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The figuration of black gender ruptures the axis of critical theory, which assumes political prescription as the logical departure from the descriptive gesture to think violence. Simply stated, black gender disallows political orientation to unthink the stasis of its conditions of violence, whether the offered prescription is ‘real’ or ‘imagined.’ Violence is locked in the celebration and the disavowal, the embrace and repulsion of blackness as genre, which is not exclusive to logics of gendering but presents a profound nexus there. This is to say violence, as a paradigm not solely conducive to a singular act enraptures blackness prior to and in excess of subject categorization. This statement is not illusive or hypothetical in its orientation, nor does it dismiss the specificities of black life. Contrarily so, the point here is to apprehend how deeply entrenched violence reveals itself when blackness is engaged critically from the perspective of thinking suffering at the level of being when theory attempts to blacken the world versus whiten (or more aptly so de-blacken) the scope of engagement.

This chapter is developed as a further introspection into and elaboration upon a previous argument I presented along with Frank B. Wilderson III in our co-authored piece entitled “The Violence of Presence: Metaphysics in a Blackened World” (Douglass and Wilderson 2013). We ground our premising logic in the following, “Ideally, philosophers (studying metaphysics) and critical theorists (studying the relational status of the subject) should not be able to labor without contemplating the
violence which enables Black (non)being; but, in fact, the evasion of Blackness-qua-violence is what gives these disciplines their presumed coherence” (Douglass and Wilderson 2013, 2). Our point was to briefly examine the theoretical labor of Elaine Scarry in *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (1985) and Jasbir K. Puar in *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (2007) as both representative of seminal works that in some ways shifted institutional discussions on subject violence. Yet the assumptive logic that undergirds each argument presents an evasion of a conversation on violence that is limitless in its essence and application, that being black specific violence. Furthermore, as demonstrated in the case with Puar, which I will take up more in depth here, any such attempts to theorize violence using black bodies, and particularly black women as the location to think modes of violence, the theory is marked as antiquated and counterintuitive to the subject’s theoretical progression towards liberation.

Where I intend to carry this argument forward is in terms of thinking “the evasion of Blackness-qua-violence” in two respects. First by examining the tendency to accuse the indictment as the cause of violence. As in the case with the attempt to give a description of black violence, the descriptive gesture itself is rendered both the cause and the further perpetuation of the violence it seeks to name and identify. This is especially the case when the theorists attempt to wallow in the contradictions of violence as a condition of black existence. The assessment of black violence on a meta-level demonstrates many inadequacies in the prescriptive response’s (in)ability to remedy the totality of the problems at hand. Also, the ease towards prescription over description can underestimate the extent to which the violence has permeated the realms of life. Secondly, a more insidious tendency of the evasion of blackness-qua-violence is to take issue with the ‘imperfect’ nature of the subject at the center of theories of violence, when that subject is black. By disqualifying the black subject at the center of investigation, the newly emerged theory is often times assumptively no different in terms of its theoretical understandings of violence. The only shift is who is seen as a more viable subject to place at the center of these seemingly nuanced theories of violence over and in-lieu of privileging black bodies. While the black body is not effaced completely from the logic, the theory makes clear that while blacks can be included they need not and cannot be the center of theoretical inquiry if others are to retain possibility through prescription.

In the second chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), “The Women of Color and the White Man,” Frantz Fanon critiques *Je Suis Martiniquaise* by Mayotte Capécia in a manner that has been widely deemed by feminist scholars as a sexist engagement with a feminist literary text (Bergner 1995; Chow 1999). Fanon approaches the text out of a forced necessity as he writes, “The enthusiastic reception that greets this book in certain circles forces us to analyze it” (Fanon 1967, 42). *Je Suis Martiniquaise* was
lauded by French literary circles, which contributed to Capécia being the first Black woman to receive the coveted award *Grand Prix Littéraire de Antilles* (Sharpley-Whiting 1998). However, this same reception was not felt amongst Fanon or Negritude writers during this political moment (Sharpley-Whiting 1998). Fanon most troubled by Mayotte Capécia, the protagonist in the novel who also shares the name of the writer, who “asks nothing, demands nothing, except a bit of whiteness in her life” (Fanon 1967, 42). Capécia, the protagonist, works as a laundress in her adult life, who upon finding out that her maternal grandmother was white reenvisions her life through the libidinal possibility she feels being a product of “mixture” and also contemplates what her life could have been if whiteness permeated her existence further, “made up my mind that I could never love anyone but a white man, a blue-eyed blond, a Frenchman” (Fanon 1967, 47).

Most notable critiques of Fanon, such as the one presented by Susan Andrade, suggests that

Fanon launches a virulent critique of Mayotte Capécia, using her first-person narrative as a transparent paradigm of black alienation, even comparing her to the arch-racist, Gobineau. His reading permits no ironic distance between the author and her first person narrator… Most damning of all, he accuses Capécia and, by extension, all Caribbean women of color who marry lighter men (either white or mulatto), of ‘lactification,’ or attempting to whiten the race (Andrade 1993, 219).

Fanon indicts Capécia for representing a certain tendency toward blackness, which is in no way presented as a representative critique “all Caribbean women of color” writ large. Instead he is concerned with how Capécia narrates, assumedly both the author and the protagonist, the demarcation of existence in white and black terms. He takes particular issue with the insistence by Capécia that “All I know is that he had blue eyes, blond hair, and a light skin, and that I loved him” which Fanon rearticulates to mean, “I loved him because he had blue eyes, blond hair, and a light skin.” Fanon heeds this warning before proceeding with a deeper reading of the text, “We who come from the Antilles know one thing only too well: Blue eyes, the people say, frighten the Negro” (Fanon 1967, 43). The “we” symbolizes not simply Caribbean men of color but Caribbean people of color, black people, who Capécia manically seeks to distance herself from. This distancing is both gendered and ungendered simultaneously. However, Capécia is equally enamored with thoughts of having a white grandmother, the potentials of life had she had a white father, and her beckoning possibilities for marrying a white man all while seeing black men as useless and potentially harmful aspects of her dreams. However there is one factor that is essential to her logic of transformation. It is not simply that whiteness must be embraced and black men effaced but that Capécia herself as a black woman be erased to open up
the blockage towards her transcendence. “If she [her mother] had married a white man, do you suppose I should have been completely white?” (Fanon 1967, 47).

