#### The alternative assumes a non-gendered Black body that totalizes violence targeted specifically at black women – this relies on false readings of the history of slavery and pathologies Black femininity.

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(Asia Nichole Hodges - University of California, Irvine, African American Studies, Undergraduate. “Mama’s Baby & the Black Gender Problematic” written for the Undergraduate Critical Theory Conference 2012. Mentored by Tamara Beauchamp. <https://www.academia.edu/2027925/Mama_s_Baby_and_the_Black_Gender_Problematic> cVs)

For me, this paper represents an opportunity to bring focus to the ungendered black subject of afropessimist thought, a concept I was first introduced to in winter quarter of 2011, which was the most theoretically rich coursework I have ever undertaken. In retrospect, the work of Frank Wilderson, III also appeared at a very critical moment in my development, both as a thinker and as a black woman engaged in organizing around issues affecting the black community on campus as well as back home. Afropessimist thought resonated deeply because it spoke to the terrifying truths of antiblack racism, black structural positionality and black life, corroborating my own experience but more importantly providing the language and a framework through which to approach a more thorough explanation of this experience theoretically. Further, when I use the term ‘’black” I mean it in the sense closest to the truth of the paradigm of afropessimist thought as described by Wilderson in Red, White & Black: Cinema & the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms. It is my intent to critique Wilderson’s argument for an ungendered black subject using the work of black feminist scholar, Hortense Spillers, and explore the categories she protects in her work. She is indispensible here not only because she was an impetus for Wilderson’s project, but also because it was her thought that mothered my own. In conversation with the seminal article of Hortense Spillers, Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book, Wilderson explains that, for him, antiblackness functions as a prohibition on gender, thus the black subject is inherently genderless. He writes, “Gratuitous violence relegates the Slave to the taxonomy, the list of things. That is, it reduces the Slave to an object. Motherhood, fatherhood, and gender differentiations can only be sustained in the taxonomy of subjects.”[[1]](#footnote-1) While this framework has helped me to understand of the structuring properties of violence, and grasp its role in subject formation more generally, this explanation features an ungendered black subject and cannot be extended to the truth of my life as a black and as a female. This is not to say that afropessimism does not hold the potential to speak to the effect of antiblackness on gender. To the contrary, it was Spillers who first argued that such work was fruitful, writing that in “undressing these conflations of meaning, as they appear under the rule of dominance… we would gain… the potential for gender differentiation as it might express itself along a range of stress points, including human biology in its intersection with the project of culture.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Both Wilderson and Spillers take the dereliction of the black from civil society as their point of departure, but in many ways, Spillers has offered us a great deal more than we know what to do with on matters of gender and antiblackness. In Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe she theorizes that there is a profundity to the particularities of the position of the female black that is exemplified through regimes of naming. In the spirit of black feminism, though its ensemble of questions cannot help me here, I must occasion an explanation of black positionality that accounts for the manner of existential negation and the modes of violence which position me, moving beyond the concerns with black patriarchy. Theoretically, antiblackness does not only lend itself to an argument against a gendered understanding of my condition, it also offers an opportunity for a more nuanced understanding of gender itself. This begs the question, what does a genderless black subject help us to understand that a more complicated rendering [or gendering] of the black subject would obscure? In my view, black political thought lags here, unable to describe its condition without relegating the particularities of the female black to the abyss. Moreover, it seems the black female labors in service of civil society in ways we have yet to fully understand. Spillers supports an argument for the necessity of this work in building a more robust theoretical foundation for black political thought, and afropessimism could be our point of departure. For Wilderson, there is a line of recognition and incorporation. Above it are human beings, civil society made up of white men and women, and below it is the black in absolute dereliction, a concept he draws from Frantz Fanon writings on the black condition. I mean to suggest that the distinction we’re looking for under the line of recognition and incorporation is not “man” and “woman”, which Wilderson would reject, but that is not to say there is no distinction to be made whatsoever. It seems we may too hastily disregard the possibility for distinction for three reasons, described loosely as outlined by Spillers: 1) there was no distinction made between male and female slaves on the ships, 2) men and women performed the same hard, physical labor and lastly, 3) gender is a category requiring the symbolic integrity from which the black is barred. I am unable to go into each in detail here, but the validity of these points of contention is not what is in question for Spillers. The distinctions made on ships or on fields are not the only sites we should scourer for insight into the black gender problematic, and evidence that captives are not regarded as “men” and “women,” like their captors, is elucidating but not explanatory. In Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe, Spillers uses naming as a point of entry into black gender problematic. She revisits Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s report on the state of the black community in America during the late 1960s, and meditates on the significance of black women emerging as the locus of black pathology. She writes that for Moynihan, “the ‘Negro Family’ has no Father to speak of—his Name, his Symbolic function mark the impressive missing agencies in the essential life of the black community… and it is, surprisingly, the fault of the Daughter, or the female line”. Thus, it is the “displacing [of] the Name and the Law of the father to the territory of the Mother and Daughter [that] becomes an aspect of the African-American female’s misnaming.”[[3]](#footnote-3) The black is without the gendered symbolic integrity that the subjects of civil society enjoy; the black performs to both genders, as well as anything in between and beyond, and is not granted the protections of motherhood or the entitlements of fatherhood for example. Moynihan observes the behavior of the black family and concludes that it is a manifestation of the backwardness of blackness generally, and the pathology of black women in particular. But a structural analysis would include a discussion of historical context, relations to power and positionality, with an understanding of the black as positioned through the violence of captivity. Moreover, the emergence of the female black marks the divergence between chattel slavery and racial slavery. Peter Wood, professor of history at Duke University, explains that partus sequitir ventrem, “that which is brought forth follows the womb”, is a legal doctrine which mandates that the child follows the status of the mother, or rather in the case of the female black, her child is doomed to captivity. Woods notes that there was a “shift from indentured servitude to lifelong slavery to heredity slavery, where not only am I enslaved but my children as well” and emphasizes that it was indeed “a remarkable shift”[[4]](#footnote-4). However, the problem is not that we do not know this history, but rather we have not dealt with it theoretically, and even in the most likely of discourses, particularity on the basis of sex is not explored. In chapter 11 of Red, White and Black, Wilderson takes up the issue of gender and sex under captivity, but largely leaves the work Spillers does in Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe untouched. Earlier in the chapter, she is employed as support for Wilderson’s claim that the position of white women and black females are made distinct as a direct consequence of captivity. However, when Wilderson addresses blackness and gender, specifically gender ontology and the reification of gender, Spillers absence is haunting. Moreover, the effect of captivity on gender is not simply a reversal of power between the categories of “man” and “woman” as suggested by Moynihan, but rather that these categories are in fact eviscerated entirely where the black is concerned. Though the black does not hold the symbolic integrity for gender normativity, as argued by both Wilderson and Spillers, the categories of male and female are still apt here; “man” and “woman” representing the body and the latter, eviscerated categories, representing Spillers’ notion of the flesh.  She writes: Before there is the ‘body’ there is the ‘flesh,’ that zero degree of social conceptualization that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse, or the reflexes of iconography. Even though the European hegemonies stole bodies—some of them female… we regard this human and social irreparability as high crimes against the flesh, as a person of African females and African males registered the wounding. [[5]](#footnote-5)Here, Spillers shows that the violence of captivity registers on multiple levels, and of course that the violence can be understood from multiple registers

#### Single-axis framework is bad because it only analyzes the violence that happens to the most privileged of those groups. Intersectionality necessary.

Crenshaw 89 (Crenshaw, Kimberle () "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8. Available at: <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>) JSW

One of the very few Black women's studies books is entitled All the Women Are White; All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us are Brave. I have chosen this title as a point of departure in my efforts to develop a Black feminist criticism 2 because it sets forth a problematic consequence of the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis.' In this talk, I want to examine how this tendency is perpetuated by a **single-axis framework** that is dominant in antidiscrimination law and that is also reflected in feminist theory and antiracist politics. I will center Black women in this analysis in order to contrast the multidimensionality of Black women's experience with the single-axis analysis that distorts these experiences. Not only will this juxtaposition reveal how Black women are theoretically erased, it will also illustrate how this framework imports its own theoretical limitations that undermine efforts to broaden feminist and antiracist analyses. With Black women as the starting point, it becomes more apparent how dominant conceptions of discrimination condition us to think about subordination as disadvantage occurring along a single categorical axis. I want to suggest further that this single-axis framework **erases** Black women in the conceptualization, identification and remediation of race and sex discrimination by limiting inquiry to the experiences of otherwise-**privileged members** of the group. In other words, in race discrimination cases, discrimination tends to be viewed in terms of sex- or class-privileged Blacks; in sex discrimination cases, the focus is on race- and class-privileged women. This focus on the most privileged group members marginalizes those who are multiply-burdened and obscures claims that cannot be understood as resulting from discrete sources of discrimination. I suggest further that this focus on otherwise-privileged group members creates a distorted analysis of racism and sexism because the operative conceptions of race and sex become grounded in experiences that actually represent only a subset of a much more complex phenomenon. After examining the doctrinal manifestations of this singleaxis framework, I will discuss how it contributes to the marginalization of Black women in feminist theory and in antiracist politics. I argue that Black women are sometimes excluded from feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse because both are predicated on a discrete set of experiences that often does not accurately reflect the interaction of race and gender. These problems of exclusion cannot be solved simply by including Black women within an already established analytical structure. Because the **intersectional experience** is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated. Thus, for feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse to embrace the experiences and concerns of Black women, the entire framework that has been used as a basis for translating "women's experience" or "the Black experience" into concrete policy demands must be **rethought** and recast.

#### Black feminist issues are ignored in a larger racial context. They are allowed to be marginalized in the face of the “larger struggle for the black community.”

Crenshaw 89 (Crenshaw, Kimberle () "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8. Available at: <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>) JSW

The point is not that African Americans are simply involved in a more important struggle. Although some efforts to oppose Black feminism are based on this assumption, a fuller appreciation of the problems of the Black community will reveal that gender subordination does contribute significantly to the destitute conditions of so many African Americans and that it must therefore be addressed. Moreover, the foregoing critique of the single-issue framework renders problematic the claim that the struggle against racism is distinguishable from, much less prioritized over, the struggle against sexism. Yet it is also true that the politics of racial otherness that Black women experience along with Black men prevent Black feminist consciousness from patterning the development of white feminism. For white women, the creation of a consciousness that was distinct from and in opposition to that of white men figured prominently in the development of white feminist politics. Black women, like Black men, live in a community that has been defined and subordinated by color and culture."' Although patriarchy clearly operates within the Black community, presenting yet another source of domination to which Black women are vulnerable, the racial context in which Black women find themselves makes the creation of a political consciousness that is oppositional to Black men difficult. Yet while it is true that the distinct experience of racial otherness militates against the development of an oppositional feminist consciousness, the assertion of racial community sometimes supports defensive priorities that marginalize Black women. Black women's particular interests are thus relegated to the periphery in public policy discussions about the presumed needs of the Black community. The controversy over the movie The Color Purple is illustrative. The animating fear behind much of the publicized protest was that by portraying domestic abuse in a Black family, the movie confirmed the negative stereotypes of Black men.2 The debate over the propriety of presenting such an image on the screen overshadowed the issue of sexism and patriarchy in the Black community. Even though it was sometimes acknowledged that the Black community was not immune from domestic violence and other manifestations of gender subordination, some nevertheless felt that in the absence of positive Black male images in the media, portraying such images merely reinforced racial stereotypes. 3 The struggle against racism seemed to compel the subordination of certain aspects of the Black female experience in order to ensure the security of the larger Black community.

