inhumanity not to fetishize black social death (even as I recognize that the invocation of social death cannot but reproduce this violence) but to elaborate that social death does not close the door to relationality. Instead, it enables a different kind of departure: a portal through which we can begin to inch towards an/Other sociality—in Sexton’s (2011) summation, “the social life of social death.”<sup>104</sup> Cooper implores, “If past is prologue, let us seize upon the ways in which we’re always out of time anyways to demand with urgency: freedom now.”<sup>105</sup> Her black feminist demand is for an untimely and unanticipated/unanticipatable freedom, or as Fanon (1963) describes it, for an “occult”<sup>106</sup> freedom. In the next section, I imagine what this fugitive demand, which has always been made by black women, might look like, even as its articulation would necessarily exceed our imaginings and expressions (hence, its designation as “occult”). Here, I contextualize how the chronopolitical order of Man annuls black life to “[transform black] men and women into dead matter”<sup>107</sup> suspended in the slow, stalled time of captivity, or what Christina Sharpe describes in her theorizations of racial blackness “in the wake” as the time of the oceanic.<sup>108</sup>

A chronopolitical study reveals that the black as a subject-that-is-not one—as a matter that cannot matter—exists outside of the temporal frame that might identify her as a being-*in-time*. The dismemberment and consumption of black flesh typical of chattel slavery and which survives in/as (*pace* Hartman) its “afterlife”<sup>109</sup> or (*pace* Sharpe) its “ongoing ruptures”<sup>110</sup> finds ideological cover in civilizational-*cum*-racial myths that predate and anticipate, that is to say, which authorize the violence of a chattel slave economy. Specifically, this violence finds cover in the historicism that abstracts Man as a becoming-white figure. In the evolutionary continuum narrativized by/as History, Man slowly stands upright, and in so doing, progressively and diachron-

ically moves through time. His pre-human or animal self emerges from 'the bush', from a time before time typified by racial blackness *qua* Africanness, to arrive—over millennia—at a white imago of the human subject redeemed from Africanness. The in-between of that departure and arrival, characterized by the reaching for and inching towards racial whiteness, is the stuff of nonblack racialization. The metaphysical algorithm Hegel et al. canonize, instructive of our epistemological totality—what Jackson describes as “liberal humanism’s hierarchal ordering”<sup>111</sup>—positions the black African as (*pace* Fanon) “the missing link between the ape and man,”<sup>112</sup> as Man’s antecedent and Other. Hence, while certainly the “human-animal binarism is... shaped by the historical development of slavery,”<sup>113</sup> this distinction, which is the distinction of body from flesh, was engendered by History itself, specifically, by a mythology of human be(com)ing that positions the black African as Man’s non-social and pre-human—animal—self.

Let us begin with Hegel, that architect of Man’s civilization-*cum*-racial hierarchy, to interrogate the mythology of Man’s chronopolitical order. The black African of Hegel’s historicism is “precluded from any possibility of progress.”<sup>114</sup> More to the point, Hegel’s account of the world and its making proscribes the black African from any movement—from an historicity—that might activate the (passing) whiteness nonblack persons of color exploit to induce the “borrowed institutionality” of their human recognition (to say nothing of the libidinal antiblackness nonblack persons of color reproduce to make a case for themselves as white-*cum*-human). Hegel describes Spencer’s “black African” as man in a ‘state of nature,’ specifically, as that pre-Cartesian artifactualized and ossified Other exemplary of “natural man in his completely wild and untamed state”<sup>115</sup>—essentially, as an unredeemable human-animal, more animal, in fact, than human (which is to say, not human at all). Hegel thus postulates in *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, which he delivered at the University of Berlin between 1822 and 1830:

The peculiarly African character is difficult to comprehend, for the very reason that in reference to it, we must quite give up the principle [that] naturally accompanies all *our* ideas—the category of Universality. In Negro life the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained to the realization of any substantial objective existence—as for example, God, or Law—in which the interest of man’s volition is involved and in which he realizes his own being. This distinction between himself as an individual and the universality of his essential being, the African in the uniform, undeveloped oneness of his existence has not yet attained; so that the Knowledge of an absolute Being, an Other and a Higher than his individual self, is entirely wanting. The Negro, as already observed, exhibits the natural man



in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality – all that we call feeling – if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character. The copious and circumstantial accounts of Missionaries completely confirm this, *and Mahomedanism appears to be the only thing [that] in any way brings the Negroes within the range of culture.*<sup>116</sup>

Hegel continues, elaborating African persons and cultures as inconsequential to the human world's teleological developmental:

What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World's History.<sup>117</sup>

The Enlightenment thinking Hegel's writings exemplify figures any characteristic that gestures towards African humanity as extra-black. Only by participating, for example, in the Arab-Islamic or "Mahomedan" cultures – in Spencer's formulation, North African cultures – that colonize Africa and in forsaking Africa/ns, Hegel suspects (prescribes), can the black African access time as a moving marker to curate socio-political life. It is in this way, insofar as our ways of being and (as) knowing inherit their political and (as) libidinal logics from Enlightenment humanism, that Islam today functions not just as a terrain for criminalization (as in the Muslim Ban<sup>118</sup>) but also as a civilizational resource for human recognition, especially for the "black African".

Hegel's reasoning that Africa "[has] no historical part [in] the World," in other words, that it "has no movement or development to exhibit" – because, he explains, "[historical movements] belong to the Asiatic or European World"<sup>119</sup> – anticipates Spencer's argument in a speech he delivers almost three hundred years later. In his polemical address at the National Policy Institute's conference in Washington, D.C on November 19, 2016, captured in another video seen 'round the globe – spectacularized in the media because during this speech Spencer asks participants to salute Trump as they would "heil" Hitler – a resolute Spencer bemoans,

To be white is to be a striver, a crusader, an explorer, and a conqueror. *We* build. *We* produce. *We* go upward. And, we recognize the central lie of American race relations: We don't exploit other groups; we don't gain anything from their presence. They need us and not the other way around. ... We are not meant to live in shame and weakness and disgrace. We were not meant to beg for moral validation from some of the most despicable creatures to ever populate the planet. We were meant to *overcome*.<sup>120</sup>



As Spencer (and Hegel) would have it, to be white is to seamlessly move through time, to ascend the ladder of time without resistance, and ultimately, to be positioned at its zenith, as the telos of everyone else's arrival. More to the point – the point of Spencer's contention – to be white is to be the agent of History that trucks in and models everyone else's becoming-human. In the container or space-time for human be(com)ing Hegel and Spencer evince, framed by the twin poles of white supremacy and black irrelevance, racial blackness typified by the African continent is the timeless constant against which the subject of History, in shades of white, comes to know and instantiate himself as a transcendental being – in the case of the nonblack person of color, as a being that can signify whiteness-*cum*-humanness in spite of material and/or phenotypical obstacles to passing-white recognition. With no past and no future, indeed, without access to time as a moving marker, black persons *qua* Africans are always already untimely; Africa as the site of Man's genesis, as the threshold for Historical knowing, arrives too soon to the table of human civilization *and* too late, which is to say – as Fanon does<sup>121</sup> – not at all.

