NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

In Due Time: Performance and the Psychic Life of Black Debt

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Field of Performance Studies

By
Misty De Berry

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

June 2020

ABSTRACT

In Due Time: Performance and the Psychic Life of Black Debt analyzes how routine modes of debt and indebtedness restrict black women's behavior across the everyday sphere and their subsequent engagement with both aesthetic and everyday performance to dismantle such routines. Modes of indebtedness are characteristic of racial capitalism and are embodied as violent behavioral responses to black women—from the current student loan catastrophe that disproportionately targets the lives of black women, entrapping them in generational scores of material debt, to the use of ideological indebtedness that was used popularly to defend Bill Cosby against black women's account of sexual assault. Indebtedness gathers in material force and affective meaning across the repetition of the everyday sphere, where, I argue such behavioral responses become habituated. I ask, if notions of habituation and indebtedness signal an accumulation of behavior over a period of time, how might we employ time as an aesthetic device to interrupt such processes of habituation?

My project illuminates that practices in indebtedness function much like durational performances—aesthetic renderings that bring attention to the passing of time. Thus, I look at black women's engagement with durational performance via close readings of socially mediated happenings and other durational media, such as the sitcom, commercial campaigns, online discourses, site-specific performances, as well as enduring, black literary texts.

Across my project, I mobilize performance as an analytic platform, a behavioral aesthetic, and communicative tool that unveils the embodied and material consequences of the often abstract relation pitted between forms of power and everyday behavior. I argue that everyday embodied acts taken up by black women might refuse and reimagine the logics of indebtedness that currently

regulate black women's lives. I advance the claim that examining indebtedness through the lens of durational performance enriches our understandings of the everyday impact of state violence on the black gendered body.

Acknowledgements

This project came into being because of the fierce guidance, meticulous support, generous resources, and bottomless offerings of love from family, friends, mentors, and all other co-strugglers who, time and time again, show up.

Thank you advisors and committee members, Joshua Chambers-Letson for hearing me, for going with me—then demanding the very best I could offer, and with the upmost clarity I could articulate. I appreciate you for believing something was there and for *seeing* me through it at every turn. E. Patrick Johnson, thank you for opening so many doors for me. I would not be in this ritual moment of address, were it not for you. My gratitude to and for you is unbound. D. Soyini Madison, thank you for demanding that I speak from my truest place. I believe your call to treat this dissertation as a lyric poem has released the best writer in me yet. Thank you, Francesca Royster, for you care, compassion, wisdom, abiding accompaniment, and for being there—at all hours. My cup runneth over. And a special thank you to Ann Russo, for reading every draft, for helping me put the thoughts into words, onto the page, and up on their feet.

Thank you, DePaul family, for teaching me how to hold space, and for holding space with me. I am eternally grateful and softened: thank you Ann Russo, Francesca Royster, Cece Royster-Russo, Laila Farrah, and Sanjukta Mukerjee. An ever special thank you to Sandy Jackson, who at the start of the race told me all that I needed to know to cross over the finish line. Thank you, it worked. And to Amor Kohli, thank you for being there for me, for challenging me, and nudging me ever forward.

Thank you to my mentors and friends who taught me how to question deeper, and deeper still: Jennifer Nash, Chaunesti Webb, Huey Copeland, Penny Deutscher Angela Ray, Michelle Molina, Alessia Ricciardi, Anna Parkinson, Charles Mills, Christopher Bush, Nick Davis, Hannah

Feldman, Ramón Rivera-Servea, Marcela Fuentes, Tyrone Palmer, Mlondi Zondi, Mariam Polisen, and Ira Murphey. Thank you Dina Walters, for the stolen talks in the corridor, for your honesty, for your labor, and your ever openness.

The fierce women of the Marxist reading group, thank you for showing me how to read smarter and cheers harder: thank you, Andrea Micu, Kelly Chung, Brittnay Procter, Maïté Marciano, and Ashlie Sandoval, for calling us into the room, and for the certain belief you had in me from day one.

I have such softness in my heart for my original cohort. For making the beginning of it all magical and special, thank you: Ashlie Sandoval, Shoniqua Roach, Jonathan Maget, Eddie Gamboa, and Arif Smith. Thank you Patricia Nguyen for your enduring sisterhood.

I am also deeply grateful for the funding support I have received for this work: The Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Department of Literature; and the program in Women's and Gender Studies at MIT; the SHASS Mellon Predoctoral Diversity Fellowship at MIT; the Black Metropolis Summer Research Grant, and ThreeWallsArt Studios. Also thank you to the institutions and spaces that have loaned out their resources: Columbia College Chicago, Northwestern University Library, MIT Humanities Library, and the Block Museum.

Lastly, my beloved families, *the crew*: Ann Russo, Francesca Royster, Cece Royster-Russo, Laila Farrah, Sanjukta Mukerjee, Gervais Marsh; *my girls:* Valerie Johnson, Naima Prince, and Tara Whitehurst; my *beloved Boston fam*: Helen Elaine Lee, Kimberly Juanita Brown, Joaquin Torres, Wynn Kelly, Sandy Alexandre, Amah Edoh, Sophia M. Hasenfus, Diana Henderson, Daria Johnson, D. Fox Harrel, with a special thank you to Kris Lee; and the *De Berry Farmers*: Ericka, Andy, and Mom (Viola Bernadette); thank you *each and all* for keeping me afloat, for the late-

night life lines—the weekend retreats, the silly memes—for counting down the hours, for keeping a light on, and for calling me ashore.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 13. "Martin Lectures at MIT" *MIT Media Lab*, photo credit unknown, 26 January 2016.

Figure 14. "New York City Ballet." Fashionmaniac.com, photo credit unknown, 17 January 2019.

Figure 15. "First Lady, Michelle Obama at Martin's Exhibit." *Twitter*, uploaded by Shantell Martin, 17 June 2015.

Figure 16. Shantell Martin. "Charge Yourself." *YouTube,* uploaded by *Albright-Knox 9 August, 2017*

Figure 17. Shantell Martin. "Fade Away." *YouTube,* uploaded by American Express 26 September, 2014.

Figure 18: "Lili Bernard Pleads with Reporters." *The* Washington Post. Photo by Ashleigh Joplin, 15 June 2017.

Figure 19. "Erinn Cosby Poses with a Cigar." *Getty Image*s. Photo Credit Unknown, Date Unknown.

Figure 20. "11:10:10: Alexandria Eregbu Lays Down." *YouTube*, uploaded by Alexandria Eregbu, 10 January 2011.

Figure 21. "11:10:10: Passersby, Passing by." *YouTube*, uploaded by Alexandria Eregbu, 10 January 2011.

Figure 22. "11:10:10: Passerby, Relaxed Gait." *YouTube,* uploaded by Alexandria Eregbu, 10 January 2011.

Figure 23. "11:10:10: Passerby, Makes Meaning." *YouTube*, uploaded by Alexandria Eregbu, 10 January 2011.

Figure 24. "11:10:10: Passerby, Tightened Lip." *YouTube,* uploaded by Alexandria Eregbu, 10 January 2011.

INTRODUCTION:

Locating Debt and Indebtedness

"Debt: /det/ Noun. 1. *Something* [...] that is owed or due."[1]

"Indebtedness: /inˈdedədnəs/ Noun. 1.1 *The feeling* of owing gratitude for a service or favor."[2]

On a warm muggy day outside of Houston, Texas in mid-July, a black woman drives along U.S. Highway 290. She has been on the road for months, back and forth from Naperville, Illinois, to Waller County, Texas, surviving on temporary jobs in Naperville and staying with friends. She has been searching for full time employment in the Houston Metropolitan area, where she longs to reside permanently. She has been barely surviving from one lousy job to the next, but on this particular day, she has finally landed a good one. Indeed, moments earlier, before cruising along the early sun-licked road, she called her closest friends and family to celebrate the beginning of a new life. Rolling down her window, she pops a fresh pack of cigarettes against her thigh, and is signaled to pull over by Texas State Trooper, Brian Encinia. The driver, the woman, the black girl,

[1] Oxford Dictionary, 2016: emphasis added.
[2] ibid: emphasis added.

the daughter, the activist, the friend, the job candidate, the college graduate, the sister is Sandra Bland.[3]

In a dash cam recording that would play repeatedly across socially mediated sites during the summer of 2015, audiences across the nation watched, stunned, as a supposed routine traffic stop escalated into a full on brutal attack against Sandra Bland, followed by her suspicious death while in custody. Most of us watched as Bland grew rightfully irritated with Officer Encinia as he demanded that she put her cigarette out. Wanting to know why she would have to follow such a command inside the private space of her own car, Encinia, fully flustered and seemingly outsmarted, informed Sandra Bland that she was under arrest. Off camera we hear Sandra Bland's awful cries. She tells us—whoever is listening, that the state trooper slammed her face against the pavement. "Do you feel like a man now?" She declares, followed by "You're breaking my wrists." In an eerie conclusion that remains to haunt black activist publics, Bland was found three days later, hanging inside the Waller County Texas jail. Her brutalization for the routine traffic violation—she had failed to signal a change in lanes—and mysterious death launched a heightened platform in the Movement for Black Lives, prompting the ongoing #SayHerName Campaign.

In the days surrounding her harrowing death, social media sites and popular news media questioned Sandra Bland's behavior with Officer Encinia, indeed justifying his action (Kaufman, 2015; Wemple, 2015). She had, after all, according to several posts, been excessively emotional and, disrespectful to the men in blue. In fact, spurned by the national media, sheriff reports quickly disseminated Bland's medical past—emphasizing past struggles with depression that, her family,

[3] It is with no small, minor, or passing gesture that I invoke the name of Sandra Bland at the opening of this work, and, then, quietly lingering across these pages. The death of Sandra Bland brought me to my knees. I am indebted to her name, to her voice—the last recorded evidence of her voice, as well as her voice that remains through family, friends, and various other strugglers working across movements to make better the materials and psychic conditions of black lives.

to this day, vehemently denies. Such an emphasis functioned as supposed evidence in her presumed suicide. However, as Francesca Royster and Amiee Carrillo Rowe write, "this 'evidence' of Bland's excessive affect positions her as always-already guilty—as misaligned with the law's juridical morality" (243). They continue:

> "Because the law is presumed to be both ethical and irreproachable [...] the act of law-breaking reflects poorly on a person's […] character. If following the law [...] determines whether a person is moral or immoral, it is all but impossible for people assigned to certain status categories to represent themselves as […] deserving" (243- 244).

On one hand, this means black women and other oppressed groups are always already marked immoral in the eyes of the state. On another, Royster and Carrillo Rowe mean to indicate the ways in which emotion and affects are weaponized by the law as a means to determine the worth of one's character. Bland was hardly gracious. She had, in fact, openly challenged Officer Encinia's reasons for pulling her over. She was also, by no means, obedient. In the presence of his uniform, she offered no sense of honor for the American flag under which Officer Encinia serves, nor the attendant duties of respectful citizenship tethered to it. Indeed, as criticisms were launched against Bland for an excessive performance of affect—rolling of the eyes, audible sighs, irregular vocal pitch—she was deemed questionable, suspect, at fault, given her lack of respectful decorum (Montgomery and Wines, 2015). As with grievances brought against Gabby Douglas, gold medalist for the U.S. gymnast team who failed to cover her heart during the national anthem: where was Bland's performance of obeisance, reverence, of indebtedness to the U.S. nation-state that served to protect her?

Why is it that, in the presence of an undoubtedly heartbreaking scene, mainstream news pundits focused, not so much on the outrageous act of violence committed against Sandra

Bland, but on the state of her emotional life and her affective performance? In some regards we (know that the basic humanity of black lives, as they are taken up in the national imaginary, are often obscured in the presence of egregious acts of state-based threats and other forms of militarized distress. Critical conversations from black thought and activist publics (Snorton; 2017; Davis, 1997; Ritchie, 2012; Kaba, 2015; Mock, 2017), to transcontinental and U.S. political theory (Membe, 2018; Alexander, 1997; Ruiz, 2019; Spillers, 2002; Butler, 2013), have been articulating such notions for decades. Still, I reason that there is something deeper, finer, yet to be quite articulated happening here. Consider that in no minor regard, as Officer Encinia signals Sandra Bland to pull over, and flags her down, he is indeed hailing her into the site of minoritarian subjectivity in relation to the authority of the state. We would be remiss not to consider the inaugural scene of black studies and a reoccurring scene of performance theory, both of which attend to the Fanonian[4] and/or Altusserian[5] hail. In the vein of both fields, and their attended investments therein, let us return to one scene, in order to dive deeper into another. That is, in considering the state trooper who flips his siren, gesturing to pull Sandra Bland over, we can think of his gesture as a hail, the proverbial "hey you" of state authority. Althusser and Fanon write about such a moment through the lens of state-based and ideological forces: perceptive processes that induce ways of being, or manners of performance that are to be lived out at the site of the body (Althusser, 2005; Fanon, 1997). Although both Althusser and Fanon center the site of the body in regards to state-based and ideological forces, Fanon, in distinction to Althusser, details how such forces affect the racialized body (singular-plural) through the lens of white-supremacy and anti-blackness, thus centering the abject body as it is hailed by the state.

[4] See, *Black Skins/White Masks,* 1997

[5] See, *On the Reproduction of Capital: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,* 2014.

In the Sandra Bland scene, what or who might we identify as the voice of the hail then? Certainly, given the representational force and direct administering of police departments and military forces via the nation-state, we can reasonably situate the voice of the hail as similar to what Althusser theorizes as the call from state authority. As Althusser notes, the authority of the state calls all subjects into modes of obedience, whether through indirect means, such as ideological notions tethered to religious apparatuses, or via direct means, such as police-based and militaristic force on the body (Althusser, 2014). And so that may attend to why Sandra Bland's refusal to submit to Officer Encinia, in general is a problem. She failed to step into alignment with the logics of good subjectivity, civil obedience in the summoning from the state. Though, more specifically, why is her reaction, or as Royster and Carrillo Rowe articulate, her mental state and therein, her affective behavior, such a problem? If, following her suspicious death, her mental state was narrated as precarious, her behavior- too much: she insisted on finishing her cigarette, raised her voice when addressed, and responded with "insults and obscenities" (Montgomery and Wines, 2015), it serves to follow, then, that what was absent from her behavior, indeed what should have been performed, was a calm state of mind, a reverential decorum, a respectful corporeality. The black gendered body at ease. She might have proffered, as black women under the veil of everyday white supremacist surveillance have been taught to proffer, an attuned softening of the chest, signaling malleability—a readiness, willingness for critique and adjustment. If she were a proper indebted subject, she may have signaled what black women have been systemically taught to convey as reverential body language. She may have, say, insisted on referring to Encinia as "Sir" with an upward inflection of pitch, and she might have also lowered her gaze, softened her face, lifted the corners of her mouth into an unassuming smile. But Sandra Bland did not embody or perform an acknowledgment of his legal status. She offered no concern for Encinia's juridical

validity. She showed no obligatory acts of gratitude, or tribute, or recognition of his duty under state entrusted power. To put it another way, we may say Sandra Bland lacked a fundamental indebtedness to a country who had, beyond everything, granted her and her ancestors freedom.