#### Single-axis framework analysis of oppression reifies the status quo. Compartmentalizes experiences and undermines potential collective action. One should start from the position of the most disadvantaged. This will have an overflow effect and benefit those who are affected only from a single axis of oppression.

Crenshaw 89 (Crenshaw, Kimberle () "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8. Available at: <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>) JSW

If any real efforts are to be made to free Black people of the constraints and conditions that characterize racial subordination, then theories and strategies purporting to reflect the Black community's needs must include an analysis of sexism and patriarchy. Similarly, feminism must include an analysis of race if it hopes to express the aspirations of non-white women. Neither Black liberationist politics nor feminist theory can ignore the intersectional experiences of those whom the movements claim as their respective constituents. In order to include Black women, both movements must distance themselves from earlier approaches in which experiences are relevant only when they are related to certain clearly identifiable causes (for example, the oppression of Blacks is significant when based on race, of women when based on gender). The praxis of both should be centered on the life chances and life situations of people who should be cared about without regard to the source of their difficulties. I have stated earlier that the failure to embrace the complexities of compoundedness is not simply a matter of political will, but is also due to the influence of a way of thinking about discrimination which structures politics so that struggles are categorized as singular issues. Moreover, this structure imports a descriptive and normative view of society that **reinforces the status quo**. It is somewhat ironic that those concerned with alleviating the ills of racism and sexism should adopt such a top-down approach to discrimination. If their efforts instead began with addressing the needs and problems of those who are most disadvantaged and with restructuring and remaking the world where necessary, then others who are singularly disadvantaged would also benefit. In addition, it seems that placing those who currently are marginalized in the center is the most effective way to resist efforts to **compartmentalize experiences** and **undermine potential collective action**. It is not necessary to believe that a political consensus to focus on the lives of the most disadvantaged will happen tomorrow in order to recenter discrimination discourse at the intersection. It is enough, for now, that such an effort would encourage us to look beneath the prevailing conceptions of discrimination and to challenge the complacency that accompanies belief in the effectiveness of this framework. By so doing, we may develop language which is critical of the dominant view and which provides some basis for unifying activity. The goal of this activity should be to facilitate the inclusion of marginalized groups for whom it can be said: "When they enter, we all enter."

#### White teachers place racial minority students at risk. When the try to teach social justice, they teach from a monolithic worldview and prevent from inclusivity because of poor planning.

Pritchett 11 (Pritchett, Jason, "Cultural Intersections: White Teachers and Their Racial Minority Students" (2011). Dissertations, Theses and Capstone Projects. Paper 479. <http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1480&context=etd>.) JSW

Racial minority students in American public schools learn in environments that are antithetical to their cultural and familial backgrounds. Because the majority of the teacher workforce is comprised of white teachers, the institution of school places racial minority students at risk. These students drop out or are labeled as failures at alarming rates. This qualitative study explored the teaching behaviors of white veteran teachers through a design that mixed both multicase study and autoethnography. The data sources for this study included interviews, focus groups, teacher journals, and teacher-authored documents. The data in this study was member checked and peer reviewed as well as triangulated to increase accuracy. Three findings were gleaned from the data: (1) white teachers in this study teach from a worldview that demonstrates a monolithic cultural gaze; (2) when white teachers are inclusive of other cultures, they inadvertently impede the progress that might occur from such inclusiveness by poor planning or by other life events; (3) the subtle relationship between power and assessment allows white teachers to unintentionally impact their racial minority students. Recommendations for teachers of English include culturally relevant pedagogy and reflective pedagogy as a means to provide racial minority students a voice in the classroom. Further research is needed to evaluate racial minority student percep- tions of white teachers and their myopic instructional strategies for the diverse students within their classrooms.

#### **Black feminists and white feminists have historically had different experiences. Absent a racial analysis of gender, black women will constantly be overshadowed by the needs of the white feminsits to their detriment.**

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Black feminist writings, in both *The Black Woman* and elsewhere (i.e. Angela Davis’s pioneering 1871 essay “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves”) extended the discussion of revolution from public institutions and the workplace to the home, the family, even the body. The exploitation of women’s labor within families, sexual assault, and birth control were among the more highly debated topics. For example, whereas many “second wave” feminists understood motherhood as inherently oppressive because it doomed (white middle-class) women to a lonely life as suburban housewives, black women were forced by economic circumstance into low-wage labor and never had the luxury of spending a lot of time with their families. Most black working women wanted more choices, more time, and more resources rather than an outright rejection of motherhood itself. Besides, black women had had a very different experience with birth control. While white women demanded greater access to contraceptives and abortion as a road to sexual freedom, black women were fighting forced sterilization and family planning policies that sought to limit black births. After World War I, the birth control movement, led by none other than the militant women’s rights activist Margaret Sanger, formed an alliance with the eugenicist movement. Together they advocated limiting fertility among the “unfit,” which included poor black people. Sanger viewed birth control as “the very pivot of civilization” and “the most constructive and necessary of the means to racial health.” Sanger, along with Dr. Clarence Gamble (the mastermind behind the massive sterilization of women in Puerto Rico in the 1950s), launched the notorious Negro Project in 1938 to promote birth control among Southern African Americans. Birth Control centers were established in black communities all over the South during the 1930s; the number of black women sterilized involuntarily rose exponentially and continued to rise through the 1970s. As Dorothy Roberts writes in *Killing the Black Body*, “It was a common belief in the South that Black women were routinely sterilized without their informed consent and for no valid medical reason. Teaching hospitals performed unnecessary hysterectomies on poor Black women as practice for their medical residents. This sort of abuse was so widespread in the South that these operations came to be known as ‘Mississippi appendectomies.’” Given the historical links between the early birth control movement and eugenics, Fran Beal was not off track when she described family planning policies under racism as a potential road to “outright surgical genocide.” Indeed, black feminists criticized the National Abortion Rights League’s support for abortion on demand and immediate access to voluntary sterilization. The Committee to End Sterilization Abuse, an organization made up primarily of women color, wanted guidelines that would prevent the practice of obtaining consent for sterilization during labor or immediately after childbirth, or for an abortion under the threat of losing welfare benefits. They argued that abortion or sterilization on demand did not acknowledge the class and race biases in reproductive policy, the life circumstances that compelled poor women to abort, or the long history of forced sterilization imposed on women of color.

# A slight detour to afrofuturism

#### Poetry/utopia necessary. Not escapism but identification with potentiality of space and distance.

Tollman 15 (Tollman, Jessica Kaplan. *The Electromagnetic Lady: Janelle Monáe, Sonic Fiction, and Black Feminist Worldmaking*. Bachelors Thesis. Wesleyan University, 2015. < <http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2385&context=etd_hon_theses>>.) JSW

Black Feminist Worldmaking Synthesizing Audre Lorde’s black feminist theory and José Muñoz’s queer of color critique, I assert that we can conceptualize Monáe’s sonic fiction as an example of Black Feminist Worldmaking. Monáe’s android futurity, her science fiction, 9 exemplifies the critical worldmaking potentiality Muñoz promotes in his book Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity (2009). And the music and lyrics of her “cybersoul” soundtrack demonstrate the radical possibilities of poetry that Lorde forwards in her text “Poetry is Not a Luxury” from Sister Outsider (1984). Drawing from the works of Ernst Bloch and Giorgio Agamben, Muñoz asserts that concrete utopias, “the realm[s] of educated hope,” are crucial to imagining a future beyond “the quagmire of the present” for queer people, particularly poor queers of color.22 Lorde argues that poetry is imagination with insight, “the way we help give name to the nameless so that it can be thought,” specifically for black women.23 Both theorists understand inquisitive imagination as a vital implement for expanding conceptual capabilities in order to envision new worlds. I consider Muñoz’s affirmation of utopia and Lorde’s advancement of poetry in tandem to develop the fused framework of Black Feminist Worldmaking—Black Feminist and Queer Worldmaking—within which to read Monáe’s sonic fiction. Lorde and Muñoz are at once acutely critical and urgently optimistic. They both advocate imagination as a means of illuminating alternate possibilities to the intolerable structures of the present for black women and/or queer minoritarian subjects. The forces structuring “the deaths we are expected to live” in this “prison house,” write Lorde and Muñoz, respectively, make our progressive, creative impulses indispensible to our psychological and physical survivals.24 For black women, poetry is “not idle fantasy,” as for queers the turn to utopian aesthetics is “nothing like an escape.”25 Rather, these critical imagination practices are rigorously informed by everyday experience. Dreaming provides the revelatory means of 10 making sense of the nonsensical strictures of the present. It cultivates the immaterial matter which with to articulate our deep-seated desires for something more, something beyond the deadly, inhuman politics of our present and the deadly, inhuman world that they creates. Poetic and utopian aesthetics constitute thinking technologies that enable the expression of longing that resists the violent socializations of black disposability and queer worthlessness. Akin to Muñoz and Lorde, Eshun understands black musicians’ embrace of extraterrestriality, **“not so much as escapism but rather as an identification with the potentiality of space and distance.”**26 The state has demonstrated its unceasing abhorrence of blackness through the protracted exploitation, incarceration, and annihilation of black life through the economies of slavery, sharecropping, and mass-imprisonment. Modern slave economy and Enlightenment philosophy conflated whiteness and Humanity through the trading of black bodies as property and the idealizing of reason, objectivity, autonomy, and property ownership. As Afropessimist theorists including Frank B. Wilderson, Saidiya Hartman, and Orlando Patterson argue, blackness was rendered the antithesis of the rational Enlightenment subject, outside the bounds of Humanity. Both Lorde and Muñoz assert poetic and utopian practices as critical, creative ways to articulate the denigrating forces of the present and to anticipate the liberating possibilities of the not-yet-here. They are propelled by the need to demand more than a barren present in which pessimistic acceptance of the state of affairs is preconditioned. **We need** Wondalands **to kick the toxic habit of presentism**—to elude entrenchment in the wasteland of a white-washed, strung-out current moment. We 11 need poetry and utopia to induce a bewilderment of “here and now” and a yearning for the “then and there.”27 Poetry constructs the “farthest horizons of our hopes and fears” just as queerness, when turned into an ideality, radiates “the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality.”28 These thinking technologies structure the perimeters of our conceptual solar systems of possibility; so, they carry our imaginations beyond this earth, to spheres that expand and contract with our relative abilities to reject a rational nucleus and reach for the seemingly senseless. We need “critical hermeneutics”29 to find our way out to our way in,30 to co-articulate deficiency and desire, lack and lust, hurt and hope.