To be sure, the assumption that black persons of African descent are relics or artifacts of and not agents with the power to affect History was already in circulation by the time Hegel ossified Africans as an undeveloped people. In "Of National Characters" (1753), Hume writes the following in a footnote almost eighty years before Hegel historicizes Man's racial hierarchy:

I am apt to suspect the Negroes and in general all other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. ...Not to mention our colonies, there are [Negro] slaves dispersed all over Europe, of which none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; [...] low people, without education...like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly.<sup>122</sup>

Hume's designation of black persons first (principally) and nonblack persons of color second (subsequently, presumably, because they approach and approximate racial blackness) as inferior beings – while the black *qua* African is *undeveloped*, the nonblack person of color is *underdeveloped* – suggests that the contingent racialization nonblack persons of color experience is and has always been the blackification Damon Young elaborates in his analysis of David Dao's assault. Kant, responding to Hume, makes a similar observation about black Africa/ns in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764), wherein he writes,

The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises about the trifling. Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of black who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still not a single one was every found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praiseworthy quality, even though among the whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through superior gifts earn respect in the world. So fundamental is the difference between these two races of man, and it appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in color.<sup>123</sup>

The chronopolitical order introduced by Hume and Kant and canonized by Hegel thus abstracts racial differences as species types to organize national fiefdoms – an archipelago of differences across space and time that gives cover to the lie of a universal human imago – under the general heading of a human world. This world is structured by a spatialization of time in which Europe is the subject of teleological development (i.e., History) and Africa/ns as the constitutive Other of this evolutionary-*cum*-developmental narrative is/are proscribed from human be(com)ing. Black persons can only access socio-political life in a human world by associating with nonblack persons (of color) like Arab-Islamic or “Mahommedan” people whose racial *qua* national station, suspended between the absolute dereliction of racial blackness and the absolute transcendence of racial whiteness, outranks Africa’s. An “unflinching paradigmatic analysis”<sup>124</sup> of Man’s chronopolitical order consequently reveals that it is precisely because humanism – a cut in the fabric of the human-animal flesh – is a race/ism that in the hour of Trump nonblack peoples of color anxiously occupy the lacuna of a black/nonblack *qua* nonhuman/human colorline, as demonstrated by Dao’s assault. The violence we experience in the hour of Trump is fundamentally antiblack, enlisted in this particular moment as an *event* to annul our civil rights (perhaps too, our human recognition). It belongs to the White/Master’s House, where it will remain after Trump’s reign, when the rest of us can reclaim our place in a liberal pecking order. Which is to say, while black fungibility is paradigmatic, our suffering is incidental and symptomatic. Hence, rather than think about our immediate losses (in a Trump administration) and gains (in the ever-after of liberal multiculturalism), we might commit ourselves instead to black insurgency, or as I argue in the next section, to the black feminine.

## The revolution will be feminized

If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free, since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all systems of oppression.

Combahee River Collective<sup>125</sup>

Black mothers are dangerous.

Alexis Pauline Gumbs<sup>126</sup>

If the inclusivity of liberal humanism-*cum*-civil society has failed to make good on its promise of universalism, revealing itself as always already exclusive, or at least antiblack, then an Afro-pessimistic approach, which cedes to the black's positionality as a subject-that-is-not-one—in Hartman's formulation, as "the position of the unthought"<sup>127</sup>—emboldens us to call for exclusivity outright. More specifically, Afro-pessimism compels us to call for a political orientation that privileges what a close reading of its (not oeuvre but) pastiche reveals is the metaphysical particularity of the black feminine. In "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book" (1987)—a foundational if not the ur-text of Afro-pessimism—Spillers describes the black feminine figure as the "zero degree of social conceptualization."<sup>128</sup> In Spillers' reading, the black feminine occupies not the "zero degree" of social *relationality* but as a feminized or penetrable, which is to say, *hyper-vulnerable* Other, she stands outside of and disrupts the very concept of the social itself. Spillers thus writes in "Interstices: A Small Drama of Words" (1984), anticipating the argument she would later develop in "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe"—that "under [...] conditions [of captivity], we lose at least *gender* difference in the outcome"<sup>129</sup>:

the structure of un-reality that the black woman must confront originates in the historical moment when language ceases to speak, the historical moment at which hierarchies of power (even the ones to which *some* women belong) simply run out of terms because the empowered meets in the black female the veritable nemesis of degree and difference. Having encountered what they understand as chaos, the empowered need not name further, since chaos is sufficient naming within itself. I am not addressing the black female in her historical apprenticeship as inferior subject, but, rather, the paradox of non-being. Under the sign of this particular historical order, black female and black male are absolutely equal.<sup>130</sup>

Spillers suggests in this passage that the flesh-making violence typical of chattel slavery predates the political-economic violence of captivity. Specifically, she incriminates History as the arbiter of humanism's

flesh-making—black-making—cut. The black's position as "female flesh ungendered"<sup>131</sup> clarifies our human wor(l)d as one in which racial differences as Historical positionalities supersede and underwrite identity categories. In Spillers' account, what matters is that the black (feminine) is proscribed from identity categories because her coordinates exist outside of the Historical frame, in the "chaos" characteristic of "the historical moment when language ceases to speak," significant of the time before time—Africa, or 'the bush'—Hegel describes as "the threshold of the World's History," exemplary of Man in a 'state of nature'.

Spillers' observation that human taxonomies—secondary cuts like gender—are reserved for proper subjects of "this historical order" elaborates the constitutive relationship between liberal claims to human universality and History that I have described as Man's chronopolitical order. Liberalism provides cover for humanism's race/ism or cut at the same time as History arranges where and how the pieces made from humanism's cut sediment, or—for nonblack persons of color—don't sediment. That is to say, History determines (manages) where and how the new materialities cast from humanism's cut are spatialized as structural positionalities-*cum*-racial categories. It calls on liberalism to make humanism plastic and capacious, so that its folds expand (i.e., to include nonblack persons of color as contributing members of human community) primarily to contract (i.e., to entrench the exclusion of racial blackness from human community). In other words, liberalism reinforces a chronopolitical order in which instantiations and evocations of the human body, including ones unrelated to race—for example, gender—are prefigured by one's Historical-*cum*-racial positionality. Following Spillers, we might argue that claims to gender are governed by the edict—to borrow from Lewis Gordon's phrasing—"above all, don't be black,"<sup>132</sup> which means: be human or white, or as Richard Spencer and before him, Hegel insisted, model Historical arrival, as secondary cuts like gender won't cohere otherwise.

Spillers' insight that the *historicity* of humanism's cut engenders black (feminine) flesh is especially influential to Wilderson's study of US civil society. In "Gramsci's Black Marx" (2003), Wilderson cites Spillers to interrogate the historical categories that position racial blackness outside of the temporal frame. While it is true that Wilderson names chattel slavery as "the great leveller [*sic*] of the black subject's positionality,"<sup>133</sup> his observation that "[racial blackness] does not generate *historical categories*,"<sup>134</sup> in other words, is metaphysically and metapolitically "*off the record*"<sup>135</sup> indicates a much broader intervention. Wilderson invokes Spillers' black feminism to read the grammar of History and the grammar of humanism together, as the structure of race/ism, specifically, of a black/nonblack *qua* nonhuman/human color-line:

To the data generating demands of the historical axis we present a virtual blank. ... The work of Hortense Spillers on black female sexuality corroborates these findings. Spillers' conclusions regarding the black female subject and the discourse of sexuality are in tandem with ours regarding the black ungendered subject and the question of hegemony and, in addition, unveil the ontological elements which black women and men share.<sup>136</sup>

Returning Afro-pessimism to its bedrock investments in black feminism thus clarifies the significance of its intervention for thinking about—so that we can throw into “chaos”—the “political arithmetic” and (as) “racial calculus” of humanism’s race/ism, not just in the American example but paradigmatically. Wilderson’s attention to the historicism that makes ungendered black (feminine) flesh clarifies Afro-pessimism’s critique as a chronopolitical study. As a chronopolitical map of the wor(l)d’s making—and, its radical unmaking—Afro-pessimism’s scale is broad. While X marks the spot of absolute dereliction as black social death, Afro-pessimism also maps the routes humanism takes to traffic nonblack persons of color between the sedimented poles of ungendered (black, feminine) flesh—Historical irrelevance—and a coherent body significant of Historical arrival. Here’s the rub: it demonstrates to those who read its map that *all routes lead back to X*, essentially reproducing a human appetite for the flesh of the Other typified by racial blackness. Regardless, we cannot say that its study of humanism’s flesh-making—black-making—project obscures nonblack suffering. As a chronopolitical study, Afro-pessimism contextualizes the suffering nonblack persons of color episodically and contingently endure in the moments their bodies are reduced to ungendered flesh, too—which is to say, as Damon Young does, in the moments their persons are made black. What Afro-pessimism asks is that we never confuse the utilitarianism of this violence with the *necessity* of antiblack violence, which is the “zero degree” of the human wor(l)d’s ontological and epistemological making.