Fanon’s proclamation that “I know nothing about her,” (Fanon 1967, 180) in reference to a particular trope of black womanhood, triggers Rey Chow in “The Politics of Admittance: Female Sexual Agency, miscegenation, and the formation of community in Frantz Fanon” to assert Fanon perceives, “women of color are all alike: in spite of the differences in pigmentation between the Negress and the mulatto, for instance, they share a common, ‘nauseating’ trait —the desire to become white—that can be generalized in the form of ‘every woman’” (Chow 1999, 39). In attempts to lodge a conversation about race vis-à-vis gender in Black Skin, White Masks, Chow concludes “black subjection” in the text “is premised on the irreducible (racial) difference between black and white people, thus, Fanon’s descriptions of the women of color are paradoxically marked by their non-differentiation, their projection (onto femininity) of qualities of indistinguishability and universality” (Chow 1999, 39). However this reading displaces and elides the description of being that invokes the statement “I know nothing about her.” It is not that Fanon knows nothing about “her” as a conflated representation of all women of color, black women in this context, but that he knows nothing of “her” that carries the same or similar fantasy of being “raped by a negro” the “psychosexuality of the white woman” (Fanon 1967, 179). Yet Chow implies that what Fanon describes as a psychic trait of white womanhood in fact “indicates that all women fantasize being hurt in sexual acts” (Chow 1999, 45). What is revealed at this moment in Black Skin, White Masks is not about the act of rape itself but about the embodiment of rapeability and power inherent in the fantasy of one’s own rape, which is racially distinguished.

There is nothing common to all women about the rape fantasy. In fact this fantasy is a power white women possess over black men and black women alike. Black women cannot fantasize into being something that they have always already been deemed to be at the level of ontology, rapeable. In fact this is what Fanon is seeking to suggest by saying “I know nothing about her.” Fanon is not omitting histories of sexual violence nor is he suggesting that the actual act of rape is by fault of women. Instead in this psychoanalytic engagement with blackness, Fanon is setting up a distinction between white women and black women by refusing to allow the perception of their assumed equal vulnerabilities to violence to prevail. The fantasy of “the woman of color” cannot will her own rape as an emblem of her own power, she cannot be “the woman who rapes herself” as Fanon describes white female sexual desire. The instance on knowing nothing about her symbolizes that Fanon knows nothing about a condition of black womanhood that is tethered to a human community of women universally situated by violence and desire, in-
stead his readings of *Je Suis Martiniquaise* demonstrates a reading of black
gender that is constituted by a violent relationship of what it means to be
black in the world.

What Andrade, Chow and other critics of Fanon impose upon his
reading of Capécia, is that the concern expressed by Fanon begins and
ends with accusations towards her behaviors as a woman thus by exten-
sion functions as an indictment of all women. However such critiques are
largely ill-equipped to engage the diagnosis Fanon is attempting to work
through, albeit it frustratingly so, which sees Capécia novel and its lauded
reception by whites as demonstrating a truth about existence that “every
woman in the Antilles” somehow knows, is that black women are
“trapped in a valued-less existence” (Sharpley-Whiting 1998, 33) sutured
by blackness. For Fanon, “what Mayotte wants is a kind of lactification,”
or in other words “the race must be whitened,” the desire is to “whiten
the race, save the race” this all “to avoid falling into the pit of nigger-
hood” (Fanon 1967, 47). The form of “valued-less” “niggerhood” Capécia
seeks refuge from in the text is black womanhood and all that it repre-
sents. Yet the critics of Fanon supplant his indictment of Capécia as a
characteristic of his critique, shifting the diagnosis to falsely occupy the
position as the cause of her suffering.

T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting critiques of the critiques of Fanon in the
chapter “Fanon and Capécia” by taking seriously Fanon’s diagnoses in
“The Woman of Color and the White Man.” Sharpley-Whiting extrapo-
lates and takes forward what the critics of Fanon were critically unable to
account for, Capécia’s own distain for black women. The inability to
render this loathing of black women, both self and other, as a symptom
worth exploring is overshadowed by an incessant impulse to think sex-
ism as the driving force of oppression towards Capécia by way of Fanon.
Taking sexism as the center of black female oppression reduces and less-
en the purviews of blackness-qua-violence with respect to gender. It
displaces black violence with a conception of human violence that situ-
ates all women in a human community sublated by their assumed equal
potential for gendered harm. Thus it leaves what is particularly ‘black’
about the situation of gender in *Je Suis Martiniquaise* unattended to and
essentially tacked onto conceptions of gender violence. Drawing on the
work of Anna Julia Cooper, Sharpley-Whiting ask that we take serious
the following, before engaging with the issues at hand in *Je Suis Martini-
quaise* “To ask blacks what they are worth is in fact to ask them to justify
their presence, the continued existence” (Sharpley-Whiting 1998, 32). The
symptoms Capécia exhibits in the text speak to an unconscious valuation
of the impossibilities of black life, represented centrally in black woman-
hood, which is affirmed by a world order of valuation enacted through
violence.

“Blackfemmephobia” for Sharpley-Whiting is what is situated at the
center of Capécia’s desires, arguing that “Fanon’s impatient, dismissive
reading of Capécia is not related to her interracial relationship proper" (Sharpley-Whiting 1998, 41) but “exhibited in her oftentimes contemptuous and stereotyped sexualized portraits of black femininity, in which the heroine incessantly tries to situate herself as ‘different’ from, or one step above black women” (Sharpley-Whiting 1998, 43). The assumption that blackness functions in the texts as that which can be effaced “lovingly” seemingly without violence is in fact a falsity. As Sharpley-Whiting goes on to argue, “The articulation of love without racial malaise or exoticism guides Fanon’s critique. Love—more specifically white male love—as a strategy of evasion/redemption, as a moyen through which to liberate oneself from black female body and hence the historical reality of black femaleness, is as futile as the mimetic strategies deployed in language” (Sharpley-Whiting 1998, 42). While Capécia desires the love of white men her right to possess love is configured by her distinction from and distain of black womanhood. In order for her to be loved there must remain a class of women for which love is not a possibility, and for which the violence of their condition is justified by the inability to transcend their inherent dysfunctions.