"Indebtedness?" You may ask, reader. And here, at the site of what we have come to recognize as spectacular, yet also, everyday forms of state-sanctioned racialized violence? Yes. Pause to consider that, at base, debt is a relationship and a performative dynamic that is grounded in domination and submission. The relationship is subtle, but ever present, and as it pertains to black life, such a dynamic is grounded in two logics. First, in general, debt is but a perpetual, asymmetrical exchange of owing something that is due (Graber 46). That is, in a debtor-creditor relationship, it is only the creditor (such as the state) who can set the terms, who enforces such terms, and who, alone, can "forgive us our debts" (see Moten and Harney, 2013). Second, to center black life, in the wake of Emancipation, which although claimed to set free black subjects who were formerly enslaved, black subjects were organized in a new relation of domination with the state. This new relation of domination took the shape of an imposed indebtedness to the state—and the men who serve to protect it—as a price for having been set free (Hartman, 1997). In this context then, that Sandra Bland was expected to perform a gestural vocabulary of indebtedness is a small price, perhaps. After all, is it not the police state that stands to protect and serve us all?

In the birth of this country's patriotic musings and paternal wisdom, is it not the police state—the men in blue under the benevolence of the red, white, and blue—to whom we owe the safety, sustenance, and longevity of "our" lives? Specific to black lives, was it not, as mainstream histories teach, the courageous patrons of the state who ushered black lives out of the chains of bondage into freedom (Du Bois, 1999; Hartman, 1997)? Such logic demands at least corporeal reverence, affective respect, an indebtedness in the summoning of the subject in the name of

Empire, the racial capitalist nation-state that serves and protects us all. Thus, if we see the strain of indebtedness lodged within such logic on one hand, then we must hold together the current debt economy on the other. No? From the 2008 housing debacle to the current student debt crisis—both of which are founded on predatory lending practices disproportionately targeting black women, how can we not attend to the question, indeed, it begs to be asked, in what other ways are notions of debt and indebtedness regulating black women's lives across the public sphere?

Debt: A Regulating Structure

While the logic of debt may yet seem opaque in the rendering above, this dissertation: *In Due Time: Performance and the Psychic Life of Black Debt* aims to grapple with such logics—their fraught entanglements and contradictions—ultimately revealing that the interplay between performance, debt, and black gendered subjectivity is unequivocally clear, routine, regulated even, across everyday spaces. And so how do the logics of debt accumulate and circulate in the everyday sphere with particular regards to black women's lives? What are the conditions that produce feelings of debt and indebtedness across black spaces? How might regulatory performances of debt be interrupted on the body, potentially producing alternative felt economies? Taken by the relationship between black women, performance, and everyday modes of neoliberalism, this particular set of questions have found its way to the center of this theoretical, conceptual, and praxis driven dissertation. Contemporary modes of debt impede black women's access to material resources and psychic wellbeing, constraining their behavior and ability to thrive. I contend that such modes of debt are characteristic of late capitalist racist violence. They range from federal student loan services that disproportionately target the lives of black women, leaving them in scores of generational debt, to anti-black ideologies taken up by mainstream media outlets

justifying the violence against Sandra Bland for not performing modes of reverence, for, essentially, not displaying embodied acts of indebtedness towards the nation-state. Modes of indebtedness are characteristic of neoliberalism's racial capitalist order and are embodied as violent behavioral responses to black women. What I am interested in is how such forces and responses regulate black women's behavior across the everyday sphere.

Across this project, I maintain that debt is as material as it is psychic and corporeal. What is more, debt is a regulating structure that hails black subjects into psychic and behavioral modes of indebted being, thus functioning like a system of subjection. Officer Encinia shows the brutal call of the state as it is linked with notions of indebtedness. Given the myriad and crucially overlapping modes of debt and indebtedness, then, I center an interdisciplinary analytic and method that together embraces performance studies, black feminist thought, and black political theory. I show that, via the debt economy, black women are hailed—interpellated into modes of being (Chambers-Letson, 2013; Fleetwood, 2011; Butler, 1997; Hartman, 1997; Hunter, 2019; Lazzarato, 2015). In this dissertation, I build upon these discourses to argue that through state apparatuses that occur within overlapping financial and social realms—ranging from policies governing credit and other banking practices, to the logics that undergird indebtedness to the black icon—black women are hailed into material legacies of debt, often materialized through psychic and behavioral modes of indebted behaviors or gestures. Debt's hail, or what I term in chapter two as the "New Financial Hail," is regulated at the level of the body via gesture and affect. Recall Sandra Bland's rolling of the eyes, and audible sighs signaling an improper, ungracious, disrespectful, or indebted subject.

Sometimes debt's hail is refused. Sandra Bland shows us the risk of violence in the lives of black women when we refuse the call, do not comply, or default, if you will, on ideological

payments. With that, I also examine moments where we might render forms of black women's cultural production as complicit in the logics of the debt economy. Across both instances, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, I show how indebtedness functions as an internalized self-regulating device, just as much as it performs externalized forces that are characteristic of state-based punitive processes. Such a commingling, I contend, reveals the ways in which the debt economy hails subjects into modes of self-making that orient the self towards a good financial subject, evocative of historical legacies of empire-making and the myth of meritocracy.

I situate indebtedness as an affective temporal performance between individuals and groups, making connections between structural formations of debt, aesthetics, and their affective impact on the black psyche and black gendered body. Modes of indebtedness gather in material force and affective meaning across the repetition of the everyday sphere, where, I argue, such behavioral responses become routine, habituated. I explore how routine modes of debt restrict black women's behavior and their subsequent engagement with both aesthetic and everyday performance to dismantle such routines. Furthermore, everyday behavior makes a turn towards routine (or ritual) through temporal processes like accumulation, circulation, repetition, and sedimentation. For this reason, I look at black women's relationship with debt through the lens of durational performance—aesthetic renderings that bring attention to the passing of time. I analyze black women's engagement with durational performance via close readings of socially mediated happenings and other durational media like the sitcom, commercial campaigns, online discourses, site-specific performances, as well as iconic—enduring—black literary texts.

In Due Time takes up this contemporary moment then—albeit tethered to the legacies of U.S. empire-making—in which neoliberal policies, practices, and values, like indebtedness, have permeated the everyday sphere, sedimenting on collective bodies. In privileging a performance

studies analytic, I turn to gesture. Gesture brings us to the body, towards processes of embodiment, and unveils the active force of will or intention. Across each chapter I give a close reading of a durational form and/or aesthetic in which a corporeal or figurative (embodied or political) regime of gesture is enacted, revealing the felt temporal registers of debt on the body.

While critical analysis has been offered on the subject-making processes inherent to contemporary modes of debt, most notably through the veil of finance capitalism (Lazzarato, 2013; 2011; Joseph, 2014), what is generally missing—and this is the gap this project aims to fill—is an account for the psychic costs of debt across black spaces, particularly in the lives of black women. Additionally, this project serves to account for asymmetrical dynamics inherent to indebtedness within black spaces just as much as it accounts for the modes of racist violence inflicted on black subjects via global neoliberal values. Further, while projects have taken an in-depth look at the aesthetics of indebted living (McClanahan, 2017; Harney & Moten, 2009), a gap remains on what the artistic production of black women reveal about indebted economies and psychic life/ontological capacities under neoliberal fraught logics.

This introduction, then, serves to—along with three chapters and a conclusion—account for how debt performs a hail and, in response, how black women both reaffirm and/or disrupt such summons. The initiating provocation of this project becomes crystalized in the conclusion: If notions of routine making (or habituation) and indebtedness signal an accumulation of behavior over a period of time, how we might employ time as an aesthetic device in order to interrupt such processes of habituation? As a project ultimately invested in performance as a mode of activist, pedagogical, and transformative praxis, I finally advance the claim that both examining and re-dressing indebtedness through the lens of durational performance enriches our understandings of the everyday impact of state violence on the black gendered body. I claim that everyday embodied

acts taken up by black women (and our co-strugglers) might refuse and reimagine the logics of indebtedness that currently regulate black women's lives.

Theorizing Debt and Indebtedness

So far I have demonstrated the core features of this project and given an overlay of what this work grapples with and argues. What remains serves to dive in deeper, get at the layers beneath the fold. That is, I will now turn to unpack and detail who I am in conversation with, why, and how a few key terms/concepts will help navigate and ground you across this project's landscape. Here, I detail the aspects of interpellation, gesture, along with affect and duration as they are pertinent to my project, followed by an overview of each chapter.

This work offers a contribution to the tradition of black feminist theorists and women of color scholars who—in an interdisciplinary exchange that also includes performance studies and black studies—advance theories of subject-formation and racialization that account for the economic dimensions of U.S. Empire and the psychic residue that lingers in its wake. For instance, Tera Hunter (2019) and Angela Davis (1993) mine the historical role the U.S. economy plays in racial formation, as Christiana Sharpe (2010) and Saidiya Hartman (1997) elucidate the ways in which black subjectivities become tangled *and* dislodged within the inner working of debt economic and psychic dimensions. At the same time, Juana María Rodríguez (2014) and Karen Shimakawa (2002) hold the aesthetic encounter front and center. They keep us at the fleshy site of the racialized body, tracking the process of racialization from its staged corporeal underpinnings to its gestural configurations. Accordingly, this dissertation tracks gestures that reveal and speak of the psychic costs of debt. At the same time, Beth Richie (2012) and Jackie Wang (2019) focus our attention on the material and class-based forms that neoliberalism, racial capitalism, and anti-

blackness take. Hence, this projects brings a black feminist performance lens to bear on the study of the debt economy's effect on black life. For this reason, Nicole Fleetwood (1997), Francesca Royster (2012), and D. Soyini Madison (2019) bring theory to flesh as they make visible the dynamism of the body to contest power. I, in turn, show how the body becomes a site for the doing and undoing of debts most insidious claims to the body. Thus black feminists and women writers of color are the pillars and whisperers across these pages. They spearhead the concepts of debt, they walk us into the trenches of analyses, and proffer modes of redress.

Let us begin again:

> "Debt runs in every direction, scatters, escapes, seeks refuge […] it plunges towards risk, volatility, uncertainty […] shackled to credit […] you start to see it everywhere, hear it everywhere, *feel* it everywhere […] in a step yesterday, some hips, a smile, the way the hand moved […] in a break, a cut, a lilt, the way the words leapt" (Harney and Moten, 61-66: emphasis added).

In this project, debt is a complex system of measuring value across social relationships—a perpetual cycle of evaluation, obligation, and payment that, as Harney and Moten (2013) gesture to above, materializes through embodied performative practices across the everyday sphere. From public debt (between nation-states and countries) to private debt (between individuals and institutions), debt is a socio-economic process of borrowing and lending, of moving deferred promises and IOU's back and forth ceaselessly across notions of space and time. Steeped in global white supremacist logics, debt is the heart beat of contemporary racial capitalism that structures life through a sovereign-sustained process—an economic, political, and affective apparatus of exploitation where subject formations are both codified and perpetuated through a systemic

controlled distribution of resources. To this end, debt is a trans-historical process that has and continues to form the basis of social relationships along divisions of race, gender, and socio-economic position. Thus debt, a tenant of neoliberalism's reach, serves as policy, product, procedure, and phenomenon across notions of time and space. Specific to the queries of this project, I maintain that debt, although eclipsed by its material reckonings, also functions as an everyday value and way of being in ways that have become so habituated that indebtedness goes unnoticed—banal, mundane—acting much like a common sense way of being. As David Harvey notes in his critical study on neoliberalism (2005):

> "For any way of thought to become dominant, a conceptual apparatus has to be advanced that appeals to our institutions and instincts, to our values and our desire, as to the possibilities inherent in the social world we inhabit. If successful, this conceptual apparatus becomes so embedded in common sense as to be taken for granted and not open to question" (5)

Let us pivot off of Harvey's "conceptual apparatus," considering debt as that which appeals to our instincts and values in ways that determine how collectives inhabit the world. Debt makes like hyper processes turned hypo affective. Debt is world-making and it also makes subjects who inhabit indebted worlds, structuring daily routines, both regular and regulated. With this assertion at base, I turn to two scholars: Saidiya Hartman (1997) and Maurizio Lazzarato (2012; 2015) to lay the foundation of this project's theoretical underpinnings and conceptual perspective. Indeed, the work of Hartman and Lazzarato make up the engine of this research, its drive and thrust. Together, these scholars help mine the role of debt in subject-making processes through registers that are socio-relational, as debt happens between people engaged in an asymmetrical power arrangement. Add to this that debt is affective, particularly at the site of the everyday, and debt is

corporeal—both on and of the body. Lastly, debt moves, happens, unfolds, lingers, and sediments across temporal properties, from notions of chronological time to those of felt endurance. Let us think about debt much like the structure of a rope. Debt has many layers which are bound, intertwined together, marking both its strength and utility towards determining processes of being, of un-being, and unraveling.

Thus this project invites readers to grapple with debt as an ontological seizure that wreaks havoc across black psychic formations which, in turn, play out at the level of the everyday affective body. My approach is indebted to Saidiya Hartman's seminal project *Scenes of Subjection*, in which she focuses on the "enactment of subjugation and the constitution of the subject" (4), analyzing indebtedness and its role in "facilitating relations of domination" (6). Indeed, she sites indebtedness as central to the "hostile paradigm" of Emancipation as it served to transition black subjects, not so much from bondage to freedom, rather, Emancipation served to transition black people from modes of servitude to those of racial subjection (ibid). As her project zooms in to theorize the relationship between debt and self-making, she writes about "fashioning the self," or modes of being that were systemically enforced across black lives during the "non-event" that was to be Emancipation (125-163). She instructs that contrary to the antics of Empire-making in the wake of the post-slavery economy, which supposedly sought to assist former slaves towards the promises of free capitalist subjectivities, notions of "self-possession" for black subjects did not serve to free black former slaves, but "sought to replace the whip with the compulsory contract and the collar with the guilty conscious" (6). Thus in the wake of Emancipation, where there was once the "master's whip," a contractual bond emerged, serving as the core socio-relational mode between black subjects and the nation-state and therein between black communities and the economy. This means that under the new post war moral logics, what was once an iron collar used

to constrain the black body shifted towards a subtle, or affective rendering of force on black consciousness. Consider her detailed thoughts here:

> "[i]ndebtedness was central to the creation of a memory of the past […] in which white benefactors, courageous soldiers, and virtuous mothers sacrificed themselves for the enslaved. This memory was to be seared, fastened into the minds of the freed. Debt […] was instrumental in the production of peonage […] operat[ing] to bind the subject by compounding the physical and affective service owed, augmenting the deficit through interest accrued and advancing credit that extended interminably the obligation of service" (131).

Here, Hartman is nudging readers to consider modes of affective regulation just as much as she is pushing us to consider notions of temporality inherent in the making of the indebted subject. While I will conclude this section with an overview of the temporal properties of indebtedness and why, along with *how* they matter to the processes of subjectivity, for the present point at hand, we can think of the physical and affective service owed as performative, corporeal gestures of indebtedness. Across this project then, Hartman's work grounds notions of the body as it is caught up and regulated at the intersection of economy, black life, and performance.

Particular to Hartman's analysis is the socio-political context of the mid to late 19th century. However, such dynamics also remain and inform this contemporary moment. For this reason, I turn to the work of Lazzarato who sheds light on the global indebted logics that inform processes of subject formation in its wake. While Lazaratto is speaking in the context of continental Europe (Greece and Italy most notably) the implications of his theories are far-reaching and offer a significant aperture for pivoting towards indebtedness particular to black lives.

Across two of his major works: *The Making of an Indebted Man* (2012); and *Governing by Debt* (2015), Lazzarato makes four points in congress with Hartman. First, debt is the basis of social relationships; next, we ought to consider debt as a social value tethered to notions of good subjectivity and morality; followed by the understanding that such a value plays out across everyday acts; and finally, and perhaps most critically, debt is productive. Debt serves to create subjects.

