

University of Vermont

UVM ScholarWorks

Graduate College Dissertations and Theses

Dissertations and Theses

2023

Race, Fantasy & Enjoyment

Edwin Owusu

University of Vermont

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/graddis>



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Owusu, Edwin, "Race, Fantasy & Enjoyment" (2023). *Graduate College Dissertations and Theses*. 1698.
<https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/graddis/1698>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Dissertations and Theses at UVM ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate College Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of UVM ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact schwrrks@uvm.edu.

RACE, FANTASY & ENJOYMENT

A Thesis Presented

by

Edwin Owusu

to

The Faculty of the Graduate College

of

The University of Vermont

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
Specializing in English

May, 2023

Defense Date: March 29, 2023
Thesis Examination Committee:

Todd McGowan, Ph.D., Advisor
Ingrid L. Nelson, Ph.D., Chairperson
Helen C. Scott, Ph.D.
Cynthia J. Forehand, Ph.D., Dean of the Graduate College

ABSTRACT

Why has the institution of race remained resilient given what we know about its detrimental impacts? Why do we enjoy race and who has access to that enjoyment? Is black trauma endemic to this enjoyment and can blackness be divorced from it? I hypothesize that we live in an episteme that has transitioned from physiological need to surplus enjoyment. This enjoyment has allowed humans to conceptualize their relations beyond the physical and necessary. Racial enjoyment is psychical because it involves how we enjoy and not how we know (enjoyment v. knowledge). There is a collective investment in race that subtends its primacy. The conservative right winger who is a nationalist is likely to dislike the racial other for easily recognizable tropes and stereotypes. In this way, their relationship to race is easier to parse. My intervention is in the white liberal framework and imaginary, where social activists are embedded in the work. My critique of the liberal left centers their racial enjoyment of blackness as l'objet petit a along the same spectrum as the regressive right. Through a fetishistic disavowal, the white liberal can experience blackness in variety, and vicinity without disrupting the violence that terrorizes black life.

This essay will be a critical exploration through a psychoanalytic framework in the Lacanian tradition. My methodology will be ethnographic and interdisciplinary, calling on social, cultural, and political commentary. Sheldon George and Derek Hook have earlier foundational work in this tradition arguing that enjoyment and its perceived theft create kindling for the violence of racial othering. It is not just that the other enjoys, but they enjoy something that prohibits my ability to actualize full enjoyment. The sanction of targeted violence is coded in blackness according to Afropessimist thought. Even at a slightly less extreme level of critique, Fanon and some Marxists still acknowledge blackness is not equated with nor afforded full humanity. The proliferation of images of black death and violability permeate the media sphere, yet blackness is culture, the world over. It is what is hip. And more than ever, the question would you want to be black seems attractive to more nonblacks. The fantasy of race is that it allows the nonblack subject an approximation to black subjectivity that is predicated on abstraction from it. This ability to enjoy the nonbelonging of the racialized other and call that nonbelonging into question by policing the boundaries of what is normative, and deviant create the conditions for acceptance into white Western society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would not be where I am today without my mother whose belief and support kept me sustained at times when I didn't even know I needed it. My academic journey does not happen without the love for debate and research instilled in me by the late Dr. Alfred "Tuna" Snider, the Director of Forensics at the University of Vermont. Meeting this man in high school changed my trajectory and forever gave me a passion for "speaking truth to power." My debate coaches turned lifelong friends and colleagues Justin and Helen Morgan-Parmett are forever in my favor. You convinced me to go to graduate school and think about the future beyond my bachelors and looking back on the journey now, I'm surprised at how quickly it all went by. Coming back to school seemed daunting and rife with opportunities to fail, but my siblings Isaac and Lydia carried me along and kept a stern eye on my progress. We did this together as a family and I am honored to continue our legacy. I would like to give my brother Isaac special acknowledgement for his part in my success. As the "big-little" brother, you have been an inspiration to me in how to work hard and persevere. Seeing you go through life with vision gives me wind in my sails and I am proud to do this for both of us. Burke, I am thankful for your life and health. If you were unable to care for our children the way you do, I would not be able to pursue this degree. Joseph and Justice, my sons, I do this as a part of the process of teaching you that life is intermittent and recuperative. You can get up, dust yourself off and try

again. I once failed out of the very institution from which I am now seeking to be conferred. Special thanks to the debaters on the Lawrence Debate Union who helped me workshop some of these ideas during van rides to tournaments, your labor is not forgotten. Pierre Morton, thank you for your continued support, I have found a new family in you. Finally, thank you to my topic committee. Professor Ingrid Nelson, your work has helped me think through subjectivity and place, but more importantly, the way you teach helped me better understand the relationship between praxis and theory. My graduate advisor Helen Scott has been the steward I needed to see me through the finish line. A constant presence as we moved through the process, I want to thank you for your guidance. Finally, Professor Todd McGowan, my topic advisor, who's work I was reading as a high school debater with no foundational understanding of the theories at the time. Life has come full circle and I am esteemed to call you a colleague. Thank you for your kind words, getting to work with you these past couple of years has been a real joy and highlight of my academic career.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: FANTASY OBJECTS.....	4
CHAPTER 3: ON RACE MATTERS	13
CHAPTER 4: COLLECTIVE ENJOYMENT	43
WORKS CITED	56

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

We live in a world that is determined by our desire. As human beings and seeking subjects, we are incomplete from the moment of birth where our very utterances give rise to a lack. A need, a void, that is ever present and coterminous. Our inability to fully grapple with our own identity has created trauma that manifests in our relations to others through fantasy. Not only does fantasy structure our desire, but it also provides respite from the “vanishing point of desire”. Specifically, racial others have sustained an onslaught that remains resistant and even thriving in this current climate because they are the object cause of societal fantasy. Fantasy structures our desires through enjoyment and attempts to vehemently protect the inner psyche of whites from encountering the trauma of existence.

Fantasy structures our enjoyment to see threats and otherize. Because we are in the thralls of the fantasy object (which we imagine will lead to complete satisfaction), the subject is never encountering the real kernel of truth: that incompleteness is the most consistent and permanent relation we have to our understanding of self. The obstacle or objet a is key to creating the fantasy so the illusion of completion appears, and here the racial other appears through the medium of chattel slavery. The racist fantasy allows enjoyment that is non-threatening to the dominant psyche and social structure. Beyond that, the fantasy moves to reaffirm such structures in their perceived validity. Fantasies are resistant to greater knowledge because they concern how people enjoy rather than how they know (McGowan 20). This analysis best answers questions of why human beings are yet to be done with race and racism.

The practice of racism reproduces the phenomenon of race in an age where we do not have the cultural dexterity to move toward true post-racial dialogue. “Racecraft” is the practice of making race legible and produces the illusion of race, cementing its ubiquity and effects on both black and white workers who are exploited by the American capitalist machine, cloaking the much-needed issue of tackling the growing inequality within America. Translation of racism into race makes violence on the black body possible and becomes the spectacle. According to Barbara and Karen Fields, “in a social context characterized by racecraft, causal relationships are typically stated incorrectly. Brown was not shot because he was black. He is black because he was shot” (Fields & Fields 62). This spectacle hides the act of racism even when it exposes it, so that manifestations of resistance are commodified in the very matrix it attempts to expose.

The culture of racial enjoyment employs an element of violence since it engages with the other to understand self. Both are incomplete and irreconcilable, leaving the subject in frustration because the enjoyment that one wishes to have been never complete but fleeting. But the enjoyment that one sees the other have is also envied and a source of disdain; they must be stealing some amount of enjoyment from us and at the same time indulging in enjoyment that we are not privy to (Hook 38). Racism engenders the “thrill of hate” involving an element of psychic disavowal that makes violence possible. This feeling that the other is robbing us of something is founded on the irrationality of lack.

Libidinal objects hold a certain value to the individual that organizes the fantasy to place the libidinal treasure as the innermost special thing that makes us, us. The cut into the body becomes the signifier of this necessary violence. The schism between the

self and other is an opportunity for internal validation of one's lack as non-unique. This realization bears consequence when contrasted with the need to protect one's libidinal treasure. Meting out violence in response to trauma that strikes at the heart of our structured fantasy thus becomes par for the course.

In exploring this relationship between violence and the racial other, Christina Sharpe describes the condition of blackness as akin to a state of "wakeness." An abjection from humanness that is never able to grasp the sublime object (Sharpe 126). What is gained by this type of racial othering is beyond the tangible and material. In considering how such thinking could become normative and foster structures like apartheid, Derek Hook remarks that the "reward of this type of ideology is also the "reward of ideology itself" (Hook 140). That is, a cyclical loop that is neither positive nor negative by design but structured to reflect whatever is safest for the individual psyche, the irony being that this fantasy is at the same time collective, providing a duplicity of enjoyment. Society organizes itself through discrimination about individuals' modes of enjoyment.

CHAPTER 2: FANTASY OBJECTS

The subject according to Jacques Lacan is psychically split from self, ever seeking completion (Lacan). Language is the mediator between the subject and the world from which it makes meaning. This means that the subject is born of and into lack. In this sense, meaning making happens through a relationship to the other. Our unconscious situates our being in our relationship to self or a creation of the subject. But the fantastical object remains illusory (whatever will lead to complete satisfaction).

The obstacle is key to the creation of the fantasy to make visible the illusion of completion. As such, the racist fantasy creates an avenue for members of the society to find surplus enjoyment. It signals a direction that doesn't threaten the structure of the society but instead affirms it. Fantasies are resistant to greater knowledge because they concern how people enjoy rather than how they know. But the supreme irony of racism is that it enables the racist to enjoy through the racialized other, even while it keeps this other in a position of nonrecognition. Fantasy is structured through desire to attain what you imagine to be the other's enjoyment.

The Racial Other

The faux distinction between white enlightened subjects as rational, civilized & moral, and enslaved Africans as primitive, savage and cognitively deficient is key to understanding racial enjoyment. All subjects seek to enjoy, but to be part of civil society, the white subject had to first disavow behaviors that were seen as backwards and not toward the betterment of a civil society. This involved a sacrifice of enjoyment by the

individual of their primal instincts for nationalist sentiment. As immoral beings who knew not how to behave appropriately, slaves consequently were perceived to be enjoying something outside the bounds of the political order of society that tied together its collective fabric. Violence was desirable and justified as necessary because that behavior had to be curbed at the level of national security but also as an affront to the individual white subject because the collective fantasy is that if the racial other is neutralized, then the transgression will cease.