Unlike Chow, who reads gender in Black Skin, White Masks as meaning either “woman of color is either a black traitor (when she chooses the white man) or a white woman (when she chooses a black man)” (Chow 1999, 46), Sharpley-Whitening challenges this perception by engaging the shades of grey with respect to blackness and gender in Je suis martiniquaise that might point more aptly to Fanon’s disposition towards the text. “For Capécia... her heroine is consistently rendered no necessarily white but, most importantly, not black” (Sharpley-Whiting 1998, 43), thus adding another element to consider which is wholly unconsidered by Chow. It is not so much a matter of being situated black in contradistinction to white and vice versa but instead about a level of proximity to blackness which assesses value along a scale of gradations where “whiteness is undoubtedly... the ultimate goal” (Sharpley-Whiting 1998, 43) but is not the only space for which black devaluation is charted. What Sharpley-Whiting reveals is that Capécia, the novelist, demonstrates a distain for blackness that is perhaps more intensive than Fanon’s position that Capécia, the protagonist, “proceeds to turn her blackness into an accident” (Fanon 1967, 46).

La Negresse Blanche, written two years after Je suis martiniquaise, by Mayotte Capécia is where “the desire to transcend black femininity... becomes ever-pressing” (Sharpley-Whiting 1998, 43). Isaure the protagonist in La Negresse Blanche “struggles with her racially identity... She cannot be a mulâtresse, but she will not accept the term négress” (Sharpley-Whiting 1998, 45). Blackness bars their entrance into the French human community. Isaure asserts her racial ambiguity against the unflinching racial markings of other black women. For Isaure black women possess an innate quality to eat their ears and possess skin to black to blush.
Isuare offers herself ultimate credence against her maid Lucia asserting “Since her distant ancestors, imported by slave traders from the time of Father Labbat, there must not have been any mixing in her ancestry. Not a drop of white blood” (Capécia 1997, 34). Lucia’s slaverseness locks her into an objective existence as the being of ‘the most pure African type’ determined at the level of her body. As Sharpley-Whiting argues in regards to Isuare’s descriptions of Lucia, “This black woman is reduced to her base corporeal, specifically sexual, function” furthermore “for Lucia, love is sex, and sex is love. Thus her love story, or rather love stories are ones driven by sheer need for satiation” (Sharpley-Whiting 1998, 47). To put this point another way, Lucia devours that which is near her and in order not to be devoured by what she represents Isuare is guided by an incessant need to mark herself as existing without any of the characteristics of being that emerged Lucia into the world, all of which were born of slavery.

Assessing the centrality of racelessness in Isuare’s disdain for black women, Sharpley-Whiting poses a few questions that I would like to move forward with. “Why does she at the novel’s end seek to exile herself to a country where she is neither black, nor white, but ‘raceless’? And finally, how does this self-imposed exile and desire to flee blackness cloaked in ambiguity of racelessness relate to her contempt for black women?” (Sharpley-Whiting 1998, 47). The function of raceless, beyond both black and white, subject positioning is an essential positioning from which to think the presence of violence in relationship to blackness. The propping up gesture performed by Capécia and Isuare, to assert themselves as capable of love and life in contrast to embodying worthlessness and lifelessness epitomized by black womanhood is insidious engagement with blackness that is found in many places. However this engagement with black gender as the ultimate other, is often elided or misrecognized in critiques of gender that do not aptly assess black gender as a formation all its own. The universalism of gendered violence as a theoretical model to apprehend the truth of suffering for black women will always fall short of accounting for just how black womanhood disfigures understandings of the role gender and sexual violence play in the configuration of blackness.

Miss Moore as she is presented is “[t]he only woman on the block with no first name” (Bambara 1972, 90). She is “happy headed” and uses “proper speech” which we can assume is resultant from the fact that she is college educated. Of all the things about her she is hated, just like the winos who made this Harlem neighborhood unlivable. Or at least this is how Sylvia,
the sassy young protagonist in *The Lesson*, a short story by Toni Cade Bambara, introduces her to us, the readers. She is “black as hell” and is just as laughable as “the junk man who went about his business like he was some big-time president” but somehow the parents of the children on this block entrusted them to her to “take responsibility for the young ones’ education,” though she to them was “not even related by marriage or blood.” All the while the adults talked about her “behind her back like a dog.” Yet, she held some level of respect, enough for the children to engage her teachings and for the adults to entertain her sachets, gingerbread, books and of course again, their children.

Fat butt, Flyboy, Rosie Giraffe, Mercedes, June Bug, Q.T., Sugar, and Sylvia, joined Miss Moore for a lesson on a hot summer day, though they’d much rather “go to the pool or to the show where it’s cool” referring to both the temperature and the aesthetic posturing of those their age, yet they are with Miss Moore, who is assumedly from all her descriptive weight, uncool and heavy on this hot day. Or they’d prefer spending time going to “the Sunset and terrorizing the West Indian kids,” but no they’ll stay for the lesson today, because even such a desire could be rounded in by Miss Moore who would certainly turn this moment into a lesson about “brotherhood” (Bambara 1972, 90). So instead of fleeing the cab that Miss Moore hails for them, giving them five dollars and instructing that they calculate the tip upon arrival to their destination at exactly ten-percent, they follow her lead and end up on Fifth Avenue. Not jumping ship, as they desire, and going to the first bar-b-que they can find, but arriving at a place where, “everyone is dressed up in stockings. One lady in a fur coat, hot as it is.” This because as Sylvia put its “[w]hite folks is crazy” and well, Miss Moore has a lesson to give (90).

These eight black children and the black woman who teaches them arrive at F.A.O Schwartz, emotionally the context of the lesson in this moment seems befuddled. Why thrust these children into a world, so unfamiliar and so wrought with the potential to harm their young psyches? Why here when along the way the children present such complicated and complex relations with one another that the lesson, or lessons, can be found there? See Sylvia calls “Flyboy a faggot anyways, ” Junebug punches Q.T. around, Sylvia and Sugar are perturbed by Mercedes, and overall the relations between the young ones are muddles with lessons on gender, sexuality, class, feminism, camaraderie, and a host of other conflicts that exist within the world. Yet, they arrive at F.A.O Schwartz, a designer toy store, close to their neighborhood, a place where none of them seem to have ever been. And they are presented with four hundred and eighty dollar paper weights as Miss Moore describes that are “made of semi-precious stones fussed together under tremendous pressure” (Bambara 1972, 90), yet the kids haven’t the slightest clue what it is for, why it is so expensive, and value it has for their lives. But Miss Moore explains “it’s to weigh paper down so it won’t scatter and
make your desk untidy,” though none of these children have a desk or a
designated space for homework. Sylvia makes clear “she know damn
well what our homes look like cause she nosys around in them every
chance she gets” (Bambara 1972, 91). Flyboy exclaims, “I don’t even have
a home” (Bambara 1972, 91) yet they are at this toy store musing over
items that cost more than their common sense will allow for understand-
ing. Sailboats for one hundred ninety-five dollars, so expensive Sylvia
becomes infuriated because “[w]ho’d pay all that when you can buy a
sailboat set for a quarter at Pop’s, a tube of glue for a dime, and a ball of
string for eight cent?” (Bambara 1972, 92).