Importantly, Lazzarato argues for a move from the language of finance capitalism to the debt economy (2015). He wants readers to relieve a focus from the speculative functions of finance capitalism to the more concrete power relations inherent to debt. The debt economy is so much more than the regulation of greed and excess—a simplistic capitalist function ensuring investment and profit. Rather, debt is fundamentally about a power relationship. Lazzarato wants to unpack the core relationship between the creditor and debtor, writing that debt "intensifies mechanisms of exploitation and domination at every level of society" (*Governing,* 7). Debt is active. And debt produces subjects. In this way, centering the economic and subjective production of man[6], Lazzarato situates debt as a consequence of neoliberal fraught logics. He writes: "The neoliberal economy is a subjective economy, that is, an economy that solicits and produces processes… of subjectivity" (37-38). Through public debt, entire societies become indebted. As Lazzarato argues, (in a fashion similar to Hartman), everyone is a debtor, accountable to, and "made to be guilty before capital" (*Making,* 24). In this way, he centers "the indebted man" as the subject-making figure that occupies the whole of the public sphere. (7).

Further, the economy produces indebted subjects "through techniques of managing the self" or work on the self, for what he terms the entrepreneurial subject, via everyday modes of

6 Here, I am using with Lazzarato's gendered language (2015).

business management and social government" (37-38). Thus, similar to Hartman's thoughts on the teaching of indebted corporeality, Lazzarato notes, "[d]ebt requires an apprenticeship in certain behavior, accounting rules, and organizational principles traditionally implemented within a corporation." (Lazzarato 71). Whereas Hartman theorizes the everyday as "micro-penality of everyday life" (Hartman 125), Lazzarato writes about such processes as a kind of everyday "machinery" (39). He notes everyday mechanisms (from accepting an invitation into a line of credit, down to the magnetic strip that sits in one's wallet) subjects are tamed and civilized, "like a household pet" (ibid). Thus, he situates debt as the paradigm for social relations, one that is contrary to the supposed logics of mutual contractual exchange at the heart of the debtor creditor relationship, revealing a punitive and compulsory relationship with the state.

Although Lazaretto holds readers at the site of the everyday, he does so through notions of a more or less universal subject. What he does not account for are the socio-material ramifications of debt in the lives of black subjects. And while his theories center heavily on the student debt economy, particularly in the U.S. (2013), what he does not account for is the disproportionate rate of exorbitant debt in the lives of black women. Allow me to elaborate. Student loans are the leading cause of debt in the lives of black women (Piper 2018). Consider that according to a recent report by the American Association for University Women, while women take on more debt at almost every degree level, type, and institution, black women take on more student debt on average than do members of any other group (AAUW, 2018). Furthermore, black women as a group are disproportionately targeted and thereby impacted by debt economies, as the subprime loan fiasco of 2008 revealed, making the debt economy, via student debt processes, a material crisis in the lives of black women. Therefore, in deepening Lazzarato's work, I assert that debt is specifically a black women's issue.

First, debt is a women's issue because of the gender pay gap. On one hand, women, in general, given gender-oppressive structural forces, pay off debt more slowly than their male counterparts and are therefore more prone to longer experiences of financial distress, including default. Second, being marked as black, while gendered female, compounds these issues, as black women face more difficulties being hired in the job market once they have graduated. As a contributing factor, single black mothers (the largest segment of black women with student loans) opt into student loans (and are targeted) at higher rates than white, black, and brown men because, in addition to the cost of attending college (tuition, books, health insurance, which most colleges/universities require for enrollment), black women disproportionately bear expenses of child care and elderly care (AAUW 7). Furthermore, retention rates among black as well as brown women college students are lower than white and Asian students across genders. Given the day-to-day institutional and affective structures of racism, sexism, and homophobia, many black women are unable to finish college, thus lowering their opportunities for gainful employment and increasing their risk for default (2). That student debt and the larger debt economy is rarely, if ever, discussed as a black woman's issue is a common omission. Particular to the lives of black women, then, the debt economy functions much like Hartman's "micro-penality of everyday life," imposing Lazzarato's "everyday machinery," thus effectively organizing subjects in its wake.

Debt: A Force that Hails

Given the historical underpinnings of debt and its material ramifications across contemporary mechanisms, debt, then, is a performative mode. As I have stated, debt is active; and

debt calls one into being. And, as I show, debt does so via behavioral codes of conduct and other everyday aestheticized acts enforced by state-based machinery and policies that are further promulgated by Neoliberalist ideologies. As with any other oppressive Nation-State-based mode of subjectification, debt is a hailing mechanism. Debt is interpellative. This dissertation contributes to a lineage of performance studies scholars who have written about interpellative acts as scenes (Hartman, 1997; Chambers-Leston, 2012), that take shape via a visual apparatus (Fleetwood, 2011), surveilled at the site of the gesturing body (Lepeki, 2004; Butler; 1997), and arranged via forced spatio-temporal constructs (Shimakawa, 2002) that are further, lived out and resisted across intimate spaces, as well as across audacious counter-publics (Munoz, 1997; Royster, 2013). Mostly, such scholars have centered black feminist performance theory and contemporary Marxist analysis while, across the board, harboring psychoanalytic investments towards examining the aesthetic and performative processes of racial formation or subject-making under the impasse of state-based power. Importantly, these conversations at base center Althusser's writings on ideologies and the repressive forces of the state through its attendant hailing mechanisms.

In *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, Althusser argues that the functional power of the state is expressed in the life of a subject via direct, physical acts of repression as well as through ideological forces. For Althusser, *direct* force and physical means of violence, such as those used by the police or military, are functions of the Repressive State Apparatus—what we may think of today as the carceral state. While *indirect* acts of force are enacted via the Ideological State Apparatus, like modes of anti-blackness that promulgates a carceral state. Althusser has in mind that the force of the state is made up of both ideological and structural expressions of power. What is more, he writes, "the existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing" (Althusser

191). Ideology hails. To be hailed, then, is to be called to perform in the presence of an ideological force always already enforced by overlapping and distinct structural and affective forces beholden to the state. And just as Althusser is invested in thinking through the role of (state) ideology in the process of subject formation, he centers the realm of physical gesture to do so.

Judith Butler's work on Althusser helps us see how the hail functions as a performative (and embodied) event. Butler delivers us to the gestural body as it is caught up in the process of interpellation, establishing interpellation as a configuration of gestures. That is, Butler brings us into the heart of the interpellative scene with the notion of gesture as it is caught up in and often unremarked about in Althusser's thoughts on subject making. For this reason, in *The Psychic Life of Power*, Butler argues that to be hailed, one must *turn* towards the voice of the hail. So if, as Althusser famously asserts "a policeman hails a passerby on the street, and the passerby turns and recognizes himself as the one who is hailed," then according to Butler the process of subject formation in relation to the subordinating power of the state is "relentlessly marked by a figure of turning" (Butler 5). Butler shows how heeding the call—that is, turning to receive the call—the subject becomes a subject through an embodied, gestural act. That such a gestural act is figurative does not deter its performative consequence on processes of subject making. Indeed, Butler notes, both the production (self-making) and subordination (self-regulating) of the subject is marked by the gesture of the turn. We can think of the "turn" then as a figuratively rendered corporal performance. It is a gesture that registers its impact across both affective and embodied internalizations of the hail, thus offering "a more insidious route for regulatory power than explicit coercion" (21). I call on Butler in order to illustrate the role of gesture inherent to the forces of interpellation.

Accordingly, in this project, I situate gesture as a regimen of socially habituated movement that surface on the body along a continuum, "from the ordinary iteration of a habit to the most spectacular and self-conscious performance of a choreography" (Noland 6). Gesture is corporeal—a tilt of a shoulder, a side-ways glance, a single wave goodbye, a spoken utterance (Schechner, 1997; Johnson, 1995; Rodríguez, 2014*)*. Gesture is also discursive. It is a written invitation, say, for a personalized gesture. A spectacular text. Gesture, too, is figurative—'a gesture of good will,' an act, or intention towards an outcome. Thus, finally, gestures are socio-political acts (Rodríguez*,* 2014*)*. Ultimately, we can think of gestures as what Claudia Rankine describes as "well-oiled doors opening and closing between address and exposure—the shiftiness of the hands, a pulse in the neck, conversations [had with eyes] translating everything and nothing at all" (Rankine, 69). Gesture here have both temporal and performative registers. Although they are ephemeral, they are also lived/felt, with important material and residual dimensions (Grainge, 2-3), such as a former lover's single wave goodbye.

Pause here, if you will, and invoke the gesture of Sandra Bland sitting in her car and pulling deeply on a cigarette in her car. At the very site of gesture, then, Bland performs a refusal to submit to the call of the state. She grabs firm to the crisis of agency at the will of an externalized force. She gestures "no"—a behavioral default at the micro every day—and as such, her life becomes collateral. She defies a reverential corporeality via gesture, an act that is both ephemeral and everlasting. In this way, I assert that gesture bares emphasis on what D. Soyini Madison writes as, "body-to-body activities on the ground […] possessed by performance […] something that viscerally swells up […] become[s] palpable, viscerally pressing towards collective, symbolic, and enlivened emotion," towards refusal, or else day-to-day survival (*Acts* 1-5). In this way, gesture gives us a material and energetic way to think about the black body as it waits in line for financial

aid, as it works the extra shift to make a payment on the student loan, as it sits in class, chin nestled at the palm of hand, keeping sleep at bay, an internal fight pursuing to keep the mind aglow, the voice primed and ready. Thus, gesture helps us witness the ways in which debt "possesses the body," exhausts the body, impedes the body, lingers on the flesh, and grips at the bone. However, while gesture also shows the very ways in which debt can be debunked, remitted, and refused, in an indebted economy, such refusals can have consequences.

At the same time, while noting the function of gesture within the interpellative event, performance studies scholars have deepened theories on interpellation via discussions on affective aesthetics that render harmful social constructions of the marginalized or abject body. Along these lines, Karen Shimakawa (1997) and Joshua Chambers-Letson (2013) have demonstrated that repressive ideologies hail subjects into aesthetic modes of behavior or self- making that unfold across generations of marginalized people over time, all the time. Importantly, both scholars write about such processes as scenes—affective-aesthetic devices—that are contingent to socio-political and historical contexts. Specifically, Chambers-Letson notes persuasively that modes of interpellation are "dramatic act[s] or staged encounter[s] between [an ideological apparatus] and the subject" (17). Thinking through Repressive State Apparatuses, Chambers-Letson instructs readers to understand them as staged encounters. Indeed, Althusser himself writes that ideological apparatuses occupy "the front of the stage" (Althusser 250). This means that we can think of durational performance and other time-based media, like scenes that are, further, at the front of a stage. They have a certain emphasis (felt or otherwise) within an entire structure or mise-en-scéne of interpellative technologies. And while the term "scene" may induce notions of an event that begins and ends, as I will show, durational aesthetics brings to light the ongoing, sedimenting

nature of interpellative technologies. Such aesthetic means have a distinct temporal impact in the lives of marginalized subjects, who are disproportionately targeted by repressive state dynamics.

Karen Shimakawa helps readers see that interpellative forces also function as calls that figuratively and materially remove a subject from the dominant order. Whereas the hail may be felt as compelling a turn *towards* the direction of a call, an in Butler's theories, Shimakawa shows readers that such forces also beckons subjects *away from* the call. As with the work of Michael Hanchard and Michelle Wright, discussion of which is forthcoming, Shimakawa extols the felt ways in which state-organized modes of time interpellate marginalized subjects. Specifically writing about Japanese and Japanese American experiences of forced interment during World War II, Shimakawa advances a spatio-durational ordering of interpellative forces across geographical sites, as well as generational experiences of marginalized living under U.S. ideological forces and other state-based repressive structures.[7]

For example, Shimakawa notes that in order for Japanese and Japanese Americans to demonstrate their patriotism, "their exemplary embodiment of the national ideal," they were forced to submit to being cordoned off from Americanness, and were literally "partitioned away from U.S. American identity in order to justify their claim to the identification (78). She writes, "such that the "subject/'I' is produced by establishing perceptual and conceptual borders around the self and 'jettison[ing]' that which is deemed objectionable, the subject becomes *I not*" […] (Shimakawa 3)." The marginalized subject, then, is made to know the self in accordance to who they are not as well as in accordance to *where* they are not. That is why, via Shimakawa's theories, I assert that the hail of debt and indebtedness forcibly remove subjects away from state-based constructs of

[7] Shimakawa advances the bases of her claims on Julia Kristeva's theories on Abjection which maintaining the separation of the object from another host site (specifically that of the mother).

normative time that, in the service of the debt economy, facilitate affective and material removals, making every day temporal disjunctures set on repeat.

Whereas Shimakawa and Chambers-Letson help us see interpellative forces as aestheticized, staged encounters in the lives of marginalized subjects, Nicole Fleetwood draws our attention to the affective perceiving body that apprehends such encounters in the first place. In the vein of interpellation, affect is tethered to the psyche, particularly via modes of sight, or ways of rendering consciousness. Fleetwood shows us how such modes are as sensory, embodied, and felt as they are scopic, seen, and witnessed. Furthermore, Fleetwood holds our attention on the visual field that, underpins such staged encounters. In *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness*, she writes that ideologies are rendered across scopic regimes, such as online video art and embedded in acts of seeing itself (2011). Fleetwood is interested in the embodied processes inherent to interpellative forces via temporal process such as perception.[8] Invested in Julia Kristeva theories on abjection as the basis of her claims, Fleetwood cites abjection[9] as:

> "A process that attempts to circumscribe and radically differentiate something that, although deemed repulsively other, is paradoxically, at some fundamental level, an undifferentiable part of the whole" (Fleetwood, 90)

According to Fleetwood, this mean that, via visual technologies, black subjectivity is all at once made legible and marked illegible, for her oft cited "hyper legible." That is, in relationship to race, the act of seeing or perception is a mode of performativity which constitutes an

[8]As phenomenologists have shown, perception is ultimately a temporal process insofar as perception takes shape through repetitious modes of perceiving that render habitual ways of sbeing over time. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2014); Alia Al-Saji (2014).

[9] While Fleetwood is invested in Julia Kristeva's theories on abjection, in this passage she is in direct conversation with Karen Shimakawa, who, similarly, takes up Kristeva to offer a congruent theory on abjection and modes of interpellation.

interpellative force in and of itself (Fleetwood, 13). Gesturing cogently to Fanon,[10] Fleetwood writes that the oft cited Fanonian moment "marks a racial primal scene in which the black subject comes into self-being through the traumatic recognition of another's eyes" (Fleetwood, 22-23).[11] Perception itself then, for Fleetwood, is totalized in the gaze and more so, renders a performative sensory mode that functions to hail marginalized subjects into corrective/legible modes of visibility. This matters if we are to finally understand indebtedness as a habitual force that is vulnerable to notions of duration, and thus, susceptible to interruption, which this project argues in the last chapter. For the present point at hand, consider in summation that from the site of the everyday, ideologies and their entrenchment with interpellative mechanisms function from the site of a staged visual encounter to the apparatus of sight, itself. Such processes are always already tethered to the abject body, making like forces that repress. And ultimately, such processes function in the service of reproducing disproportionate access to power, resources, and well-being, which impact black communities, and other marginalized lives across generations and epochs.

Theories on Affect and Duration

If scholarship at the intersection of performance theory, black studies, and political economies are the foundation on which this project rests, then conversations on affect and duration serve as this project's joints and studs. Affect and duration bring together major concepts, such as debt and indebtedness, they align and overlap such concepts, moving us from one revelation to another. A theory of affect helps us ascertain, give language to, and grapple with the ways in which

[10] Note, Fanon proceeded Althusser by more than 15 years on theories of interpellative forces that are also specific to racialized, (black) modes of being.