#### Monae’s work is able to demonstrate the contingency of reality by recalibrating notions of temporal progress. She fuses oppositional entities, creating a field of potentiality able to interrogate history and social identities. She reveals binaries and apparent antagonisms as intertwined – sounds like a perm. Monae’s sonic fiction addresses differential minoritarian populations, but doesn’t insist on harmony (means we escape Assimilation DA on perm).

Tollman 15 (Tollman, Jessica Kaplan. *The Electromagnetic Lady: Janelle Monáe, Sonic Fiction, and Black Feminist Worldmaking*. Bachelors Thesis. Wesleyan University, 2015. < <http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2385&context=etd_hon_theses>>.) JSW

Monáe’s body of work functions like a magnet between past and future, between human and machine, between reality and fantasy. I argue that Monáe’s alien mythology, embodiment of the android, and “cybersoul” genre fusions **demonstrate the contingency and mutability of social reality by recalibrating notions of temporal progress, materiality**, and authenticity. Her body of work contains within its structure two opposing poles that produce a field of flowing social concepts and sonic currents that serve to stimulate a **shift in consciousness**. The attraction between a magnet’s north and south poles exhibits a strong force known as a magnetic field. It is precisely the opposition of these poles, their respective positive and negative charges, that generates the field of flowing magnetic current. 31 We can visualize this field as an expanding sphere of contouring lines along which magnetic charge flows from one pole to the other: In this current field, we can concieve of “Electric Lady” Janelle Monáe as an “Electromagnetic Lady.” Her innovative project fuses social reality with science fiction and human with alien, seemingly oppositional entities, in a manner that produces a field of potentiality in which to **rethink historical narratives and social identities**. Magnets move electrically charged particles in a “circular or helical path,” producing magnetic fields that exert force on other magnetic objects that enter the 13 field.34 For instance, the needle of a compass lines up in the direction of the field lines. Monáe’s generative fusions create a field charged with the potential to shift one’s **perceptual orientation of temporal and social norms**. Her sonic fiction brings the listener into the outer space of **conceptual binaries**, revealing **apparent antagonisms**, such as reality and fantasy, to be **intertwined;** each fundamentally is structured and contained by the other. By orienting the listener to both past and future, placing the listener on a field line between the two, the Electromagnetic Lady reveals aliens to be fundamental to our present history. A crucial stimulus of Monáe’s sonic fiction is a drive to expose of commonly accepted notions of truth to be, in fact, myth. She reveals narratives of emancipation and notions of inclusion to be murderous illusions, window dressing for the decimation, subjugation, and neglect of black, brown, and queer life. When I speak of the alien, I am talking about black, brown, and queer aliens because the reverberations between the poetic, political drives of Black Optimism and Queer Worldmaking resonate strongly, for me. Afrofuturism and Worldmaking echo each other’s critiques of nationalism and assimilation and I feel the precussive interplay between these frameworks produces a rich theoretical tapistry. When the orbits of these paradigms are considered in tandem, the combined force of their creative matter amplifyies their rigorously sounded critiques in common. The Electromagnetic Lady complicates the binary between fact and fiction by interrogating historically situated present-day alienations through an alien future. For instance, in the song “Sincerely, Jane,” Janelle Monáe connects her experience growing up in Kansas City (“Left the city, my momma she said don't come back 14 home”) to that of Cindi Mayweather in Metropolis (“Five, seven, eight, two, one / It is now time, for you to come home, my dear”).35 The song’s baroque instrumental arrangement stages a dramatic tragedy while the lyrics sound alarm at the current state of affairs (“We live and then we die and we never know the why”) and reject their brutal conditions (“So down now we go, down underground”). Monáe belts, “Are we really living or just walking dead now?!” alluding to residents of her hometown, who she says have “lost they minds,” describing scenes of gang violence, drug use, teen pregnancy, and poverty. “Sincerely, Jane” is Track 5 on Metropolis: The Chase Suite (2008), played directly after Track 4, “Cybertronic Purgatory”—an ethereal electro-opera depiciting android Mayweather in the liminal death-like state after combusting during a coerced performance portrayed on Track 3, “Many Moons.” “Sincerely, Jane’s” album placement narratively links the exploitation and malfunction of androids to the **dehumanization** and **social death** of impoverished black communities. Monáe’s co-articulation of social reality and science fiction reveals the conditions of black life already to be post-apocalytic, stimulating a consciousness shift. The seemingly opposing poles of social reality and science fiction, when fused in The Electromagnetic Lady’s body of work, are exposed to be entangled. The sonic currents of Monáe’s Metropolis flow into our social reality, revealing it to be, for precarious, minoritarian populations, a science fiction. Differential **minoritarian populations** are addressed throughout Monáe’s sonic fiction, sometimes in concert, sometimes distinctly, most often something in between. There is a methodological demand on me, in producing a theoretical argument, for clarity; to name specifically which human population and alienation I am refering to 15 in reference to Monáe’s android futurity. Yet much of what I find generative about Monáe’s work is precisely its calculated ambiguity, the **liminal status** of her **worldmaking project** between reality and fiction, her temporal melding of past, present and future, her indistinct performance between human Janelle Monáe and android Cindi Mayweather, her fusion of sonic influences that necessitates extensive use of hyphination from the astute listener. Monáe’s sonic fiction is generative precisely because it **retains contradiction in its structure**, like a magnet, and **incorporates disonant alien peoples without insisting upon harmony**. It begets a potentiality that modifies and magnifies perspective by shifting planetary spheres of **temporality**, certainty, relationality, and **affect**. I read the willful ambiguity that saturates Monáe’s sonic fiction as a **black feminist performance strategy** that plays a cruicial role in stimulating the generative fusions that I elaborate in each chapter.

#### Perm – afrofuturism + afropessimism. Monae’s sonic fiction lends the android slave a voice.

Tollman 15 (Tollman, Jessica Kaplan. *The Electromagnetic Lady: Janelle Monáe, Sonic Fiction, and Black Feminist Worldmaking*. Bachelors Thesis. Wesleyan University, 2015. < <http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2385&context=etd_hon_theses>>.) JSW

In this first chapter, I argue that Monáe’s sonic fiction utilizes the myth of an alien future to reimagine **past and present alienations** of black Americans. I read Monáe’s artistic project as reconfiguring the historical reality of the transatlantic slave trade’s through the mythology of Metropolis’s android subjugation. I understand Monáe’s sonic fiction to centralize the production, commodification, and exploitation of posthuman bodies in a dystopic future in a manner that reimagines the dehumanizing social and economic alienation of black Americans engendered by white imperial slavery. Monáe releases and performs her music and alien narrative in the present, re-presenting the socio-economy of slavery to have created a racialized class of alienable people that remains alienated today. I read Monáe’s sonic fiction as 19 sounding/resounding with slavery’s reverberating discord by allegorically implicating its social organization and economic industry as central to the foundation of the United States. The imagined android futurity of Metropolis thus refutes the whitewashing of slavery and its erasure in the colonial, and capitalist, archive. I study the relationship between alienability, alienation, and the alien in Monáe’s sonic fiction through the paradigms of Afrofuturism and Afropessimism. Afrofuturism is a critical framework and aesthetic form that reimagines black experiences of marginalization, dislocation, and limitation—particularly those stemming from the Afro-diaspora—as they intersect with gender, sexuality, and class. Afrofuturism provides an optic lens and a phonic amplifier through which to reconceptualize the transatlantic slave trade as a forced alien mutation. I deploy both visual and sonic analogies to unpack how Afrofuturist artists utilize futuristic images and sounds to reconfigure present and historical alienations. Monáe’s Afrofuturist project visually materializes an alien world of androids and sonically produces the alien music of “cybersoul”—alien formations upon which I elaborate in detail in chapters two and three, respectively. By activating both senses, Monáe’s Afrofuturist twinning produces a particularly powerful shift in perspective, which engenders reconsideration of the relationship between the transatlantic slave trade of the past, black alienation in the present, and the persistence of racism into the future. Afrofuturism is divergent from yet closely tied to Afropessimism, a paradigm and historicizing model that understands blackness as antagonistic to the Human and “freedom” as impossible without the destruction of civil society. Afropessimism conceptualizes blackness in toto as constructed by and for slavery and therefore 20 inextricable from it. I contend that the turbulent dystopia of Monáe’s sonic fiction expresses an Afrofuturist utopic desire marked by Afropessimist historicizing methods. Monáe’s dual deployment of these frameworks complicates the notion of them as dichotomous by demonstrating the political insight achieved through a political orientation toward both the future and the past. In the first half of this chapter, I argue that Monáe’s sonic fiction re-produces the alienation of slavery and its enduring effects in the alien-android dystopia of Metropolis through allegory. As one might loop a record sample through a sound synthesizer to distort and refigure it for a new music production, Monáe’s sonic fiction loops slave alienation through the alien future to render audible its reverberating discord for black Americans in the present. The historical dehumanization of the Afrodiasporic populations who were objectified as alienable aliens—foreign bodies that could be bought and sold—is recapitulated through a future characterized by android exploitation, commodification, and annihilation. In the second half of this chapter I discuss the hunting, degradation, and auctioning of androids in three of Monáe’s songs, “March of the Wolfmasters,” “Metropolis,” and “Many Moons,” theoretical aural sites which recall the savage deprecation, monetary valuation, and disposable treatment of black lives aboard slave ships and throughout the Americas. Monáe’s looping effect utilizes science fiction tropes and alien sonic qualities to refigure slavery’s embodied violence, challenging its erasure from the colonial record. The critical intervention of Monáe’s sonic fiction is its animation of the dehumanized black subject-as-object, resisting the hegemony of slavery’s alienating 21 forces. By embodying the android in her music and performance, Monáe allegorically animates the black voice silenced during slavery, the voice that continues to be suppressed under different guises today. I think with Monáe to conceptualize her project as activating the potential of futurist mythology to counter and transform the alienation and narrative suppression of black Americans. I read Monáe’s sonic fiction as a transmutation of historical black alienation into an alien, android future. The slave’s objectification renders her subjectivity silent and negligible, alienated from voice and historical record. Whereas the silence of the colonial archive mutes slave alienation and its reverberating legacy, Monáe’s sonic fiction gives voice to the inaudible by animating the android slave. It centralizes the resilient life force that emanates from the objectified and abjected. Afrofuturist visions such as this are not naively utopian, for they rely upon Afropessimist historical revisions to explicate the roots of the alienated conditions they seek to transform.