If Afro-pessimism is necessarily a black feminism—Wilderson explains, “Afro-pessimism is made possible by the critical labors of a particular strand of *Black* feminism, a la [Saidiya] Hartman and [Hortense] Spillers”<sup>137</sup>—then its critique, which elaborates “the world, and maybe even the whole possibility of and desire for a world” as the “master’s tools” of Audre Lorde’s intervention,<sup>138</sup> arms the black feminist argument with ammunition to forge a cosmology typified not by plentitude but by lack. This cosmology is grounded not by phallic signification but by a “perpetual and involuntary *openness*,” which—Sexton teaches us—is “the “paradigmatic condition of black existence in the modern world.”<sup>139</sup> The notable difference between an Afro-pessimistic approach and a black feminist one, if any, is that Afro-

pessimism accepts and leans into the paradigmatic structure of black antagonism, accepting the Historical alienation that typifies social death, it bears clarifying, not as a closed door to social life but as a portal into an/Other sociality — *off the record*. Without a name or referent, the “elsewhere and elsewhere” of black social life, which “sprouts out of the wet places in [our] eyes...the waiting places in [our] palms, [and] the tremble holding in [our] mouths,”<sup>140</sup> finds refuge in black femininity because (*pace* Spillers) the immateriality of gender in the black instance does not default the metaphysics of racial blackness to phallic masculinity but to invaginated femininity. Speaking to a different audience, Lewis Gordon explains that the racially black man as (*pace* Spillers) the personification “female flesh ungendered” is always already feminine. He writes,

The black man is caught. He cannot reject his femininity without simultaneously rejecting his blackness, for his femininity stands as a consequence of his blackness and vice versa. Standing in front of a white [human] wall, he appears as a hole, as a gaping, feminine symbol to be filled, closed up, by the being who has being.<sup>141</sup>

Doubly penetrable as *hole* — as the invaginated Other of Freud’s phallocentrism and the human-animal Other Fanon describes — the black (feminine) is a figure that awaits signification interminably. Powerless to “escape concealment under the brush of discourse, or the reflexes of iconography,”<sup>142</sup> the black (feminine) conjures Other ways of being and knowing that “can be felt and perceived even though — or especially if — [they] remain unrecognizable or unintelligible to our current common senses.”<sup>143</sup> Excommunicated from the historical frame, the black (feminine) gives sanctuary to our freedom dreams. Hers is the safe harbor that guards black life from humanism’s thieving reach. And, as “the historical evocation of chaos”<sup>144</sup> — as (*pace* Fanon) an im/possibility for time — the black (feminine) rages against the machine to disarticulate the “historical categories” that engender human be(com)ing in the first place.

In an exchange with Wilderson, Hartman summons the life and writings of Harriet A. Jacobs to claim the non-negotiable centrality of the black feminine as “the space of death, where negation is the captive’s central possibility for action.”<sup>145</sup> Black femininity as a “content [that] exceeds [...] expression”<sup>146</sup> — recall that the black (feminine) “[presents as] a virtual blank” and has no shape or meaning — models the social life of social death and is the harbinger of an occult Otherwise. That is to say, the black (feminine) is pregnant/impregnable with possibilities for a non-Historical becoming. She disarticulates the spatialization of time *qua* the racialization of time to “[interrupt] the habitual formation of bodies;”<sup>147</sup> her #blackgirlmagic indexes an/



Other time—a gestational time—to induce “chaos” for the record and the record-keeper alike. Following Annie Menzel’s reading of maternal generativity, the black feminine as the site of maternity—the black womb—invokes “unspeakable violence with insurgent horizon.”<sup>148</sup> Not just void, the black feminine-cum-maternal engenders another space for living, not *in-time* but divested from time as the marker of forward-movement and teleological development. Hers is not the time of History (i.e., Man’s chronopolitical order), which Walter Benjamin describes as a “homogenous, empty time”<sup>149</sup> that dialectically (re)produces “the ‘time of the now’”<sup>150</sup> in/as the time of tomorrow—of futurity, or humanism. Rather, hers is an embryonic and gestational time, which like the slow and stalled time of captivity *qua* the oceanic is the insurgent and occult time of waiting/wading and wanting.<sup>151</sup> While the birth canal, in Christina Sharpe’s pointed rendering, is a “domestic middle passage” that “[disfigures] black maternity, [turning] the womb into a factory (producing blackness as abjection much like the slave ship’s hold and the prison)” and demanding from the black mother the reproductive labor of chattel slavery—Sharpe explains that the birth canal “[ushers children] into her condition; her non-status, her non-being-ness”<sup>152</sup>—the black womb, as a container for gestation and not the vehicle for entry, specifically, as embryonic space-time suspends black life to nurture its emergent but not-yet-emerging Otherwise.

Taking inspiration from Spillers’ exhortation in “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe” (1987) to “make a place for” the black (feminine) as a “[non-Historical] social subject,” not to make room for her in “the ranks of gendered femaleness”—in humanism’s liberal folds—but to claim her “insurgent ground,”<sup>153</sup> which Menzel describes as Spillers’ call for a “maternal temporality of continuous upheaval,”<sup>154</sup> I submit, in closing, that the black feminine *qua* maternal, as Rizvana Bradley describes her, a “(w)holeness”<sup>155</sup> that, as Toni Morrison memorably insists, “consistently [defies] classification,”<sup>156</sup> is at once void (i.e., socially dead) and pregnant (i.e., with social life). She summons the revolution that we—all of us, black and nonblack persons (of color) alike—seek, not (just) as a salve for Trump’s violence but as the escape hatch we can use to flee the White/Master’s house, the violence of liberal humanism as the architect of chattel slavery and colonialism, and the container for human be(com)ing—History—that constrains our movements generally. To live in the space-time of the black womb’s oceanic is to be swallowed up by the infinite expanse of racial blackness. As the site of an/Other social, this embryonic space-time disarticulates Man’s chronopolitical order and is the “elsewhere and elsewhere” that we have been looking for, to date, in the wrong place—in the letter of the law of a civil society that operationalizes humanism’s race/ism. We might find our freedom instead in the black mother, who uses the resources she does not have to hold and to carry, indeed, to make life-generat-



ing black poetry from the grammar of this wor(l)d's insatiably violent antiblack prose.

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## Notes

1. The *Southwest Asian and North African – or, SWANA – designation replaces the “Middle East” to distinguish the region and its peoples based on geographic rather than colonialist boundaries.* In addition to displacing Orientalist assumptions that position its region and peoples as adjacent (i.e., supplemental) to Western Europe, this terminology pushes against emic and etic assumptions alike that as Middle Eastern persons, peoples from Southwest Asia and North Africa are essentially Caucasian. See “About Swana” in *Iranian Alliances Across Borders*, available at <http://iranianalliances.org/35-campaigns/107-about-swana> [Accessed June 4, 2017].
2. Frank B. Wilderson III, *Red, White and Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010) 100.
3. Frank B. Wilderson III, “Irreconcilable Anti-Blackness: A Conversation with Frank Wilderson III.” A public lecture at Pomona College sponsored by the Art History Department, April 19, 2017, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1W7WzQyLmI> [n.d.], minute 5:55.
4. Fred Moten, “Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)” in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* Volume 112, Number 4 (2013) 746.
5. Jared Sexton, “The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism” in *InTensions* Number 5 (Fall/Winter 2011).
6. *Ibid.* 31.
7. Wilderson, *Red, White and Black* 181.
8. Jared Sexton, “Properties of Coalition: Blacks, Asians, and the Politics of Policing” in *Critical Sociology* Volume 36, Number 1 (2010) 87–108.
9. I owe this phrasing to Franco Barchiesi, whose friendship and mentorship sustain my person and scholarship, and for whom I am grateful every day. This particular phrasing emerged from a conversation in which we deliberated Jared Sexton’s “Properties of Coalition.” Sexton’s interlocution in the essay’s final pages, and especially in its final line, in which he beseeches nonblack persons of color to stand “against property and propriety,” seemed to indicate to us that nonblack persons of color experience a *dilemma* of coalition in which they can (though certainly, they don’t, and this is precisely my point of contention) make the ethical choice to relinquish their – contingent and unguaranteed – claims to civil society and to human relationality, and

to subordinate themselves to black antagonism. See Sexton, "Properties of Coalition" 101.