[11] Fleetwood means the oft cited 'Look, a negro.' moment featured in *Black Skins* of a white child hailing Fanon on a public street. This moment sits at the core of Fanon's writings on interpellation.

debt and indebtedness land on subjects, creating bodies and selves across space and time. A theory of affect helps us understand how modes of indebtedness move across time and space via what I describe as debt's durational properties. Thus this project understands affect and duration as working hand in hand, aiming to make sense of debt's felt properties and its temporal registers, particularly as it relates to the black psychic experience and black gendered body as she is caught up in the interpellative hail of indebtedness.

My thinking here draws upon the work of Sara Ahmed and other scholars who engage affect theory to situate affect as a feeling and/or knowing (Stewart, 2007) informed by colonial legacies (Khanna, 2003) and emitting certain forces that range from the overwhelming to the barely there (Lorde, 2007; Yanay, 2012; Brennan, 2004.) These forces are prior to and thus influence judgement, evaluation and emotion. In this way "emotions and affects follow different logics" (Bertelsen and Murphie, 2010:148, See also: Massumi, 2002). Emotion can be named and understood, whereas affect lingers ubiquitously on and between bodies (Manning, 2012: 95). We can thus think of affect as a vehicle for emotion, distinct if but by a hair's distinction. My use of affect acknowledges a difference (and perhaps indifference) to emotion and notions of feelings, while holding them in tandem with one another (Brennan, 2004). Being mindful of their distinction while privileging their inter-relation serves to reveal the movement of forces between bodies as durational.

In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed explores "how emotions work to shape the surfaces of individual and collective bodies" (Ahmed, 2014: 1). According to Ahmed, "bodies take the shape of the very contact they have with objects and others" (ibid). Thus, she examines how being is socially constructed through modes and languages of feeling. Such constructions are seen when emotions become "attributes contributed to collectives" (2). What is of concern to her

project is not emotionality as a characteristic of bodies (individual or collective), but the processes whereby "being emotional" comes to be seen as a characteristic of some bodies and not others (4). Here, recall Bland's performance of excessive affect and the dissemination of her mental health (or emotional) medical records surrounding her death. With that in mind, Ahmed's theorizations underscore how emotions and affects operate to "make" and "shape" bodies in ways that involve orientations towards others. She writes, "I and 'we' are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact [or perceptions] of others" (Ahmed, 2). We learn to see and be (or un-see and un-be) with one another as informed by how we come to feel about one another. How different groups are represented, felt, and perceived are directly tethered to how they are treated.

Consider the sobering and veracious #SayHerName hashtag campaign which the cruel treatment and suspicious death of Sandra Bland sparked. The campaign speaks to the presence of countless black women, girls, and femmes who are rendered invisible, going unmourned and unseen as human beings. As black feminist scholars have shown, when black women are socially constructed as mammies, matriarchs, welfare queens (Collins, 2008), and bulldaggers (Cohen, 2005), these racist tropes "stick" (Ahmed, 6) and are passed down across generations through representational forms (like durational media) or gestures. Perhaps these tropes and forms shaped Officer Encinia's perception of black women as he pulled Bland over, flagged her down, slammed her on the pavement, and threw her into the back of the car. That is why in this project, I theorize affect alongside duration to underscore the enduring legacy of racist, sexist perceptions, and everyday felt processes that Moya Baily astutely terms as misogynoir (Bailey and Trudy, 2018). Felt processes endure, adhere to black women's bodies as they are set within economies of indebtedness. They impact policies that determine which bodies are regulated by the state, who

can have access to "good" credit, who gets a break at the bank, and even who gets a full night's rest?

If, for Ahmed "the surfaces of bodies 'surface' as an effect of the impressions left by others" (10), emotions are crucial to the very constitution of the psyche. In Teresa Brennan's *The Transmission of Affect*, affect has an energetic dimension where, through a forceful projection, affect "may be felt and taken on by others" (Brennan 6).[12] Brennan argues that affect is dependent on "body movement and gestures [...] which […] inform a group's responses to one another" (53). Such responses are taken up and repeated (this is what Ahmed refers to as that which sticks and what Butler calls performativity). This project's concluding chapter aims to crystallize the implications of consciously repeated responses on the body and on collective psyche, but such a crystallization can only be arrived at by attending to the function of the temporal properties inherent to indebted affects, or duration.

In this way, conversations at the interstices of art history and performance theory have been instrumental in analyzing the function of duration. For example, the work of performance artists such as Tameka Norris (2012), Tehching Hsieh (2000-2010), William Pope. L (2001), and Okwui Okpokwasili (2017) illustrate duration as an integral element of their practice. Although each of these artists explore vastly different themes—across notions of artistic authenticity; labor and rest; black legibility and the troubled landscape of black girlhood; respectively—they each center duration as an aesthetic device in order to cast light on the temporal dimensions of the raced,

[12] By affect Brennan means "the physiological shift accompanying a judgement [...] whereas emotion is an "evaluative orientation toward an object" (5). In addressing how affect differs from feeling, Brennan stresses feelings are not the same as affect. She notes "when I feel angry, I feel the passage of anger through me. What I feel with and what I feel are distinct" (5). Further, she writes "feelings are subset of affects, along with sentiment, and emotions. [...] Feelings refer to the sensations that register stimuli and thence to the senses, but feelings include something more than sensory information insofar as they suppose a unified interpretation of that information. [F]eelings [are] sensations that have found the right match in words (5).

gendered, or otherwise abject social body. In much of the scholarship on durational art, duration is achieved through embodied endurance or by pushing the body to its physical limits over various lengths of time (Heathfield and Chi, 2015; Oliver, 2013; Abramovic, 1998). My account of duration puts this well-established understanding of durational performance in conversation with the generational legacies of debt that, indeed, push black bodies and black psyches to their limits over time. Additionally, my use of duration augments these conversations by analyzing duration as a process of accumulated affects and gestures within the everyday realm and its subsequent impact on routine and regulated behavior.[13] As Adrian Heathfield notes, duration reveals "how time is lived and felt in a body; how it leaves its mark in material things; how the past lives in the present; how singular lives and times remain" (11). This theory of durational performance allows us to think of the black gendered body as a "sentient witnesses to time" (ibid). As I contend, centering duration not only reveals time on the body. The lens of duration shows us that mundane, routinary behavior is powerful in its mutability and therefore proffers a site for interruption, reverb, redress.

Debt: A Durational Encounter

In considering the felt day-to-day life of the indebted black subject, a durational framework matters alongside, and at times, more so than a chronological (spatial and temporal) concept of time. No one contributed to this distinction more than Henri Bergson. Unquestionably, Bergson has greatly influenced contemporary notions on time across Western thought, from the academy to public imaginaries, as well as throughout literary and visual art forms which spanned the 20th

[13] A small portion of my thoughts here are taken from my prospectus written for this dissertation in the summer of 2015. See De Berry, "Prospectus."

century. Particularly useful for the performance studies scholar, Bergson draws this conversation about time back to the sensing body: the body animated in time and because of time. In understanding what Bergson was advancing in terms of a distinction between time as chronological and time as durational though; it is helpful to know who and what Bergson was speaking against during his life.

At the turn of the 20th Century, Bergson was writing to offer an alternative theory of time, one that prefaced a philosophical approach, rather than a scientific one. That is why, Bergson, contra Albert Einstein, in large part shaped modernity's ongoing debates about the nature of time as either a quantifiable measurement of space or a qualitative experience of the body (Canals 13). At the time, Einstein was lauded by the scientific community as well as across global publics for his newly minted theory of relativity. During the height of World War II, as the U.S. Government contemplated the probability of nuclear weapons reaching across the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, Einstein served as a special advisor to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt precisely when notions of time became crucial to the American imaginary (Einstein, 1939). Bergson however, did not think the meaning or understanding of time was something that physicists should or could answer alone. Here, Bergson spent his life, and dedicated his oeuvre (and in particular, *Duration and Simultaneity*) to establishing an absolute distinction between space, which he associated with quantity, and time, which he associated with quality. Bergson advocated for a notion of time that is more than a chronological passage of instances or events. For Bergson, duration is the internal experience of time, while that which is called "time," that is, rendered via language, is merely an externalized representation of the chronological ordering of instances and events.

A key factor across Bergson's writings on duration is that the subject is someone who endures.[14] Indeed, the enduring subject marks the whole point of duration for Bergson. This point opposes spatial notions of time, which holds that the past, as Bergson notes, according to spatial logics of time, merely "passes away." It is not retained. Rather, conceding to an understanding that the subject is one who endures, Bergson advanced the notion that the subject is tethered to the past (Bergson, 1998).

Bergson's example of a shooting star may clarify his move from time as a spatial marker to time as something felt and rendered across the enduring subject. Imagine a shooting star glittering wondrously across a night sky. What is seen to the eye—what is externalized—is a star moving from one position in space to another and at the speed of light. Here the eye marks time as it is rendered across space. Though what is experienced by the shooting star—what is internal—is a felt "intensity" of perhaps something wondrous, mystical, or magical. The experience of the shooting star, a spatial temporal event, does not merely "pass away." Time here is not (solely) rendered from one spatial position to another, rather it is felt, it remains, and endures in the subject's memory, across her ever changing consciousness. The past survives in the present. Instances do not pass away, as Bergson would say, they pass on, as Rebecca Schneider writes

[14] To this end, *Duration and Simultaneity*, Bergson's opus which established his theories on duration, at heart a passionate missive written solely to and ultimately against Einstein who stood for the reach of the scientific community. Einstein stood for a rationalist mode of thinking, that is time had a direct, objective positioning. Bergson theorized time as that which "could never be grasped quantitatively" (Canales, 10). For Bergson, Einstein and his theory of relativity, which was rising in popularity during the time of Bergson's writing, could not account for the body that endures time (Bergson, 2001; Cannales, 2015; Guerlac, 2006). This was due to scientific discourses, based in Enlightenment rationality, which accounted for time solely in spatial markers. Here Bergson was advancing a notion of time as outside of a spatial logic. Indeed, duration, for Bergson, at its core, defines the very separation between time and space. (Widder, 2:30-3:20). As Nathan Widder notes "Bergson presented duration as a continuous succession of distinct but interpenetrating qualitative states, one that appears discontinuous and quantitative, only when time's qualitative character is abstracted away and it is symbolically represented in space, there by becoming extended, disvsible and hence numerable." (Widder, 6:45-7:45 min).

(2011). They inter-animate as Fred Moten argues (2003b). In the debt economy, such instances are a set of daily experiences that repeat and inscribe, a year's worth of 30-day cycles bent towards acquiring less and less, of becoming more and more in debt, more invisible, and out of time.

Bergson was not so much concerned with time in its own right, but with the value of time as it regards the animated body that endures (Widder, 2015). Similarly, in this project I am theorizing time as experiential. Time is not so much qualified by its traditional spatial properties, but by its felt, sensed, and phenomenological registers. This reorientation towards duration allows us a window into the interior, affective states that derive from day-to-day experiences at the site of body (Guerlac 5-6). Such ideas are at the seat of what phenomenologists would take up such as Jean-Paul Sartre (1992), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2014), and most significant to theories of black life, Franz Fanon (2008).

In what follows, then, I turn to Fanon to consider more fully the relationship between modes of interpellation, affect, and duration, particularly as it pertains to black life. While Fanon had a different project than Bergson—the liberation of black people[15] via a psychoanalytic-phenomenological analysis—he did so after positioning Bergson's concepts of time as a mainspring to his thoughts.[16] Fanon was an avid reader of Bergson. In *Black Skins, White Masks* he writes briefly about the role of both Bergson and Einstein as Jewish intellectual figures who established global narratives of time during the rise of Anti-Semitism in the then expanding German Nazi regime (Fanon 98). In this important moment in Fanon's text, he gestures to the relationship between narratives of time and lives under threat by state sanctioned anti-blackness and racism. For Fanon, both the social organization and the force of time—chronological and

[15] Fanon was writing in the context of black Algerian life.
[16] See Fanon (1997), pp 98.

durational here—is in congress with Althusserian ideology. [17]It hails black people into epistemological and affective modes of knowing the self. Drawing on Fanon, I am claiming the debt economy interpellates black subjects into modes of self-making that are durational and felt over time.

Contemporary black writers theorizing in the wake of Bergson's and Fanon's canonical texts, such as Michael Hanchard (1999) and Michelle Wright (2015) continue to think of time as an interpellative force. Wright has shown that collective narratives of spatial time hail black subjects into epistemological navigations and ontological notions of self (27). She writes that spatial notions of linearity prevail in constructions of blackness, arguing however, that experiences of blackness happen in an epiphenomenal time—a non-linear time, or the "now through which the past, present, and future are always interpreted" (Wright 4). Michael Hanchard gives texture to these claims as he reminds readers of the various ways that socially constructed notions of time keep black subjects in subordinate positions. In "Afro-Modernity: Temporality, Politics, and the African Diaspora," he shows how the durational, felt, and temporal components of the white U.S. Nation-State during the Civil Rights era were rendered temporally through modes of waiting. From waiting to use the proper restroom, to waiting for legislative change, such durational modes were state-organized modes of time that interpellate black subjects into unequal modes of being.

Furthermore, durational experiences of time, like waiting, are the effects of the temporal disjunctures that result from racial difference (Hanchard 253). Handchard writes:

> To be black in the United States meant that one had to wait for nearly every- thing. Legalized segregation, the maintenance of separate and largely unequal institutions, meant

[17] Franz Fanon's theories on interpellation (though not his term) was published originally in *Black Skins, White Masks* in 1952, just under 20 years prior to the first publication of Althusser's work on interpellation in 1970.

> that blacks, as a consequence of prejudicial treatment, received health care, education, police protection, transportation, and a host of other services only after those same services were provided for whites. Above all, legalized apartheid in the United States represented an imposed disjunctive time structure within which U. S. African-Americans were made to live (263-264).

This means that modes of felt time or durational experiences, such as waiting, facilitate ways of being that are directly contingent on state structured organizations of time. Across the debt economy, then, temporal renderings of day-to-day, experiential living has disproportionate effects on raced, gendered, and classed subjects.

Chapter Review

Each chapter in this project will take on, sit with, and analyze the various concepts I have laid forth in this introduction. In Chapter 1, "Forgive Us Our Father's Debts, Our Mother's Dividends," I begin by offering a historical background to the formation of debt and indebtedness across black spaces in the wake of Emancipation. I examine the use of contract ideology by showing how, through the systemic use of the contract, the nation-state launched black communities into unremitting scores of material debt, as well as into affective modes of indebtedness (Hartman, 1997; Stanley, 1998). I argue that contractual logics were fraught with asymmetrical power arrangements between black subjects and the white state. However, I show that while black men were caught in unequal dynamics with the nation-state (the white *patris*) via wage-based contracts, black women were forced into asymmetrical power arrangements with the black patriarch via the marital contract—though notions of coverture. Consequently, black women

were obligated to yield all that she owned to her husband—she was indebted to the black patriarch via her belongings, including her very word.