Intro+first verse+hook 🡪 intro to black fem k of pess.

# BlackHauntology

#### Afrofuturism rejects the common sense the props up cultural hegemony by allowing subaltern populations to take an active part in their subject formation and history. This rejects the timeline of European colonization and the creation of the Cartesian subject. Afrofuturists reject the idea of the “Human” in favor of the creation of one’s identity.

Dryhurst 12 (Andrew Dryhurst, " The University of Birmingham, School of English, Drama and American & Canadian Studies, Undergraduate , A Deconstructive Exploration of Afrofuturism, <https://www.academia.edu/29665498/A_Deconstructive_Exploration_of_Afrofuturism.pdf> )

“There is no modernity without coloniality, because coloniality is constitutive of modernity, and modernity is the name for the historical process in which Europe began its progress toward world hegemony.”20 Afrofuturism operates in future spaces that delineate the notion of modernity. It creates a discontinuity of experiences related to the past (i.e. contemporary ‘modernity’), allowing the artist or subject to craft their own organic perspectives and realities. Mignolo opines that the creation of the secular state created a new community of birth to replace the community of theology.21 The enlightenment notion of citizenship in a mono-national state colonised pluri-versal senses of belonging, and racial discrimination, a concept conceived to justify colonisation, mutated into the state’s ideas of citizenship. Kant’s ‘geopolitical ethno-racial tetragon matrix’ divided the world into ethnicities: yellows in Asia, reds in America, blacks in Africa, and whites in Europe.22 Whiteness became synonymous with Christianity and the secular state. The notions of state and citizenship were then projected beyond Europe as a universalised campaign of what Ramon Grosfoguel deems “epistemicide,”23 the extermination of knowledge and ways of knowing. Colonisation allowed Europe to construct a unique image of itself, an identity gauged by comparisons against an alterity defined as the ‘other’. The inception of statehood and citizenship crafted a secular discourse that “continued to program [people’s] hybrid ontogeny/sociogeny behaviours, by means of unmediated genetic programs.”24 Through the symbolic correlation of the mode of ‘I’ with the eusocial ‘we’,25 societally inscribed discourse reinforced the alienating, hierarchical structures of coloniality. The threat to statehood, and therefore humankind now came from one’s own intrinsic passions and desires. “Salvation/redemption could only be found by the subject able to adhere to the laws of the politically absolute state, and thereby the ‘common good’.”26 The expansive mercantilism that accompanied the rapid rise of the centralised state would come to justify the exploitation of ‘capital resources’ in the name of economic common sense for the greater good. The state legitimised the expropriation of the ‘New World’, and atrocities such as the Trans-Atlantic slave trade to the ‘rational’ peoples of Europe. The correlation between economic prosperity and governmental performance evolved the ‘other’ from a racial entity into an economic and political issue of contention. The global poor had become systemically expendable.27 As mercantilist economics became the status-quo, a new criterion emerged for the human: mastery of the scarcity of land and food, also known as ‘social Darwinism’. Only the strong, amidst rapid population growth, could overcome the challenge of scarcity. The impoverishment of the ‘native’ proletariat ostensibly represented “the bio-evolutionary determined incapacity of its members”28 to survive in the world of the competitive market. The cultural dominance of hegemonic powers has sometimes been described as the ‘prime modernity’. “The ideological basis of the hegemonic power’s rule lies in its ability to maintain cultural universality...[and] hegemonic cultural power rests upon the assumption that the prime modernity is desired by all, beneficial to all, and attainable by all.”29 I would agree that Decoloniality and Afrofuturism are subversive to the maintenance of a hegemonic universality. However, they both posit that the Eurocentric hegemon which they oppose asserts its power by imposing of a system of hierarchies, knowledge, and cultural norms through what Mignolo labels as, “the colonial matrix of power.”30 The colonial matrix of power refutes the, “[hegemon’s] assumption that the prime modernity is desired by all, beneficial to all, and attainable by all,” and instead portrays a more malevolent hegemon, fully aware that the rigid dynamics of its modernity are not beneficial towards or desired by the majority of its subjects. Those at the apex of the cultural hegemon understand the epistemic constraints of modernity relative to what Bordieu termed as ‘habitus, “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of generation and structuring of practices and representation.”31 Bourdieu’s use of ‘disposition’ emphasises the challenge in not only altering these structures, but also in their identification. How does one acknowledge something that is pre-disposed within them? Afrofuturists, I would argue, adopt a ‘Gramscian’ position in their understanding of the complex dynamics of modernity. There is a slight shift in the parallax of perspective that occurs with an understanding of modernity relative to Gramsci’s notion of ‘common sense’ rather than Bordieu’s ‘habitus’. In no way does this undermine the validity of Bordieu’s theory. In fact, with Gramsci’s understanding of ‘common sense’ as a disparate bundle of conventional understandings that constitute the sociological and ontological landscapes of an individual’s existence, there is still a gargantuan obstacle facing Decolonialists/Afrofuturists. Gramsci acknowledges that ‘common sense’ assists the cultural hegemon with the maintenance and reproduction of existing power systems, and that the horizons of ‘common sense’ are indeed problematic for the subaltern populations who are subjected to the hegemonic narratives. However, Gramsci also perceived ‘common sense’ to be a heterogeneous agglomeration of narratives that contains within itself the seeds for transformation.32 Thereby the potential for subversion exists within the deconstruction of the elements that are constitutive of ‘common sense’. In order to escape the horizons of ‘common sense’, Gramsci deemed it necessary,“to work out consciously and critically one’s own conception of the world and thus, in connection with the labours of one’s own brain, choose one’s sphere of activity, take an active part in the history of the world, be one’s own guide, refusing to accept passively and supinely from outside the moulding of one’s personality.”33 Therein lies the value of a Gramscian conception of modernity to the Decolonialists/Afrofuturists. Not only does Gramsci emphasise the importance of autonomous subjectivity formation, his rhetoric also lacks the etymological ‘fixity’ of the ‘disposition’ in Bordieu’s ‘habitus’. The Gramscian model is more conducive to understanding how things change than the ‘Bordieuan’ idea, which is only really suitable for explaining why things remain the same. The lineage of colonisation was both justified and consolidated by the evolution of a universal anthropocentric ontology in Europe, circa. 1492. Exogenous epistemologies, irrespective of their cultural and historical heritage, were dismissed in favour of a homogeneous, subjective rationality. Subsequent manifestations like the citizen and the stately society were modeled on the Manichean conditions that were ascribed to ‘humanity’. Afrofuturism unequivocally rejects any notion of a universal barometer for humanity in favour of the reclamation of cognitive space to form one’s own identity.

#### One should conceptualize identity as fractals in order to break from imposed identities and become empowered to transgress beyond the rules of their imagination. Fractal identity works toward constant complexification and unintelligibility of identity instead of a reductionist model (shitty tag but shrug). Afrofuturist countermemory is a distraction from linearity that opens the door to the future, the present, and micropolitical relationships.

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The cleansing of oppressive structures of a colonizing epistemology from one’s subconscious is a ferocious battle in which the Afrofuturist is constantly engaged. The speculative tools of Afrofuturism provide a framework for the exploration of **narratives** that exist beyond **empiricism**. Spaces are formed where formal and textual mediations are conducted to provide partial articulation for the deeper narratives that are occurring in the subconscious mind. Physicist Benoit Mandelbrot coined the word ‘**fractal**’ to describe a shape that revealed details at all scales. His research showed that upon closer inspection, the geometric composition of objects consisted of chaos, which, if inspected even closer again, displayed rhythms and patterns of order, so on and so forth53. The Euclidean world of straight lines and geometric shapes that had hitherto represented order was no longer objectively validated, and therefore neither was the essentialist rhetoric of fixed empiricism. The notion of ‘fractalness’ is a helpful starting point to analyse identity, something that Kodwo Eshun proclaimed to be, “[an] intermittent fluctuation [...] the epiphenomenon of convergent bodily processes.”54 By considering identity to be fractal in its composition, a subject is **no longer limited to a singular mode of being human.** The synthesis of a fractal identity is known as **heteronymity**. This collection of outsider identities **frustrates the implied values of the figure that exists as the ‘Other’**. “[The] heteronym, a many-name, one in a series of parallel names [...] distributes and disperses you into the public secrecy of open anonymity.”55 Through heteronymity one can break the subconscious social contract that was described by Sylvia Wynter. The codes of **ethnographic representation are reinvented** and rewritten by a multi-layered consciousness that releases the subject from the shackles of **imposed identity**, and empowers them to remake the rules that bind their imagination. In the words of Gilbert Simondon, “the living being resolves its problems not by adapting itself, which is to say, by modifying its relationship to its milieu... but by **modifying** itself through the invention of new **internal structures** and its complete self-exertion into the axiomatic of organic problems.”56 Heteronymity, and ‘heteronymously’ inspired artwork confront what Kobena Mercer refers to as the **‘politics of enunciation’**. The ‘politics of enunciation’ is the **differentiation in the connotative value of utterances that are denotatively mutual, based on the speaker’s racial and gendered identity**. Mercer asserts that texts have the power to, “overturn the notion that minority artists speak for the entire community [whilst beginning to address the] shift in politics of race and representation [that] forces us to question whether the racial identity of the black artist can serve as a guarantee or fixative for one’s reading of aesthetic and political value.”57 The individual elements of an abstract subjectivity each have their own depth, and are constantly changing, preventing any empirical confinement of a given subjectivity as a trait or characteristic. The act of **exploring the fluctuating nuances of cognition allows the subject to freely interrogate their, “post-modernit**y.”58 In ‘Chaosmosis an ethico-aesthetic paradigm,’ Felix Guattari wrote of ‘schizoanalysis, a concept that is synonymous with heteronymity. “Rather than moving in the direction of reductionist modifications which simplify the complex [schizoanalysis] will work towards its **complexification, its processual enrichment, towards the consistency of its virtual lines of bifurcation and differentiation**, in short towards its ontological heterogeneity.” 59 Through breaking with the norms of modernity, the **subject can use art to germinate a new cognitive synthesis**, producing mutated centers for the creation of subjectivities. That is to say, new ideas mutate from the realm of cognitive abstraction into new rhizomes, new perspectives, and new spaces for experimentation and creation. Unsurprisingly, music became the predominant medium that Afrofuturists use to pursue their heteronymity. “Ordinarily one thought that the function of the artist was to express himself and therefore he had to set up particular relationships. I think that this whole question of art is a question of changing our minds, and that the function of the artist is not self-expression but self- alteration, and the thing being altered is [...] his mind.”60 John Cage Chapter Five: Afrofuturism and Music “Music is a prophecy: its styles and economic organisation are ahead of the rest of society because it explores, much faster than material reality can, the entire range of possibilities in a given code. It makes audible the new world that will gradually become visible.”61 Jacques Attali The act of **heteronymity confirms inner space as an arena for the individual to define themselves away from generic labeling or stereotyping**. The exploitation of outer space too provides a license for one to create their own future, in a place where society didn’t perceive black people to be.62 Outer space is the future, an escape from demons of the past. The Afrofuturist extends the tradition of counter-memory, “reorienting the cultural vectors of Black Atlantic temporality towards the proleptic as much as the retrospective.”63 The ‘atemporal’ abstraction of linearity is a catalyst for the speculative acceleration into inner-space and its spaces within spaces, and into outer space, where there is a canvas for projections of the utopian. The Afrofuturist utilises technology as “a cultural space in which various forms of interaction and exchange, of mimesis and reversal, become historically possible.”64 The cybernetic synthesis of cognition and algorithm constructs networks of spatial architectures in the infinite landscape of the mind.