Though it seems more fitting to ask, who would taunt these children
with a world built on their exclusion, harming their emotional well-being
by placing directly in their faces what they cannot own, what they per-
haps may never have? However we learn that for Miss Moore it was
never her intention to entice the children with a desire to possess these
things, although some left yearning to acquire what they saw. However
Sugar got to the crux of the larger structural analysis at the heart of Miss
Moore’s lesson by saying “I don’t think all of us here put together eat in
a year what that sailboat cost” (Bambara 1972: 95). This prompts Miss
Moore to say, “[i]magine for a minute what kind of society it is in which
some people can spend on a toy what it would cost to feed a family of six
or seven. What do you think” (Bambara 1972: 95)? Sugar responds “that
this is not much of a democracy” (Bambara 1972: 95). When pressed
about any further lessons learned for this day Sylvia says nothing, runs
off and rejoices that she still have four dollars left over from the cab ride
and the money belongs to Miss Moore.

If we stop to evaluate Miss Moore’s lesson outside of the performance
of what she taught, how she taught it, and other things she performative-
ly missed or didn’t engage in her teaching of the children, there appears
another lesson. Miss Moore exists as a double entendre. She signifies as
she speaks and as she is silent. She is symbolic is her actions and appear-
ance. She inhabits a liminal space as a dual invocation, both present and
absent. Returning to the text to gauge “the lesson” not as Miss Moore
presents it in action but as she is presented to us in description, another
tale unfolds. Her “nappy hair,” “black as hell” complexion suggests that
she is situated in the language of asexuality, though her inability to read
within a normative framing lends her to the text, I argue, as a queer
figure. She is illegible to the heterosexual narrative arc, as “Miss” Moore,
which connotes that she is not married and her care of other’s children
suggests she has none of her own. Sylvia’s honest and critical description
of her makes it feel as if she is other, different, somehow separate from
everyone else in the text. She is monstrous with skin so dark and feet
“fish-white and spooky” and soulless because she looks like she’s always
going to church but “she never did.”
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Although descriptively Sylvia labors hard with charged language to mark Miss Moore as other by the end of the story Sylvia is speechless because she seems to have come to terms with the familiarity of Miss Moore’s position in the world in a similar context to her own. Though Miss Moore as a figure lends herself to a queer reading, I argue that the entire community relation of this poor black post emancipation depiction of Harlem is queer in its emergence and timeless existence. Children looked after by a woman of no known relation, unable to inhabit innocence with “cluttered up parks and pissed” on walls and stairwells, homelessness, poverty, and overall precariousness with regards to sociality. The “block” as Sylvia refers, is marked by murkiness that is structurally violent in form and function. The block represents in this case Harlem, but more broadly speaking the constitution of blackness across space and time. The block is everywhere and nowhere, it is precarious in its dual invocation. What situates it antagonistically with the world is the persistence that the actors on the block must perform their way out of this liminal violent space, as if their actions were what created its grasps over their non-existence. So Miss Moore carries that weight of the expectation that she will and should teach and act against all things that stand in her way, near her, or are perceived as what should be her concerns. She bears a heavy load.

In “Punk, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” Cathy Cohen (1997) calls for a queer politics that is able to account for the black subjects who are so often displaced in the structure of politics. She asks, “how queer activist understand politically the lives of women (particularly women of color) on welfare, who may fit into the category of heterosexual but whose sexual choices are not perceived as normal, moral, or worthy of state support” (Cohen 1997, 26). What Cohen is calling into focus in a largely non-black queer political orientation, emphasizing the fact that some bodies are queered even if their behaviors and self-designations might not explicitly identify them as such. While Cohen makes this argument about “women of color” as general category, the reference to “welfare queens” in the title places specific concern on the production of black women in a location where identity and categorization diverge. This move brings gender and sexuality into close conversation with one another when blackness is of concern. Cohen elaborates on this point by expressing a “concern about the current structure and future agenda of queer politics is the challenged assumption of uniform heteronormativity from which all heterosexuals benefit” (Cohen 1997, 37). In order to bring this point into focus Cohen returns to the scene of slavery as the place from which the constitutive elements of sexuality and gender are revealed. What emerges in Cohen’s reading of the black kinship structures under slavery is how blackness is rendered the quintessential being of sexual deviance enacted through a pathologizing of slave gender performances as inherently nonnormative
and thus subject to gratuitous violence. This point brings us back to Bambara and *The Lesson* (1972) in which a community seemingly destabilized by capital presents social relations that pervert and mutate the rearrangements of political economy. Yes “welfare queens” as presented by Cohen and “the block” as presented by Bambara are riff with economic violence. Yet blackness is insidiously marked by theoretical escapes as it is swallowed by a class analysis, just as Chow previous tried to subsume Capêcia using the same logic, leaving much to be said and explored about what exactly makes these conditions black and why blackness is at all meaningful.

Recent critiques of the use and functionality of the term intersectionality have begun to circulate widely within cultural and feminist studies scholarship, as it is debated whether intersectionality is or ever has been a viable framework for theorizing modes of domination and power. Intersectionality emerged within academic discourse in the late 1980’s in an article published by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) entitled “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics,” and was further elaborated upon in the subsequent publication by Crenshaw (1991), “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color.” In these articles, Crenshaw specifically examines the inability of law to understand the formation of racialized female bodies as a constitution produced of its own histories and experiential narratives that do not coincide with the legal definition of racial or gender discrimination. Furthermore, Crenshaw argues that feminist theory with its centering of white female oppression and antiracist politics which tends to focus on the plight of black men, overshadows and mollifies the lived experiences of black women and other women of color (Crenshaw 1991). The critiques launched against intersectionality and the legacy of Crenshaw’s work have placed specific focus on the general applicability of the theory because of its specific centering of the black female body as the location from which to theorize. It has been argued that with “its emphasis on black women’s experiences of subjectivity and oppression, intersectional theory has obscured the question of whether all identities are intersectional” (Nash 2008, 9) and thus questions whether cross-subjective relationality can be drawn from theorize through black gender.