There is the fundamental view that the racial other is both different and dangerous, what Wilderson calls negrophobia. This phobic object is the objet a of the white racial subject's desire insofar as its capture is the fantasy of white supremacy and antiblackness alike. Freud reveals in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that desiring subjects do not seek pleasure but rather enjoyment. Enjoyment is the death drive's motioning of the subject toward the journey, not the destination of the fantasy. And enjoyment in this sense is not what we typically imagine, but rather one that is tied to suffering and incompleteness as a repetitive cycle. As a vestige of slavery, racism is persistent because it allows for the same type of racial enjoyment even if, on paper, African Americans are no longer enslaved. White supremacists and conservatives have been fed a narrative demonizing and criminalizing the racial other and have generational muscle memory of a fake, genocidal superiority that continues to inform much of their politics and behavior.

The irony is that white liberals who profess allyship also define their subjectivity in predation to blackness and in relation to white supremacy. The problem of race is not one of knowing but enjoying precisely because those who garnered the most enjoyment

from it at the onset of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade hundreds of years ago continue to do so today. The white liberal subject has an investment in racial capitalism and white supremacy because they benefit both in personal enjoyment and through the other's enjoyment. Social movements continue to tout the universality of oppression and of self-determination but without first uprooting the system that makes violence possible and permanent, coalition politics and white liberal framing remain synecdoche.

Republicans and Democrats have been quarreling over the same questions for generations, yet the parameters of the game have not been met with enough force to create an equitable society, however one defines it. Materialists would say this is not for a lack of trying, and it is true that many have committed their lives, and some lost it in pursuit of human and civil rights. These martyrs, witting or accidental, did not die in vain, but the coordinates of white supremacy remain largely unchallenged because white liberals enjoy performativity and dogma. Their subject position in relation to blackness under white supremacy provides them something akin to the settler move to innocence. While outwardly disavowing the racist and genocidal violence of America's history, they also enjoy the comforts that its legacy has bestowed in land, wealth, access, and plenary power.

Allies of the racial other may believe they do not wish violence on that other, but they have always accepted it as part of doing business in the American enterprise where slaves were once considered three-fifths of a human being. Their enjoyment of this collective racial fantasy relies on this fetishistic disavowal of the rituals of white supremacy they attempt to distance themselves from because in doing, they can claim to

be about and for change. What that change looks like is programmed through the white gaze and centers Eurocentrism. To move forward, we must deconstruct the enjoyment of race and its categorical imperative. White liberals must challenge their understanding of race as a material byproduct of oppression and shift to a more surgical inquiry into the convergence of enjoyment and power, and how they impact both the physical and psychical lives of black people.

Alienation & Meaning

Human subjects are alienated from a sense of self since the excess of language defies our understanding and obfuscates comprehension. There is always something that language cannot capture, and this excess creates the lack of which the subject's being and lack are born. The subject attempts to reject this being since it cannot make sense of it, but its unconscious has an incessant need to reproduce and call on that being in hopes of gaining a full understanding of self. The white racial subject masks their lack in representations of the racial other from which they hope to derive both meaning and jouissance (which will henceforth be synonymous with enjoyment). There can be no effective understanding of the mechanisms at play that reduce blackness to object without critique of the modes of enjoyment.

In the search for self, a pastiche of information is gathered through communicative faculties and the ability to exert our will to form judgements about the world. Taken within the context of slavery, we can further dissect the psychical life of white racial subjects like the slave master who was supportive of the institution and saw

it as an extension of their supremacy, both as rational being and in alleged superiority.

Orlando Patterson properly concludes and situates slavery as social death for blacks:

“What the captive or condemned person lost was the master's gain. The real sweetness of mastery for the slaveholder lay not immediately in profit, but in the lightening of the soul that comes with the realization that at one's feet is another human creature who lives and breathes only for oneself, as a surrogate for one's power, as a living embodiment of one's manhood and honor (Patterson 78).

Surrogacy implies not only that one can project that power onto the other, but even more explicitly, that that other has no agency. Blackness has no neutrality because the lack of agency under white supremacy marks black bodies as projected surrogates for white anxieties even after the abolition of chattel slavery. We can be made hyper visible or effaced depending on who is at the pulpit and seldom is it done in spaces that could be considered safe for our being. It goes without saying that slaves were nonconsenting victims of kidnap, rape and torture who were made to work to survive. Nonetheless, that slaves were used in the toiling of land that was stolen from indigenous people of North and Latin America serves as an example that surrogate violence can be expropriated and marks blackness as complicit in the genocide that Native populations endure. The compounding psychological effect of these crises is why Sheldon George states that slaves were very possibly the first modern subjects, ones who dealt with profound alienation and fragmentation (George 269). The collective investment in the institution ordered the national politics into modalities allowing all nonblacks to extract some level of humanity and find a place in civil society.

Non-Belonging & The Other's Enjoyment

Enslaved persons appear first as an objet a for the white imaginary through captivity. The behavioral tendencies of revolters and other nonconformists gave rise to another level of contention, transgression. Through the act of transgression, they were enjoying in a way that their colonial masters could not and in draconian fashion, were hunted, re-enslaved or often killed. The Real enjoyment of nonbelonging is available to everyone (Lacan Seminar XI). It is only in the racist fantasy that racial others have a monopoly on nonbelonging. As such, black people as a racialized body become violable. The wake of this violation and violence situates black as an excluded category and the site of social death. Death being outside the system of representation means there is a certain amount of enjoyment because of the proximity of the other/black to death allowing the subject to enjoy an extreme experience. But the spectacle of racism hides the act of race even if it exposes that racism. Even when we are outraged, we are missing the structure.

The collective enjoyment of the racial other is not limited to racists. Well-meaning liberal also wants to approximate something more sophisticated but with the same structure of desire. The current epoch has made whiteness off-trend culturally, dubious morally and tenuous politically. Republicans work on strategies to reach an ever-increasing demographic of disillusioned nationalists whose enjoyment of the racial other has undergone little change since it involves much of the same elements present during chattel slavery and the Jim Crow era. Today, the proliferation of images of black death and violation have reached every corner of the globe, yet the cycle repeats. Democrats and liberals alike who profess allyship will readily admit that they have been at this for

generations, yet black Americans continue to get poorer and white supremacist architects of American textbooks alter or refuse to publish basic facts about human history. Maybe precisely because black has never been afforded the subjectivity of human.

How can it be the case that allies are fighting for equity yet are party to the governments and municipalities that make these decisions possible? How can it be that those who enjoy black suffering are able to continuously be successful in thwarting any efforts toward change that don't require marches and mottos. It is not because their numbers are deafening or their organizational power so mighty a behemoth that it cannot be tamed. It is because racism is about enjoyment and even those who distance themselves from violence on black bodies profit from it. The careers of countless liberals have been borne on promises broken to minority constituents about the dawning of a new day that never comes. Only in America could the party that wanted to keep slavery on the books be the same one courting and receiving the lion's share of minority votes.

The unconscious language of white liberals has a similar structure of desire towards the racialized other as conservatives and participates in the same culture of enjoyment. The racist fantasy is a response to the problem of modernity which says everyone is equal. Racism becomes a way to fight the trauma of universal equality, giving the racist fantasy and objet a in the black body. And this loop feeds itself: whites who are disillusioned with their life can find community in conservative chatrooms that are echo chambers of hate and liberals who want to distance themselves from this behavior can outwardly disavow it while never having to confront their own psychological enjoyment of the racial other.

Materially, they can show up to rallies, donate money, and follow social justice manuals. But the divestment is unconscious when confronted with questions of who is human and deserving of everything that means. If white allies truly considered blacks equal, there would be no stopping the groundswell that would impel us toward racial equity. But the law is the law, rules are rules, money is money, things take time, life is life and so on. All these institutions have been prefixed by white supremacy and overdetermine black life and death. Black apportionment in civil society has always been conditional because it allows white subjects to negotiate their own position, as both always outside and simultaneously centered.

Capitalism & Race

Materialists largely concern themselves with the physical output of power relations and how these manifestations deny or privilege certain people. The problem with this analysis is that it cannot properly address the irreducible need to oppress or inflict violence even when it will yield no material impact on the bottom line to gain. The gratuitous violence of slavery is constitutive of capitalism and vital to its function. The excess of surplus labor that makes capital accumulation possible is homologous to the excess of enjoyment attached to blackness that makes it desirable and its capture possible (Lacan, *Seminar XVI*). Capital thrives on surplus value that is tied to surplus enjoyment because we are working for more than we need. Goods and services cannot be exchanged for equal value, so at one level, capital relies on an unequal bargain.

This surplus labor that produces surplus value is the objet a of capitalism to never be captured. Capitalist enjoyment can never bring full satisfaction because the amount of capital required is unquantifiable and amorphous. Nonetheless, the extraction of human labor is key to the capitalist endeavor and mediates the relationship to surplus value. This human labor is also a key element in translating surplus value to surplus enjoyment. Lacan describes the capitalist discourse (fifth discourse) as based on semblances of representation that desire material accumulation of and through the fetish object (Vighi 424). Language as we have discussed thus far refers to the set of communicative faculties made up of signifiers.

Discourse reaches beyond this formalistic structure and into political, social, cultural, and economic spheres of existence. This accumulation linked to the objet a is unquantifiable because capital accumulation promises ever increasing value. Capital discourse is an attempt to bridge the subject/other divide, and yet surplus value reveals the sleight of hand as well as capitalist discourse's inability to yield satisfaction. Capitalism reinforces the object of desire as positive value and cements the fetish through the commodity form. Capitalism does not produce any real enjoyment since individual subjects are cogs in the wheel, the best we have are approximations and glimpses of fleeting joy and happiness (DeClercq 79). Calculability qua capitalism, technology and other cultural advancements have given us DNA, statistical data, media capture and other evidence of racial bias, black violation, and loss. The same calculability that has made market profit, speculation, and capital accumulation possible. This dyad cuts at the truth of capitalism's promise of full satisfaction in an era of universality.