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As a dissection of all of the layers that combine to constitute a performance, the ‘Verfremdungseffekt’ is a relevant precursor to hauntology. Essentially, hauntology shares with Brechtian theatre the same function of deconstruction. The past is deconstructed and shown as it exists and is perceived from inside the present. Hauntology is about transcending the forcible reconciliation of representations as reality to focus on the social dimensions of these representations. Through deconstruction, these social dimensions are deconstructed and excavated until internal contradictions are discovered, and in turn, a space is carved out for alternatives. Hauntology exists in a temporal dyschronia where traces of lost futures spasmodically emerge from the past and unsettle the present. In an Afrofuturist context, “hauntology is the proper temporal mode for a history made up of gaps, erased names, and sudden abductions.”90 By reassessing the validity of historical texts and discourses that have so often proliferated the subjugation of people of the African diaspora, hauntology opens a space for the archaeological reevaluation, and the identification of new truths and narratives that had hitherto the point of observation remained undetected. Through deconstruction, the phantoms of history that cannot be ‘ontologised’ away91 are reintroduced into relevance and discourse, and the singular narratives associated with official historical record are shown to be incomplete. The aesthetic effect of hauntology can be applied to a wide variety of texts and subjects. As we will see in Krista Franklin’s ‘Money Folder’, the hauntological aesthetic arises from the contextual factors surrounding the image. Franklin’s collage technique abstracts the images in the piece and imbues them with new meanings that case a spotlight on the lurking specters of the past. Sampling and Collage in Afrofuturism Sampling and collage are mediums for cutting, ripping, and tearing apart normative culture, and the oppressive and hegemonic structures of society. They allow an artist to subvert linear narratives and ascribe a text with their own, personal meaning. The sample also empowers the viewer/listener to formulate their own perspectives, their own aesthesis Meanings of a text that have been established on face value are destroyed and hidden ones are revealed. Contrary to universal hegemony collage is “a metaphor for universal continuous change. It is both the result of a blind impulse and directed process. The transformation is driven by the desire of each entity to be itself, blending into a wider landscape where other objects interact.”92 Collage is one of the many techniques that Ohio born artist Krista Franklin uses in her work. In ‘Money Folder’ (Figure 1) she uses collage to construct an alarming scene where it is insinuated that the power of money and purported financial equality provides a sufficient premise with which to atone for, and forget the horrors of historical oppression. The central figure of the piece is a ‘black-faced’ vaudeville era performer whose face is awash with an expression of petrified helplessness. He is subserviently licking the white glove in his hand, an interaction that is notably highlighted by Franklin, as the man’s tongue is the only coloured element of an otherwise monochromatic figure. In black and white we have the circus of top hats, make up, and stage shows, all relics of the past. In the present, live and in colour, we have the pink tongue of subservience. Franklin shows that while it may not be as explicit or elaborate as it used to be, the power structures that reinforce the disparity between black and white are remain as effectual as ever The collage appears as a sequential layering of processes. The foundational layer has ‘Devant’, ‘Frente’, and ‘Fron’ (with a missing ‘t’) listed down, all of which mean ‘in front of’ in the three main colonial languages: English, Spanish, and French. This insinuates a disregard for the past, and a focus on the present. The next layer, a loose coupon for ‘Magic’ shaving powder, confirms the erasure of the past. ‘Magic’s’ logo is of a razor next to the words ‘no more trouble’. The powder is marketed as being “formulated for black men to help stop razor bumps.”93 The metaphor of a ‘smooth and clean shave’ is fitting for ‘Money Folder’. The folded edge of the coupon shows that it is being removed for use, presumably in an act to forget the ‘rough and bumpy’ past in favour of an embrace of the purported ‘smoothness’ of modernity. The packaging is enticing the black man to rid himself of the vicissitudes of his skin’s past. Dollar bills appear all over the collage, fragmented over the canvas and the only entity that interacts with every other piece of the artwork. Opaque hundred dollar bills provide the foundations upon which the character, the stereo player, and the advertisement lie. A translucent fifty-dollar bill disappears further as the coupon is extracted. The scene is a paradox. Without money one has no means to a voice, as portrayed by the stereo, gramophone, and mask, yet money is being spent to ‘remove’ the ‘razor’ sharp constituents of history. Meanwhile, the objects at the front of the collage lay benign. The stereo’s volume gauges indicate silence; the gramophone’s needle is set aside, and the mask lies dormant on its side with its eyes closed, dead. Culture has been rendered utterly helpless, and the voices of yesteryear have been shelved and silenced. Magic, according to parent company L’Oreal, “believe everyone should be able to celebrate his or her beauty with confidence. And for people of colour that means they should be able to express how they want to look, and, ultimately, who they uniquely want to be.”94 Krista Franklin refutes this ‘ultimate’ correlation. ‘Money Folder’ makes a statement that is akin to Mignolo’s ‘AestheTics vs AestheSis’ thesis, as Franklin unequivocally rejects the validity of a societal reconstruction that she regards are purely aesthetic. Aesthetic, surface transformations are in no way capable of exorcising the specters of the past. Sampling is the key theme of John Akomfrah’s 1996 film, ‘The Last Angel of History’, in which the main protagonist is known as the ‘Data Thief’. A metaphor for Afrofuturism, the ‘Data Thief’ travels through time acquiring artifacts of Afro-diasporic expression in an attempt to discover the ‘mothership connection’. The price that he pays for traveling through time is that he forfeits the right to be a part of his society’s modernity. The most effective form of data thievery is sampling, and, by utilising this method, The ‘Data Thief’ uses both the past to create new visions of the future, and the knowledge that he brings from the future to re-contextualise the past. For a population in which many have no base heritage, sampling is the motion capture and adaptation mechanism that is deployed for survival. Sampling is a means for navigating an experience of constant flux. Sonically, sampling allows for a simultaneous cross-referencing of generational creators in which all eras of black music are digitally immortalised. “Sonic futurism doesn’t locate you in tradition, instead it dislocates you from origins.”96 The sonic futurism breaks from genealogies, and rejects all notions of a compulsory black condition. Afrofuturist musicians travel through time, taking inspiration from their predecessors and collecting samples to surgically stitch together an innovative new creation. In the sonic realm, hauntology appears in the form of a sample. The sample disrupts the listener’s auditory experience, and adds a new dimension to the act of listening where the listener is cognizant of the intrusion into the present of a fragment of the past. The consequential fictions created by recursive sampling adopt meaning, and imbue past sounds with a layer of hauntological significance. Writing in 1957, Norman Mailer brilliantly articulated the dilemma of the Afrofuturist musician, “we are obliged to meet the tempo of the present and the future with reflexes and rhythms which come from the past; the inefficient and often antiquated nervous circuits of the past strangle our potentiality for responding to new.”97 Sampling is a means through which the musician can overcome this dilemma, and free themselves from the obligations and ‘choking’ grip of the past. Sonic hauntology allows for a diversion from the constraints on innovation that are caused by a linear continuation of the cultural narratives of the past, into a space of possibility that caters for the creation of new sounds that are unique to contemporaneity. Mark Fisher captured the synergy between Afrofuturism and ‘sonic hauntology’ perfectly, “Afrofuturism unravels any linear model of the future, disrupting the idea that the future will be a simple supersession of the past. Time in Afrofuturism is plastic, stretchable and prophetic – it is, in other words, a technologized time, in which past and future are subject to ceaseless de- and recomposition.”98

#### Blackness ought to be conceptualized as a hack constantly shifting and being redeployed. Blackness is a ghostly methodology, a technical hauntology in relation to whiteness.

Cokes 13 (Cokes, Tony. "Filmmaker's Journal:resonanz.01(2008â2013) Notes / Fragments on a Case of Sonic Hauntology." Black Camera 5.1 (2013): 220-25. Web.) JSW

I am developing resonanz.01, a video essay that ghosts, or thinks through and rearticulates Derrida’s concept of hauntology, as referenced in the above epigraphs, into relation to my reading of Paul Gilroy’s e Black Atlantic, in which he maps blackness as a transnational diasporic form whereby mu- sical, cultural, and political tropes, themes, and genres circulate via tech- nologies, particularly sound recordings. Given that sound recordings (like the texts that I ofen deform in my practice) are objects of commodity cir- culation and consumption for multiple publics in disparate contexts, they inhabit a kind of virtual space and time of future deployment, consumer desires, and potential abuse. By that I mean that these familiar forms are con- stantly being shifted, re-encoded, and re-circulated among nodes: their ori- gins are played, replayed, and displaced. My adaptation of Gilroy’s concept involves unsettling any notion of fixed historical origin, or essentialist notion of blackness, and thinking instead about how black cultural practices inhabit, shadow, and shift modern cultural forms in unexpected ways and contexts. This video case study will consider ways in which non-blacks participate in, retrofit, and complicate black cultures, not through appropriation, theft, or misappropriation (as these exchanges may have been traditionally enacted and described) but through reworking the logics, technologies, abuses, and improvisations that blacks themselves deployed to invent, reproduce, and circulate their historical and sonic interventions. It’s not about simply copy- ing or imitating a given image or static idea, as if there were an authentic mode. It’s about taking up a technology or structure (usually at some cul- tural or geographic distance from its normative use or tradition) and trying to produce differential originary meaning with it. I’m arguing that blackness is not an essence, but a hack (or series thereof), a method, a technological intervention under construction (and also under often dire social pressures) being coded, or played into existence daily. My work is an attempt to think blackness as an uncanny, ghostly methodology, that is, blackness as a criti- cal, technical hauntology in relation to whiteness.