Intersectionality was developed in the field of Critical Race Theory out of legal necessity to offer domestic violence survivors the ability to file legal claims as both racial and gender subjects (Crenshaw 1989, Crenshaw 1991). While Crenshaw develops intersectionality using black women as the initial subjects of the theory, Crenshaw and other scholars have explored its applicability in relation to other women of color. The framework of intersectionality begins and ends with the law, as even the implications it sees fit for activism, inevitably turn back to the law as the
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place where redress is to be sought and decided. However the power
granted to intersectionality in its critiques that see it as a paradigm shift-
ting theory on identity and subjectivity are far reaching in logic. Cren-
shaw explains that the scope of her argument “presented intersectionality
as a way of framing the various interactions of race and gender in the
context of violence against women of color” (Crenshaw 1991, 1296) as
“vulgar constructionism thus distorts the possibilities for meaningful
identity politics by conflating at least two separate but closely linked
manifestations of power” (Crenshaw 1991, 1297). The theoretical frame-
work is most concerned with how acts of violence are responded to after
the fact of its occurrence to best locate and identify the needs of the
survivor.

The critique of intersectionality launched by Jasbir Puar in Terrorist
Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times (2007) posits that intersec-
tionality as a theory functions as a handmaiden of the state. This fact is
undeniable as any attempt to use the law as remedy to social and political
problems upholds the state as the ultimate purveyor of justice. In this
respect intersectionality as a theory is indeed shortsighted in assuming
the state as separate from and not invested in the misrecognition of sub-
ordinate subject categories even when those subjects are seemingly incor-
porated into the dominate schema. However the formation of intersec-
tionality around the disproportionate levels of violence perpetrated
against black women both by individuals and the state, is not an acciden-
tal or inconsequential observation made by Crenshaw. In fact its quite
profound in the sense that it recognizes and names the victimization of
black woman as deserving a critical inquiry all its own. While Puar is
correct in the assertion that intersectionality functions in conjunction
with the politics of the state, my contention is that the formulation of the
critique posited in Terrorist Assemblages is in fact not rooted in a criticism
of its aiding of state violence. Instead the issue is much more pernicious
and insidious in its calculation. The problem instead can be attribute to
the valuation of black women’s suffering as first continuing to exist post-
emancipation and post-civil rights as a purely black constituted violence
and secondly with the privileging of black women, or black people in
general, as possessing a singular victimhood rooted in blackness.

Jasbir Puar represents an anxious and ambivalent tendency towards
black feminist and black political genealogies as a potential sight for
multivalent theorizations in her push to move beyond intersectionality to
what she terms “terrorist assemblages.” Employing the term “assem-
blages” from the work of French post-structuralist theorist Gille Deleuze
and his intellectual collaborator, psychoanalytic practitioner Felix Guitta-
ri, Puar seeks to challenge the dominate queer progress narratives “of the
post-civil rights era” which are argued to be “fatigued debate about the
advances and merits of civil legitimation” (Puar 2007, xiv). In contradis-
tinction Puar is interested in a political project “to exhume the convivial
relations between queerness and militarism, securitization, warm terrorism, surveillance technologies, empire, torture, nationalism, globalization, fundamentalism, secularism, incarceration, detention, deportation, and neoliberalism: the tactics, strategies, and logistics of our contemporary war machines” (Puar 2007, xiv). The question bares asking who does the “our” symbolize in the naming of this contemporary struggle? The formulation of the “our” here harkens back to the forces association of Capécia with a female community in which the theorists did little work to prove she belonged to above and beyond the assumption that feminine pronouns thus demarcate female communality. Puar is attempting to bring the post-civil rights subject, into purview with a presumed common struggle with other subjects of “queer times.”

Puar posits a reformulated radical queer subjectivity as a counter and corrective logic to black feminism and black political tactics more broadly. Staging a critique against formulations of intersectionality, Puar asserts:

For while intersectionality and its underpinnings—an unrelenting epistemological will to truth—presupposes identity and thus disavows futurity, or, perhaps more accurately, prematurely anticipates and thus fixes a permanence to forever, assemblage, in its debt to ontology and its espousal of what cannot be known, seen, or heard, or has yet to known, seen, or heard, allows for becoming beyond or without being (Puar 2007, 216).

While intersectionality is a broad encompassing theory, its underpinnings as alluded to in this passage, are again realized in the bodies of black women, as the subjects of black feminism, who come to stand in as Puar’s unspoken opponents. By assertion critical theory as the genealogy, which Puar is, writing into, like critics of Fanon, have already made an objective determination about where gender that is black specifically stands in relationship to narratives of liberation and that relationship is theorized into obsolescence. That is to say while the intellectual labor performed in Terrorist Assemblages is insidious and exemplary in its own right, in displaying the contentious relationship between radical politics and blackness, it is not exhaustive in its task. The formulation of the terrorist assemblage brings to the forefront an insistent framework that disavows black articulations of suffering at the same time as it posits a new revolutionary subjectivity that is in theory more dynamic than blackness. The concept of “blackfemnephobia” articulated by Sharpey-Whiting (1989) as indicative of the impulses of Capécia’s writing, is structurally linked to the conceptual maneuver Puar makes in arguing that the underpinnings of intersectionality, black feminists, disavow futurity through a supposed reliance on the permanence of what is termed “identity,” crowding out the possibilities of being and becoming, politically, those things that are simply unknown.
By drawing out what undergirds the push to “re-think” intersectionality, this argument is not insisting on a strident recuperation of its modes of theorizing and its premises for defining systems of oppression, as an oppositional strategy to the terrorist assemblage. Instead I am most concerned with why it is assumed that theory emerging out of a black gendered space has nothing to offer the political orientations of those situated seemingly outside of the bounds of blackness. What is it about black gender that disallows theory to sit within the optimism of positivist re-invisionings of subjectivity? My contention is that, these newly emerged theories makes very visible old standing relations of power that exist between blackness and the theoretical mobility of other subjects. This tendency demonstrates the manner in which theorists that attempt to problematize black subject theories as demonstrating an unrelenting focus on objective relations of power, also in the same breath use black bodies as objective proof to support their claims, and thus reify why theories of objectification continue to centrally figure in critical black theory. The question that demands engagement is, why then are we confronted with the figure of the black woman, why is this trope called upon?