CHAPTER 3: ON RACE MATTERS

The victors are the architects of history and as such race is temporal. Enlightenment thinking centered rational, Western scientific methodology as the protocol for legibility and meaning making. Chattel slavery was well underway during the Enlightenment era, and the related ideology is saturated with racialization conjuring the civil individual through rationality which privileged a Eurocentric methodology and discarded nonwestern, nonwhite peoples. Humanness was scaled to intentionally relegate blackness to the bottom, making racial hierarchies a constitutive and concomitant element of time/space. This intentionality congealed with the calculability of capitalism made racism more potent, assigning value and currency to the black body.

The arc of time is an aspiration towards progress, and it is over-deterministic of blackness that is deemed pathological. White racial identity is not a static category, but one marked by what it is not, the greatest part of which is blackness. Both white and black bodies are defined in relation to a racialized world, but whites benefit from the protection of institutional forces that mark their bodies as safe and inviolable—and often infallible. Progress is key to liberal conceptions of time that make violence acceptable in promise of a future that is securitized. Black criminality and deviance must be ever present to preserve the vision of futurity in the white imaginary (Dillon 40). But if the state promotes a propagandized version of the future that is founded on antiblackness, then it is also actively engaging the replication of that violent present in contrast to the safe future it aspires to. Said more plainly, it is not just that violence is acceptable, but it

is acceptable in precisely the degree, severity, and frequency we see it because it remains desirable to nonblacks.

The struggle for black liberation has created a crisis of representation as we continue to wrestle with our understandings of, and relationships to, race. The proliferation of images of black death over the past decade highlights the need for a discourse that identifies the plateau of progressivism regarding race and civil rights. In grappling with black life, death, and blackness proper, Frank Wilderson theorizes that blackness is coterminous with slaveness. In a way, black trauma is akin to pornography for the masses across the political spectrum and what it means to be human is defined by black exclusion and social death marking slavery as permanent. According to Joel Olson “White identity is marked by those who are already apart of the white club. A white person is called white by other whites. The antithesis of white is not-white, a category of subordination that has been occupied by v arduous peoples and social identities throughout American history (16). This condition is necessary for the functioning of society and blackness, in this context, can be identified by the bonds of solidarity formed in a cultural context around the violence that links diasporic Africans.

The progressive model of time necessarily employs the racial fantasy as a constitutive element that criminalizes the black body: one that transgresses what is allowed to be enjoyed but also envied for what it enjoys. Alliance and coalition building then, should be understood as an amalgam of misaligned interests ordered through the same racialized, capitalist, and white supremacist constructions that permeate the other parts of American life. Society buys our investment in the future by promising that it will

be better, safer, richer, and more progressive. The violence of today, inflicted on black bodies, is the fine print that all participants in white supremacist civil society align themselves with in pursuit of that future. The black body as a technologized object is securitized and provides a public service. This materialist function tied to capital accumulation cements the non-humanity of black subjects.

And the victims are not the only ones who know it. News cameras have been filling the neighborhoods of the marginalized for generations and capturing the same story of degradation, deprivation, and disenfranchisement and death. Black people are hardly surprised at the depravity of violence we suffer because it is imprinted in our biological make-up, and the trauma is shared. The latest shooting in Harlem, NY or Birmingham, Alabama should not be the impetus to fight for a world where people don't suffer from state sanctioned violence and aren't exposed to the harms of white supremacy. Yet white liberals continue to need new stories to stoke the fires of anti-oppression and give them fuel in their batteries to go out and do the work.

Slavery

In the establishment of the trans-Atlantic trade, 12.5 million Africans were forcibly removed from their homes and forced onto boats to take them across the ocean. The 10.7 million who survived this harrowing journey found themselves stripped of all human rights and sold as chattel to the highest bidder where they were forced into unpaid labor often for the rest of their lives. For the US, in 1840, cotton, produced by slave labor, constituted 59 percent of the country's exports. In 1860, slaves as an asset were worth

more than all of America's manufacturing, railroads, and productive capacity put together. The exploitation of enslaved people was not only done during the trans-Atlantic trade by countries like the United States, but rather by many governments across the globe throughout history. It is on the backs of slavery that the economies of today's world are built.

Oppression has taken many forms over the course of human history, but it has always existed against enslaved people and their descendants. Today, we can see the effects that this historical oppression has caused. According to American Progress, in the US, the median income for the white household is \$189,000 (one hundred and eighty-nine thousand dollars) while for a black household that number is \$24,100² (24 thousand one hundred dollars). This metric is not just a result of the achievement gap that exists. The average wealth of a college educated white household is \$1,793,000 (one million 7 hundred 93 thousand dollars), while for black college educated households it's only \$270,000² (2 hundred and 70 thousand dollars). That means that even at equally high education levels, white people earn more than 6 times more than black people (Federal Reserve).

These statistics prove that Postbellum America was never set up for the success of African Americans. Incremental change is how capitalism creates the illusion of progress and the narrative is that America could only handle so much. The North had to make some concessions to keep the union together. And today, liberals and conservatives continue these same bipartisan politics while those at the bottom operate as pieces on the chessboard. Framed appropriately, the fight for social justice is freedom versus all who

oppress it. Masters then, are implicated as much as anyone who benefited from slavery and its fallout. But the implications haunt the white liberal psyche and give rise to fetishistic disavowal and performative allyship that resemble white settler moves to innocence.

Sheldon George in referencing Patterson, explicates that slavery is social death for blacks through the act of nonbelonging. The subject is ever under the purview of the master and at the same time separated from family, self, history, and any permanence in that is not rooted in trauma. The resulting subject is one who can be studied and directed in theater to foster the jouissance of the master. Even the Northern winners of the Civil War made continuous concessions that made it impossible for the gains of Reconstruction America to cement and truly change the course of the conversation on race in America. The slave inhabited the position of both insider and outsider because their identity was inextricably tied to the fabric of the American social order. They were a mechanical part of the racial capitalist endeavor, yet not afforded the basic rights of humanness because as an institution, slavery towed the line between marginalization and integration. This nonbelonging could at times be the desire of masters and at other times be their ire. The insideness afforded a slave might create the conditions for them to violate the master's sense of order and in that way, enjoy what the master cannot, while the slave's outsideness creates immediate suspicion and conjuring of illegality and danger that were ever present.

The effective domination of enslaved people was a representation of the (in)civility of the white European who oversaw the plantation and shaped relations: the

more efficient a master was at his genocidal enterprise, the more civilized he was deemed to be. Criminalization through white surveillance created a panoptic relationship between the slave as object and everyone else, dramatizing their trauma and parading it as legal proceeding (Yancy xv). The white imaginary had a collective investment in the maintenance and non-disruption of the power relations that continue to impact black lives today.

Lynching

Even as the world began outlawing slavery in name, oppression of former slaves continued and continued to have direct and devastating economic impacts. For example, during the Jim Crow era in the US, African Americans were not equally protected under the law. Lynch mobs were allowed to randomly persecute African Americans with no repercussions, keeping them away from the voting booths and restricting them from freely moving to homes they desired. McGowan has highlighted how lynching are unique in the racial history of America because they created the conditions for collective enjoyment of whites (McGowan 25).

This epoch is different for America because it became a part of the legal fabric of the country. As African Americans began to gain grounds in advancing their cause legally, the American South was swift and reactionary to the new politics and extra-legal lynching were routinely carried out. Even when the perpetrators were caught and tried, they were freed, highlighting the law's complicity. Setting aside the tenor of the era,

today's technology can identify persons present at lynching who can be tried for their crimes. Yet there is no fervor for such a movement.

Cherry picking that happens in social movements with regards to the tenacity of the fight for black liberation is indicative of the enjoyment garnered by those at the higher end of the racial order. Appeals to proper legal discourse or effective political strategizing are used to limit access and silence the disenfranchised. Sojourner Truth was welcome at suffragist events until she began to espouse her abolitionist views, then went from guest speaker to being made to march at the back of the crowd. Black women showed up in droves to vote for, and ultimately elect Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States. Yet black women remain at the bottom of the intersection in the United States because of the country's investment in racial capitalism.

The extra-legal nature of lynching provided another point of collective enjoyment that is tied to the political process. Self-determination is often referenced in relation to the marginalized but in its simplest form, it is the wish of those who are unheard to speak for themselves. Lynching as enactment of vigilante justice satiated white crowds who's own lack created frustration with the racial other. The same arm of the law that criminalizes killing did not and has not sought out most people who could be tried for these crimes today, allowing us to conclude that such sanction on violence against black bodies is constitutive of the United States' legal and political order. The acceptance of permanent violence against the black body is how white liberals negotiate their security and futurity with white supremacy.

Media Proliferation of Black Death & The Spectacle

The third and current epoch of racial enjoyment sets itself apart through a proliferation of images of black violability. Slavery was a national endeavor that allowed whites to contend with questions of their social, political, and economic lives and collective enjoyment was grounded in the institution. The era of lynching was a response to the inability to enjoy the racial other in the fashion desired with impunity. It also dealt with the perceived enjoyment of the other and one's own inability to access that enjoyment. Today, all levels of black life are available for viewing. The proliferation of images of black death centers the spectacle of race and make racism an un-interrogated bystander. It seems even the best and most fervent supporters of racial equality and equity suffer fatigue, given the concessions and compromises on race issues movements continue to make. When Christina Sharpe speaks of the spectacle, it is the trick of white supremacy masking and obfuscating the problem (Sharpe 122). Furthermore, racial capitalism promotes strategies that produce profit from the reproduction of these images, making blackness into a thingliness that is transactional.

Following the murder of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman in 2012, much ado was made about the testimony of Rachel Jeantel, the victim's friend. People from inside and outside her own community were critical of her affect and appearance but, most importantly, her speech. Her dialect of African American English, which is interchangeable with African American vernacular English, was detrimental to a conviction. We will assess through analysis, both linguistic and critical, if Ms. Jeantel's speech patterns were indeed the cause of the ire felt across the courtroom and the nation.

In "Language and Linguistics On Trial: Hearing Rachel Jeantel (And Other Vernacular Speakers) In The Courtroom And Beyond," John Rickford and Sharese King take a linguistic approach to figuring out what happened during her testimony. We will use Ms. Jeantel as a case example to discuss the broader web of what is heard when black folk speak. Rickford and King suggest that Rachel Jeantel's lack of traditional American English mastery, when cross-examined by defense attorney Don West, put her in a predicament. In essence, if Rachel had learned standard American English, she would have that as a tool and could code-switch as necessary, preserving her ability to be heard in any setting. At the surface level, this seems like a fair assessment. However, there are multiple problems.