10. Wilderson, *Red, White and Black* 49–50. Wilderson writes about Native Americans, "Indians perpetually shuttle between death and civil society: at one moment they are isolated from Human community (civil society or 'contemporaries') in their genocidal effect (much like slaves); at another moment, the moment of sovereign effect, Indians are wedged back into the Human fold. For slaves, this shuttling between death and civil society is simply not allowed – which accounts for the anxious need to imagine Black slavery as an historical rather than ontological phenomenon" (50).
11. This argument resonates with Alexander Weheliye's distinction of the "not-quite-human" in *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Duke University Press: 2014). Indeed, it is no coincidence that Wilderson and Weheliye are likewise influenced by the black feminist tradition.
12. An antiblack political economy is always already an antiblack libidinal economy because, as Saidiya Hartman argues in *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford University Press, 1997) and I elaborate in this essay, an antiblack libidinal economy – the sentimentality of heart and mind, resulting in myths and categories that preclude the black from the realm of the social – animates and sustains its political economy.
13. In "Properties of Coalition," Sexton asks, "Is the political desire of non-blacks for coalition with blacks undermined to the extent that the former group 'accepts the American system and wants only – it at all – to make peripheral, marginal reforms in it'...a social formation for which the exclusion of [the category of racial blackness] is *sine qua non*?" (89).
14. Saidiya Hartman does not name herself as an Afro-pessimist. I locate her in the Afro-pessimist canon because her historical writings like *Scenes of Subjection* (1997) and critical fabulous like "Venus in Two Acts" (in *Small Axe*, Volume 26 [June, 2008]) are foundational to Wilderson's and Sexton's arguments about the political (Wilderson) and/as libidinal (Sexton) economies of antiblackness.
15. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection* 168.
16. *Ibid.* 169.
17. *Ibid.* 173, my emphasis.
18. *Ibid.* 171.
19. *Ibid.* 175.
20. This phrasing borrows from Jared Sexton's application of Luce Irigaray's concept-metaphor for female sexuality, in her psychoanalytic study *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985). Sexton's use of the phrase appears in his contribution to a *Jadaliyya* roundtable on the topic of Black-Palestinian solidarity. See "Roundtable on Anti-Blackness and Black-Palestinian Solidarity," June 3, 2015, available at <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/21764/roundtable-on-anti-blackness-and-black-palestinian> [Accessed May 6, 2017].

21. The plethora of memes to emerge after Trump's win, relaying messages like the quote "They tried to bury us. They didn't know we were seeds," accredited to the gay Greek poet Dinos Christianopoulos (1931 - Present), and reminding the multitude, "We survived eight years of George W. Bush," demonstrate psychic-emotional investments in this conviction. Such displays, plastered on social media, seek to fortify the resolve of the multitude such that they will not succumb to hopelessness in the wake of Trump's win, encouraging those persons who feel especially vulnerable to Trump's prejudices to persevere. They are posted without the context or care that might name how and why not everyone who endures structural violence – especially racially black Americans whose vulnerability is unreasonable and timeless – perseveres. See Chez Pazienza, "They Said, 'We Survived Bush, We'll Survive Trump.' Now We Have Proof That, as Before, Not All of Us Will" in *The Daily Banter*, February 5, 2017, available at <http://thedailybanter.com/2017/02/people-will-die-bc-of-trump/> [Accessed April 14, 2017].
22. Wilderson, *Red, White and Black* 100, 283, 309.
23. Jared Sexton qtd. in Frank B. Wilderson III, "Afro-pessimism and the End of Redemption" in *The Occupied Times of London*, March 30, 2016, available at <https://theoccupiedtimes.org/?p=14236> [Accessed May 6, 2017]; and in Wilderson, *Red, White, and Black* 30, n.10.
24. If black persons are excommunicated from the social, then efforts to make black life matter do not constitute a social movement but a set of demands to do away with the social altogether.
25. In her critique of Hannah Arendt's "rise of the social," Patrice D. Douglass similarly argues that racial blackness is the "[essential] calculus in what is assumed as the essential machinations of violence against subjects," that is to say, is "the central logic to [the] deployment" of violence against those persons who qualify for human subjectivity, including – in my argument – nonblack persons of color. See "The Claim of Right to Property: Social Violence and Political Right" in *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* Volume 65, Number 2 (2017) 148.
26. Lisa Hagen, "Trump spokesman denounces racism amid 'alt-right' meeting" in *The Hill*, November 11, 2016, available at <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/307142-trump-spokesman-denounces-alt-right-meeting-in-washington> [Accessed April 1, 2017].
27. Peter Cvjetanovic is the viral face of the August 12, 2017 white nationalist protest "Unite the Right" in Charlottesville, Virginia. He makes this statement to rebut the circulation of his image in social media, pleading with news reporters, "I'm not the angry racist they see in that photo." Qtd. in Meghan Breen, "UNR Student Talks After Marching in Charlottesville White Nationalist Rally" for *KTVN.com*, August 12, 2017, available at <http://www.ktvn.com/story/36123640/unr-student-marches-in-charlottesville-white-nationalist-rally> [Accessed August 14, 2017].
28. "Donald Trump's entire election victory speech" in *CNN.com*, November 9, 2016, available at <http://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2016/11/08/donald-trump-entire-victory-speech-election-sot.cnn> [Accessed April 1, 2017]; "Here's the full text of Donald Trump's victory speech" in *CNN*.

- com*, November 9, 2018, available at <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/09/politics/donald-trump-victory-speech/> [Accessed April 1, 2017].
29. "Donald Trump's entire election victory speech," emphasis deduced from tone.
  30. Jeremy Diamond, "Donald Trump disavows 'alt-right'" in *CNN.com*, November 23, 2016, available at <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/22/politics/donald-trump-disavow-groups-new-york-times/> [Accessed April 1, 2017]; Hagen, "Trump spokesman denounces racism."
  31. I follow Sara Ahmed's warning in *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Duke University Press, 2012) against 'diversity work'. Phrasing inclusivity as diversity work lends itself towards the neoliberal management of non-white peoples and ideas. As the empty gesture of 'inclusive excellence,' diversity work brings people of color into the folds of disciplines and institutions without actually holding disciplines and institutions accountable to changing their infrastructures to support non-white cultures and perspectives.
  32. "Roland Martin Confronts White Nationalist Richard Spencer on *NewsOne Now*" in *NewsOne.com*, November 22, 2016, available at <https://newsone.com/3597206/roland-martin-confronts-white-nationalist-richard-spencer-on-newsone-now/> [Accessed April 1, 2017].
  33. *Ibid.* minute mark 23:52.
  34. *Ibid.* minute mark 24:27.
  35. *Ibid.* minute mark 23:55
  36. *Ibid.* minute mark 23:55.
  37. *Ibid.* minute mark 24:43.
  38. *Ibid.* minute mark 23:10.
  39. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982) 5.
  40. Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (Routledge, 2004).
  41. "Jason Reza Jorjani: Arabs Committed 'White Genocide' Against 'Caucasian' Iran, and 'Parasitically Appropriated' Their Culture" in *Angrywhitemen.org*, November 26, 2016, available at <https://angrywhitemen.org/2016/11/25/jason-reza-jorjani-arabs-committed-white-genocide-against-caucasian-iran-and-parasitically-appropriated-their-culture/#more-20770> [Accessed December 7, 2017].
  42. This is especially true of SWANA communities. I elaborate the Iranian instance in "On the Chronopolitics of Skin-ego: Antiracism, Desire, and Identification in Bravo TV's *Shahs of Sunset*" in *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* Number 29 (2016), available at <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/malaklou.html> [Accessed July 13, 2017].
  43. Hortense Spillers defines "interior intersubjectivity" as the "locus at which *self-interrogation* takes place." See "'All the Things You Could Be by Now, If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother': Psychoanalysis and Race" in *Boundary 2* Volume 23, Number 3 (Autumn 1996) 84.