I thus advance the claim that such legacies of debt haunt contemporary U.S. publics in ongoing affective arrangements. Taking my cue from Bill Cosby's status as America's favorite black patriarch, in the latter half of the chapter, I examine the function of the black iconic patriarchal figure that was used as a symbol of indebtedness across struggles for political liberation and representational modes of redress. I give a close reading of online public discourses following the Bill Cosby sexual misconduct scandal that sought to defend Cosby's legacy, next to public testimonies of key black women figures across Bill Cosby's televised fictional life and public career. I analyze such discourses as gestures of indebtedness within intimate/familial group spaces or socially mediated publics to argue that such gestures bind subjects together in subconscious contractual agreements on particular ways of being in relation to one another over a culturally sustained duration of time. I contend contractual agreements with the black patriarch remain and are enacted routinely across black public imaginaries. Across such spaces, indebted gestures regulate black women's behavior in catastrophic ways that are characteristic of state-based punitive structures. And while such gestures bind black women to patriarchal notions of power, from the white nation-state to the black father, they simultaneously disappear their lives. Such a paradox, I argue, unveils the embodied and material consequences of the often abstract relation pitted between forms of power and everyday behavior.

In Chapter 2, "are you, you?: The New Financial Hail and the Making of Indebted Selves," I analyze *are you you* (2010-current), an online durational performance series by Shantell Martin and her artistic partnership with an American Express backed documentary *Spent: Looking for Change* (2014). I argue that, together, *are you you* and *Spent* reveal a paradigmatic example of

how the debt economy hails subjects into modes of debt via black women's corporeality and cultural production. I show that *are you you* and *Spent* reveal how gestures (corporeal and socio-political) can function as aesthetic means through which indebted ideologies hail subjects into modes of self-regulating behavior that take root over time. Across the chapter, then, I offer close readings of gestures—from the gesture of an invitation to the gesture of a signature—in which a durational regime of movement is enacted, revealing the felt temporal registers of debt on the body. I assert that gestures may proffer aesthetic means through which indebted ideologies hail black subjects into modes of self-making in the service of the debt economy.

I theorize what I term the "New Financial Hail." The "New Financial Hail" is an interpellative call from the economy that wields an affective force via a host of everyday gestures. I assert the "New Financial Hail" is a state-serving ideological force that subtly coerces marginalized subjects into performative modes of being. At the same time, while the "New Financial Hail" calls black subjects into modes of indebtedness, such a hail, I demonstrate, also casts black subjects out into alternative financial economies, such as pay-day loan services. I contend that the "New Financial Hail" at once structures the day-to-day time, or duration of black indebted subjects, while simultaneously directing black lives towards felt temporal foreclosures. I argue that black lives are coerced into what I describe as indebted modes of C.P. time. Purposefully evocative of its more colloquial use: people of color time, by C.P. time I mean a cyclic palimpsestic time. I show that C.P. time straddles the distinction that Bergson gave us between quantitative and qualitative time (Bergson, 2001; Guerlac, 2006). That is, more than being a measurable unit of passing time, most critically, C.P. time is felt—it is a durational experience of time (ibid). I argue that such a temporal experience is written on the black body (singular-plural) and across

generations of black flesh as disproportionately distributed time that buttresses the debt economy in ways that are hostile to and disappear the lives of black women.

Chapter 3, "Here in Black Paradise: A Ritual for Debt," turns to *Paradise* (1997), the trans-historical novel by Toni Morrison. In conversation with Morrison's critical engagement with the black indebted figure, I argue that Morrison provides an aesthetic encounter to consider debt as a psychic violence in the lives of black women, particularly as it relates to improper modes of reverence and other unruly behavior, or behavior considered sexually deviant. I show that Morrison stages black indebtedness across daily acts of exchange. I demonstrate that indebtedness plays out at the micro site of everyday gesture, that over time, make like elevated routines. I assert that through such gestures, Morrison renders black debt as entrenched within the financial and the ancestral—in the metaphysical and spectral sense, as well as across the corporeal site of the body. Next, I show that such routine-like-gestures act as stylized modes of behavior for what we can think of as black sacred rituals. Accordingly, I assert that rituals interpellate black subjects. They call or invite the town's people and the unruly mix-raced women at its edge into modes of indebted black being. Here, I pivot to show a paradox at the center of the novel: an all-black paradise is meant to include certain modes of blackness in as much as it is meant to exclude others.

Building on the work of Christina Sharpe (2010), I analyze the ways in which Morrison's libidinal economy of blackness gestures to the historical context of black gendered dynamics at the intersection of sexual deviancy and black indebtedness. Lastly, as the title of the novel (*Paradise*) invokes a bygone temporality, I argue that Morrison stages phenomenological openings to alternative, collective experiences of black time. Though metaphor and the manipulation of grammatical structure, she theorizes such openings as durational strategies taken up by the novel's unruly black women in order to resist and reimagine regulating modes of indebtedness. I thus

conclude on Morrison's ritual staging of indebtedness as it pertains directly to duration, arguing that the everyday and heightened gestures taken up by black women throughout the novel offer a different use of time. One that troubles notions of indebtedness and provides an occasion to reimagine the logics of indebtedness that currently regulate the gestural vocabularies that structure black women's lives.

CHAPTER ONE

Forgive Us Our Father's Debts, Our Mother's Dividends

I. THOSE WOMEN

> "Forget about those women... I can't even speak to those things. And I don't want to."
> (Phylicia Rashad. ABC News with Lindsey Davis. January 8, 2015. 01:20-01:27).

On Tuesday, April 22, 2018, Bill Cosby was sentenced to 3-10 years in federal prison for drugging and sexually assaulting his former mentee, Andrea Constand. According to Constand's testimony, the assault took place 14 years ago in Cosby's home located in an affluent suburb just outside of Philadelphia, PA (Bowley, 2018). Cosby, a nationally beloved black comedian, writer, actor, and former college athlete, who had risen to the unprecedented position of "America's Favorite Dad" (Walker, 2015) was led away from the Pennsylvania state court house, in handcuffs, having been found guilty during a retrial for three counts of aggravated indecent assault. Over the latter half of the 20th century, the beloved black patriarch had become coveted as a leading mouth piece on fatherhood, everyday familial intimacies, and deep seated American morals. The American public watched stunned, then, as over the course of two publicly embattled years (2015-2017), Cosby became the subject of more than 50 women's accusations against the nation's favorite father for acts of aggravated sexual assault and misconduct, intensified by his use of

drugs[18] to incapacitate his victims. The scandal, which to date remains to be an international sensation in some communities and ongoing water cooler gossip session in others, led to the withdrawal of many public campaigns and national deals for the fallen patriarch. And although public sentiment towards the iconic head of the family is now suspect at best, condemnation of the star was most unpopular at the time of the initial flurry of accusations and well into further developments surrounding the case, particularly among black audiences. So in January 2015, when Phylicia Rashad—Cosby's onscreen wife for over 10 years—spoke the opening epigraph, the Cosby scandal then was relatively new to U.S. audiences.

Indeed, Rashad's statement came on the heels of Hannibal Buress,' now legendary standup routine in October 2014, in which he ousted the beloved patriarch for accusations that had apparently been kept quiet in private elite celebrity spaces (Graves, 2018). Buress' routine,[19] meant to be a dig at "our father" for his classist comments made on the state of black communities in America, opened up the proverbial Pandora's box and inspired a spate of women to come forward with public statements (ibid). Three months later then, in an interview with ABC's Lindsey Davis,[20] Rashad went on air to defend her on screen spouse. Aglow in her mid-sixties, she sits poised in a lavender and gold high collared blouse espousing her admiration for her spousal colleague. "He's a genius. He is generous. He's kind. He's inclusive […] he's not a coward, you know" (Rashad, ABC News with Lindsey Davis. January 8, 2015. 5:05-5:10)?[21] Speaking in a

[18] Cosby as publically admitted to using quaaludes with intimate partners during, what he states were consensual encounters (see Rhodan, 2016).

[19] To watch Buress's standup routine see: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/26/hannibal-buress-how-a-comedian-reignited-the-bill-cosby-allegations

[20] Lindsey Davis, similar to her noted confrontation with Senator Kamala Harris for creating harmful criminal justice reform policies during the 2019 democratic debates, invited Rashad into a moment of accountability that so many of us longed to see.

[21] Phylicia Rashad. ABC News with Lindsey Davis. January 8, 2015. To see the full interview: https://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/video/phylicia-rashad-addresses-bill-cosby-allegations-28076378

poised and precise rhythm, marked by metered breath, she moves to clarify an earlier statement that wrote off the few women who had come forward—13 at that time—explaining, "I can't speak for those women. And I don't want to" (Rashad, 01:20-01-27). She is at once calming and halting. She wears a soft and short haircut accented by feathered bangs gathered atop her eyebrows making like gossamer wings upon smooth, caramel skin. If Cosby was America's favorite dad, Rashad was our elegant mother, a fierce figure for many black women and girls. And although she and Lindsey Davis are seated at the same level, Rashad peers over her nose at the respondent, tilting her head slightly downward—speaking as if from a throne—string of gold pearls, vibrant at her neck, and continues: "it's not about the women… this is about something else. It's about an obliteration of legacy" (Rashad, 01:40-01:52).

And so Rashaad will have audiences sit with two considerations. First, although several women were accusing Cosby of sexual assault, for Rashad, it is not about those women at all. Rather, it is about protecting a legacy who "inspired a generation of young people who introduced and portrayed American culture in its diversity" (Rashad, 4:15-4:20). Secondly, and of critical weight for the chapter at hand, Rashad instructs audiences that not only does she *not* desire to speak about his acts of sexual misconduct, but that she, in fact, *cannot* speak of such acts.

How is it that such a fierce figure—who held assertive space for black women once a week spanning generations,[22] in the intimacy of our living rooms, attesting to black girl's strength and anti-normative longings—could not speak her mind on Cosby's alleged acts of gendered violence? Although Rashad played Cosby's wife on screen for just under a decade, she has no legal obligation to defend Cosby, or say, to recuse herself as his spouse. Still, it is as if she speaks from that place,

[22]The show aired from September 20, 1984, until April 30, 1992. After being removed from various channels due the sexual misconduct scandal, *The Cosby Show* currently airs on *TV One*, the only American network to offer the series to date.

from within the institution of marriage. In this regard, then, Rashaad not only speaks up for Cosby, but speaks with Cosby, alongside Cosby, she "stands by her man" and serves to protects his image, his status, his patrimony—his legacy. That is, with the audacity of her word, she covers him. One might say, then, that Rashaad's performance harkens to the historical legal doctrine of coverture.

Recall coverture, the 19th century law which imposed the act of covering, that is, of being in unison with one's spouse. Specific to the role of the wife, coverture meant a wife's "legal existence as an individual was suspended under marital unity, a legal fiction in which the husband and wife were considered a single entity: the husband".[23] Further, under such a clause, wives were made to merge all contractual obligations with those of her husband. This merger meant that all of her possessions, her children, her property, and most specially, her *word*, belonged to her husband such that, on one hand, she could never claim her own individuality devoid of him. And on another, she could not "legally sue," that is, be called to speak against him, or contrary to him in any legal matter (Hunter, 78-79). Although, state by state, coverture was eventually abolished by the late 1800s, notions of coverture still remain in effect today under the legal procedure of spousal recusal (ibid).

Within this context, Rashad's performance demonstrates an intimate contractual bind/bond, a service that gestures towards the urgency of protecting her spousal relationship with her onscreen husband, a black man who also happens to be a nationally beloved familial icon. What her comments and lack thereof imply, is that given Cosby's service—affectively, morally, politically/financially to black Americans and Americans writ large—one should cover for Cosby at any costs, even if such costs require the disregard, rebuff, and refusal of taking seriously the allegations of his gendered, sexual, and ethically violent behavior towards "those women."

[23] Coveture. (n.d.). In *Encyclopædia Britannica online*. Retrieved from: https://www.britannica.com/topic/coverture

And she was hardly speaking from a vacuum.

As the number of accusers grew from 13 to the heights of 60, many weighed in, from elite and famous celebrities to the average everyday person. Heated debates covered many factors central to the scandal, including the historical framing of black men as sexual predators;[24] the potential truth of such allegations; and, most especially, the ethics of the women that had brought the allegations against Cosby decades after the fact. In the fall of 2014, a group of concerned citizens started the Facebook page "We Support Bill Cosby" (2016).[25] Describing their page and project as "'We the people' support Bill Cosby in the face of unfounded allegations of rape" (ibid), the group encouraged published articles and personal posts that made visible those who do not believe and/or frankly condemn the women accusing Cosby. More so, the page offered a public platform to defend and preserve Cosby's legacy as well as his character as a positive black role model.

For example, Facebook user Aaron B. posted on April 23, 2016:

> "We (Black People…) are in desperate need of 'Role Models'... You could've found a cure for 'Cancer' and that would mean nothing if 'they' started a rumor that you had done the 'Horizontal Mambo' [t]hese individuals [Cosby's accusers] haven't got the 'character'... to do the right thing!" (2016).

Similarly, on December 5, 2014 Ken D. posted:

> "I think it's A Shame [sic] that someone that has tried to help the young Black kids by showing the results of all the Fatherless Homes [sic]. Now someone is trying to destroy him" (2014).

[24] For many black audiences there is a long memory, indeed historical precedence of white women falsely accusing black iconic male figures (as well as everyday black men) which often led to public obliteration of black men's social standing and/or a physical loss of black men's lives.
[25] This page has since been disbanded.

The same day, Ant R. posted:

> "They trying to kill our heroes yo!" (2014).

What Rashad's performance reveals, when thought together with other socially mediated discourses, is a logic of indebtedness—a logic of debt—spurred by the memory of services rendered to black families across the nation. After all, it was Bill Cosby who would become for many Black Americans, though certainly not all, the ideal father figure. Given the impact of such a positive, powerful, and iconic representation particularly during an ongoing crisis of fatherlessness in the black family unit, Rashad and members of the public sought to defend the inspirational figure who had come to mean so much to them, and supposedly to all of us across the nation. Indeed, Bill Cosby, himself, credits the birth of *The Cosby Show* as an offering on his own indebtedness to NBC, the network which launched his career and secured his place as a household staple of black and white living rooms across the U.S. (Jicha, 1992). That is why we can understand this intermixture of Phylicia Rashad and Clair Huxtable as, in one way, arising from Cosby's creative imagination and, in another, being employed via his executive power as integral to a fundamental payment on his debts to black communities. Through this complicated lens of indebtedness, then, we might see that Rashad spoke up for Cosby in chorus with a public engrossed in the language of debt in ways that curtail, constrain, and restrict the behavior of other black women. Here, it should be noted that during the initial public reporting on the scandal (October 2015) and well into its latter stages (April 2019-current), although white women—often featured bereft in tears—served as the primary public face of those traumatized by Cosby's actions, few

public platforms, if any, highlighted the fact that at least 18 of the more than 50 accusers were black and brown women.[26]

How do the logics of debt accumulate and circulate across the everyday sphere with particular regards to black women's lives? How is it that modes of debt and indebtedness both appear and disappear the lives of black women? In the making and sustaining of black kinship, who owes what to whom, and why? Before we can grapple with any of these questions, we must explore the conditions that produce feelings of indebtedness across black spaces in first place. That is, before we attempt to wrestle with the psychic and affective costs of debt in black women's lives, along with debt's performative dimensions, it will prove helpful to take a financial, material inventory on the historical making of debt in the lives of black subjects.