First, Rickford & King admit that "We know, from decades of dialectology and sociolinguistics research (e.g., Matthews 1938, Wolfram 1969, Macaulay 1977), that nonstandard or vernacular dialect (varieties that include 'structures that are not mainstream or standard'; Wolfram & Schilling 2015:16) are spoken most frequently and fluently by ethnic minorities and by less educated, working-class, or poor people worldwide." (Rickford & King 955). Second, research indicates that understanding other forms or dialects of English does not interfere with understanding African American varieties. Third and most importantly, it places the onus on the person who is there to help the system get justice to adjust themselves to foreign and unwelcoming spaces. In cross examining Rachel Jeantel, Don West made repeated insinuations about his inability to understand her and ultimately not just her comprehension but her credibility.

The most directly related area is education because it seemed from the Zimmerman trial that while Jeantel was a fluent speaker of AAVE, she might not have been a proficient reader. Defense attorney Don West exploited this fact to discredit her by thrusting a hand-written statement (supposedly but not written by her) at her in the courtroom and asking her to read it. After a while, she admitted she could not read cursive. As Subtirelu (2013) noted, this was a particularly embarrassing moment for Jeantel (Rickford & King 968).

Rickford is talking about Jeantel's ability to code-switch - the process whereby speakers of African American English will oscillate between standard English in their variety of AAE. Code meshing takes a more holistic approach to this linguistic strategizing and conceives of language as a more fluid process where the speaker does not have to be rigidly confined to choosing one variety or another. The line of thinking is that had Rachel had the skills, she would have been able to code-switch effectively, which might have impacted her testimony and ultimately the verdict in the George Zimmerman trial.

Whites and nonblacks (based on their degree of separation) are largely insulated from the impacts of racial capitalism, and the violence meted out on black and brown bodies. Some of this violence is sanctioned by the state, and some of it is vigilante activism. In either case, the degree to which it is dealt with by the proper authorities reflects the white supremacist state under which we live. to be even more pointed, blackness equals death such that anti-blackness by its very nature is the definition of life... No matter how bad one's life is, the measure or litmus test for the severity of your

condition is how bad the person darker than you is. One does not know one is alive but for one's relative status to black people (Wilderson 126).

Rickford and King also acknowledge that Jeantel's variety of AAE is particular and was challenging to understand in the courtroom. Indeed, that may be the case. We will pause and realize that Rachel Jeantel went on to graduate high school. Difficulty aside, my disappointment is with the authors' brief and a short mention of the intersectional relationship between race and believability. According to Lynda Alcoff, the act of speaking is always political. She says, "the rituals of speaking that involve speaker and listeners' location affect whether a claim is taken as true, well-reasoned, a compelling argument, or a significant idea. Thus, how what is said gets heard depends on who says it, and who says it will affect the style and language in which it is stated.

The discursive style in which some European poststructuralists have claimed that all writing is political marks it as important and likely to be true for a certain (powerful) milieu; whereas the style in which African American writers made the same claim marked their speech as dismissible in the eyes of the same milieu" (Alcoff 8). On the bedrock of Alcoff's foundation, I am inclined to side with Ashanti Young in his description of code switching. We know that whites do not speak mainstream "accepted" standard English as a strict protocol in public settings. Yet, they are afforded the luxury of passing and maintaining jobs, credibility, and access in a way that black people cannot.

To be black is to be made a spectacle in America. Globally, there is no private life for the melanated people of the earth who have no home. The trick of racial capitalism is that it sells the non-belonging of the racial other as something the white

subject can capture. There is no part of Ms. Jeantel's subjectivity that would make her fully knowable in the courtroom, nonetheless, the theater of opportunity allows the spectacle of trauma in the pursuit of justice. The use of linguistic imperialism to discredit her is evidence of white supremacy's control of knowledge production and what counts as valid in a courtroom that is set up to benefit those white supremacists.

The African continent may house the most concentration of black people, but colonial powers have decimated the people and extracted resources from the land. Today that legacy still looms large, and China is on the rise as the new predatory lender in the region. Under the weight of all this, code-switching, while a small part of the story, nevertheless plays a role. Incidents of trauma involving black bodies are the outward indicator of the lack of value placed on black lives. Consider that code-switching is even a thing because of the stigma attached to non-white bodies and their language performance. Not to mention the ramifications from the in-group agitation that occurs with downplaying one's race.

What they hear when we speak is another part of the spectacle, not a different event. We are made to be strange by the purpose of fueling that spectacle (Sharpe 113). The phonological assessment of Rachel's testimony did not change how she was perceived immediately upon entering the room, which permeated the space and set the stage for what was to come. The most apparent thing about her and the impediment in this racialized America to her success was her race. Another analysis of Rachel Jeantel's cross-examination gives us a look at the different yet concurrent events. Speaking about and describing the status quo to contextualize the events of the day of the murder, the

defense constructs America as a post-racial society that is essentially colorblind. Against this backdrop, there are interactional moments during the defense's questioning of Rachel Jeantel wherein creepy-ass cracker is positioned as immoral within a post-racial ideological framework and evidence of racism toward white people. According to Slobe

Don West's use of pauses, hyper-articulated Standard American English, and emblematic deictic terms discursively and linguistically segregate Martin's and Jeantel's community from the hegemonic white practices of the courtroom. West's attempts to assert symbolic control over the semantic meaning of creepy-ass cracker reflect the relative unmarkedness of Standard American English and whiteness in contemporary United States judicial systems and society. Trayvon Martin's observation of Zimmerman's whiteness, as indexed by the word cracker, is positioned as evidence of a culture and an individual with inherently violent, racially motivated intentions (Slobe 614).

Not only was Trayvon Martin being criminalized by the mere fact of his blackness, but doubly criminalized posthumously for his speech and choice of words which are clear and intelligible but not mainstream.

The criminality of blackness itself makes the act of speaking from that body a deviant act. Frank Wilderson once described blackness as coterminous slaveness. The condition of a slave is one robbed of personhood and agency. The result is a "social death" where black people serve as a vital regulatory health function for society but are not community members. It is worse than the second-class citizen, for at least that individual is still a citizen. The appropriate analogy is a citizen vs. an alien... from a

different galaxy. Nothing about blackness is made to be intelligible except in the service of white supremacy. I could contend, after all, that the mere fact that there is such a thing as standard English is white supremacist by nature. Even "whites" do not speak it, making the term merely exclusionary (Wilderson).

But why does Wilderson matter when we discuss AAE and the fallout from Rachel Jeantel's testimony? Because he also says that black death and violation as a phenomenon is enjoyable for no material reason other than the enjoyment of the spectacle. Ms. Jeantel became the ridicule of black liberals who decried her intellect, white liberals who decried the system, and the unwitting victim of prosecutors who played on a nation that is primed for racial tension. What they hear when we speak is another reminder of what they hate. When in emergencies requiring communication, speakers of AAE, like anyone else, will try other dialects, then languages, actions, gestures, or whatever is necessary to communicate. So why then, has the pain and loss conveyed by black Americans not led to more marked changes in their condition? Black children stand in front of legislative bodies and cry out for their parents and kin not to be murdered in the streets, to no avail. Americans support gun rights but cannot stand to hear black people speak of it. And to display them in art (music videos and the like) does not earn a pass.

While The Dixie Chicks can make songs plotting the murder of an abusive husband, and no one bats an eye, a rapper uttering words of revenge for the loss of a family member earns them the ire of white society. To be sure, both are criminal acts. However, as with deviance, society has labeled one of these more criminals than the

other. So, what can black folk do? Practice present distancing. That is to be actively aware and current on the information of social justice work but to be selectively engaged as it meets their mental health, emotional, financial, and other needs.

Violence directed at black people in the United States manifests at an individual level (specific instances of police brutality against innocent individuals, George Floyd, Brianna Taylor, Eric Garner, Walter Wallace Jr, Philando Castille, Elijah, Trayvon Martin, and so many others). But also systemically, at a more complex social, economic, and political level in the United States and sustains itself with racial inequality. What is heard when we speak has been a pure spectacle of sport, as evidenced by the lack of effective change. If we are to make any inroads toward a pragmatic approach to effective change, it must first start with a deconstruction of the white supremacist state that enjoys black death, violence, and subjugation.

In some ways, white social activists have been more of an ally to white supremacy than they have been to black people because state sanctioned violence cannot happen without the compliance of the majority, silent or not. At The Women's March on Washington in 2017, black women reported harassment and an unhealthy culture dominated by cisgendered white women (Milner 88). These women who have been the highest benefactors of Affirmative Action, may not have liked Donald Trump, but they certainly did not feel a sense of comradery with the black and queer folks who showed up either. Blackness is continually reduced and relegated in white liberal spaces as progressives tout wins for their agenda items that address marginalized folks in other categories.

Ms. Jeantel's experience in court that day exposed the spectacle of black life as intertwined with the legal appendages of white supremacy. Controlling the formation of knowledge and what is considered legitimate speech means the legal system retains a vitality through the collective investment in the process. Kimberly Crenshaw correctly identified this phenomenon in her writings on intersectionality and critical legal studies that identify blind spots in how the legal process apportions believability and innocence (Crenshaw). Today, most white liberals acknowledge intersectionality as one of the most important theories of critique. Yet, Rachel Jeantel's experience is codified in a legal framework that escapes harsh scrutiny about the variable ways white supremacy manifests in black life. By and large, this legal framework is one accepted by white liberals who see it at best, as a path to revolutionary and lasting change, and at worst, a permanent feature of the landscape that we must deal with as is. In either regard, the brunt of the labor is borne by black bodies who must either do the work of change or suffer the most severe consequences in its pursuit.

Implications

What links all three epochs in the public spectacle that allows collective enjoyment and/or fetishistic disavowal. At each turn, there has been a leveling up of the collective investment in black trauma. Slavery was legal in the sense that it was on the books (and remains so in some constitutional form in many states with exception clauses). While their actions were largely confined to their plantations, the horrors that slaves endured at the hands of masters speaks to the lack of the white racial subject. The omnipresence of

the slave master meant that enslaved people had no space of their own. The height of lynching in America saw the public display of tortured and charred black bodies as odes to the symbolic order.