The declaration by Sylvia Wynter that “Black women’s struggle is quite other,” (Wynter 2006, 25) highlights paradoxes inherent in the constitution of black gender. What is situated at the crux of blackness and gender, represented in the black female condition, is the inability for the black being to emerge through articulation. Articulation is defined as “the act of giving utterance or expression” and also “the action or manner of jointing or interrelating.” The particularity of violence inherent to the structural position of black gender cannot arise into thought and struggles to stay afloat in theory. Intersectionality as a political project is responding to this social reality. Black women do not emerge as subjects through either blackness or through gender as political frameworks. There is an interrelation between that of blackness and gender that disallows a comprehensive utterance of what it means to be a black woman. The categorization of being in this respect is overdetermined by what it means to possess a race and inhabit gender. Though the terms of engagement are not befitting given that the black does not possess race, it is accumulated and made fungible, nor does it inhabit gender, it exceeds it and predetermines what the very meaning of gender, categorization, and recognition is in Human terms. As Wynter makes clear, “race is a code word for ‘genre’” (Wynter 2006, 24), making both race and gender a product of the Human project, though blackness as a paradigmatic structure is neither product nor other of Man, but a position of non-being.

The reading of genre, provided by Sylvia Wynter, problematizes the theoretical grounds upon which feminist and Marxist projects employ distinction to theorize relations of power and suffering at the level of
subject constitution. With respect to the implementation of moral and political laws in the Greek polis, Wynter writes

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the biocentric descriptive statement that is instituting of our present mode of sociogeny, the way we at present normatively know Self, Other, and social World is no less adaptively true as the condition of the continued production and reproduction of such a genre of being human and of its order as, before the revolution initiated by the Renaissance humanists, and given the then theocentric descriptive statement that had been instituting of the mode of sociogeny of medieval Latin-Christian Europe, its subjects had normatively known Self, Other, as well as their social, physical, and organic worlds, in the adaptively true terms needed for the production and reproduction not only of their then supernaturally legitimated genre of being human, but as well for that of the hierarchical social structures in whose intersubjective field that genre of the human could have alone realized itself (Wynter 2003, 272).

The point here is key, while this order of being is inherent to a Greco-Roman constitution, the formative political system to the function of politics in Western modernity, it is also simultaneously Judeo-Christian, of Renaissance Humanism, and also Medieval. The “epochal ruptures” that announce these various shifts in time do not destabilize what situates the conception of being itself, whether spirit/flesh or self/other, Man and the production of the Human omnipresent throughout. Thus the modern notion of Man, produced by the Western configuration of what it means to be, is marked by genre. Distinction, reinvention, reclamation, and dissociation are the modus operandi of Man. While it has been argued through the Culture Studies theoretical model that modernity has marked Man through male gendered bourgeoisie whiteness, Judeo-Christianity, heterosexuality and, patriarchy, I argue with respect to Sylvia Wynter, that this stagnated representation locks Man into a singularity, when instead Man is plural it is all things that contend expressively with human knowledge. Man encapsulates a social order that grants credence to being in positivity and in suffering, a power of recognition and announcement.

What Wynter troubles is the concept that Man, as an overrepresentation of the human, is produced of the singular constitution, so profoundly heralded by Cultural Studies and by the political focus on white supremacy as the essential structural arrainment necessitating another world. Furthermore she radically disrupts the insistence that the articulation of genre distinctions is produced separately and in opposition to the structure of “Man.” In fact, she argues “‘genre’ and ‘gender’ come from the same root,” and as such they are representative of “Man” because “there cannot be only one mode of being human; there are a multiplicity of modes” (Wynter 2006, 24). The process of articulating a place within a structuring order, whether as liberated or suffering subject, is emblematic
of Man as the multiplicity of all being. In this respect distinction and kind function as the “ontogeny” and “sociogeny” of “Man” as the overrepresented human, not as the antithesis to this process of production. As such what genre, and by extension the assumptive logic of feminism and Marxism, produces is in fact not distinction at the level of the constitution of Man, but instead a performance of distinction that fortifies the continuation of the Western episteme.

Contrary to Man, blackness is unable to articulate itself into genre and the exposure of this paradigm of exclusion sits at the nexus of violence that engenders the black female body, returning us to the previous points by Cohen (1997) that place slavery and kinship into tension. Rather than approaching blackness as a racial category, it instead should be approached as a paradigm predicated on dissociation. Blackness must be theorized as class, gender, and sexuality as opposed to attempting to think blackness through class, gender, and sexuality. Blackness in its constitution is distinction. However the differentiation is produced through a totalizing violence that merges and overdetermines difference as sameness. Hence why blackness is invoked as matter-of-fact when it encapsulates vast plurality. Through slavery, singularity is inscribed onto blackness “in order to deny, displace, and minimize the violence of slavery” (Hartman 1997, 25). What is granted precedent over variation amongst slaves is the paradigm of submission of all slaves to the will of the master. As such it matters not what the slave is in difference but that the slave is a slave in a singular relationship to all that the master can be, raced, gendered, classed, and sexual. As Saidiya Hartman argues in Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America (1997), “what is striking here are the myriad and nefarious uses of slave property and the ways in which slaves become the property of all whites, given their status in civil society” (24). My suggestion to think Blackness as in contradistinction to thinking through arbitrary categories of difference, is to suggest that genre discourse only manifests through the violent relation that produces blackness as structurally silenced in response to every mode of being. This condition is borne of slavery.

While 9/11 spelled out an epochal rupture in the constitution of race, with respect to the social and political configuration of Eurasia and its relationship to the world, the shift morphed and intensified the regime of violence launched against and at brown bodies, however the production of the terrorist as trope did not replace nor disrupt the violent strictures of blackness. Though Venus always performs in at least two acts, the blackfemmepobia at the root of the terrorist assemblage is not solely tether against the failure of intersectionality to articulate black women and their liberation as explicitly anti-state thus anti-incorporation but what sutures it is such articulation cannot occur given the status of black gender as absent hyper-presence and also its position as what fortifies the inauguration of the announcement of different and exceptional modes of
distinctly non-black subjectivities. The terrorist assemblage is ignited by Man and its structural obligation to proliferate. The designation as a radical subjectivity that rhizomatically resists and disintegrates hegemony does not bar it from being productive to newly formed hegemonic structures that maintain Man as a structural predicate to blackness.

By opening queerness to logics of power that are not specifically tethered to race, gender, class, nor the strictures of sexuality, Puar is attempting relinquish queerness from an identitarian model of theorizing oppression. Arguing through affect theory that, “we must encourage genealogies of sexuality that suspend, for a moment, the rubrics of desire, pleasure, erotics, and identity that typically suspend ‘sex acts,’ yet simultaneously avoid collapsing sexuality into a thin biopolitical frame of reproduction, hetero or homo” (Puar 2007, 211). While race, which is conflated with identity in this analysis, cannot be rejected completely in a model that centers affective queerness in the post 9/11 political times, Puar instead employs “off-white” theories of races, drawing specifically on the performance theory work of Jose Muñoz, to point to “affect as always already within signification, within narrative, function as a form of critical resistance to dominant modes of being and becoming” (Puar 2007, 208).