Thus, in this chapter, I examine modes of debt and indebtedness and their impact on the lives of black women in the United States in the wake of Emancipation through the turn of the 21st century. To situate my findings, I begin by tracing the emergence of debt across gendered dynamics within the black heterosexual family [27]unit as they were set against and intermixed within the rise of U.S. empire. Accordingly, I analyze the post-emancipation economy in the lives of newly freed black subjects in the U.S. South. I turn to black performance theory and black political theory (Stanley, 1998; Hartman, 1997; Hunter, 2019; Davis, 1983) to establish the use of contract

[26]To date, the black women accusers and women accusers of color who have come forward with allegations against Bill Cosby are included below next to their age at the time of the assault (when known), and the year of the incident: Jewell Alison, late 20s, late 1980s; Donna Barrett, 24, 2004; Lili Bernard, early 1990s; Sarita Butterfield, 22, 1977; Chelan, 17, 1986; Lachele Covington, 20, 2000; Charlotte Fox, 23, 1970; Renita Chaney Hill, 16, 1980; Helen Gumpel, 31, 1987; Beverley Johnson, mid 1980s; Lisa Jones, 21, 1986; Kacey, age and date unknown; Angela Leslie, 26, 1992; Lise-Lotte Lublin, 23, 1989; Katherine McKee, 23, 1974; Louisa Moritz, 25, 1971; Jennifer Thompson (Jena T.), 17, 1988, Eden Tirl, 22, 1989. This list was compiled from a plethora of resources, see "Black women accusers of Cosby" in the bibliography.

[27] Post-Emancipation, the black heterosexual family unit became the primary site of exploitative fees/debts In the configuration of U.S. Empire. See Hunter, 2019.

ideology which sought to offer moral assurance to the white nation-state and set forth equal relationships with the newly freed. In conversation with Amy Dru Stanley (1998) and Saidiya Hartman (1997), I show that though the systemic use of contract ideology, the white state launched black communities into unremitting scores of material debt as well as into affective modes of indebtedness. Here, I demonstrate how contract ideology was enforced by legislative gestures, such as crop lien laws and sharecropping practices that served to function as asymmetrical acts of material and affective exchange between black subjects and former slave owners.

Having made the point that contractual logical was fraught with asymmetrical power arrangements between black subjects and the white state, I pivot to ironize my analysis. I show that while black men were caught in unequal dynamics with the nation-state via wage-based contracts, black women were forced into asymmetrical power arrangements with the black patriarch and/or head of the household via the marital contract, though notions of coverture. Consequently, black women were obligated to yield all that they owned to their husbands, including their word, indeed their sovereignty.

Next, I advance the claim that such legacies of debt haunt contemporary U.S. publics in ongoing affective arrangements. Building from Saidiya Hartman (1997), I argue that such gestures work to bind subjects together in subconscious contractual agreements on particular ways of being in relation to one another over a culturally sustained duration of time. In this way, I situate indebtedness as an embodied ideology, as an affective/temporal performance between individuals and groups. Here, I zoom in on the durational properties of such legacies. I claim that indebted affects are unbound by time and space and so they accumulate and circulate through the social sphere, across generations adhering to black collectives. That is, affective modes of indebtedness

determine gendered behavioral dynamics that surface and remain today, particularly across black familial or black kinship-like spaces.

Taking my cue from Bill Cosby's status as America's Favorite Dad, in the latter half of the chapter I examine the function of the black iconic patriarchal figure that was often heralded as a symbol of indebtedness across struggles for political liberation and representational modes of redress. Having centered the notion that, television, like other socially mediated platforms is "the nervous system for American society and the forum through which public life and politics are played out," (Poniewozik, 57), I analyze *The Cosby Show* and other Cosby related media happenings next to landmark legislative and public policy gestures, such as Reganomics. Building from performance studies conversations on both embodied and political gestures (Johnson, 1997; Rodríguez, 2014), I assert that indebtedness fastens to black public imaginaries via a host of performative acts and gestures that accumulate and circulate. Thus, I pivot to show how the temporal properties of indebtedness function across black spaces. Critical to the argument of this chapter, I maintain that it was not just *The Cosby Show* that assured Bill Cosby's status as an icon: a figure to whom we owe a debt. It was also the aesthetic medium, the television sitcom—an episodic gesture—repeated and sustained over a culturally prolonged duration of time and staged in the everyday intimacy of black living rooms. Such a durational encounter registers the kinetic efforts of political gestures aimed toward fortifying a black collective politic, what we have come to think of as "Cosby's legacy".

Ultimately, I argue that while debt and indebtedness are subconscious contractual agreements that were systemically produced between black subjects and the nation-state in the wake of Emancipation, such agreements continue and are enacted routinely across black public imaginaries. Across such spaces, indebted gestures regulate black women's behavior in

catastrophic ways that are characteristic of state-based punitive structures. And while such gestures bind black women to patriarchal notions of power, from the white *patris* to the black father, they simultaneously disappear their lives. Such a paradox, I argue, unveils the embodied and material consequences of the often abstract relation pitted between forms of financialized power and everyday behavior.

Contractual Logic and the Making of a New *Patris*

In the wake of Emancipation, a turn to contract ideology granted the white supremacist nation state, particularly the U.S. South, moral assurance for having juridically freed black subjects from the tyranny of chattel slavery. A remnant from Post-Enlightenment rationality,[28] contract ideology offered rational, free acts of labor's exchange around notions of supply and demand. According to Amy Dru Stanley in her seminal study, *From Bondage to Contract* (1998), the post-slavery economy celebrated contractual language as a "cultural code that identified contract with personal freedom and social progress, that found metaphor for human relations in market transactions" (3). At the same time, and most critical for the Post-Emancipation white consciousness, it marked a full on thrust towards acts of equal or symmetrical exchange among free subjects. Contract ideology offered a foundational logic that would shift practices in bondage to "arrangements centered around choice" thus "testifying to the mutual consent of the contracting parties" (2-3). In other words, contractual logic created a road map where new economic

[28] Classical contractarians (John Locke, 1993; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 2012; see also Mills, 1997; and Morris, 1999) have talked about contract ideology as based on subjects, in possession of themselves, turning themselves over to the state therein consensually giving their authority over to the state where upon the state would protect that authority through agreements laid forth in the contract. According to Stanley, this language reflected traditions of common law, Anglo-American political economy and Puritan theology" (Stanley, 2; Mills, 1997; 1999).

relationships could be understood as agreements reached between two willing and, most specially, equal parties. Thus, from the unfurling of Emancipation, the white *patris* and newly freed black subjects found themselves engaged in acts of contractual gestures as a means of shape-shifting new understanding of themselves towards mutually free economic subjectivities.

At this time, contractual language celebrated freedom at the site of exchange. Indeed, it was the contractual logic of exchange that functioned as the "very symbol of freedom" (23). Meanwhile, contractual logic assured moral girth for the South insofar as it assumed consent between willing individuals, sovereign onto themselves. Though, as Stanley instructs, while contract ideology maintained that "consent—the ideal of voluntary subordination—rendered contract wholly inconsistent with slavery," it also established "limited power on one side and obedience on the other" (6). Thus, in a sense, contract ideology was the perfect process for a post slavery economy as it afforded whites a moral certainty that they were merely entering into contractual arrangements with free, sovereign subjects onto themselves who were also made to be obedient (6-10). However, as many black scholars have noted (Spillers, 2003; Hartman, 1997; Hunter, 2019), black subjects were never made to be recognized as subjects during or after slavery. As such, in the practices of the nation-state, black subjects had not a free sovereign self for which they could claim consent in any practical way. As a result, under the new contractual logic of the south, consent legitimated various degrees and forms of obedience that fell just short of enslavement.

For example, the federally establish Freedman's Bureau, meant to ensure the transition of fair treatment to black subjects under the new tenant of the former south, often forced the newly freed into contractual arrangements with "no regard to the fairness of the terms" (Hunter, 24). Indeed, agents of the state often targeted black subjects who refused contracts, or were in between

contracts, and held them "liable for prosecution under vagrancy laws" (ibid). What is more, during reconstruction, as whites scurried to maintain moral, along with economic and political domination, the turn to contract logic obscured asymmetrical power dynamics undergirding new labor arrangements and other acts of wage-based exchange. That is why, as Maurizio Lazzarato notes in *Governing by Debt* (2015), exchange implies an equal relationship (74). But the dynamics between white former slave owners and black ex-slaves were hardly symmetrical. Indeed, in the post-slavery economy, exchanges took a formidable root across legislative gestures and other state produced discourses which systemically lead to unremitting forms of generational debt across the lives of black people. Such generational modes of debt took root across asymmetrical relationships that, as I will show, for black women, were as tethered to the white *patris* as they were to the black patriarch.

The post-Emancipation Era through Reconstruction (roughly 1863-1880) was a historical period supposedly meant to dismantle the plantation mode of production and transition freed slaves into wage earners in order to achieve economic and material stability (DuBois, 1998; Marable, 2015; Mandle, 2012; Jones, 2009). However, as Keeyanga Yamatta Taylor explains, "the instantaneous freeing of the slaves was an economic disaster for the South" given that "at the time of the war more than $4 billion was wrapped up in slaves" (Taylor, 2008). This economic disaster was compounded by the fact that due to the war, southern banks had little to no money, the south itself was virtually bankrupt. The war had brought economic devastation to white former slave owners via a sudden halt in the streaming of day-to-day income and or economic resources. This means white landowners could not offer any collateral to banks for the little bit of money the banks did have. Further, although neither white nor black landowners could not make enough money selling their harvests to local merchants, racial tensions remained dense, given that white

landowners did not want to recognize black people as sovereign subjects, let alone pay them (Byres, 2-39).

Therefore, the question which arose for whites in the South after the Civil War was "[h]ow closely could new systems of agricultural organization [...] approximate slavery" (Byres 121)? For this reason, white landowners continued to exploit black labor though legislative gestures, such as crop lien laws or rural credit systems, as well as sharecropping practices which surfaced given the newly freed rarely had the equipment needed to till the land (Marable 3-15). In the newly emancipated South, sharecropping practices meant that black farmers would till the land of white landowners and give up part of their crops in *exchange* for housing or as payment for rent. Additionally, under rural credit systems, white landowners and planters would therefore "loan" black sharecroppers the needed equipment in "exchange" for the coming harvest, in effect, placing liens on black sharecroppers' future crops (ibid). Such legislative gestures were not written into law, so much as they were verbal agreements—albeit legally binding ones—ordered at the will and whim of former slave owners and thoroughly backed by the state. As historian Jay R. Mandle argues, the regulations of these systems was virtually non-existent, ultimately giving "landlords a claim for rent and advances [such that] landlords could [...] take control of the crop [just] as it was gathered" (124-5).

Meanwhile, as the newly freed were promised the oft-cited forty acres and a mule,[29] most former slaves never saw such a deal realized. This promise was never fulfilled because, in the wake of President Abraham Lincoln's assassination, the government order, "Special Order Number 15"

[29] As it's been questioned, in *Black Reconstruction*, Du Bois never refutes that '40 Acres in a Mule' was promised. What he mentions, in referencing that particular provision is how it was spun in propagandist histories which taught that black freedmen "ignorantly believed" that congress would turn over plots of land to the newly freed (731). The problem here being a distribution of discourses which taught that black people were somehow selfishly 'misinformed' rather than systemically hoodwinked and exploited.

which, at the request of black church leaders, was meant to turn over “4000 thousand acres in land that had been seized from the confederacy and then split it up among the thousands of newly emancipated people” was revoked under President Andrew Johnson (Hannah-Jones, 2019). Thus, only a small fraction of publicly held land ever came into the possession of former slaves, and, when such land transfers did occur, the land was often destroyed via racist acts of violence or else the land had already been devastated due to the war, severely limiting its yields and commercial viability (Darity, et al 2018).

As economist William “Sandy” Darity notes in his provocative report on reparations (2017), the failure to provide those formerly enslaved with the promised 40 acres of land, in addition to the systemic regulation of share cropping practices through crop lien legislation gave rise to a dispossession of resources that accumulated across generations, accruing within black families and across black collective spaces. The transfer of such lands would have provided black subjects a stake in the economy, thus enabling them to acquire wealth and distribute it across generations, like so many white subjects have been able to do. As follows, then, through the imposition of contractual logic, generational modes of debt emerged across asymmetrical relationships between the newly freed and the new white nation-state. At the same time, in the newly emancipated South, just as contract ideology regulated the economic realm, it too, regulated the institution of marriage via the marital contract.

From ‘Jumping the Broom’ to Being Swept Under

Post war, having been granted the right to marry legally, formerly enslaved black communities continued to form families (as they secretly did during slavery) while also working to re-unite kinship bonds that were severed under the cruelty of slavery. Participating in the formal

institution of marriage was a very important feature for both black men and women. However, as Tera Hunter notes in her meticulous study on black family formation in the antebellum south, black former slaves were not so much attached to a family structure, so much as "they were attached to a family sensibility" (Hunter 206). Given sharecropping and rural credit systems, black families often began their lives as juridically freed subjects though set loose within the grips of unremitting debt. Thus, under these conditions, legal, or contractual marriage for black subjects was a means to express humanity, along with love and commitment under the strained logics of the newly emancipated south[30] (Stanley, 1998).

At the same time, part and parcel to the failures of Reconstruction was the brutal regulation of black family formation in the name of empire. Formerly enslaved subjects were often forced into domestic/intimate contractual bonds, as they were otherwise subject to punishment if unmarried while living together. This is because state-mandated contractual marriage for black subjects was essential to transitioning the emancipated nation towards new capitalist subjectivites—or class positions—particularly for working and middle class white family units (Hunter, 2019). In a similar way, during this "era of racial uplift" middle class and elite black families saw marriage as explicitly connected with finally being recognized as moral subjects and therefore heralded as just civilians (22). Ironically then, what was once a forbidden act in the eyes of the state became a "legal and moral requirement for full citizenship" (Hunter, 15).

Nonetheless, kinship bonds and family formations have always been integral to survival for black life both during and 'post' the trauma of slavery, often "provid[ing] them with the only

[30] Here she notes the weighted value elite Black specifically placed on the contractual institution of marriage, highlight that classism "helped elites to define marriage narrowly at the same time that racist institutions devalued Black life." This narrow definition, Hunter makes clear, was born of post-slavery realities, politics, and repression, not in slave quarters or the extended kinship networks of the early nineteenth century.

space where they could truly experience themselves as human beings" (Davis, 16-17). Here, black women in particular, unlike their white female counter parts, were highly valued for their domestic functions(ibid). As Angela Davis notes in her critical study, *Women, Race, Class*, pre-Emancipation, "[i]n the infinite anguish of ministering to the needs of the men and children around her, [black women] were performing the only labor of the slave community which could not be directly and immediately claimed by the oppressor" (17). This means that pre-war, as well as post-war, black women were central to kinship bonds and any sense of autonomy felt across slave communities. That is, black women's presence in the family unit was, at base, "essential to the survival of the community" (ibid). However, for black women in the newly emancipated south, marriage was not a relief from the tensions of contractual obedience. To this end, the differences in contract ideology, as it was expressed across the economic realm via labor practices and via the institution of marriage, proved to be quite unique.

While contractual labor begat coercive modes of participation from newly freed slaves, the martial contract was uniquely different on two important fronts. In one way, it offered a contractual relationship that black men and black women could enter into, more or less 'freely.' At the same time, asymmetrical relationships within the black household surfaced under contractual logic, as marriage granted a wife's obedience to her husband. That is, different than the wage/labor contract, the marriage contract featured the statute of coverture. Tera Hunter's definition of coverture is useful here, defining it as:

> "an ancient legal doctrine that gave men the power to control their wives under the twoness of blended into oneness construct, in which the husband controlled all matters of the law on behalf of the couple" (77).

This doctrine meant that, unlike the black worker's contractual obligations with former slaver masters, coverture ensured that black wives were obligated to "yield all that she owned— her person, her body, her being" to her husband: the black patriarch of the household[31] (Stanley 11).