44. Jared Sexton qtd. in Wilderson, *Red, White and Black* 7, n.8.
45. "Hallucinatory whiteness" is Frantz Fanon's phrasing in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952).
46. See Max Siegelbaum, "Black Egyptians decry daily racism" in *AlJazeera.com*, July 19, 2013, available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/07/201371817106275826.html> [Accessed April 1, 2017]; Imogen Lambert and Nada Ramadan, "Being black in Egypt" in *The New Arab*, July 23, 2015, available at <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/features/2015/7/23/being-black-in-egypt> [Accessed April 1, 2017]; Valentina Primo, "'They call us black and filthy': Sudanese Refugees in Egypt, trapped between racism and violence" in *CairoScene*, available at <http://m.cairoscene.com/In-Depth/They-Call-Us-Black-and-Filthy-Sudanese-Refugees-in-Egypt-Trapped-Between-Racism-and-Violence> [Accessed June 10, 2017]; Susan Abulhawa, "Confronting anti-black racism in the Arab World" in *AlJazeera.com*, July 7, 2013, available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/06/201362472519107286.html> [Accessed April 1, 2017]; Rebecca Tinsley, "The Great Taboo: Arab Racism" in *The Huffington Post*, November 9, 2011, available at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rebecca-tinsley/arab-racism\\_b\\_951422.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rebecca-tinsley/arab-racism_b_951422.html) [Accessed April 1, 2017]; Ali Harb, "Arabs and African Americans: A complicated relationship between solidarity and bigotry" in *The Detroit Journalism Cooperative*, July 25, 2016, available at <http://www.detroitjournalism.org/2016/07/25/arabs-and-african-americans-a-complicated-relationship-between-solidarity-and-bigotry/> [Accessed April 1, 2017]; "Racism in Lebanon: Black is not thought beautiful" in *The Economist*, May 26, 2012, available at <http://www.economist.com/node/21555951> [Accessed April 1, 2017]; and Beeta Baghoolizadeh, "The Afro-Iranian Community: Beyond Haji Firuz Blackface, the Slave trade, and Bandari Music" in *Ajam Media Collective*, June 20, 2012, available at <https://ajammc.com/2012/06/20/the-afro-iranian-community-beyond-haji-firuz-blackface-slavery-bandari-music/> [Accessed April 1, 2017], to list just a few examples.
47. See Brendan Cole, "Migrants are being sold at open slave markets in Libya" in *International Business Times*, April 12, 2017, available at <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/migrants-are-being-sold-open-slave-markets-libya-1616492> [Accessed April 16, 2017]; Emma Graham-Harrison, "Migrants from west African being 'sold in Libyan slave markets'" in *The Guardian*, April 10, 2017, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/10/libya-public-slave-auctions-un-migration> [Accessed April 16, 2017]; and Damola Durosomo, "African Migrants Are Being Sold In 'Slave Markets' In Libya As They Try To Reach Europe" in *Okay Africa*, April 11, 2017, available at <http://www.okayafrica.com/in-brief/african-migrants-slavery-europe/> [Accessed April 16, 2017].
48. I use "bad faith" as Lewis R. Gordon does in his text by the same name, with one notable difference: mine as an Afro-pessimistic posture attempts to think the structures of antiblackness as paradigmatic. As paradigm, antiblackness functions to position and differentiate the nonblack person of color as much as it functions to entrench the singular and inalogous

wretchedness of racial blackness. Hence, while Gordon describes “bad faith” as “an effort to deny the blackness within by way of asserting the supremacy of whiteness,” I mean to think about how nonblack people of color deny their own racial differences as a way to distance themselves from the pathology of racialization, indexed by racial blackness, by aligning themselves with whiteness. See Lewis Gordon, *Bad Faith and Antiracist Racism* (Humanities Press International, 1995) 6.

We might alternatively think about such a move, in which a people—duped by the promise of alternative positionality—actively work against their own interests, as “cruel optimism.” See Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

49. Jared Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008) 75.

Ida B. Wells—black feminism—anticipated Sexton’s argument by more than one century. Franco Barchiesi elaborates that in her 1900 essay, “Lynch Law in America,” Wells “reflected on the elasticity of White violence on the black body, a violence for which no obvious political or punitive justification existed. Her conclusion was that gruesome killings of blacks served the quotidian purposes of building the White community, its symbolic order, its gendered roles, and the racial hierarchies it presided over.” See “Trump, the event, the paradigm” in *Global Project*, November 21, 2016, available at <http://www.globalproject.info/it/mondi/trump-the-event-the-paradigm/20500> [Accessed April 6, 2017].

50. This is Saidiya Hartman’s phrasing in *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007) 6. The excerpt from which I extract this phrasing reads, “Slavery [has] established a measure of man and a ranking of life and worth that has yet to be undone. If slavery persists as an issue in the political life of black America, it is not because of an antiquarian obsession with bygone days or the burden of a too-long memory, but because black lives are still imperiled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago. This is the afterlife of slavery—skewed life changes, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment.”
51. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Charles Lam Markmann trans. (New York: Grove Press, 1982) 110.
52. Frank B. Wilderson III, “Gramsci’s Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society?” in *Social Identities* Volume 9, Number 2 (2003) 233.
53. *Ibid.* 233.
54. See Fanon’s haunting realization that he is perceived by white colonialists as a beast—“A Negro, in fact!”—which incapacitates and disables him, totally and completely, making impossible even (especially) a being-forself, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Richard Philcox trans. (New York: Grove Press, 2008) 95.
55. Consider Yisrael Ben Yehudah’s video blog clip, “200 year old [sic] chair padded with SLAVE HAIR and cotton, they used Negro Jews like Sheep. NEVER FORGET” in *YouTube*, September 15, 2016, available at <https://>



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_HXH3n8NHqI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HXH3n8NHqI) [Accessed April 24, 2016] – to say nothing of the lynching souvenirs well-documented by Ida B. Wells and others.

56. Wilderson, "Gramsci's Black Marx" 233.
57. Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes* 149, original emphasis.
58. Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book" in *Diacritics* Volume 17, Number 2 (Summer 1987) 67.
59. *Ibid.* 67. Spillers elaborates, "The procedures adopted for the captive flesh demarcate a total objectification, as the entire captive community becomes a living laboratory" (68).
60. Although Hortense Spillers does not name herself as an Afro-pessimist, her black feminist writings, especially "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" (1987) offer the foundational arguments that cohere Wilderson's and Sexton's Afro-pessimistic interventions.
61. See M. Shadee Malaklou, "DAPL and the Matter/ing of Black Life" in *The Feminist Wire*, November 30, 2016, available at <http://www.thefeminist-wire.com/2016/11/dapl-mattering-black-life/> [Accessed April 14, 2017].
62. Barchiesi, "Trump, the event, the paradigm." Barchiesi explains, "In previous shifts, a substantive continuity has underpinned – after the legal end of racial slavery and under administrations of all ideological persuasions – the succession of legalized [black] segregation and disenfranchisement, mass imprisonment, the devastation of [black] families and communities through explicitly punitive social policies and, most recently in the age of Barack Obama, a dramatic surge in the killing of [blacks] by police enjoying recurrent impunity."
63. *Ibid.*
64. Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007) 112. Lorde, like Fanon, advocates not for the world to be restructured to accommodate difference, but for new "blueprints of expectations and response" that might destroy the world to instead sustain "the earth that supports us" (my emphasis). Her argument that "the future of our earth may depend upon the ability of all women to identify and develop new definitions of power and new patterns of relating across difference" siphons Fanon's call for the end of the world as we know it. See Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007) 123. Such an end/beginning might make a space-time accountable to black Others, who share more in common with earth-matter – with the land that "breathes and births and engenders life even as human society depletes it of every possible resource with which to do so" – than with human beings endowed with a recognition that begets 'inalienable' rights. See Malaklou, "DAPL and the Matter/ing of Black Life."
65. Barchiesi, "Trump, the event, the paradigm."
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*