In addition it also charges blackness with violating the freedom of other subjects because of its strict racial demarcation. As Jared Sexton argues in Amalgamation Schemes: AntiBlackness and the Critique of Multiracialism (2008), which provides a crucial commentary on multiracial politics, “Blacks are thus depicted in the multiracial imagination as a conglomerate anachronism, perpetuating disreputable traits of antebellum slave society and presenting a foremost obstacle to the progress of liberal society” (2008, 36). While the terrorist assemblage is not a ‘liberal’ theory per se and has more radical leanings, Sexton’s assertion still reveals itself in this respect. Again this conflates structural categorization with self-naming and employs race to suggest that it is a conscious political choice of alignment, while failing to account for the violence that is inherent in race regardless of how one chooses to perform it. Furthermore, what is assumed is that blackness is absent of movement within and is a stagnant social category that is simply an identity choice not a necessity of condition. Thus blackness in this purview can by choice ascribe itself to off-whiteness to open up possibility for transformation but such a suggested gesture misunderstands the violent history that produced and continues to produce black exclusion from the arena of racial ambiguity.

Queerness thus forges a political off-white post-blackness, “not an identity nor an anti-identity, but an assemblage that is spatially and tem-
porally contingent” that “refuses the continuity between self and other” (Puar 2007, 204-5). As a theorem, to be queer is to “affective, ontological, and [an] assemblage paradigm [that] challenges the limits of identity based narratives of queerness, especially those reliant on visibility politics” (Puar 2007, xxvii). This departure from blackness also assumes a more crucial misunderstanding that misaligns the relationship between queerness and blackness. The anchoring of terrorist assemblages in a distance from black politics holds that there is no essential relationship between queerness and blackness, and that queerness is a new modality separate from the ways blackness has been configured within the social structure as presumably an identity not ontology. Demonstrating this in the separation of the assemblage from intersectionality, Puar argues, “Intersectionality privileges naming, visuality, epistemology, representation, and meaning, while assemblage underscores feeling, tactility, ontology, affect, and information,” (Puar 2007, 215) thus aligning traits with the assemblage that privileges truth over the perceptions and beliefs that undergird the terms associated with intersectionality. The relationship between these superficial terms associated with intersectionality and a the school of thought most responsible for its production is reveal more clearly in later works presented by Puar to further explain the contention relationship the terrorist assemblage holds with intersectional models of existing.

In a talk given by Puar at the University of California, Berkeley, entitled “‘I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess’ Intersectionality, Assemblage, and Affective Politics,” the relationship between queerness, blackness, and intersectionality is supplemented with several précis about the formulation of the project. This talk was given as a response to criticisms that the departure from intersectionality that Puar vouched for was in some ways unclear. As such Puar reformulates the issues with how Crenshaw set ups the intersectional framework, by stating,

It produces an ironic reification of sexual difference as a/the foundational on that needs to be disrupted… [it] argues that all identities are lived and experienced as intersectional… But what the method of intersectionality is most predominantly used to qualify is the specific “difference” of “women of color,” a category that has now become, I would argue, simultaneously emptied of specific meaning on the one hand and overdetermined in its deployment on the other… And more pointedly, it is the difference of black women that dominates this genealogy of the term “women of color”… Thus the consolidation of intersectionality as a dominant heuristic may well be driven by anxieties about maintaining the “integrity” of a discrete black feminist genealogy, one that does not necessarily resonate in there of how intersectionality functions. (Puar 2010, 52)

The problems inherent in Crenshaw’s articulation of an intersectional framework are identifying by three central conceptual flaws. First, that
sexual difference functions as a pillar of distinction, secondly while intersectionality claims to represent all it simultaneously deflates and overinflates the significance of certain subjects over others, and most crucially that black women dominate the framing of all women of color. As such these problems allow for black feminist genealogies, in Puar’s calculation, to privilege themselves in manners that adhere and also do not adhere to intersectional models. And furthermore, supports a black feminist “insistence that an interest in exploring other frames, for example assemblages, gets rendered as problematic and even produced WOC feminist invested in other genealogies as ‘race traitors’” (Puar 2010, 53). There is no illustration of how this name blaming occurs yet Puar goes on to state that the black feminist use of intersectionality also provides support to white feminist racism. Citing Malini Joshar Schueller to state, “that most scholarship on WOC is produced by WOC, while many white feminists, although hailing intersectionality as primary methodological rubric continue to take gender difference as foundational” (Puar 2010, 53). Thus black feminism opens the door for white feminists to continue using gender as the primary mode of analysis while using intersectional logics to evade racial and other modes of difference.

The lingering traces of blackness apparent in Terrorist Assemblages (2007) explicitly emerge here. What is at play in this calculation is a grotesque misalignment of power. It is grotesque in the sense that it participates in disfiguring the structure of blackness. As descriptive theories labor to apprehend the constitutive relationship between black gender and violence, the response identifies the description as the cause. Black feminists are thus accused of producing a condition so confining it infringes on the radical freedoms of others, rather than seeing this condition as that which black gender is confined to. The theory Puar is producing stabilizes itself through the assumption that blackness is, as it appears, objective and thus already always dealt with, manageable, and disposal. This performance of accusation by way of assertion, brings to the forefront an anxious disregard of black specific theorizing, by identifying it as forceful and oppressive thinking that clouds the theoretical possibility of other marginalized subjects and upholds the already privileged white and black paradigm. As Jared Sexton argues it comes to be asserted without inquest that “blacks have inverted racial hierarchy—or reversed racism—to the categorical disadvantage,” (Sexton 2008, 36) of other racial groups. No emphasis is placed on why black feminist theory centers attention on racial and sexual different, and again fault is attributed to black feminism for holding firm to something that assumedly no longer structurally exist in a distinct and substantive manner. Yet and still, there is no counterevidence provided to show how black women are constituted otherwise.