Those who participated can be seen in photographs today. Those who did not, read about it in newspapers. In either regard, depending on your proximity to whiteness, you were not susceptible to such a fate and could organize your life as human, not deserving of such a fate. Today, the media proliferation of images of black death and violation have shaken up the landscape but revealed the ambivalence and readiness of hardline fundamentalists. American, home grown, cisgendered white male terrorism is rampant yet racist attitudes about nonwhite and black criminality persist. This third epoch is unique because of the advances of technology that have made black culture ubiquitous in its triumphs and traumas, which are exported through racial capitalism (Yancy xix-xx)

Fanon & Wilderson

Unabashed violence against blacks is desirable and normalized under white supremacy. Beyond this, there is pervasive disenfranchisement, powerlessness, and alienation that are unique to the condition of the diaspora and the aftereffects of slavery. The sacrifice of the black body in this repetitive cycle where it is violated and spectacted, becomes the life force of society. For Fanon, the colonial fantasy creates the racialized other. In today's climate the right-wing, race-hating bigot is easy to spot. The liberal wants to approximate something more sophisticated but with the same structure of desire. The unconscious language has the same structure of desire toward the racialized other. There is no

condition beyond violence for the colonized as every waking moment is spent under oppression and tyranny that enforces literal and metaphoric violence. This oppression galvanizes the oppressor around a unified and elevated sense of self (Fanon). But it also organizes the oppressed around the core of their subjugation and the climate of the very violence they live with every day. This tension is palpable.

The condition of colonization not only impacts the material lives of the colonized by their immaterial beings as well. The problem of neurosis as Fanon describes it creates a condition whereby the black subject is unable to reconcile their desire to be white for all intents and purposes, against the backdrop of the racism and violence they suffer under white supremacy. As this trauma persists, there is a need for a psychic break and when there is a struggle for self-determination, the colonizer in that moment can recognize the humanity in the colonized because they are willing to risk life and limb for futurity. This same moment is a point of realization for the colonized who are shocked into a sense of awareness about their ability to form coalitions and bonds of solidarity.

Where Patterson saw slavery as social death, Wilderson extends the analysis to contemporary black life. Under white supremacy, black people still suffer violence that retains their position as other. Blackness inhabits a certain subject position that is fundamentally different from all others. As such it can be the very sight for resistance. If we engage with the premise that blackness equals social death, then there can be only something to gain. The struggle ought not to feel daunting regarding how we seek alternatives.

Indeed, some of the criticism against Afropessimism's nihilism is that it does not push academics beyond the pale of their pen. There is some merit to these considerations, but a critique does not require an alternative for validation. Furthermore, his uncompromising take on black subjectivity is a protest America's incessant need to criminalize and project blackness as the embodiment of danger. A blind optimism in white liberal politics that negotiate the inhumanity of black people is not the answer in his view. It is not enough to say we are siding with the leftists, but the direction we are facing which is determined by who's leftist ideology we are affirming and what pedagogies we are endorsing.

While Wilderson is correct in much of his theorizing, there are undeniably systemic oppressions faced by black women that place them at further margins than black men. Ultimately, the oppressed must learn to wield their power in ways that redefine their identity and reassert agency. In said conversation, violence as a tool of the oppressed is vital and the state as sole arbiter of violence is a non-starter. Colonial rule has permeated the lives of the oppressed beyond their lived experience and has warped their psyche as well. As such, violence can also be a recourse for correcting some of the harm of colonization that remains with the victimized. Sartre explained Fanon's thinking in explaining that the native "cures himself" of his neurosis by excising the settler who is negotiating the colonial subject's humanity as currency.

On White Liberals

The white liberal is content with the white supremacist fantasy because it does not force them to confront the formation of the racialized other's subjectivity that is beyond their control and definition. Thus, surplus enjoyment for white allies relies on a version of the other that is definable and programmable, making social movement ideologically synchronous with the racial thinking that subjugates populations and makes violence normative. The performed disavowal hides the true fetish and secures the fantasy, protecting the libidinal treasure.

But how can this be the case if white liberals are willing to sign up for the fight, vote with their ballot and actively campaign for the changes they want to see? Barack Obama's own grandmother had a love for him that was as deep as any she knew yet professed a fear of black bodies that he identified in grappling with his own subjectivity. Even at the level of her own psyche, she could not understand how someone who outwardly looked and performed as black could not be threatening but was nonetheless proud of her grandson for becoming president of the United States, even if he is in the category of people most likely to be detained and accosted by police. White liberal subjects in a racialized white supremacist world never need get too close to the fire, they can be transient and nomadic with the cultural and political winds. This protects the inner psyche from the trauma of race and provides a means of continual enjoyment. As Sara Ahmed puts it,

In saying we are raced as whites, then we are not racists, as racism operates through the unmarked nature of whiteness; or in saying we are racists, then we are not racists, as racists are shameless; or in saying we are positive about our racial

identity, as an identity that is positive insofar as it involves a commitment to anti-racism, then we are not racists, as racists see themselves as above others, and so on. These statements function as claims to performativity rather than as performatives, whereby the declaration of whiteness is assumed to put in place the conditions in which racism can be transcended, or at the very least reduced in its power. Any presumption that such statements are forms of political action would be an overestimation of the power of saying, and even a performance of the very privilege that such statements claim they undo (Ahmed 4).

Afropessimists posit that antiblackness is unique and distinct from white supremacy because there are those who are impacted by white supremacy but do not necessarily suffer antiblackness. There are some junior partners of white supremacy who benefit from participation in the violence directed at black people and act to further normalize the conflation of blackness with criminality and undesirability. Framed as such, deviance and illegality become intertwined in the psychological explanation for exclusion and thus, to be human, or alive, or have value, means to be anything but black. The trend of social movements in the United States has been to focus on the equality of oppressions as a reason to take their moment in the sun (Bassichis & Spade).

The groundswell of legislation, social change, and cultural shifts on discourses of race, gender, and difference have created a universal equivalency where no one's freedom means any less than their neighbors. But the most heinous legacy of this country and the Western world at large has been the genocide of African and indigenous peoples across the Caribbean and North America. This elephant in the room serves as a lightning

rod for liberals who decry a racist past and nostalgia for those who do not see that history in the lives they live today. According to Bassichis and Spade

The fantasy of life getting better imagines violence as individual acts that bad people do to good people who need protection and retribution from state protectors (law enforcement, policymakers, administrators), rather than situating bodily terror as an everyday aspect of a larger regime of structural racialized gendered violence congealed within practices of criminalization, immigration, enforcement, poverty, and medicalization targeted at black people at the population level - from before birth until after death - and most frequently exercised by government employees. It is not a leap to see, then, how cultural politics of naturalizing the premature death of black people produces a benevolent thrall for white gays and lesbians to adopt black children. White gay and lesbian politics must remain silent on anti-black racism, must position itself as anything but black, to keep its place in line for the future (Bassichis and Spade).

Here is expressed a proximity theory of survival - futurity under white supremacy orients the patterns of relationships so that the closer one comes to blackness, the more death is imminent. The violability of the black body, the resulting spectacle, and the enjoyment of that spectacle are all part of the fantasy of race that permeates our lived experience.

Whiteness has never been a static category, having at one time been exclusionary of even white European immigrants of Italian and other origins and later making a shift when it was advantageous. The antithesis of white remains static however, as “non-white”, and the power to define that category has remained solely with whites. The denominator for

all non-whites has historically been black and indigenous people and racial enjoyment necessitates that whites, whether supremacist or not, participate in the policing of boundaries. After all, the white liberal cannot objectively identify its target as racism without the advent of race. At this level of collective enjoyment, blackness is interpreted through the white gaze and refracted back to black people.

Constituted as criminals before birth, there is no neutral place for blackness to exist. This liminality is how the racialized other can be fantasized into existence yet remain pliable and violable. The racial fantasy structures relations to codify and normalize this pattern. McGowan posits that racism is less about what we know and how we enjoy, and I tend to agree. The enjoyment of black trauma is available to all and invites their participation in both antiblackness and white supremacy. Social justice movements have made far reaching strides in the linguistic and cultural circles where bigotry and oppression existed.

But by and large, the problem of race has yet to be defeated because we derive pleasure from the enjoyment of its fantasy. “By providing the image of enjoyment in the figure of the racial other, the fantasy offers the subject a solution to the problem of desire and gives the subject a reward of enjoyment for its be-longing. This solution both quiets the potential disruptiveness of desire and gives the subject a taste of enjoyment to make the confines of the social order seem less barren “(McGowan 27). The individual efforts of social movements mitigate but cannot subsume racism if there is a collective investment in this type of enjoyment.

Insofar as blackness is the remainder, black enjoyment is the source of white enjoyment through the projection of phantasmic white anxieties. The antiracist liberal derives enjoyment through seeing what they consider to be the completion of black enjoyment via their allyship. This allyship is ascribed a certain value, that by and large does not show up in the places that matter. Faux progressivism is met with anecdotal evidence about the progress of LGBTQIA, Latinx, women, and other marginalized groups' agenda. What is lacking is a focus on the antiblack violence on which this country was founded. Whiteness is normative and blackness is pathological through the production of knowledge. This is the crucial piece that other positions miss in their formations of policy and practice.

White nationalism is so profoundly cemented in the American project that its vestiges run concomitant with immigration policy formation, American attitudes towards non-citizens, and even the idea of civilization itself. Walia's descriptions are so vivid that the reader is forced to grapple with the depth of savagery. While Walia does give credence to the effect that otherization has, I think it bears further analysis. The otherization that happens because of xenophobic attitudes on the part of Americans is a direct correlation to the securitization that politicians, neoconservatives, and neoliberals alike champion.