68. It is for this reason that calls in the wake of Trump's win to restructure the electoral college as an articulation of the collective will of America's civil society, or to abolish its institution are insufficient. In its creation, the electoral college further incentivized the slave economy, since "the more slaves [a slave state] bought or bred, the more electoral votes it would receive." Wilderson (2016) argues that "an historical analysis of the electoral college illustrates how black people are political *currency*, not political *actors*." As such, it merely symptomizes and does not authorize the be(com)ing-human constituted by pulverized black flesh. See Akhil Reed Amar, "The Troubling Reason the Electoral College Exists" in *Time.com*, November 10, 2016, available at <http://time.com/4558510/electoral-college-history-slavery/> [Accessed April 3, 2017]; and Wilderson's opening remarks at a University of California, Irvine student government-sponsored debate on October 17, 2016, at which Wilderson and his debate opponent, Associate Professor of Political Science Carole Uhlaner, were asked to respond to the question, "Is Voting an Essential Element of Change in a Democracy?" Wilderson's remarks are accessible as the unpublished essay "Why I Don't Vote," available at [https://www.academia.edu/29401599/Why\\_I\\_Don\\_t\\_Vote.doc](https://www.academia.edu/29401599/Why_I_Don_t_Vote.doc) [Accessed May 5, 2017], original emphasis.
69. Sylvia Wynter, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations" in *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*, Katherine McKittrick ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015) 32–33.
70. Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press 2016) 33.
71. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection* 168.
72. As Jared Sexton exhorts, "[We] better understand white peoples' fantasies, because tomorrow they'll be legislation." Qtd. in a public lecture by Frank B. Wilderson III at Omni Commons in Oakland, California on June 1, 2015, available at <https://vimeo.com/129677829> [Accessed June 12, 2017]. See minute mark 01:06:08.
73. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection* 169.
74. Michael Harriot, "Welcome to the America Black People Have Always Lived In" in *The Root*, February 23, 2017, available at [http://www.the-root.com/welcome-to-the-america-black-people-have-always-lived-i-1792665929?utm\\_source=theroot\\_facebook&utm\\_medium=socialflow](http://www.the-root.com/welcome-to-the-america-black-people-have-always-lived-i-1792665929?utm_source=theroot_facebook&utm_medium=socialflow) [Accessed April 1, 2017]/
75. This no-where, as the site of social excommunication and psychological terror, resonates with the third-person subjectivity (the non-subjectivity) of the "sunken place" in Jordan Peele's horror-thriller "Get Out" (2017). The "sunken place" demonstrates Fanon's description of what it means/how it feels to "exist triply". See my movie review of "Get Out" in Episode 47, "Jürgen Habermas on Secularism and Democracy" of the *Always Already Podcast*, March 6, 2017, available at <https://alwaysalreadypodcast.wordpress.com/2017/03/06/habermas/> [Accessed June 12, 2017], minute mark 45:00–55:00; and Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Philcox trans. 92.

76. I make this observation on the heels of Nathan J. Robinson's report "The Clintons Had Slaves" — siphoned from his book *Superpredator: Bill Clinton's Use and Abuse of Black America* (Demilune Press, 2016) — in *Current Affairs*, June 6, 2017, available at <https://www.currentaffairs.org/2017/06/the-clintons-had-slaves> [Accessed June 12, 2017]. Robinson's argument has rocked the left, progressive corners of polite American society (i.e., civil society) but comes as no surprise. He does not let the Clinton's secret out of its bag. Hillary Clinton writes about this 'civil service' in her memoir *It Takes a Village* (Simon & Schuster, 1996).
77. See Frank Guan, "The Model Minority in the Age of Trump" in *New York Magazine*, April 13, 2017, available at [http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/04/dr-dao-and-the-model-minority-in-the-age-of-trump.html?mid=facebook\\_nymag](http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/04/dr-dao-and-the-model-minority-in-the-age-of-trump.html?mid=facebook_nymag) [Accessed April 15, 2017]; and Kat Chow, "'Model Minority' Myth Again used As A Racial Wedge Between Asians and Blacks" in Code Switch, National Public Radio, April 19, 2017, available at <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/04/19/524571669/model-minority-myth-again-used-as-a-racial-wedge-between-asians-and-blacks> [Accessed April 19, 2017].
78. Damon Young, "The Asian Doctor Dragged Off A United Airlines Flight Is The Blackest Thing That Happened This Week" in *Very Smart Brothas*, April 11, 2017, available at <http://verysmartbrothas.com/the-chinese-doctor-dragged-off-a-united-airlines-flight-is-the-blackest-thing-that-ever-happened-this-week/> [Accessed April 14, 2017], my emphasis. Media coverage of Dao's attack likewise reproduces a treatment we usually reserve for black victims of extra-legal state violence: the dredging up (the elaborating and manufacturing) of that victim's alleged criminal history. See Matthew Diebel, "United Airlines passenger David Dao was violent before removal, aviation police say" in *USA Today*, April 25, 2017, available at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2017/04/25/united-david-dao-police-report-dragging-incident/100873730/> [Accessed June 12, 2017]; and Ranier Maningding, "Exploiting Dr. Dao's Alleged Criminal Record Is A Racist Tactic We Use On Black People" in *NextShark*, April 12, 2017, available at <http://nextshark.com/dr-david-dao-criminal-record-racism-llag/> [Accessed April 14, 2017].
79. Sexton, "The Social Life of Social Death" 6.
80. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" 67.
81. Barbara Demick, Matt Pearce, and Adam Elmahrek, "Many Trump Protesters say this is the first time they've protested anything" in *Los Angeles Times*, November 11, 2016, available at <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-trump-protest-profiles-20161111-story.html> [Accessed April 11, 2017]. In a statement to Demick et al., sixteen-year-old Sophie Wang from Brooklyn explains: "We saw [Trump] making these crude comments about other people—about women, about immigrants—and we were really shocked." In Trump's America if not structurally, all nonblack persons of color are imagined in the collective unconscious as "immigrants," more to the point, and despite whatever papers or legacies they might have on hand to evidence naturalization, as *undocumented* immigrants. Despite this inconvenience, the immigrant (undocumented or otherwise)

- enjoys being-*in-time*; she is assigned (based on phenotype, accent, gait, and other visible markers) an imagined homeland to which she belongs and to which Trump and his ilk would rather she return. In contrast, black Americans are natively alienated, absent from the archive, without a name or record to indicate when and from where their African ancestors were stolen. They thus have no 'homelands' to return to. Jared Sexton explains (*pace* Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother*): "We might say to the refugee that you may lose your motherland, but you will not 'lose your mother.'" See "People-of-Color-Blindness: Notes on the Afterlife of Slavery" in *Social Text* 103 Volume 28, Number 2 (Duke University Press, 2010) 41.
82. Hari Ziyad, "Solidarity can't work without understanding that Blackness has a role in every struggle" in *The Black Youth Project*, April 18, 2017, available at <http://blackyouthproject.com/solidarity-cant-work-without-understanding-blackness-role-every-struggle/> [Accessed April 19, 2017]. See also Emma Green, "Why Do Black Activists Care About Palestine" in *The Atlantic*, available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/08/why-did-black-american-activists-start-caring-about-palestine/496088/> [Accessed April 19, 2017]; and Malaklou, "DAPL and the Matter/ing of Black Life."
83. That the multiculturalist "we" are not on the other end of an unabating state violence is likely the reason why so many of us commended the Los Angeles Police Department when it reported less than a week after Trump's win that it "will not help deport immigrants under Trump." In a November 14, 2016 statement by LAPD Chief Charlie Beck, the organization vowed "not [...] to engage in law enforcement activities solely based on somebody's immigration status." Beck elaborated, "We are not going to work in conjunction with Homeland Security on deportation efforts. That is not our job, nor will I make it our job." We would be wise to temper our reception of this news with the knowledge that the LAPD "killed more people," mostly black, "than any other agency in 2015" (recall that Ezell Ford died the previous calendar year, on August 11, 2014, from multiple gunshot wounds he sustained from LAPD officers who not only were *not* charged with his murder, but who are further seeking recompense for [reverse] 'racial discrimination' in a lawsuit against the city). See Kate Mather and Cindy Chang, "LAPD will not help deport immigrants under Trump, chief says" in *Los Angeles Times*, November 14, 2016, available at <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-los-angeles-police-immigration-20161114-story.html> [Accessed April 14, 2017]; Aaron Mendelson for Southern California Public Radio, "LAPD has killed more people than any other agency in 2015, data shows," June 1, 2015, available at <http://www.scpr.org/news/2015/06/01/52116/lapd-has-killed-more-people-than-any-other-agency/> [Accessed April 14, 2017]; Kate Mather, James Queally, and Marisa Gerber, "No charges against LAPD officers who shot and killed Ezell Ford, D.A. says" in *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 2017, available at <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-ezell-ford-no-charges-20170124-story.html> [Accessed April 14, 2017]; and Matt Hamilton, "LAPD officers who fatally shot Ezell Ford sue city, alleging racial discrimination" in *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 2016, available at <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-lapd-law->

suit-retaliation-ford-shooting-20160803-snap-story.html [Accessed April 14, 2017].