So, for black women (as well as white women), there existed a conflict between marriage and self-ownership (Stanley 177). And while there were differences in how such dynamics played out for white women and black women, for the purposes of this chapter, the important point to emphasize is that, given coverture, a black woman had no legal "control of her name; her person; her property, her labor, her affections, her children, and her freedom [an] utter loss of sovereignty of self" (Stanley 177). After all, black women were marked as tithable labor (Hunter 9). This means a tax on black wives was to be paid by their husbands.[32] Such tithes created great obstacles for black families, oftentimes prohibiting black families from advancing economically—acquiring wealth (Hunter 9). Two points arise here then. One, the presence of the black wife represented a central expenditure in the black patriarch's material debts to the nation. And two, in the event of the black patriarch's death (physical or social) his debts became the debts of his widow. That is why, under the contractual logic of marriage in the postbellum economy, black women were made to be black men's debts on one hand, while also made responsible for their debts on another (77). Accordingly, black wives were forced to merge their belongings—down to their very word—with the black patriarchs of their household (77). Such historical statues endure today in notions of today's spousal recusal, a remnant of coverture, which forbids spouses from testifying against one another. We might pause to consider the ongoing silence of Camille Cosby, Bill Cosby's off-screen,

[31] While Stanley gives deft study of the contractual logics which undergirded the post-slavery economy and the given household relationships under that system, she does not make distinguishing claims between black and white households

[32] If single, a black woman paid taxes on herself.

real-life wife, who to this day refuses to entertain the possible validity surrounding the accusations of 60 women against her husband—the nation's fallen black patriarch. In fact, in statements eerily off-key, Camille Cosby compares her husband, Bill Cosby, to Emmet Till, citing the media as blame for the public lynching of a legacy (Deb, 2018).

Given these claims and returning to the point at hand, in the wake of Emancipation, wage-based contracts enforced asymmetrical relationships between formerly enslaved black men and the new white *patris*. Meanwhile, under the rubric of contractual marriage, the formally enslaved black woman—made to merge her word, her sovereign belongings with the black patriarch—inherited an asymmetrical relationship with herself. She was made to be off kilter to herself. A nomad to her own name. She was fashioned then towards misappropriated arrangements on the flesh, of the corpus, caught up and entangled: everyday gestural interludes between husband and nation, husband as nation making like episodic encounters with indebted reckonings.

What Feels Like Debt

Up until this point, I have laid out a brief financial history of debt specific to black communities under the making of Empire. Though, as this project maintains, the financial materializes on the body, across the social sphere. That is, in one way, notions of the material and the juridical are central to the contractual logic of debt which served to create and regulate a black indebted figure in the eyes of the nation-state for having been set free, given the right to vote (for men), and granted admittance into legal marriage. By the same token however, affective uses of debt—or indebtedness—were enforced on black subjects alongside material forms of debt. Black performance theory has much to say about affective histories. For instance, in her seminal study, *Scenes of Subjection*, Saidiya Hartman shows how affective and behavioral modes of indebtedness

were imposed on black subjects by agents of the nation-state (such as missionaries and teachers) as a means of showing gratitude to the nation for having set black people free. Complimentary to Sandy Darity's work on black economic histories, Hartman illustrates that systems of debt along with notions of indebtedness work together in ways that are deeply entrenched in black affective histories.

In this way, Hartman writes about the circulation of white-supremacist ideologies via aesthetics, like illustrative manuals with the supposed aims of guiding black subjects out of the degradation of slavery and into the responsibility and ethics of freedom (Hartman, 128-129). Through pedagogical panoramas, she explains, everyday modes of embodiment and codes of conduct—ranging from personal hygiene to the intimacies of marriage—were disseminated to enforce notions of debt to the nation for having been granted access to national citizenship. These aestheticized mandates circulated across state-sponsored interpersonal relationships, "old and dear friends of the negro," such as schoolteachers, missionaries, entrepreneurs and plantation managers (Hartman, 128-130). Within these realms, debt and indebtedness governed black women's bodies, particularly in white households through black women's domestic labor and affective behavior (Hartman, 1997; Threadcraft, 2016; Stanley, 1998; Jones, 2009.) As Hartman instructs us: "debt was the center of a moral economy of submission and servitude" as being in debt was and remains to be a process of performing an ethically viable self" (Hartman 131). She continues, in a passage also cited in the introduction:

> "[i]ndebtedness was central to the creation of a memory of the past […] in which white benefactors, courageous soldiers, and virtuous mothers sacrificed themselves for the enslaved. This memory was to be seared, fastened into the minds of the freed. Debt […] was instrumental in the production of peonage […] operat[ing] to bind the subject by

compounding the physical and affective service owed, augmenting the deficit through interest accrued and advancing credit that extended interminably the obligation of service" (131).

I return to this passage to emphasize the way the affective (and psychic) black body[33] was regulated by the white patris via modes of debt that bound the black subject to endless acts of reverential behavior, or what I am describing as performative gestures of indebtedness. In this way, we can think of the physical and affective service owed as performative gestures of indebtedness.

As performance studies scholars have shown, gestures are affective behaviors that carry meaning (Johnson, 1995) and function as communicative acts which produce and reproduce societies (Bell, 10). Further, as Juana María Rodríguez writes, gestures "reveal the inscription of social and cultural laws [...] transform[ing] individual movements into an archive of received social behaviors that capture how memory and feeling are enacted through bodily practices" (Rodríguez, 5). Following these theorists, I am arguing that debt and indebtedness fasten to the body and remain as embodied temporalities—durational performances on and of the black gendered body, ranging from everyday modes of field and domestic labor to affective codes of conduct. Such indebted affects have had devastating impacts across generations of black lives, impacts that continue to be felt today.

Indebtedness and its legacies are tethered to the failures of Reconstruction. Performative gestures of indebtedness do not happen in a historical container, nor do they remain temporally fixed. As such, it is important to consider the durational properties/aesthetics of affective economies as they adhere and linger across generations, determining how bodies are treated within

[33] Hartman would use the term flesh here.

and outside of collective spaces. That is why reflecting upon the long reaching legacy of financialized affects, like indebtedness, and their systemic production, circulation, and codification across black lives, gives a deeper context to what José Munoz (1997), Sarah Ahmed (2014) and others (Al-Saji, 2014; Fleetwood, 2011) account for as affective accumulation—a buildup of feeling like registers. These scholars mean for readers to hold central across analyses of racialized dynamics the grave impact of feelings and/or perceptions that sediment among and on marginalized collectives, thus determining how such groups are perceived, apprehended, and therein treated (Munoz, 1997; Ahmed, 2016; Al-Saji, 2014). This helps us contend with the fact that historic notions like debt and indebtedness do not merely fade away with time. Rather they remain, they "stick" (Ahmed, 2016: 194-195) become "habituated" (Al-Saji, 36). Indeed, financialized affects like indebtedness, are as historic and far reaching as they are subtle and fine. They are embedded in the ways we imagine ourselves, through to the ways we gesture across everyday spaces. Indebted affects ground our worldview and determine the langue we engage. Accordingly, let us now consider that affects, like indebtedness, circulate and accumulate, unbound by space and time, determining how subjects are treated within and across group dynamics.

New Bonds, Former Ties: An Affective Transmission

The previous section focused on the ways in which contract ideology fueled modes of debt and indebtedness between the new nation-state (albeit the old white *patris*) and newly freed black subjects. This following section makes a pivot to tease out the legacies of those dynamics as they surface and are expressed across black spaces today. Here, I pivot towards our contemporary times—the latter half of the 20th century into the early 21st— directly aiming to reveal the past as it is stuck and the present (Hartman, 1997; Heathfield, 2015; Sharpe, 2010). Just as I have argued

that the buildup of material debt accumulates via everyday gestures, I will now show how affective debt—or indebtedness—accumulate via similar aestheticized behaviors. Here, I complicate, texturize, give deeper meaning to debt and indebtedness as a socio-cultural performative: the staying power of debt that endures in the public imaginary and its consequences on everyday behavior. This means that, in large part, I look at the temporal properties of indebtedness (debt as a durational encounter) insofar as such properties are caught up in and enmeshed with the material, affective, and aestheticized processes of debt.

To do so, I turn to the iconic black patriarch often used as a symbol of indebtedness across socially mediated sites. If we understand indebtedness as a durational act that unfolds affectively across generations, I turn to the TV sitcom, *The Cosby Show*, and read it against the rise of Bill Cosby as America's Favorite Dad. I advance the claim that we should understand the gravity, impact, psychic hold of Bill Cosby and *The Cosby Show* given the latter's weekly platform as a televised happening—an episodic gesture that secured notions of black legibility. That is, the legacy of *The Cosby Show* took shape via an accumulative mode of affective repetition due to the durational format of a sitcom. Thinking both Muñoz and Ahmed together, we could say that there is "affect" insofar as there is "duration." Affect and duration work in tandem, marking different tonalities, but functioning as a pair nonetheless. So whereas thinking in terms of duration centers the experiences of someone who when recovering from a flu feels better on day 7 than she did on day 2, thinking affect in distinction to, though because of duration is to consider what she may feel—the lingering ubiquitous feelings—of having gotten sick in the first place while living in an indebted economy where, regardless of one's form of labor, productivity is one's credit, value, and saving grace. That is, through a reading of the Cosby case, I will show how duration tethered to

the body—singular and collective—can both lay bare and obscure the subtle affective dimensions of everyday being as regulated across the debt economy.

By 1984, the year that the pilot episode of *The Cosby Show* aired and roughly 100 years after the Reconstruction Era, black families and black women had made some strides in terms of securing higher wages and higher yearly income. Still, with the passing of the 1944 GI Bill that granted disproportionate access to benefits such as education and employment across white and black communities, along with the racist federal home loan polices of the post war era, there was no accumulation of wealth in black communities. Such an accumulation of dispossession saw the 1980's as the backdrop for one of the most severe regimes of state-based economic stress and disaster in the lives of poor and working-class black people. With the election of Ronald Reagan to the U.S. Presidency, Reagan's administration oversaw the proliferation of advanced anti-black and white supremacist ideologies. Among many other devastating effects, such ideologies—what became known as "Reganomics," ensured excessive tax cuts for wealthy elites while drastically cutting social services for low income black families, and other families of color with particular devastating impacts on low-income black women (Taylor, 2016; Richie, 2012). Such practices worked to deepen the division of access to wealth accumulation between white and black people, along with other poor people and low-income people of color. With public infrastructure on the decline and the mounting HIV/AIDS crisis that disproportionately affected the lives of black women and black families at large, socio-economic stress in black communities was at an all-time peak. So, on September 20, 1984, just a little over a month before Regan's landslide re-election, when *The Cosby Show* aired its first episode, it ushered in and circulated a counter image to decades of socio-political depression and vile racist imagery and conveyed, rather, a sense of

cultural pride, artistic celebration, intimate black familial humor, black confidence, prosperity, and black love.

The Cosby Show (1984 – 1992), featured the everyday dynamics of the Huxtables, as they centered around Dr. Heathcliff Huxtable—played by Bill Cosby who was inspired largely by his off-screen life with wife, Camille Cosby and their five children. Cosby played the central character of Dr. Huxtable who, notwithstanding the awful irony, was a respected gynecologist. Together with his attorney wife Clair—played by Phylicia Ayers-Allen, later Phylicia Rashad— they raised their five children: Sondra,[34] Denice,[35] Theo,[36] Vanessa,[37] Rudy,[38] and later, Olivia,[39] in an upscale Flatbush brownstone. Although Denise Huxtable, played by the formidable Lisa Bonet represented the rebel child who routinely resisted authority, the Huxtable children, and the larger extended family,[40] were all college educated or college bound "good kids." More so, the Huxtables were culturally affluent, artistic, and respected members of the community. For many black people, the weekly streaming of an economically wealthy and vibrant black family into their living rooms surrounded by their own family and loved ones was a culturally triumphant moment. There they witnessed a black father and black mother, for example, counseling their son, Theo, on why receiving a 'D' on his report card was not acceptable,[41] or celebrating their oldest daughter

34 Sondra Huxtable-Tibideaux: played by Sabrina Le Beauf.
35 Denice Huxtable-Kendall (1984 to 1987 and from 1989 to 1991): played by Lisa Bonet.
36 Theo Huxtable: played by Malcolm Jamal Warner.
37 Vanessa Huxtable: played by Tempestt Bledsoe.
38 Rudy Huxtable: played by Keisha Knight Pulliam.
39 Olivia Kendall (1989-1992): played by Raven Symoné.
40 Other family members featured on the show include Heathcliff Huxtable's mother and father: Russel and Anna Huxtable played by Clarice Taylor and Earl Hyman, respectively.
41 Season 1, Episode 1: "Pilot" (9/20/1984).

Sondra's visits from Princeton,[42] or Denise's decision to travel to South Africa to study sculpture and other local aesthetic practices.[43]

While other television shows of the time, such as *Good Times* (1974 – 1979), *What's Happening* (1976 – 1979), and *The Jeffersons* (1975 – 1985) featured loving and confident black families, what distinctively set *The Cosby Show* apart from other black television series was their socio-economic status. Unlike the Evans family and the Thomas family of *Good Times* and *What's Happening* respectively, the Huxtables were not poor; and crucially different from the Jeffersons, the Huxtables had never known or experienced poverty. They never had to, as the opening credits for the Jefferson's celebrated, "move on up".[44] *The Cosby Show* in effect was an aestheticization of black social and economic wealth that, for some black people represented images of their own lived realities. For those whom the show did not represent directly, the Huxtables did advocate for something achievable or potentially be-able, if not for the self, then for black people as a collective. This is important because as Patricia Hill Collins tells us, the ways in which groups are represented, are ways in which groups are and may come to be treated (Collins, 2008). As such, the fact that *The Cosby Show* held the number one rated position during the entire length of its air time[45] meant that black, white, and other racial/ethnic groups celebrated, or at the very least witnessed a loving, intelligent, and successful black family on a regular, repetitive, accumulative basis. Indeed, it was the *New York Times* that crowned Bill Cosby as America's Favorite Dad (Walker, 2015). Yet, although there were important tensions together with legitimate celebration around the show,

42 Season 3, Episode 21: "I Know That You Know" (3/19/1987)
43 Season 5, Episode 5: "Out of Brooklyn" (11/3/1988).
44 The theme song to *The Jeffersons*, a tune that became very popular, was titled "We're Movin' On Up" and was co-written by Ja'net Dubois and Jeff Berry. The opening credits feature a version of the song as performed by Dubois and the Oren Waters gospel choir.
45 Only two other television shows have consecutively ranked in top positions during their air time: *American Idol* (2002- 2016) and *Survivor* (2000- Current).

similar to the circulation of aestheticized panoramas written about by Hartman, it is the circulation of *The Cosby Show* together with its accumulative affects that secured Cosby's status as an icon, a legacy: a figure to who we owe an unpayable debt.

I argue, then, that the feeling of indebtedness that we/audiences, and that black collectives in particular, come to feel towards Cosby has a stickiness akin to the way Sara Ahmed writes about the stickiness of affect. Along these lines, Ahmed, through her work in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, takes up the affective circulation of hate within racist group formations and discursive practices. She asserts that hatred is not an attribute that is natural to any particular individual, but rather hatred sticks to certain individuals and groups due to the impact of the circulation of racist discursive practices over time (42-46). Ahmed argues that the circulation of affect functions in a similar logic to Karl Marx's theory of capitalist accumulation. Affect builds in force, through processes of accumulation and circulation. As Marx's model reveals an accumulation of money or value, Ahmed theorizes an accumulation of affect through the circulatory processes of discursive and embodied practices.