According to Wahlia, "In the face of the far right's overt racism, liberal centrists defend hollow multiculturalism, even though its essentialized framings of culture animate racial violence. Liberal multiculturalism and racist nationalists share an assumption that racialized communities are bearers of different and, as such, state multiculturalism is

organized to subtend, not dismantle, racial power... and in Europe the ideological intersection of racial capitalism and racial citizenship is evident in European far-right critiques of immigration" (Wahlia 183). Because this white supremacist nation has metastasized in global reach, its application of both soft and hard power must become more nuanced. Both are instruments of the capitalist regime and opponents of class struggle. Both are aimed at securitization because capitalism's base is a foundational understanding that one has a right to property. The securing of that property then becomes necessary and self-evident as one becomes a part of any community. The American empire has always pushed outward and sought expansion, even during isolationist eras. So too has capitalism. It needs to produce, reproduce, grow, destroy, and regenerate.

This excess of production and the need for excess labor create the conditions for the inevitable oppression we see across the globe "land grabbing in today's warming world is intensifying through greenwashed colonialism scholars characterized these land grabs as 'green grabs,' the process of appropriating land for environmental agendas such as conservation, biocarbon sequestration, and biofield production" (Wahlia 71). The carceral state is the physical manifestation of border policy steeped in the logic of fear and control. But it too is a manifestation of the distinction between self and other because transgressors are deemed deviant and subject to remand. The racial other retains permanence in this category of deviant because society relies on interpretations of that other against whom it defines itself. This categorization is a part of the same

sociopolitical and legal frameworks that sanction violence on black bodies and demonizes the racial other.

Inter - Collegiate Debate

As a high school debater recruited to the University of Vermont to join the Lawrence Debate Union, my life has been a walk with critical interrogation. The LDU was a part of the Cross Examination Debate Association and went to tournaments engaging students in questions ranging from philosophy and economics to national policy and the resulting impacts. During the late 1990s and early 2000s when I came to the team, college debate was undergoing an influx of BIPOC participants who had received training through Urban Debate Leagues. These leagues were founded by college debate coaches and trainers who would travel to places like New York City, Atlanta, District of Columbia, and many other inner cities to teach high school students these skills and the resulting classes of students would go on to attend institutions of higher learning and compete at the collegiate level. The argumentative terrain of college debate before this wave was dominated by traditional and institutionalized structures that formalized the process. There were time conventions, speaker responsibilities, speed of speech, rules of decorum and other processes that made entry into the elite levels of the activity elusive for many black people (Reid-Brinkley 73).

There came a turn in the mid 2000s where teams like the University of Louisville and Towson University decided that they would voice their concerns through the activity and make the community must engage and contend with the substance

therein. Some of the conventions mentioned above privileged certain bodies (people with more access to resources can spout more facts at a faster rate of speed than their counterparts coming from the inner cities who may not have had the level of access). Nonetheless there was initially a warm reception, as some of these teams began to see the fruits of their labor and win big tournaments making arguments about the racist nature of the activity and its gatekeeping. In the early 2010s, however, there was a shift. As more conservative schools saw their success rate impacted by this change, they recalibrated their efforts and many began to run more critiques to appeal to the judges who were now seemingly more invested in questions of ideology. Others retreated and doubled down on their commitment to tradition. In either case, the resulting geography did not show an environment more inviting to nonwestern conceptions of dialogue, argument, and debate.

Recently, I was reminded in a passing conversation by my old debate coach about a time in a debate when my partner and I decided to use our speech time to play and perform some hip-hop as means of argument making. One of our opponents, a cisgendered white male, got up and commented that he had been made “dumber” by what had just transpired. Debate culture at all levels in the United States boasts a demographic of people who consider themselves more intellectually engaged than the average person. Afterall, it involves a voluntary surrender of one’s free time to research and present arguments on a diverse array of global issues. That was 2002.

It was February 2023, at the Novice Nationals British Parliamentary Debate Tournament, when I found myself rebuking a room full of people for their similar level of antiblackness. The only other black adjudicator on the team put in a motion about black

curriculum in schools and that too, came under scrutiny. Debaters come from and are welcomed into a tradition where the ability to sound convincing replaces soundness in argument. White cisgendered debate produced a game with rules that were exclusionary to certain bodies because those bodies rationalized differently, presented differently, and were received differently. Not much has changed today and debate continues to be antiblack in many circles and exclusionary to orientations that do not fit traditional politics.

There had already been heated discussion about a possible topic choice based on the Black Panther movie, which did not end up being used earlier in the tournament. Students would have debated whether Kilmonger, the villain in the movie, was justified in seeking retribution from his family and nation that had kept his birthright from him. The controversy was that this topic did not have enough “depth” for diverse array of arguments and analysis. The second choice of topic area or “motion” about black curriculum forced the adjudicators to consider issuing an apology because someone complained that the motion seemed unfairly weighted to one side. In fairness, there was a 10-2 split for Affirmatives over Negatives in that round of debating. Some debaters felt they did not have much to say on the topic that asked if schools should have a black curriculum, but this belies the fact that as a topic committee, we had already gone through the list of possible arguments that could be made and decided to move forward. Not to mention that the inability to think of arguments does not equate with their nonexistence.

The privilege of white liberalism is that it centers its practices and forms of knowledge production to establish a monopoly on legitimacy. These students who had not had the challenge of having to think and debate race through unconventional tropes felt there was a lack of fairness and complained. And so, there I was, finding myself in a meeting about how to tow this line and make white folks feel better about losing on a race motion that seemed heavily weighted, during Black History month. The labor of race matters is heavily borne by black people in America and this debate tournament at a prestigious New England university was no exception.

The lack of self-awareness seemed unconscious to debaters who felt they were making genuine complaints about fairness. But the larger implication is that their relationship to the racial other in that discussion was occluded by their need to play the game and uphold its structures. The game became more important than the substantive value of the arguments or the stakeholders. This is the cyclical loop of liberal politics where the investment in performatives and half measures secures the place and inner psyche of the white subject while making the racial other disposable. Black folks enter the activity and are in rooms where their bodies, lives, history, and worth are often being discussed yet are prevented from interrogating the format and its methods.

These instances of anti-blackness in debate reinforce the commitment to traditional structures that remain impervious to real mitigatory change even in an activity that prides itself on intellectual engagement. Defenders of tradition argued that the activity suffers when the competitive game is infiltrated by critical projects, as if judges were being asked to choose between being a good or bad person. College debate remains

a microcosm of white liberal society and its varying degrees of commitment to structural change. Progress in the activity is constrained because debaters flock to the safety of pre-establish norms when challenged and the specific content that their interpretations employ is less important than the emotion it spreads. While debate is evolving, the status quo is resilient, and activism is useless. The activism must contend with the same mechanisms of traditional debate. (Reid Brinkley 112) The focus on policy education and the machinations of Western rational politics failed repeatedly to boost marginalized voices in debate, but an honest assessment of the community reveals that change won't occur through the same old models of activism via limits, ground, and predictability. The theatrical view of activism treats the debate space as the stage for political spectacle, an accepted, and becomes ignored, by-product of politics-as-usual.

Collegiate debate is an allegory for white liberal society because it functions by promulgating broken theories of change where revolution is co-opted by traditional norms to build the illusion that dissent is tolerated while discouraging strategies that might change the activity. Rather than bear down on the hard questions, debaters' hunger for a new, attention-grabbing paradigm to market when the excitement of a new revolutionary interpretation wears off. This sleight of hand demotes racial understandings in this space, such that it becomes impossible to understand the common enemy that can queer, feminist, and race debaters (Ross 832). Debate traditions and norms don't change because those who have been centered continue to enjoy a level of privilege that they are not willing to give up.

CHAPTER 4: COLLECTIVE ENJOYMENT

Trauma Pornography

We are not all consumers of pornography, but we all have some relationship to it, even if that relationship is none. The trauma associated with racism produces a sort of pornography that has long been the fascination of whites since the advent of chattel slavery, the theater of opportunity. Unfettered access to the slave in both a physical and psychical sense fostered the rape and torture of innocent people and created the terror that would imprint on the American social order and cement the legacy of racism. The slave owner could enter the slave's domicile at any time, without notice, for any reason, and do anything they pleased. Buck breaking is a case in point of the savagery of the institution and makes clear how slavery was psychosexual and expropriated the perversions of slave masters. Should a slave have attempted to escape, or be too boisterous, or simply for enjoyment, they could be, at best flogged, at worse, raped and killed.

This was often done to the male slave that was perceived to be the most dangerous to the master's order. This act of "buck breaking" is a public spectacle that is done in front of all, to make an example and display the desired power dynamic (Patterson). Physically, the implications of seeing the biggest and strongest be violated with impunity is meant to domesticate the remaining slaves. Often, the victim would be falsely accused of trivial things, shedding light on the imbrication of legality/rationality, race, and consequence. There is no rationality that would explain the depravity of slavery nor the act of buck breaking, nonetheless, the levy of accusation fuses irrational with the

rational. As non-consenting subjects, slaves had no legal standing to deny slave owners yet were tried and judged, calling jurisprudence into question. The trauma of violence on the black body is foundation to the white racial fantasy that makes white supremacy possible and persistent.

Fetishistic Disavowal & Rachel Dolezal

Today, the white liberal is content with the white supremacist fantasy because it does not force them to confront the formation of the racialized other's subjectivity that is beyond their control and definition. Thus, surplus enjoyment for white allies relies on a version of the other that is definable and programmable, making social movement ideologically synchronous with the racial thinking that subjugates populations and makes violence normative. The performed disavowal hides the true fetish and secures the fantasy, protecting the libidinal treasure.

We have moved beyond the time of timidity about black subjectivity.

Technology has made black culture ubiquitous for better and worse and exposed much of the world to the most intimate parts of black life and death. It used to be the case that you would ask a room full of white or non-black people if they could raise their hands to indicate which of them would want to be black and no hands would go up. The line has been crossed: it is no longer the case that people do not want to be black. The example of Rachel Dolezal and racial capitalism highlight how white supremacy can both weaponize and make black subjectivity impotent. This is the nature of enjoyment for the white

liberal who can secretly enjoy the matrix of black life - the most contingent of any racial category.

If then, both the racist and liberal enjoy the racial fantasy, to contend with the problems of racism and work towards a radical black liberation, we must understand race as situated in a culture of enjoyment that gives rise to racist fantasy (Gaines). The entry point is crucial to enjoyment of the fantasy, which is why the powerful are often the oppressors. Enjoyment is apportioned racially not classically, allowing the white working class to feel akin to Jeff Bezos believing in the shared collective fantasy founded on the non-being of the racial other. That enjoyment is not about what we know but what protects our fragile notions of self, the other, how we perceive the other, how the other perceives us and the pastiche of them all.