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What does it mean to construct a visual form that functions as a concep- tual or imaginative symbol, not an illustration or caption for sonic (or other) content? What would a critique of neoliberalism or late capitalism look like, or sound like? I read Saville’s decision to use a series of layered radio waves from the first observed pulsar1 for the cover of Joy Division’s debut album Unknown Pleasures as either a muted, cryptic parody of normal marketing, or a simple refusal to reduce the encoded sound to pure commodity. (Joy Di- vision drummer Stephen Morris suggested the image afer he saw it in the Cambridge Encyclopedia of Astronomy.) Saville’s design strategy critiques the record industry’s commodi cation of music, particularly its simplistic, in- strumentalized identity branding, yet he presents this critical commentary as a minimal, oblique ghost layered into the album cover’s generic physical parameters. For example, another early cover for a di erent Factory artist borrowed a concept from the Situationist writer Guy Debord.2 at album came in a heavy sandpaper sleeve designed to damage other records when placed next to them on retail racks or collectors’ shelves. Saville practices a limited, zero-degree design. He treats the record cover as a sign, a too fa- miliar form strategically lef incomplete, or under erasure. My video will use a similar, modernist-derived, oblique image vocabulary. Images will be ab- stracted in order to serve as grounds for textual and sonic guration. My vi- suals will neither illustrate anything directly nor provide documentary evi- dence. resonanz.01 is less interested in reproducing the hindsight-bound biog- raphy of Ian Curtis (Joy Division’s lead singer and lyricist) than focusing on the band’s sound—a representational moment that is still unfolding sonic and allegorical futures: in shoegaze, grunge, and further out, from techno to dubstep and beyond. eir sound echoes well beyond any limited essential- ist idea of what rock was, can, or should be in relation to noise, the studio as instrument, or sound itself. What if one only wants to trace out the mean- ings and associations of the vinyl/digital artifact’s sounds? Listen to the sur- face noise of sound, the stutters of studio culture, the warped echoes of our traumas, fears, and desires. Willfully disregard the arti cial depth, sequence, and meanings of biography and narrative. Attend to the sound, space, the production and processing of our desire, and our listening. In the video I will argue that Joy Division’s sound, as sculpted by Martin Hannett’s production techniques, explores the dark space of post-industrial capital, tracing its paranoia and decay through sonic fragments, stuttered, displaced, sutured: a global, waking, shape-shifing nightmare (traumatic capital and its history?) that enslaved my ancestors and from which we have clearly still not awoken. is darkness at noon, this empire upside down and backward is today almost always mediated, recorded, produced (and this has been the case for over a century). It is perhaps most clearly docu- mented in sound, not music, and certainly Joy Division’s intervention is not just “white rock.” Yes, dear post-punks and Goths, blackness is both rock’s center and its margin. I am contesting the notion that punk, post-punk, or another rock genre is somehow less imbricated in blackness than rock’s preceding modes. Blackness is constitutive. Blackness is neither irrelevant nor acciden- tal. Blackness is everywhere. It haunts and it repeats. Or it repeats, then it haunts. Even when blackness is absent, silent, or invisible, it may still frame conditions of possibility for future sonic, visual, textual, or material legibility. Like the “Soul” circulated via black vinyl records that are heard, repeated, then tweaked and recoded locally, not just in Detroit, or in Memphis, but in Berlin, or Kingston, or in the north of England. In black music listening is not passive. It is a distributed, productive process or technology. This idea clearly informs the intertextual role that sound performs in my media prac- tice generally, where sound is ofen deployed in complementary or antago- nistic relation to the allegedly hegemonic visual or textual elements. For me sound always encodes labor, desire, history, and other social processes. Therefore, my work is in a zone where sound is neither natural nor neutral. In my multidisciplinary practice, sound is consistently at work complicat- ing other signifying systems. Joy Division’s sound is a transnational, technological condition. Ob- viously, it had local, speci c implications for Manchester— late 1970s, but these continue to reverberate elsewhere. One might argue that it didn’t really start in Manchester. Perhaps it started in Kingston, Jamaica, was ltered through 1970s London punk, reemerged in Bristol in the 1990s as trip-hop, and bangs out today via South London (Bristol or Baltimore) in dubstep’s killer bass. Dub is a critical in uence and sonic framing device. Dub’s use of the recording studio as instrument generates the altered time-space for subsequent concepts of dark modern life. It is this insistence upon recorded sound, its palpable depths—or perhaps better, its technological shadows, hal- lucinations, and sickly surfaces, far away from rock clichés like rawness or spontaneity—that makes Joy Division’s works listenable and still vital afer thirty years, still ringing in my ears. My video considers the traversals and interpenetrations of sonic and so- cial spaces set in motion by Joy Division’s collision of garage rock, dub, and punk that continue to inform and in ect equally dissimilar genres and prac- tices today. Precisely, it is the space of Martin Hannett’s production, with its delay/detour into noise, urban decay, and dubness that takes Joy Division so far away from punk and makes their reworking of Velvet Underground/ Stooges rock tropes, electronic noise, and motoric grooves borrowed from Germany (and their fated invention in the afermath of a Manchester Sex Pistols’ concert) more valid for me than their so-called original historical ut- terances. If Iggy Pop’s “ e Idiot” was indeed found on a hanged man’s turn- table, we can be sure that its sounds have been heavily processed, “corrupted from memory,” altered to function in a new/old depressed industrial land- scape (translated from Detroit to Manchester), rather than simply duplicated. All the recordings of “live” performances that I have heard attest admi- rably to Joy Division’s ability as a boundary-crossing post-punk band. How- ever, it is in the studio that their sound truly manifests its most unpredictable and di erential e ects. e recordings are meticulous sonic constructions bearing little resemblance to any rock performance, be it garage, punk, or grunge. Martin Hannett’s recording and mixing of a punk-infuenced band detours simple rock ri s through the aural palette of dub and la musique con- crète to displace and destabilize standard listening practice. This indeed was the sound of music. Tones, looped or slowed until durational, become drones. We hear shards, samples of breaking glass and crockery. Hums, creaking, and whooshings of machines. Beats with cavernous spaces around and between them. Times captured, slowed, reversed, scrambled, collaged with an ear to- ward spatial fragmentation and sonic hallucination. Brittle, bright percus- sion contrasted with deeply dull thudding basscapes. These elements con- geal into haunted, perfect settings for fragmented, urban tales of alienation and trauma.

# Afrofuturism NEG stuff

## Afrosurrealism K

### 1NC

#### Afrofurism constantly theorizes about an unattainable future- rather we need to recognize the future as NOW

**Chorbadzhiyska 17** (Phetogo Tshepo Mahasha, “The Topicality of Afro-Surrealism Today and Forever: A Critical Analysis of the ‘Afro-Surreal Manifesto’ by D. Scot Miller" )//KM

The theatricality of the manifesto is contained in its preoccupation with that same present in combination with the implications of the text’s genre. Even though the text was posted in 2009 and this is clearly noticeable on the blog’s web page, the manifesto possesses a performative quality that brings it to live every time a person reads it, creating the concept of the perpetual present. Although **Miller denies Afro-Futurism as a feature of Afro-Surrealism in his section on what Afro-Surrealism is not**, he clarifies that it is because it is a different movement involved with contemplating the future. Instead, Afro-Surrealism being situated and strictly interested in the present, considers the ‘RIGHT NOW’ a source of speculation about the future; there is ‘no need for tomorrow’s-tongue speculation about the future’. According to the author, the ‘future-past’, or the future’s past, is ‘RIGHT NOW’. Then he reiterates it with an example: ‘RIGHT NOW, Barack Hussein Obama is America’s first black president’. Due to the inevitable passage of time, politics, and history, Barack Obama is not a president of the United States at the time of this academic essay written in 2017. Nevertheless**, the phrase ‘first black president’ is a fact that will always be true of American history.** Thus, the sentence, and subsequently the manifesto, will be true in any Era they are ‘performed’ by being read. And there is a hint that this was Miller’s agenda from the beginning when he urges the necessity for Afro-Surreal art because of others’ works but also because of ‘the words you are reading right now’. Here the text is aware of itself and its importance, making it an agent in its own performativity. Therefore, **the Afro-Surrealist manifesto acts as an explanation of but also a manifestation of the aesthetics’ ideology and explores Afro-Surrealism’s treatment of time, origins and politics to prove the world’s necessity for it.**

#### The alternative is an embrace of the Afrosurreal as an act of community building within the present

**Miller 16** (D. Scot Miller, Columnist-In-Residence @SFMOMA @Open\_Space, author of The AfroSurreal Manifesto, poet, curator, teacher.) “Afrosurreal: The Marvelous And The Invisible 2016" October 2016 )//KM

To me, it’s a piece of art first and foremost; a declarative and evocative poem meant to speak directly to the first Futurist Manifesto, written by the Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, published in the Italian newspaper Gazzetta dell’Emilia in Bologna on February 5, 1909. I had engaged with that manifesto, and my many others, as I researched the arts manifesto in form and function through Mary Ann Caws definitive work: Manifesto: A Century of Isms. The rage and lust for speed, war, and misogyny spoke to pre-fascist Europe and influenced many of the artistic, social, and political movements for the last one hundred years. Though the first Surrealist Manifesto came fifteen years later, if you placed Futurism against Surrealism, it’s clear that Futurism and the illusion of progress overcame Surrealism. With the rise of Afrofuturism, I saw many of the same traits of Futurism becoming embedded in it. Afrofuturism began to reflect the same love for speed, the same belief in the superiority of technology over craft, and seemed to be working towards establishing nationalism within its core tenets. Though — or maybe because — Afrofuturism lacked the cohesion that a manifesto provides, it had begun to veer into superstition, anti-intellectualism, and exclusion. I believe that t**here were quite a few people who were witnessing the same thing, but were given no alternative**. The black avant-garde artist, the woman artist, the gay artist, the disenfranchised and under/mis-represented had nothing in the contemporary zeitgeist that speculated on a real-time, unifying, collective vision. On a personal level, **the discovery of The Afrosurreal was a liberating experience.** I crafted the manifesto as a dispatch from that initial zone of discovery. In one way, it was written as an attempt to undo a great error: the triumph of Futurism. In another, it was a call to the invisible inhabitants of these contested spaces to build community around, and through, the unique absurdity of our time. As I watch the manifesto continue to manifest, I believe what I see is Suzanne Césaire’s vision coming marvelously to fruition

#### Afrosurrealism is not one calcified ideology but rather consistently shifting, which gives us a BETTER way to solve for concrete struggles within the present