84. See Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*.
85. Hence, and as Calvin L. Warren writes, there is “no rational reason for African Americans to vote, given the historicity of voting as an ineffective practice in gaining tangible ‘objects’ for achieving redress, equality, and political subjectivity.” See “Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope” in *CR: The New Centennial Review* Volume 15, Number 1 (Spring 2015) 219–220.
86. Colin Kaepernick qtd. in Jill Martin, “Colin Kaepernick: ‘It would be hypocritical of me to vote’” in *CNN.com*, November 15, 2016, available at <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/14/sport/49ers-qb-colin-kaepernick-explains-why-he-didnt-vote/> [Accessed April 7, 2017].
87. Mine is more than (just) a structural critique of political-economic interests; I have insisted throughout this essay that the political economy of structural antiblackness is generated within an antiblack libidinal economy, in other words, owes its antagonisms to feelings and sentiments of the (human) heart and mind. Stories of Bernie Sanders’ interpersonal antiblackness abound, and we should pay attention to them as an indication of political-economic phenomena. See, for example, Josh Feldman, “Dem Rep.: Where Were the Staffers of Color for All Sanders’ Years in Congress” in *Mediaite*, February 17, 2017, available at <http://www.mediaite.com/tv/dem-rep-where-were-the-staffers-of-color-for-all-sanders-years-in-congress/> [Accessed June 12, 2017]; and Tamerra Griffin, “Sanders’ Former Press Secretary Says She Experienced Racism On The Trail” in *BuzzFeed*, July 30, 2016, available at [https://www.buzzfeed.com/tamerragriffin/symone-sanders-discusses-racism?utm\\_term=.ikMkQvyg#.qswZNd6r](https://www.buzzfeed.com/tamerragriffin/symone-sanders-discusses-racism?utm_term=.ikMkQvyg#.qswZNd6r) [Accessed June 12, 2017].
88. See Wilderson, “Afro-pessimism and the End of Redemption.”
89. Wilderson, “Why I Don’t Vote,” my emphasis.
90. See Angela Davis, “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves” in *The Massachusetts Review* Volume 13, Number 1/2 (Winter – Spring 1972) 81–100.  
 It would appear that this retrenchment has already commenced—in the form of an attack on the Black Lives Matter movement. See Darren Sands, “What Happened to Black Lives Matter?” in *Buzzfeed*, June 21, 2017, available at [https://www.buzzfeed.com/darrensands/what-happened-to-black-lives-matter?utm\\_term=.yrA2NvA7#.qvRVaG12](https://www.buzzfeed.com/darrensands/what-happened-to-black-lives-matter?utm_term=.yrA2NvA7#.qvRVaG12) [n.d.]; and the organization’s response, “The Movement for Black Lives responds to recent claims of a fractured coalition” in *Mic*, June 23, 2017, available at <https://mic.com/articles/180730/the-movement-for-black-lives-responds-to-recent-claims-of-a-fractured-coalition#.Tx6Xgn4TY> [n.d.].
91. Tongo Eisen-Martin for Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, “We Charge Genocide Again! A Curriculum for *Operation Ghetto Storm: Report on the 2012 Extrajudicial Killings of 313 Black People by Police, Security Guards and Vigilantes*,” available at <https://mxgm.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/we-charge-genocide-FINAL.pdf> [Accessed April 14, 2017].

92. Portions of this section first appeared in *Chronopolitical Assemblages: Race/ism, Desire, and Identification in Iranian Contexts* (ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2016) by Maryam Shadee Malaklou.
93. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Philcox trans. xvi.
94. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, J. Sibree trans. (New York: Dover Publications, 1956) 29.
95. Andrew L. Yarrow, "Why French Presidential Candidate Emmanuel Macron Could Save Western Democracy" in *Washington Monthly*, March 2, 2017, available at <http://washingtonmonthly.com/2017/03/02/why-french-presidential-candidate-emmanuel-macron-could-save-western-democracy/> [n.d.].
96. Macron bemoans, "The challenge of Africa is...civilizational. ...Failing states, complex democratic transitions, the demographic transition." He adds that Africa's is the problem of the black family at the same time as it is the problem of failing governmentality, stating, "One of the essential challenges of Africa ... is that in some countries today seven or eight children [are] born to each woman." See Lizzie Dearden, "Emmanuel Macron claims Africa held back by 'civilisational' [sic] problems and women having 'seven or eight children'" in *The Independent*, July 12, 2017, available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/emmanuel-macron-africa-development-civilisation-problems-women-seven-eight-children-colonialism-a7835586.html> [Accessed July 13, 2017].
97. "Touchstone of cohesion" is Frank B. Wilderson III's phrasing in *Red, White and Black* 43, 48, 153, 154, 167, 169, 172, 183, 204, 232, 256.
98. Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, "Losing Manhood: Animality and Plasticity in the (Neo)Slave Narrative" in *Qui Parle* Volume 25, Numbers 1&2 (Fall/Winter 2016) 96.
99. This is Frank Wilderson's genealogy. Wilderson writes, "Africans went into the ships and came out as Blacks. ...This violence which turns a body into flesh, ripped apart literally and imaginatively, destroys the possibility of ontology because it positions the Black in an infinite and indeterminately horrifying and open vulnerability, an object made available (which is to say fungible) for any subject. As such, 'the black as no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man' or, more precisely, in the eyes of Humanity." See *Red, White and Black* 38.
100. As Che Gossett remarks, "We can recognize this anti-black... 'grammar of animality' in Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, in which Africa is symbolized as outside of history, logos and telos, and therefore as primitive, barbaric and bestial." See "Blackness, Animality, and the Unsovereign" in *Verso Books*, September 8, 2015, available at <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/2228-che-gossett-blackness-animality-and-the-unsovereign> [n.d.].
101. Brittney Cooper, "The racial politics of time" for TEDWomen 2016, October 2016, available at [https://www.ted.com/talks/brittney\\_cooper\\_the\\_racial\\_politics\\_of\\_time#t-684608](https://www.ted.com/talks/brittney_cooper_the_racial_politics_of_time#t-684608) [Accessed April 23, 2017], minute mark 10:29.
102. *Ibid.*, minute mark 10:25.



103. Ibid., minute mark 11:09.
104. Sexton, "The Social Life of Social Death."
105. Cooper, "The racial politics of time," minute mark 11:20.
106. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Constance Farrington trans. (New York: Grove Press, 1963) 183.
107. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother* 68.
108. Sharpe, *In the Wake*.
109. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother* 6.
110. Sharpe, *In the Wake* 13.
111. Jackson "Losing Manhood" 112.
112. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Philcox trans. 13. Sylvia Wynter makes a similar argument in her 935-page unpublished manuscript *Black Metamorphosis: New Natives in a New World* (1970s), archived at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in the New York Public Library, wherein she writes, "From the beginning, it would be the 'Negroes' who would be consigned to the pre-Darwinian last link in the [Great] Chain of Being—to the 'missing link' position, therefore between rational humans and irrational animals." Wynter's interlocution elaborates Fanon's; hers reminds us that the exclusion of racially black persons from the protocols and protections of *human* being predates the introduction of secular time as that cosmology that engenders a metaphysics of Man (i.e., preceded secular time as Messianic time).
113. Jackson "Losing Manhood" 124.
114. Patricia Purtschert, "On the limit of spirit: Hegel's racism revisited" in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* Volume 36, Number 9 (2010) 1039 – 1051.
115. Hegel, *Philosophy of History* 93.
116. Ibid. 93, my emphasis.
117. Ibid. 99.
118. The Muslim Ban, in effect January 27, 2017 through March 16, 2017, was prompted by (and references) Executive Order 13769, titled Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, which banned persons from Muslim-majority countries (specifically, Libya, Sudan, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, and Somalia) from entering the US It was replaced on March 6, 2017 with Executive Order 13780, titled Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, which Trump describes as a "watered down, politically correct version" of the original order. The Supreme Court has allowed some of the ban to go into effect until it hears consolidated cases about it in Fall 2017. See Eugene Scott and Ariane de Vogue, "Trump says he's calling it a 'travel ban'" in *CNN.com*, June 5, 2017, available at <http://www.cnn.com/2017/06/05/politics/trump-travel-ban-courts/index.html> [Accessed June 9, 2017]; Michael D. Shear and Adam Liptak, Supreme Court Takes Up Travel Ban Case, and Allows Parts to Go Ahead" in *The New York Times*, June 26, 2017, available online <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/26/us/politics/supreme-court-trump-travel-ban-case.html> [Accessed August 18, 2017]; and Alicia Parlapiano and Anjali Singhvi, "The Supreme Court Partially Allowed