But what is most privileged for the individual, the libidinal treasure, is psychically incomplete. In this cry of transracialism, Rachel Dolezal is reaching for the enjoyment perceived to be had by the racial other. I am doing the work, I live and am present with these folks every day, I feel the struggle to my core, right? I must be black. No, I am black. And this is our struggle. This pathology is an extension of the liberal agenda in social movements where the drive is towards a synchronicity with the work that is impossible. One can never fully identify with the other, but the work of social justice is so visceral, intimate, and psychic that these faux convergences nonetheless occur.

The problem arises when liberals are not able to separate the work from the lived experience. While the conservative who attends a Trump rally openly wears their

desire for the other, the liberal couches their relationship to the racialized other in equally flat terms that don't foster a fervent attempt to understand the fullness of identity. Rachel Dolezal can be black simply by saying so. And denounce it in the same breath should she choose to relinquish it.

The ability to hop in and out of conversations affecting the livelihood of a real group of people comes with privilege. Her entry point into the collective fantasy gave her a unique opportunity to gain attention because race and color are still so dominant in American culture. There are also some fundamental questions posed by her proclamation. What does it mean to be black? How do we define such a category? If it is true that blackness is at best determined by this collective struggle against the backdrop of violence, it becomes even more attractive to claim a history that is not yours. It is through the envy of the lack of the other that this manifest.

Hip-Hop Tourism

Hip-Hop tourism in America has become commonplace in the late 2010s and early 2020s. As the music has become more mainstream, the line between art and life is blurred. Non-black persons are routinely seen in neighborhoods they only hear about in hip-hop songs. There is a desire to identify not just with the music and the artist, but to experience them intimately. This desire is reproduced in the way the media portrays images of black violability as both spectacle and normative, enhancing the attraction. This brush with death is psychically equivalent to surplus enjoyment moving beyond hearing the lyrics and seeing the music videos to being "on the block" much the same

way that Rachel Dolezal might say that she was in the field doing the work. Hip-hip tourism has created a voyeuristic industry that gives this new generation of nonblack people another avenue to enjoyment of the racial other through the sale of and profit from black bodies.

The question also must be asked about what is gained by this rejection of whiteness by whites like Rachel Dolezal. Here lies the connection between the libidinal treasure and the fantasy. Because the current climate is saturated with anti-white propaganda, it is fashionable to be anything but white. Disavowal of whiteness creates solidarity with the oppressed and attempts to repair some of the trauma of the widely held belief that whites have in some way or another profited while others have suffered. For white liberals who are about the work of social justice, there must be a concerted effort to separate the work from the lived experience.

There need not be a conflation that risks devolving into chaotic and insensitive misrepresentations and appropriation. Today, Rachel Dolezal has an Onlyfans.com account that displays her black fished tones and appropriated looks. Onlyfans is a social platform that allows subscribers to pay for content that creators, a lot of whom are sex workers, produce. The white liberal imaginary is replete with competing psychical factors that rest and call on the white supremacist fantasy for foundation. Rachel Dolezal spouts a transracial identity built on lies and fabrications from her schooling to her lineage. What is it about blackness that made it attractive enough for her to appropriate?

Collective Enjoyment & White Supremacy

Whiteness dictates what does and doesn't belong, while simultaneously being outside of, and unencumbered by the system of categorization through any permanent attribution. The white racial subject is unable to confront their lack because they are mired in the matrix of white supremacy and invested in its hierarchies before birth and white psychological fears impact black racial identity formation by inscribing those anxieties onto the black body. White conservatives make the conversation easy for those of us who wish to identify and critique right wing ideology that views blacks with vituperation. But if race and racism were about what we know, we would be further along in the fight for racial equity. The lack thereof, can in part be attributed to white discursive practices that produce materialist interpretations of a psychical phenomenon.

The economic disparity across the United States implicates poor whites as well yet their level of commitment to white supremacy remains. Sensible white Americans have opposed slavery and even laid down their lives for the cause—yet its haunting vestige, racism, remains. White liberals have advocated for diversity in representation, but the divide remains. Then we can draw the conclusion that white liberal elites enjoy the racial fantasy even through their performative disavowal. This unconscious desire for the excesses of racism plagues the work of social activists who grapple with the material concerns of race. The problem is misidentified as one of knowing rather than enjoying. As Dillon says, “White supremacy is not just a spatial technology that inhabits infrastructure and institutionality: it is also a temporal regime that refuses to abide by the progress of the law, language, or the passage of time. State violence limits the possibilities of the present and future by binding both in a closed circuit of reverberation

and magnification. When time accumulates, it possesses, detains, and immobilizes: this is time as a form of capture” (Dillon 40-42). White supremacy insulates the white imaginary from the natural constraints of time/space and the temporality of racial trauma reinforces time as capture. The future that white liberals aspire to with its betterment, is a product of the white supremacist violence of the status quo that is ontological and constitutive, leaving no reprieve for blackness.

Black Joy & Contrition

I have always found the phrase black joy fascinating. The need to conjure and prefix the idea of one’s enjoyment with one’s race applied to no other race before blacks. The impermanence of a coherent global psychical register for blackness has made black synonymous with violable. “The black body becomes ontologically pliable, just a thing to be scripted in the inverse of whiteness. Cutting away at the black body, the black person becomes resigned to longer aspire to his or her own emergence or upheaval. James Baldwin once said that not until he got to Europe and could shed the American brand of racism, was he able to contemplate what it meant to be just James, and not James, who was a black man. The auspices under which black joy is expressed are suspect and always in flux because white supremacy renders the black subject into object and keeps it ever-violable (Wilderson - being interviewed). According to Sheldon George “At the moment that the slave is forced to make the choice between their life or captivity, they undergo what George calls a constrictive alienation that forces his sacrifice of something

valuable” (George 272). The temporality of white supremacy means blackness is always in negotiation with whiteness for the rights to label itself.

I have talked to colleagues and friends in intimate conversations about how the world teaches black people the act of contrition. Chattel slavery made anything the master deemed illegal as law. The psychological impact on enslaved people was the repression of their own sense of being and any true sense of self. The terror imminent in daily life made self-actualization impossible as nonconsenting persons. Enlightenment thinkers by and large thought of African people as inferior, with Hegel having said that the negro could not even distinguish between the flesh of an animal and that of a human, implying a primitive cognition.

To function in white supremacist democratic America, blacks must sacrifice their self-actualization and act in accordance with self-preservation. The behaviors and protections attributed to other citizens are mirages that disguise the reality of life as an African American whose subjective disposition is flimsy. There is a permanent self-policing that must happen to assure that one abides by the boundaries installed and maintained by white supremacy if one is to survive. So then, even when slavery is off the books, is post Jim Crow, and has elected a black president (twice), there are limitations on black subjectivity that remain (Dillon 49). The internal debate amongst African American communities about the role of religion in normalizing race relations is ongoing.

That aside, blacks must engage in contrition as a means of survival on multiple fronts. Colin Kaepernick was a quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers in the National Football League. During the 2016 season, he decided to take a knee while the national

anthem of the United States was being sung. He would later comment that his intent was to demonstrate on behalf of the marginalized who had suffered unjustly, feeling that he was unable to stand for a country that was actively oppressing his people. (Boycoff 191) There were other players, black and nonblack, who came out in support of Kaepernick in the initial phases of the scandal.

But there was soon a fallout from NFL owners and fans who saw this display as an affront to America itself. Famously, Jerry Jones, owner of the Dallas Cowboys proclaimed that any player on his team who took a knee would face harsh consequences. As more NFL owners voiced their discontent, players began to walk down their initial stances, sanitizing and curating their messages to propitiate the masses. For his part, Kaepernick explained that he had only come to this decision after talking to a friend who was a veteran and giving it some deep thought. Furthermore, the NFL did not always have such a close relationship with the US military. It was a marketing tactic to engage more fans that burgeoned into a mantra used for blockade of what should have been civil demonstration and dissent (Boycoff 202).

It is not just in the workplace, images of black people begging for their lives at the hands of police and racists also fall on the spectrum of contrition because the act of contrition involves a back and forth to establish if the manner of dealing with the grievances suffice for the aggrieved. This relationship is monodirectional in a white supremacist world because one's very life depends on their ability to convince police officers with a monopoly on state sanctioned violence. Black people must be contrite for

erring in the eyes of the law and contrite in their reactions to abuse of that law and power, it is a circular loop.

The impact is threefold: first, black expressions of joy are curtailed at the subconscious level of enjoyment because the white racial subject is unable to deal with the fullness of the black racial subject absent the projection of anxieties. And if black joy is curtailed there can never be an understanding of black anger that situates it properly in the context of any other global struggle for liberation against oppression because these dualities are coterminous. Secondly, the push of NFL players towards contrition makes visible the disavowal of liberals who seek a post racial society. They know that race is a problem, and they also know that Kaepernick was not speaking ill on the military or the flag. The rightful conflation of America with a racist regime produced anxieties that forced a negotiation of the issue - to dumb it down and reduce its punch. This pretense of what is not happening while it is happening protects the white liberal psyche from the truth of white supremacy and their complicity in it. Third, the fallout traumatizes the black psyche who must negotiate their existence in relation to the threat level perceived by the white racial other from casual insults and microaggressions to bias and lethality in law.

Conclusion

The era of civil rights ushered in a groundswell of knowledge to the American public about the nature of race issues and the activism of the times was epistemic. But as a result of inadequate measures and half-hearted reforms that export the labor to those at

the bottom, systemic racism, and white supremacy remain pervasive in America. There are many who are working fervently on meaningful causes, but the collective enjoyment of the accouterments of racialized capitalism and white supremacy keep the revolution at bay and time again we are confronted in today's America with different ways that black life can be violated and spectacted. From slavery to lynching to the era of mass proliferation of images of black death, not enough has been done to curb racialized violence. The enjoyment of the racial other is impartial to both white conservative and liberal subjects and creates the inability for social movements to get over the hump.