**Francis 13** (Terri Francis, Associate Professor in the Department of Communication and Culture at Indiana University, “The No-Theory Chant of Afrosurrealism" )//KM

Emerging in the mid-1920s, while the Harlem Renaissance was in bloom, surrealism’s own leading theoreticians initially avoided defining this conceptual term too concretely. “Surrealism proper [was] a [non]-genre specific aesthetic project of fusing life and art, dream and reality, conscious and unconscious experience.”3 Numerous manifestos by André Breton, surrealism’s leading nonleader, defined routes to the surreal, and the discussions they engendered pointed to the potential of surrealism without seeking to control the criteria of this output. It was a no-theory in the sense that the practice of surrealism was as important as, or perhaps even more important, than maintaining a theoretical position as such. Neither surrealism nor Afrosurrealism is a style, a set of criteria, an ideology, a genre, or even a coherent exploration. It is not a movement. It is an imaginary, magnetizing loosely related sensibilities and it certainly is a modernism connected to other forms of modernism such as the Harlem Renaissance, negritude, magical realism, and what Haitian novelist Jacques Stephen Alexis called marvelous realism. All are advance guard approaches to life and society from which intellectuals and artists drew inspiration as they sought to challenge convention. In a 1956 essay for the leading Pan-African journal of his day, Présence Africaine, Alexis spoke of the Haitian marvelous as one might speak of Afrosurrealism, writing, “What, then, is the Marvellous, except the imagery in which a people wraps its experience, reflects its conception of the world and of life, its faith, its hope, its confidence in man, in a great justice, and the explanation which it finds for the forces antagonistic to progress?”4 His discussion of Haitian uniqueness in other sections of the essay warrants much greater scrutiny than is possible here, but his ambition to situate and define the marvelous allows us to envision the many expressions of surrealism, as ethics and aesthetics that attach if fleetingly to this evocative term surrealism. Alexis’s essay closes with the goals or “objects of Marvellous Realism”: 1. To sing the beauties of the Haitian motherland, its greatness as well as its wretchedness, with a sense of the magnificent prospects which are opened up by the struggles of its people and the universal and the profound truth of life; 2. To reject all art, which has no real and social content; 3. To find the forms of expression proper to its own people… while employing in a renovated and widened form, the universal models, naturally in accordance with the personality of each creator; 4. To have a clear consciousness of specific and concrete current problems and the real dramas which confront the masses, with the purpose of touching and cultivating more deeply, and of carrying the people with them in their struggles. . . . There are many aspects, which need to be made clearer . . . there are many gropings and many errors ahead of us, but we shall know how to profit even by our mistakes, to reach as soon as possible what is already taking shape before our eyes, Work will settle all the rest.5 Here Alexis pens a manifesto that calls for nationalism, political engagement, and artistic production that unifies academic or “universal” traditions and the vernacular with the personal. Rather than isolating Haitian aesthetics he seeks “the profound truth of life” in the culture’s specificity. Particularly striking is his call to consciousness. He makes it clear that the marvelous is not an escape into some artistic nonreality. Rather, the artist is to “have a clear consciousness of specific and concrete current problems.” The marvelous or surrealism is in fact an acute awareness of reality, of “the real dramas which confront the masses.” For the artist carries the people, “cultivating more deeply.” The piece ends pragmatically but also enigmatically. The fourth goal listed is somewhat ambiguous as regards “the purpose of touching and cultivating more deeply, and of carrying the people with them in their struggles.” Who carries whom? The artist carries the people.

#### Specifically, Afrosurrealism provides a more inclusive framework for black, brown and Asian peoples to ALL theorize in a collective future

**Chorbadzhiyska 17** (Phetogo Tshepo Mahasha, “The Topicality of Afro-Surrealism Today and Forever: A Critical Analysis of the ‘Afro-Surreal Manifesto’ by D. Scot Miller" )//KM

Although by identifying a specific race, and thus making it a part of the black narrative, suggests a narrower public, Miller defends Afro-Surrealism to have a broad application due to its inclusive nature. Miller differentiates it from strictly African art by borrowing justification from Sartre who comments on the African Surrealism (‘[it] is revolutionary because it is surrealist, but itself is surrealist because it is black’, the latter part of which implies that being surreal because it is black means that its racial charge defines it as above reality). And yet the innovation of the aesthetics is its reimagined specificity. Miller outlines the inclusiveness of the term by referring to its etymology: ‘The root for ’’Afro-‘’ can be found in ‘’Afro-Asiatic’’, meaning a shared language between black, brown, and Asian peoples of the world’. Miller speaks of San Francisco and its decreasing black population by also expanding the danger: ‘No black people means no black artists, and all you yet-untouched freaks are next’. Continuing that line of thought, Miller adds later in practice number six that ‘Afro-Surrealism is intersexed, Afro-Asiatic, Afro-Cuban, mystic, silly, and profound’. Thus, Miller suggests Afro-Surrealism to be about belief and performativity; it can be anyone. It also implies that it is not grounded in black history only, black history is world history; it is grounded in the necessity for the discourse and the art at a perpetual present.

### Links

#### Afrofuturism remains locked into theorizations of the future –rather surrealism offers us the ability to look into the PRESENT

**Miller 09** (D. Scot Miller, Columnist-In-Residence @SFMOMA @Open\_Space, author of The AfroSurreal Manifesto, poet, curator, teacher.) “AFROSURREAL MANIFESTO" )//KM

Afro-Futurism is a diaspora intellectual and artistic movement that turns to science, technology, and science fiction to speculate on black possibilities in the futur**e. Afro-Surrealism is about the present. There is no need for tomorrow's-tongue speculation about the future.** Concentration camps, bombed-out cities, famines, and enforced sterilization have already happened. To the Afro-Surrealist, the Tasers are here. The Four Horsemen rode through too long ago to recall. **What is the future? The future has been around so long it is now the past. Afro-Surrealists expose this from a "future-past" called RIGHT NOW.** RIGHT NOW, Barack Hussein Obama is America's first black president. RIGHT NOW, **Afro-Surreal is the best description to the reactions**, the genuflections, the twists, and the unexpected turns this "browning" of White-Straight-Male-Western-Civilization has produced. THE PRESENT, OR RIGHT NOW San Francisco, the most liberal and artistic city in the nation, has one of the nation's most rapidly declining black urban populations. This is a sign of a greater illness that is chasing out all artists, renegades, daredevils, and outcasts. No black people means no black artists, and all you yet-untouched freaks are next. Only freaky black art — Afro-Surreal art — in the museums, galleries, concert venues, and streets of this (slightly) fair city can save us! San Francisco, the land of Afro-Surreal poet laureate Bob Kaufman, can be at the forefront in creating an emerging aesthetic. In this land of buzzwords and catch phrases, Afro-Surreal is necessary to transform how we see things now, how we look at what happened then, and what we can expect to see in the future. It's no more coincidence that Kool Keith (as Dr. Octagon) recorded the 1996 Afro-Surreal anthem "Blue Flowers" on Hyde Street, or that Samuel R. Delany based much of his 1974 Afro-Surreal urtext Dhalgren on experiences in San Francisco. An Afro-Surreal aesthetic addresses these lost legacies and reclaims the souls of our cities, from Kehinde Wiley painting the invisible men (and their invisible motives) in NYC to Yinka Shonibare beheading 17th (and 21st) century sexual tourists of Europe. From Nick Cave's soundsuits at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts to the words you are reading right now, the message is clear: San Francisco, the world is ready for an Afro-Surreal art movement. **Afro-Surrealism is drifting into contemporary culture on a rowboat with no oars, entering the city to hunt down clues for the cure to this ancient, incurable disease called "western civilization."** Or, as Ishmael Reed states, "We are mystical detectives about to make an arrest." A MANIFESTO OF AFRO-SURREAL Behold the invisible! You shall see unknown wonders! 1. We have seen these unknown worlds emerging in the works of Wifredo Lam, whose Afro-Cuban origins inspire works that speak of old gods with new faces, and in the works of Jean-Michel Basquiat, who gives us new gods with old faces. We have heard this world in the ebo-horn of Roscoe Mitchell and the lyrics of DOOM. We've read it through the words of Henry Dumas, Victor Lavalle, and Darius James. This emerging mosaic of radical influence ranges from Frantz Fanon to Jean Genet. Supernatural undertones of Reed and Zora Neale Hurston mix with the hardscrabble stylings of Chester Himes and William S. Burroughs. 2. **Afro-Surreal presupposes that beyond this visible world, there is an invisible world striving to manifest, and it is our job to uncover it**. Like the African Surrealists, Afro-Surrealists recognize that nature (including human nature) generates more surreal experiences than any other process could hope to produce. 3. **Afro-Surrealists restore the cult of the past.** We revisit old ways with new eyes. We appropriate 19th century slavery symbols like Kara Walker, and 18th century colonial ones like Yinka Shonibare. **We re-introduce "madness" as visitations from the gods, and acknowledge the possibility of magic.** We take up the obsessions of the ancients and kindle the dis-ease, clearing the murk of the collective unconsciousness as it manifests in these dreams called culture. 4. Afro-Surrealists use excess as the only legitimate means of subversion, and hybridization as a form of disobedience. The collages of Romare Bearden and Wangechi Mutu, the prose of Reed, and the music of the Art Ensemble of Chicago and Antipop Consortium express this overflow. Afro-Surrealists distort reality for emotional impact. 50 Cent and his cold monotone and Walter Benjamin and his chilly shock tactics can kiss our ass. Enough! We want to feel something! We want to weep on record. 5. Afro-Surrealists strive for rococo: the beautiful, the sensuous, and the whimsical. We turn to Sun Ra, Toni Morrison, and Ghostface Killa. We look to Kehinde Wiley, whose observation about the black male body applies to all art and culture: "There is no objective image. And there is no way to objectively view the image itself." 6. **The Afro-Surrealist life is fluid, filled with aliases and census- defying classifications.** It has no address or phone number, no single discipline or calling. Afro-Surrealists are highly-paid short-term commodities (as opposed to poorly-paid long term ones, a.k.a. slaves). Afro-Surrealists are ambiguous. "Am I black or white? Am I straight, or gay? Controversy!" Afro-Surrealism rejects the quiet servitude that characterizes existing roles for African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, women and queer folk. Only through the mixing, melding, and cross-conversion of these supposed classifications can there be hope for liberation. Afro-Surrealism is intersexed, Afro-Asiatic, Afro-Cuban, mystic, silly, and profound. 7. The Afro-Surrealist wears a mask while reading Leopold Senghor. 8. Ambiguous as Prince, black as Fanon, literary as Reed, dandy as André Leon Tally, the Afro-Surrealist seeks definition in the absurdity of a "post-racial" world. 9. In fashion (John Galliano; Yohji Yamamoto) and the theater (Suzan Lori-Parks), Afro-Surreal excavates the remnants of this post-apocalypse with dandified flair, a smooth tongue and a heartless heart. 10. Afro-Surrealists create sensuous gods to hunt down beautiful collapsed icons