The shortsighted nature of this position is that to make a critical departure, the anchoring claim situates itself against something that is
structurally destabilized and silenced in arguing, without concerted force, its opposition. Theory cannot be post-blackness without blackness, as there is an essential quality to blackness that allows for such claims to register as possibilities. Without explication Puar succeeds in developing a new theory of queer liberation by employing blackness in its overdetermination, all without illustrating how and if blackness and queerness are distinctive political organizations. As Sharon Holland argues in The Erotic Life of Racism “the erotics of the old black/white binary we understand not only racism but potentially our erotic selves” (2012, 14). While Puar might like to assert the application of queerness to the terrorist assemblage rejects the understanding that queer is constitutive with sex, as an analytic tool it cannot be disarticulated from its historical emergence as a term that has been used to mark non-heteronormative sexual and nonsexual behaviors vis-à-vis Cohen. Thus the forceful nature in which blackness is evacuated for queer modalities misrecognizes that black and queer genealogies have an inexplicable history. Puar is upholding this claim through an assumption that a connection must be forged where one is not already. And also, that queerness offers blackness a quality that the reverse pairing does not offer.

The push by Puar to force blackness to come to terms with queerness is a political misnomer. Viewing these categories as distinctive associations, does not take into consideration what has been done with non-heteronormalized black sex “before” and prescribes correctives under the auspices of radical political change that employ technologies of classification that are genealogically rooted in black suffering. When gender and sexuality are not theorized through blackness, there constitution is assumed as not inherent of being and thus discourse functions to dislodge the subject from the perception of essential structuring, by arguing that they are in fact mutable. However blackness reveals that the freedom, will, and ability to find possibility in gender and sexuality are produced only through beings that exist in contradistinction to blackness. Gratuitous violence cripples the ability of truth to emerge through black distinction making it a structurally unclear just how the black suffers.

Hortense Spillers (1987) offer a precise and critical theorization of how the sexual violations born onto the black female body under the domination of slavery, produces a deadening political silence around its occurrence. Spillers locates this economy within “an American grammar book,” that demarcates a violating relation to the black gendered body, that through the application of its grammar functions as a logic that does not speak or reveal its maneuvers or motivations. A condition so totalizing that the evidence to prove its existence as complete domination and the “counter-evidence,” its chartable acts of resistance, are without proof that allow them to be imagined as a systematized occurrence. The log-books kept by slave ship captains and crew members along the voyages of the middle passage render for Spillers that, “the sexual violation of the
captive females and their own express rage against their oppressors did not constitute events that captains and their crews rushed to record in letters to their sponsoring companies, or sons on board in letters home to their New England mama” (Spillers 1987, 73). Acts of sexual aggression and domination in this respect located themselves within an economy of silence, from which actions of intent and responses to pain were made undetectable. What happened to the body, in materiality and theory, as a result of this economy of violence—that produced racial slavery as a global system and race a trans-global apparatus of power and domination—forced dispersals of injury into spaces, temporalities, and realms in manners that persist in maintaining the silence of how the unbridle access of the black female body as raw material acts as the condition of possibility for a host of other racially gendered and sexualized violences to unfold.

As illustrated through a reinvigoration of the work of psychoanalytic theorist David Marriott, Zakiyyah Jackson (2011) argues that the discursive functioning of gender and sexuality hold out a peculiar relationship with blackness one established through the formulations of blackness as an ontological category and not as an identity, predicated on political choice as Puar argues. Jackson critically argues, “The violence that produces blackness necessitates that from the existential vantage point of black lived experience, gender and sexuality lose their coherence as normative categories” (Jackson 2011, 359). This point speaks directly to Puar’s inability to account for black feminist protocols in the terrorist assemblage. Black feminism as a political project deforms genre, it is in essences the unmaking of genre subjectivities. For Puar queerness is a choice association tether to gender and sex or not, however what Jackson reveals is that such choice of association is not granted to blackness, or the black lived experience, as a choice of association or disassociation. Jackson goes on to point to blackness as the “absolute index of otherness” where subjectivity is concerned and states, “While particular nonblack sexual and gendered practices may be queered, blackness serves as an essential template of gendered and sexual ‘deviance’ that is limited to the negation not of a particular practice but of a state of being” (Jackson 2011, 359-60). Blackness is always already gendered and sexually situated and to assume it as not critically misunderstand the manner in which blackness enters coherence not through race but as a contrapuntal position to existence itself. Thus the instance by Puar that queer times are post-black times (post-civil rights) miscalculates the fact that blackness queers time, it destabilizes modes of existence assumed as stable, instable, immutable, and mutable. This is not by way of choice but through violence that applies itself to black life in theory and in thought as if blackness requires no further explication or theoretical engagement.

Blackness finds itself cast in politics time and time again as the example from which to draw on but from which generative political possibility
is assumed to no longer exist. Puar is exemplary of this response to blackness in theory however does not represent the totality of this maneuver. Continual and ongoing access to blackness creates the conditions of possibility for new arising political subjectivities to form as they access blackness in objectifying ways to tether and suture critiques. This manifestation is authorized through the specific historical and continued relationship between blackness and (un)gendering violence that functions as an authorizing mode of access, producing structural, material, and theoretical entrances into blackness as the subject which any and every one can interject upon without the necessity of proven authorization. Just as Capécia’s protagonists marked themselves as worthy life subjects against the inability of black women to do the same, speaking for them through the register of disdain, the terrorist assemblage is able to take flight by staging a critique against a seemingly defenseless blackness, that in its presentation is assumed as devoid of a history and condition of suffering all its own. This arrangement is the afterlife of capture and sexual violence as a paradigmatic arrangement, that is to say it is the afterlife of slavery. This is Miss Moore’s lesson.

NOTES

1. In a 2006 interview “Proud Flesh Inter/views: Sylvia Wynter,” Wynter explains the usage of the theory of “genre” in her work by explaining, “Although I use the term “race,” and I have to use the term “race,” “race” itself is a function of something else which is much closer to “gender.” Once you say, “besides ontogeny, there’s sociogeny,” then there cannot be only one mode of sociogeny; there cannot be only one mode of being human; there are a multiplicity of modes. So I coined the word “genre,” or I adapted it, because “genre” and “gender” come from the same root. They mean “kind,” one of the meanings is “kind.” Now what I am suggesting is that “gender” has always been a function of the instituting of ‘kind’” (23).

2. Wilderson argues in Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms (2010), of the fundamental distinctions between black violence and human violence by arguing, “whereas Humans exist on some plane of being and thus can become existentially present through some struggle for, of, or through recognition, Blacks cannot reach this plane. Spillers, Fanon, Hartman maintain that the violence that continually repositions the black as a void of historical movement is without analog in the suffering dynamics of the ontologically alive” (38).


WORKS CITED


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