The racial fantasy that situates white supremacist anxieties has primacy because it provides a way of organizing enjoyment for the members of a society that enables them to sustain the image of an unlimited and complete satisfaction. The racist fantasy brings together how we desire and how we enjoy in a specific calculus. It is an attempt to use the racial other's enjoyment as the solution to the problem of the white subject's desire. Simultaneously, capitalism is insidiously adept at defusing community protest and activism without responding to demands. On the battle ground of revolution, performatives and platitudes cannot mobilize and inaugurate a new legal regime. While the collective enjoyment of black people is centered on the shared trauma of race, the collective enjoyment of whites is centered around upholding systems of white supremacy and their ability to enjoy is also inextricably linked to reproductions of violence. They are not able to enjoy in the same way black Americans are seen to be able to inhabit and enjoy a hybridity of being where they both inside and outside of accepted social spheres. White Americans are, either active or remit overseers of white supremacy from which

they benefit. This precludes their ability to enter this hybrid class and is a source of psychological trauma but enjoyment through the other is a temporary suture.

We all enjoy racially and have some relation to race. Understanding racism as a problem of how we enjoy and not what we know will improve our chances of producing meaningful solutions to relationality and racialized violence. Fetishistic disavowal makes the psychological misplay possible where white liberals believe they are actively engaging in the right measures and working on the right causes, all the while being party to the systems they critique. In our current epoch where whiteness is off-brand and not in style, white liberals who do not want to represent the ugly symbols of America's racist past are seeking subjects trying to gain a deeper understanding of their subjectivity, but that inquisition is negotiated in relation, and not opposition to white supremacy and its institutions.

The racial other also provides a mode of belonging to the white racial subject who, through their relation to that other's enjoyment, can situate their own desire and place in the larger society and the world can part take in this industry of black trauma pornography that normalizes violence against the black body. This collective level of enjoyment extends the shelf life of white supremacy. White racial subjects, liberal or conservative, derive enjoyment from the institutions of white supremacy because it does not threaten their inner libidinal treasure and sense of self. Therefore America has seen a decline in civil and human rights as authoritarianism and fascism continue to rise.

Why we enjoy and how we enjoy is a more critical question concerning the state of isolated subjects who seek completion. Racialized others suffer the brunt of the

externalized anxieties that represent the traumatic within white racial subject, and securitizing blackness ties the health of the society to the protection of global capitalism. 'Blackness as threat' narratives normalize racial violence and make the white, safe, predictable future possible. This future is shared by white supremacists and liberals alike who see the faults of the present as symptom and the promise of the future as remedy. Chattel slavery and capitalism created the conditions for excess that allowed the modern white subject to project their anxieties and fears onto the racial other. Recognizing racism as a means of enjoyment invites white liberals to think about their relationship to collective enjoyment and investment in white supremacist structures that make violence on black bodies possible.

WORKS CITED

- Ahmed, Sara. "Declarations of whiteness: The Non-performativity of Anti-racism." *Borderlands* 3.2 (2004).
- Aladangady, Aditya, and Akila Forde. "Wealth Inequality and the Racial Wealth Gap." *The Fed Wealth Inequality and the Racial Wealth Gap*, <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/wealth-inequality-and-the-racial-wealth-gap-20211022.html>.
- Alcoff, Linda. "The Problem of Speaking for Others." *Cultural Critique* 20 (1991): 5-32.
- Bassichis, Morgan, and Dean Spade. "Queer politics and anti-blackness." *Queer Necropolitics*. Routledge, 2014. 191-210.
- Boykoff, Jules, and Ben Carrington. "Sporting Dissent: Colin Kaepernick, NFL Activism, and Media Framing Contests." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 55.7 (2020): 829-849.
- Butler, Judith. *Notes toward a performative theory of assembly*. Harvard university Press, 2015.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé W. *On Intersectionality: Essential writings*. The New Press, 2017.
- Declercq, F. Lacan on the Capitalist Discourse: Its Consequences for Libidinal Enjoyment and Social Bonds. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* 11, 74-83 (2006).
<https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.pcs.2100068>
- Dillon, Stephen. "'It's here, it's that time:': Race, Queer Futurity, and the Temporality of Violence in Born in Flames." *Women & Performance: a Journal of Feminist Theory* 23.1 (2013): 38-51.
- Fanon, Frantz, 1925-1961. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1968.
- Feldstein, Richard., Fink, Bruce, Jaanus, Maire, and Lacan, Jacques. *Reading Seminar XI: Lacan's Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis: Including the First English Translation of "Position of the Unconscious" by Jacques Lacan; the Paris Seminars in English / Edited by Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink, Maire Jaanus*. Albany: State U of New York, 1995. Print. SUNY Ser. in Psychoanalysis and Culture.
- Fields, Karen E., and Fields, Barbara Jeanne, Author. *Racecraft : The Soul of Inequality in American Life / Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields*. 2012. Print.

- Gaines, Alisha. *Black for a Day: White Fantasies of Race and Empathy*. University of North Carolina Press, 2017.
http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469632841_gaines. Accessed 13 May 2022.
- George, Sheldon, and Derek Hook. *Lacan and Race: Racism, Identity, and Psychoanalytic Theory*. Routledge, Taylor Et Francis Group, 2022.
- George, Sheldon. "Jouissance and Discontent: A Meeting of Psychoanalysis, Race and American Slavery." *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2018, pp. 267–289., <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41282-018-0105-0>.
- Hook, Derek. "Pilfered Pleasure: On Racism as the Theft of Enjoyment" *Lacan and Race: Racism, Identity and Psychoanalytic Theory / Edited by Sheldon George and Derek Hook*. 2022. Print. Psychology and the Other. Pg. 37-38
- _____. "The Object of Apartheid Desire: A Lacanian Approach to Racism And Ideology" *Lacan and Race: Racism, Identity and Psychoanalytic Theory / Edited by Sheldon George and Derek Hook*. 2022. Print. Psychology and the Other. Pg. 140
- Lacan, Jacques. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1994) p. 281
- Marriott, David S. *Lacan Noir: Lacan and Afro-Pessimism*. Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2021.
- McGowan, Todd. "The Bedlam of The Lynchmob: Racism and Enjoying Through The Other" *Lacan and Race : Racism, Identity and Psychoanalytic Theory / Edited by Sheldon George and Derek Hook*. 2022. Print. Psychology and the Other. Pg. 20-29
- Olson, Joel. *The abolition of white democracy*. U of Minnesota Press, 2004.
- Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and social death: A comparative study, with a new preface*. Harvard University Press, 2018.
- Rickford, John R., and Sharese King. "Language and Linguistics On Trial: Hearing Rachel Jeantel (and other vernacular speakers) in the Courtroom and Beyond." *Language* (2016): 948-988.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism / Edward W. Said*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage, 1979. Print.
- Seawell, Sophia. *Towards an Ethical Whiteness: the Case of Rachel Dolezal*. MS thesis. 2017.

- Sharpe, Christina Elizabeth. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Duke University Press, 2016. Pg. 113-126
- Slobe, Tyanna. "Creepy-ass cracker in post-racial America: Don West's examination of Rachel Jeantel in the George Zimmerman murder trial." *Text & Talk* 36.5 (2016): 613-635.
- Vighi, Fabio. "Capitalist Bulimia: Lacan on Marx and Crisis." *Crisis and Critique* 3.3 (2016): 415-432.
- Wilderson III, Frank B. *Afropessimism*. Liveright Publishing, 2020.
- Yancy, George. *Black bodies, white gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race in America*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. xv
- Žižek Slavoj. *Sex and the Failed Absolute*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2021.

SECONDARY READINGS

- Bergner, Gwen. "On the subject of race in psychoanalysis." *Frantz Fanon: Critical Perspectives* (1999): 219.
- Carmichael, Stokely. "Toward Black Liberation." *The Massachusetts Review*, vol. 7, no. 4, 1966, pp. 639–51, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25087498>. Accessed 13 May 2022.
- Coviello, Peter. "Intimacy and Affliction: Dubois, Race, and Psychoanalysis." *MLQ: Modern Language Quarterly, Duke University*
- Gaines, Alisha. *Black for a Day: White Fantasies of Race and Empathy*. University of North Carolina Press, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469632841_gaines. Accessed 13 February 2022.
- Hook, Derek. "What is "Enjoyment as a Political Factor"?" *Political Psychology* 38.4 (2017): 605-620.
- Marable, Manning, and Leith Mullings. *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society*. Haymarket Books, 2018.
- McIvor, David W. "Clad in Mourning: Psychoanalysis and Race in Contemporary America". *Journal of Psychosocial Studies* 13.1 (2020): 35-48. <<https://doi.org/10.1332/147867320X15803492699268>>. Web. 13 May. 2022.

- Milner, Adrienne N., and Adekonyinsola Aromolaran. "Colour-Blind Racism And The 2017 Women's March: White Feminism, Activism And Lessons For The Left." *The Fire Now: Anti-Racist Scholarship In Times Of Explicit Racial Violence* (2018): 86-96
- Rakei, Simon, and Phethani Madzivhandila. "Black Marxism And Liberatory Praxis." *Marxism and Decolonization in the 21st Century: Living Theories and True Ideas*, Rutledge (2021).
- Reid-Brinkley, Shanara Rose. *The Harsh Realities of "Acting Black": How African American Policy Debaters Negotiate Representation through Racial Performance and Style*. Diss. University of Georgia, 2008.
- Ross, Marlon B. "Commentary: Pleasuring Identity, or the Delicious Politics of Belonging." *New Literary History* 31.4 (2000): 827-850.
- Sexton, Jared. "Jared Sexton, 'Ante-Anti-Blackness: Afterthoughts.'" *Lateral* 1 (2012).
- Sharpe, Christina. "Christina Sharpe, 'Response to 'Ante-Anti-Blackness''." *Lateral*, 9 July 2021, csalateral.org/section/theory/ante-anti-blackness-response-sharpe/muse.jhu.edu/article/39487. Press, 2003
- Spillers, Hortense. "Time and Crisis: Questions for Psychoanalysis and Race." *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, philpapers.org/go.pl?id=SPITAC-
- Walia, Harsha. *Border and rule: Global migration, capitalism, and the rise of racist nationalism*. Haymarket Books, 2021.
- Wang, Madison. "Anti-racism and the End of Thought: Reflections on the Regulatory Tendencies of Anti-racist Critique." (2021).