### 2NC: AT:PERM

#### NO PERMS- drawing lines between afrosurrealism and afrofuturism is GOOD- clumping together two different forms of speculative fiction devalidates both fields of scholarship

**BLACK GIRL NERDS 15** (Guest Writer for Black Girl Nerds.com, a black feminist speculative fiction website) “Why Black Science Fiction Studies Matter" )//KM

My dissertation examines how AfroSurrealism differs from other forms of Black speculative fiction, such as Afrofuturism and the AfroFantastic, but underlying my research is the more serious question–why do these debates matter? Why should we attempt to delineate one type of speculative fiction from another? What are the dangers of not studying texts written by writers of color? And what are the risks associated with mislabeling or miscategorizing them? I’d argue that in science, **you label and classify in order to study, in order to understand**. Our minds have limited ability. We cannot sort through everything, and classifying information makes it easier for us to have a sense of how different ideas interact. It’s important to recognize that these categories aren’t fixed and sometimes interlap. For example, the Gullah web designer-visual artist Verneda Lights sometimes creates art that is traditional, AfroSurreal, or AfroFuturistic. The two pieces included in this post, “World Invisible: Garden of Eden” and “An American Girl,” are works that I would describe as AfroSurreal, rather than as AfroFuturistic or traditional, because they aren’t focused on the future or the past, but instead, seamlessly blend both. Lights, who is also a physician, poet, and entrepreneur, shows how difficult it can be to categorize art; contemporary artists often have diverse interests and create work that explores multiple themes. Yet today, many scholars are categorizing art in order to understand it. Alondra Nelson, Mark Dery, Ytasha Womack, and Marleen Barr have produced groundbreaking work in the category of Afrofuturism. Franklin Rosemont and Robin D.G. Kelley’s Black, Brown, and Beige along with Terri Francis’s AfroSurrealist film series and D. Scot Miller’s AfroSurrealist Manifesto have given us a foundation for studying AfroSurrealism. And in 2016, one of the largest conferences for writers and writing teachers, the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) will feature two speculative fiction panels featuring writers of color, “Octavia Butler and Her Legacy” and “Social Justice in Speculative and Fantastical Fiction for Young Readers.” **Black science fiction studies is growing, and I think that’s a good thing. Writers of color tend to be understudied, but the growing categorizations demonstrate that their work has value and is worthy of analysis.** We need to have these discussions. Anything we take seriously, we study. We need critics to analyze these texts, even if we later realize our hypotheses were wrong.

#### Afrosurrealism's focus on today and rejection of the role of tech makes the aff incompatible with the alt

**Womack 2012** (L. Ytasha, Afrofuturism: An Aesthetic and Exploration of Identity)//KM

“Afro-surrealists expose this from a ‘future-past’ called right now,” writes Miller. “Right now, Barack Hussein Obama is America’s first black president. Right now, Afro-surreal is the best description to the reactions, the genuine reactions, the twists and the unexpected turns this ‘browning’ of White-Straight-Male- Western-Civilization has produced.” “I honestly believe it’s the in-betweens,” Miller says. “It’s out- side of everyone’s comfort zone.” The manifesto’s tenets celebrate the invisible world and nature, the absurd and the whimsical, in depicting the beau- ties and dichotomies of the day. “Afro-surrealists use excess as the only legitimate means of subversion and hybridization as a form of disobedience,” Miller writes. “Afro-surrealists strive for rococo: the beautiful, the sensuous, and the whimsical.” With a penchant for masks, dandyism, and eighteenth-century aesthet- ics, Afro-surrealism decontextualizes the day. To quote surrealist poets Aime and Suzanne Cesaire, Afro-surrealism sparkles with “the marvelous.” The emphasis on today rather than the future, the minimal tech, heavy folklore, and mystical prism, according to Miller, makes an aestheti

### 2AC PERM

#### Perm do both- even if these are two distinct categories, futurism and surrealism overlap enough to make the perm feasible

**BLACK GIRL NERDS 15** (Guest Writer for Black Girl Nerds.com, a black feminist speculative fiction website) “Why Black Science Fiction Studies Matter" )//KM

My dissertation examines how AfroSurrealism differs from other forms of Black speculative fiction, such as Afrofuturism and the AfroFantastic, but underlying my research is the more serious question–why do these debates matter? Why should we attempt to delineate one type of speculative fiction from another? What are the dangers of not studying texts written by writers of color? And what are the risks associated with mislabeling or miscategorizing them? I’d argue that in science, you label and classify in order to study, in order to understand. Our minds have limited ability. We cannot sort through everything, and classifying information makes it easier for us to have a sense of how different ideas interact. It’s important to recognize that these categories aren’t fixed and sometimes interlap. **For example, the Gullah web designer-visual artist Verneda Lights sometimes creates art that is traditional, AfroSurreal, or AfroFuturistic.** The two pieces included in this post, “World Invisible: Garden of Eden” and “An American Girl,” are works that I would describe as AfroSurreal, rather than as AfroFuturistic or traditional, because **they aren’t focused on the future or the past, but instead, seamlessly blend both**. Lights, who is also a physician, poet, and entrepreneur, shows how difficult it can be to categorize art; contemporary artists often have diverse interests and create work that explores multiple themes.

## Afro PIK

#### We endorse the entirety of the 1AC sans their use of the prefix- AFRO

#### The use of the prefix Afro- arrests the radical potentiality of the affirmative

**Mahasha 13** (Phetogo Tshepo Mahasha, “Art Criticism: is the prefix ‘Afro-’ (as in “Afro-futurism”) arresting our imagination and manifesto salesmanship?" )//KM

The prefix ‘afro-’ has acquired a parasitic character, leeching off manifestos. And **it has the capacity to arrest African imagination, so that the African imagination follows other manifestos, only to attach itself to them and never coming up with an original of its own**. Couple this with an observation that I made: a blog tagged and listed musician Simphiwe Dana as an Afrofuturist, which I found a bit offsetting because the context in which the art was and is being produced, is in a way minimized. The purpose of this essay is to clarify my own ideas of Art Criticism about the use of the ‘Afro-’ prefix, The African Renaissance and African art, and perhaps try to point a way forward for myself. As writing this essay lead to the discovery of my own limits of essay writing talent, I would say this is a ‘personal essay’ that guides my own thinking, as I can’t really claim it is definitive. Mothership Mothership The prefix ‘Afro-’ A prefix modifies a word/statement. The prefix ‘Afro-’ as used in art criticism modifies existing manifestos. In my opinion, it does not promote the generation of wholly new ideas and manifestos, but only the modification of the creativity of others. The prefix ‘afro-’ has acquired a parasitic character, leeching off manifestos: **Afro-Surrealism, Afro-Punk, Afro-Futurism and Afro-etc. I** think it has the capacity to arrest African imagination, so that the African imagination only follows other manifestos, only to attach itself to them and **never coming up with an original of its own**. I wouldn’t have a problem with it because creativity is about modifying elements that are already there to create something new, but given what’s out there at this point I have an objection. Just a quick internet search reveals that the movie The Matrix is listed as Afro-futurism on some websites. It can go to the point where Afro-futurism can only be about a person of colour in a future space, when in fact for a project like ‘The Matrix’, the faces and races are interchangeable, it would still be what it is without black people in it. I read an Afro-Surrealist manifesto written by D. Scot Miller and it had me asking a few questions. In this manifesto, Miller outlines what isn’t Afro-Surrealism. He writes, “Afro-Surrealism is not surrealism.” “…Leopold Senghor, poet, first president of Senegal, and African Surrealist, made this distinction: ‘European Surrealism is empirical. African Surrealism is mystical and metaphorical.’” And then he says of Afro-Surrealism, “[it] presupposes that beyond this visible world, there is an invisible world striving to manifest, and it is our job to uncover it.” And he goes on to say, “Afro-Surrealists restore the cult of the past. We revisit old ways with new eyes. We appropriate 19th century slavery symbols, like Kara Walker, and 18th century colonial ones, like Yinka Shonibare. We re-introduce ‘madness’ as visitations from the gods, and acknowledge the possibility of magic. We take up the obsessions of the ancients and kindle the dis-ease, clearing the murk of the collective unconsciousness as it manifests in these dreams called culture.” Miller claims that Afro-Surrealism is NOT Surrealism. And then he goes on to define something that’s different from ‘Surrealism’ and calls it ‘Afro-Surreal’. My question when I read Miller’s Manifesto was why call it Afro-Surrealism if it is not Surrealism? Why prefix the word Surrealism with ‘Afro-’? Most importantly, since it is so different from surrealism, why not call it something entirely new? Miller considers The Neptunes early music Afro-futurist. Would that same music if it was produced by a person of a different race still be considered Afro-futurist? What made it fundamentally Afro-futurist except for race?

### Aff Answers

#### Afro acts as a way to tie our performance of futurity to race

**Chorbadzhiyska 17** (Phetogo Tshepo Mahasha, “The Topicality of Afro-Surrealism Today and Forever: A Critical Analysis of the ‘Afro-Surreal Manifesto’ by D. Scot Miller" )//KM

The focus of Afro-Surrealism is the present but it does not deny succession of time and the importance of the past as an agent in shaping the ‘now’. In point three of the Afro-Surrealist practices, Miller admits its link to the past but only in its purpose to be reimagined in the present. His exact words are: ‘Afro-Surrealists restore the cult of the past. We revisit old ways with new eyes’.[8] Thus, there is not a contradiction, according to the manifesto, between the name and the ideology of Afro-Surrealism as it might have been suggested by Mahasha. The preceding movement of Surrealism, according to a manifesto by Andre Breton, merges reality with fantasy to create ‘a kind of superior reality’[9]. When Miller speaks of the strategies of Afro-Surrealism – the ‘use of excess as the only legitimate means of subversion’, it is evident that the **new aesthetics do not only combine but also build upon the end product of reality** and fantasy. Then, if the new movement is interested in modernizing and politicizing the past in the present, the addition of a prefix to a pre-existent term is in line with the purpose of Afro-Surrealism art. Having in mind the importance of the present to Afro-Surrealism, the ‘Afro’ prefix in the name hints at that same present’s treatment of race. It also shows that the **new aesthetics do not only reimagine artistic but also human history.**

1. Wilderson, III, Frank B., Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010, 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Spillers, Hortense. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe."*Diacritics*. (1987): 66. Print. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid, 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1i3000.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Spillers, 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)