- Trump's Travel Ban. Who Is Still Barred?" in *The New York Times*, July 19, 2017, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/06/29/us/politics/supreme-court-trump-travel-ban.html> [Accessed August 18, 2017].
119. Hegel, *Philosophy of History* 99.
120. "Roland Martin Confronts White Nationalist" minute mark 00:50, emphasis deduced from tone.
121. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Philcox trans. 100. Fanon writes, "At the start of my history that others have fabricated for me, the pedestal of cannibalism was given pride of place so that I wouldn't forget. They inscribed on my chromosomes certain genes of various thickness representing cannibalism. ... Two centuries ago, I was lost to humanity; I was a slave forever. And then along came a group of men and declared that enough was enough. My tenacity did the rest; I was rescued from the civilizing deluge. I moved forward. Too late. Everything had been predicated, discovered, proved, and exploited. My shaky hands grasped at nothing; the resources had been exhausted. Too late!"
122. Qtd. in Thomas Hill Green and Thomas Hodge Grose, *The Philosophical Works of David Hume* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1882) 253.
123. Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, John T. Goldthwait trans. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) 111.
124. This is Frank B. Wilderson III's phrasing. In context, Wilderson uses "unflinching paradigmatic analysis" to describe Assata Shakura's attorney and aunt Evelyn Williams' "paramilitary courtroom strategies." See "The Vengeance of Vertigo: Aphasia and Abjection in the Political Trials of Black Insurgents" in *InTensions* Number 5 (Fall/Winter 2011) 11, 10.
125. Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" in *Home Girls, A Black Feminist Anthology*, Barbara Smith ed. (New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, Inc., 1983), available at <http://circuitous.org/scraps/combahee.html> [Accessed April 3, 2017].
126. Alexis Pauline Gumbs, "'We Can Learn to Mother Ourselves': A Dialogically Produced Audience and Black Feminist Publishing 1979 to the 'Present'" in *Gender Forum* Number 22 (2008), available at [http://www.cihuatl.pueg.unam.mx/pinakes/userdocs/assusr/A397/A397\\_643.pdf](http://www.cihuatl.pueg.unam.mx/pinakes/userdocs/assusr/A397/A397_643.pdf) [Accessed May 10, 2017]. See also Gumbs' doctoral dissertation, *We Can Learn to Mother Ourselves: The Queer Survival of Black Feminism 1968-1996* (Durham: Duke University, 2010).
127. See Saidiya V. Hartman and Frank B. Wilderson III, "The Position of the Unthought" in *Qui Parle* Volume 13, Number 2 (Spring/Summer 2003) 183-201.
128. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" 67.
129. *Ibid.* 67, original emphasis.
130. Hortense Spillers, "Interstices: A Small Drama of Words" in *Red, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture* (University of Chicago Press, 2003) 156, original emphasis.

131. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" 68.
132. Lewis R. Gordon, *Her Majesty's Other Children: Sketches of Racism from a Neocolonial Age* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997) 63.
133. Wilderson, "Gramsci's Black Marx" 236.
134. Ibid. 236, my emphasis.
135. Ibid. 236, original emphasis.
136. Ibid. 236.
137. Frank B. Wilderson III qtd. in Shannon Walsh, "Afro-pessimism and Friendship in South Africa: An Interview with Frank B. Wilderson III" in *Ties that Bind: Race and the Politics of Friendship in South Africa*, Shannon Walsh and John Soske, eds. (Wits University Press, 2016), original emphasis.
138. Lorde, "The Master's Tools".
139. Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes* 149, original emphasis.
140. Alexis Pauline Gumbs qtd. in Walidah Imarisha et al., "The Fictions and Futures of Transformative Justice: A conversation with the authors of *Octavia's Brood*" in *The New Inquiry*, April 20, 2017, available at <https://thenewinquiry.com/the-fictions-and-futures-of-transformative-justice/> [Accessed April 22, 2017].
141. Gordon, *Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism* 128. Gordon elaborates, "Consider the white man. Being pure Presence, he is equated with manliness *in toto*. The manly, or masculine, is in fact a figure of denial, a being who attempts to close all its holes and become pure, sealed flesh in search of holes. From the perspective of such a being, all holes are elsewhere; he doesn't even have an anus; when he kisses, nothing enters his mouth—he enters the Other's. In his presence, the black becomes a chasm to fill. But the black 'man' is a *hole*. ...[The penis] protrudes. It pretends not to be a hole, but instead, a filler-of-holes. ...As pure Presence, masculinity is an ideal form of whiteness with its own gradations; the less of a hole one 'is,' the more masculine one is; the less dark, the more white. The black man would therefore have the propensity to become slimy if it were not for the fact that he embodies femininity even more than the white woman. His skin, his eyes, his nose, his ears, his mouth, his anus, his penis ooze out his femininity like blood from a splattered body. He faces the possibility of denying his feminine situation: a black man in the presence of whiteness stands as a hole to be filled; he stands to the white man in a homoerotic situation and to the white woman in a heterosexual erotic situation with a homoerotic twist; she becomes the white/male that fills his blackness/femininity" (127).
142. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" 67.
143. Kara Keeling, "Looking for M—Queer Temporality, Black Political Possibility, and Poetry from the Future" in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* Volume 15, Number 4 (2009) 567.
144. Spillers, "Interstices: A Small Drama of Words" 156.
145. Hartman, "The Position of the Unthought" 187.

146. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louise Bonaparte* qtd. in Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Markmann trans. 223.
147. Keeling, "Looking for M" 567.
148. See Ann Menzel's reading of Spillers' "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" in her essay, "Maternal Generativity in the Afterlife of Slavery," forthcoming in *Contemporary Political Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan).
149. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" in *Illuminations*, Harry Zohn trans. (New York: Schocken Books, 1968) 262, Thesis XVII.
150. Ibid. 263, Thesis XVIII A.
151. Jared Sexton similarly describes racial blackness as "a form of prenatal animation—'stuff floating'...in amniotic fluid somewhere between the embryonic and the fetal, between swelling and sucking, 'a terrifying excess which, although it negates what we understand as 'humanity,' is inherent to being-human.'" See "Unbearable Blackness" in *Cultural Critique* Number 90 (Spring 2015) 171.
152. Christina Sharpe, "Black Studies: In the Wake" in *The Black Scholar* Volume 44, Number 2 (Summer 2014) 63.
153. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" 80, original emphasis.
154. Menzel, "Maternal Generativity in the Afterlife of Slavery."
155. Rizvana Bradley, "Living in the Absence of a Body: The (Sus)Stain of Black Female (W)holeness" in *Rhizomes: Culture Studies in Emerging Knowledge* Number 29 (2016), available at <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/bradley/index.html> [Accessed May 10, 2017]. Bradley enumerates *black (w)holeness* as "an augmentation as well as a subtraction from the black hole" insofar as "black (w)holeness accomplishes a redoubling of the black hole in its supplementary abstraction from any concept of origin, space, and time." Her argument that "the negative space blackness is constantly imagined and re-imagined...to activate and occupy" is the "discursive order reduced to zero" invokes Spillers'-cum-Afro-pessimism's designation of the black (feminine) as the human world's "zero degree of social conceptualization." Further, Bradley's argument that the figure of the black feminine "emerges on the other side of the historical transaction" elaborates my claim that the chronopolitical order of Man makes race/ist differences out of human-cum-Historical ones. See Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" 67.
156. Toni Morrison, "What the Black Woman Thinks About Women's Lib" in *The New York Times*, August 22, 1971, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/1971/08/22/archives/what-the-black-woman-thinks-about-womens-lib-the-black-woman-and.html?mcubz=1> [Accessed June 9, 2017].