What is more than an indebtedness that continues to linger, stick, and remain, is that the iconic figure Bill Cosby (and our debt to him) symbolizes "an intimate doorway for connecting people," what Nicole Fleetwood, writing on the function of the icon notes as a "restoration of the racial past and present" (Fleetwood, *Racial Icons* 56).[46] In fact, coinciding with the crest of the Civil Rights Movement, it was his 1960 debut as the lead character in "I Spy" which "broke the racial barrier in television by featuring Cosby as the first-ever black lead of a weekly dramatic series" (Blade, 2004). Cosby's performance in the series prompted the *New York Times* to declare Bill Cosby as the "balm for the jangled American psyche of the time" (Darnton, 1993). Indeed,

[46] Fleetwood is in conversation here with Su Holmes and Sean Redmond (New York: Routed, 2006).

Cosby's more than three decades of streaming into America's living room from "The Bill Cosby Show" to the "The Cosby Mysteries," in addition to daytime children's programs such "Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids" along with number one selling books on fatherhood during new articulations of liberation in black communities, contextualized him as one of the more visible figures for ethical trustworthiness and moral certitude. His iconicity finally culminated through *The Cosby Show*, where he "dominated the medium as no star has since the days of Lucille Ball" (Staff, 2013). Indeed, Coretta Scott King described Cosby as "the most positive portrayal of black family life that has ever been broadcast (Graham, 2005).

Such durational episodes produce feelings of indebtedness for a figure whose image so politically, affectively, and ideologically represented and defended the lives of black people across the nation for so many years. Cosby as an icon is important to accumulative and circulatory processes of affective debt, because as Nicole Fleetwood tells us, the black icon transcends race even while capturing the everydayness of race and racialized experience (Fleetwood, 2015). The accumulation and circulation of Cosby as an everyday, representational force is tantamount to feelings of indebtedness that endure for Cosby as a black icon. Further, consider that the racial icon performs "a negotiation of the historical present" that sheds light on "the [...] peculiar relationship between the nation, representation, and race in the context of the U.S. history of slavery" (Fleetwood, *Racial Icons* 1-2). So, as Hartman writes of affective debt, indebtedness binds subjects to the past in ways that show up in the present (Hartman, 1997). Debt is an affective structure. Debt binds black subjects to the state, or the white *patris* just as much as debt binds such subjects to the black patriarch. Here, acts of indebtedness are performed through unremitting gestures of submission as a way to make payments on an un-payable debt. Furthermore, as scholars have shown, the afterlives of slavery accumulate in the present (Hartman, 1997; Sharpe, 2010;

2016; Brand, 2002). If debt is an affective structure, and if affect is cumulative—moving across bodies, time and space—as Ahmed and Brennan show, then, I argue that the affective structures of debt incurred as the costs of freedom in the past, accumulate in such a way that black subjects in this contemporary moment are continuously hailed to account for from the gestural site of the body. In this way, indebtedness moves across simultaneous temporalities, or what Rebecca Schneider describes as "syncopated temporal registers" (9). Indebtedness, too, codifies behavioral vocabularies that, as performance and dance studies scholars have shown, produce and reproduce collectives (Johnson, 1995; Rodríguez, 2014; Noland, 2009).

Lastly, the fact that the image and affectivity of the racial icon is ultimately circulated—by artists, activists, and members of black communities, writ large—in order to push against oppressive forces such as racial inequality, psychic injustice, and every day systemic abuse means indebtedness functions like a tool. Indebtedness can be operationalized then as a gestural force by collective spaces, ultimately promoting certain behavioral and/or discursive ways of being between iconic figures of debt and the groups to which they aim to serve. The Facebook comments shows us this. When Facebook user Aaron B. writes that the women who accused Cosby—and let us call to mind the black women accusers specifically—haven't "got the character to do the right thing," presumably he means that the right thing would be to keep quiet, to merge their word with his, to apply the logics of coverture.

While posts like Aaron B's on social media sites may be contextualized as small discursive acts, or in Erin Manning's phrase, "minor gestures," such gestures, as Manning writes, "travel across modes of perception, inventing languages that speak in the interstices of major tongues" (Manning, 2). These minor gestures are paradigmatic of larger structural and affective forces. And as this next section will show, given the socio-historical context of debt and indebtedness that is

particular to black spaces, it is at the very site of gesture—minor and otherwise—where indebted affects can surface in ways that disappear the value of black women's labor and lives.

Gifts from the Father, and other Patron Gestures

Although *The Cosby Show* was not short of criticisms for unrealistic portrayals of black family life, Cosby would, nonetheless come to represent for many black families the model of a fun, trust worthy, and loving father figure. And as the last section has put forth, Cosby secured such a place in the heart of black spaces through the repetition and accumulation of weekly televised performances—episodic gestures—that redressed long-standing racist portrayals, or at the very least, shortsighted representations of black life. Though, perhaps larger than any other demographic, one could argue that it may very well be black women who have a heightened sense of debt to Cosby. If we can agree that it is obvious that Cosby represented the ideal father figure, then a little less obvious point is that along with representing the ideal paternal figure, Cosby influenced a surge in the circulation of black visual and performing arts across mainstream publics. Here, Cosby featured black art as not only having a stake in the circulation of high art commodities, he also celebrated an unprecedented valuing of black art on a mainstream platform. This was particularly true for black women artists.

For instance, in season 2, episode 13, Clair Huxtable learns of an auction at Sotheby's featuring a painting by her uncle Ellis Wilson, which, she recalls, used to hang in her grandmother's living room. The episode thoughtfully highlights a conversation with an African American art dealer detailing a use of aesthetics—light, form, composition within a tradition of black cultural expression. Later, Clair wins the bid on the painting and hangs it ceremoniously in the living room where it becomes a fixture of the prime-time show. For many audiences, such an

episode may have been the first time they were exposed to the monetary, cultural, and aesthetic value of black art in a high-end art market. And it is this very episode with Clair and the Ellis painting—*The Funeral Procession* (1977)—that made way for the show's subsequent featuring of work by black women artists such as Varnette Honeywood[47] and Brenda Joysmith,[48] stalwarts in visual arts communities. We can think of Cosby's aesthetic staging of Honeywood and Joysmith as social gestures towards a black collective politic in the tradition of black radical aesthetic practices. Such traditions shepherded in on-the-ground political activism and created black representational practices that culminated in ongoing "temporalities of struggle and renewal" particular to black aesthetics (Madison, *Acts* vii). We can think of Cosby's socio-political gestures, then, as "act[s] that extend beyond itself, that reaches, suggests, motions... action[s] that signals a desire to [...] perhaps to touch," to alter, to change (Rodríguez, 2).

Through such gestures Cosby might have singlehanded exposed mainstream media to an onslaught of typically locally-celebrated black artists, raising their profile to national status, and again, especially for black women. Indeed, "during the initial post-Cosby show years, 11% of African-Americans reported to have purchased original art reaching a peak of 25% by 1997" (Hill, 2013). In this way, Cosby seemed to transcend the traditional narrative of the high-arts dealer who regulated the arts economy via a corporatized model of value and exchange. Black art, as featured in the Huxtables' living room was not an abstract exclusionary artifact for the socially elite, rather it was a site of black cultural celebration that went so far as to feature the beloved choreographed dance routine to Ray Charles' soulful rendition of "Night Time is the Right Time"[49] (1958) with

47 See: http://www.varnette.net/artwork.html
48 See: https://www.blackartdepot.com/search?q=brenda+joysmith
49 The song was originally recorded by Nappy Brown as "The Right Time" in 1957. Ray Charles subsequent version was released under the title of "(Night Time is) the Right Time" in October, 1958.

the Ellis painting functioning as an aesthetic anchor.[50] So it can be argued that Cosby was, in large part, responsible for shifting a tone towards black art, and in particular, for providing another model of the art world, and one that was heavily focused on the artistic production of black women.[51]

And it was not solely the visual art of black women that Cosby introduced to the American public. Cosby also gave many black women actors and other expressive artists their first break. Black women such as Alicia Keys,[52] Erika Alexander,[53] Essence Atkins,[54] Iman,[55] Robin Givens,[56] Victoria Rowell,[57] and Angela Bassett,[58] to name a few, were able to use the show as a stepping stone to long lasting careers in the arts, several of whom becoming icons in their own right. These are political gestures in and of themselves wherein Cosby brought many black women artists into America's living rooms ultimately indexing black women's artistic labor as a rich contender within the American art canon. As Juana María Rodríguez notes, such political gestures function like a "force of connection and communion" that creates kinship-like bonds between friends and strangers (Rodríguez, 2). Further, "they extend the reach of the self into the space between us; they bring into being the possibility of a "we" (ibid). Such gestures function to bind subjects in affective arrangements across disproportionate access to power.

[50] Perhaps one the more famous and beloved episodes of the series, the routine was featured in "Happy Anniversary." Season 2, Episode 3, 10/10/1985.
[51] *The Cosby Show,* was not alone in this endeavor. Other television shows, such as *Good Times,* also played a role in showcasing black art.
[52] "Slumber Party." Season 1, Episode 22, 03/28/1985
[53] "Period of Adjustment." Season 7, Episode 4, 10/11/1990.
[54] "I'm 'In' with the 'In' Crowd." Season 6, Episode 3, 10/5/1989.
[55] "Theo and the Joint." Season 1, Episode 17, 2/07/1985.
[56] "Theo and the Older Woman." Season 2, Episode 5, 10/24/1985
[57] "Theo's Dirty Laundry." Season 6, Episode 21, 03/15/1990
[58] "Bookworm." Season 4, Episode 14, 01/07/1998.

Here, consider that the largest single contribution ever made to a Historically Black College or University (HBCU)—and one of the largest donations made to any school during the late 20th century—was the million dollars Cosby singlehandedly gave to Spellman College, the historical black college for women in Atlanta, Georgia (Daniels, 1998). The gift was announced by then college president, Johnetta B. Cole, preeminent and cherished black feminist scholar. In an announcement that set forth a three-day celebration for Cole's presidential inauguration of the college, she stated Cosby's gift would be used to not only fund black women's intellectual production at the college, but also for the building a women's center, a fine arts gallery in addition to other academic centers. Cole would later describe the announcement as being greeted by "gasps of wonder, foot- stomping, shouts of jubilation, and prolonged applause" (ibid). In what happens to be an awfully eerie statement in light of Cosby's sexually violent tactics, she continues, "I woke up the next morning and pinched myself to see if it had been a dream" (ibid).

(Breath)

And so, there is indebtedness here.

One might even say, Cosby *showed up* for black women.

Though an important paradox emerges here. That is, in one way, Cosby played a major role in the introduction and elevation of black women's artistic and intellectual production to mainstream audiences. Yet in another way, there would be no Cosby without black women's artistic production. Indeed, it was the presence of Phylicia Rashad as Clair Huxtable, a passionate, sharp, and no-nonsense working mother who loved both her family and work fiercely with tender acerbic insight that made Cosby, *Cosby*. She was a major thrust in the success of her family unit, often

times providing a solid platform for her husband, Heathcliff to appear, disrupting what black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins would theorize during the height of the show as "controlling images" (Collins, 1990). Then too, what made Cosby, *Cosby* was the weekly exposure to Denise Huxtable, her ambiguous blackness, her unruly affect as the non- conforming child—and later Lisa Bonet's deviant sexual behavior—that provided modes of resistance for young black women coming of age in an era of black respectability politics. It was Vanessa Huxtable through Tempest Hazel's sensual and heightened gestures—such as the lift of an eyebrow followed by a sideways glance—which spoke to black women's intuitive knowledge, those "non-rational," and un-namable ways of knowing, that Audre Lorde describes in her oft-cited "Uses of Erotic" (2007). It was Anna Huxtable, Heathcliff's mother, the oldest appearing matriarch on the show, still dancing lively to Ray Charles. It was Sondra; it was Rudy; it was Olivia, before Raven Symoné carried all the implications of being *so Raven*.[59] It was not so much Bill Cosby, but the centrality of the many black women who showed up in that famous brownstone living room and, in some cases, who joined the black public imaginary off the set. It is their subsequent lives, work, and cultural production which garnered attention given their mere presence and in some cases absence on the show. Indeed, if Bill Cosby is America's dad, then the black women who surrounded him on a weekly basis for years—generations—are our sisters, mothers, daughters, friends, lovers, cousins, mentors, comrades. America's indebtedness ought to gesture towards the black women who made tuning into *The Cosby Show* the cultural, intellectual, and artistic event that it was and remains to be. Paradoxically then, although debt binds black women to patriarchal figures (abstract and

[59] The child actress would go on to become the sweetheart of Nickelodeon and the Disney Channel, staring in the successful tween series: *That's So Raven* (January 17, 2003 to November 10, 2007). Symoné also continues to be the center of controversy for making harmful and hurtful comments about blackness in the U.S.

literal), indebted gestures can also disappear the lives and labor of black women while re-producing itself from the very lives and labor that makes such indebted economies possible.

Predictive Value

On one hand, there is a sense of bottomless debt to the black patriarch, Bill Cosby because, well, he did so much for us. Unlike the debt Hartman describes—a debt owed to the white *patris*, the nation-state, by black subjects for having been supposedly set free—a debt to a black father figure, who single handedly supported scores of black women through college, launched a multitude of careers, and helped millions of black people celebrate black life, is a debt worth getting behind. And maybe there is something to that, to the indebtedness that one comes to feel for our loved ones, our family figures (both the families into which we are born and those we choose). Maybe there is a joy even in not being able to fully express the value that an intimate companion (paternal, maternal, or otherwise) has come to symbolize and mean in one's life. This speaks to an indebtedness that one may spend their lives fully knowing they will never quite be able to pay off, but would happily try every day, all the same. Though by the same logic such indebtedness can be more problematic, ominous even. That is, indebtedness can also unfold into subconscious codes of behavior that causes harm within relationships, particularly those structured around disproportionate access to power. And so, how might we hold together the felt legacy, or iconicity of the black patriarch together with the disproportionate modes of indebtedness distributed across black gendered spaces? Perhaps the books should be wiped clean, all debts forgiven: an everyday dismissal, then, of all debts to the patriarch creating possibilities for solvent, affective expenditures.

Here then, I would be remiss not to nod to Brittney Cooper and her call for the death of both Heathcliff and Clair Huxtable in the public imaginary. In a gripping piece for the *Crunk Feminist Collection*, Cooper writes, "[i]t has long been time to slay the Huxtable patriarch. So Cliff Huxtable, you're dead to me!" She sharply continues, and "everybody should be clear that Clair Huxtable is dead, too" (Cooper, 2014). Here, Cooper wants black audiences to grapple with newer representations of black women that are not bound and tethered to the respectability politics that one could surely say undergird notions of indebtedness across black spaces. I agree with Cooper's call for black collectives to grapple with representational forces of black women across socially mediated platforms in ways that allow for more complicated, atypical, and unruly aspects of black gendered living under the legacies of racism in the U.S. Though, I am also more curious about the work of keeping alive Clair, Heathcliff, and therein Cosby's legacy. I am interested in the tension between notions of the patriarch (both familial and nation) together with the black women both appeared and disappeared, not in spite of their wake, but because of it.

All that being said, if I have spent this chapter helping us better understand how systems of debt emerged historically in black spaces and how such material structures move across affective registers, then I have laid the groundwork to ask how does debt organizes—that is, summon life into being? I mean, how do such legacies of debt call subjects into modes of behavior bent towards being and belonging, not so much to a group, but, as I ask in the following chapter, in the presence of indebted economies, how may one be called into their very sense of self?

CHAPTER TWO

‘are you, you?’: The New Financial Hail and the Making of Indebted Selves

During the late summer of 2018, Chase Bank launched its *Your Way* campaign. The 30 second online advertisement opens to a wispy scene: an amber dawn featuring streaks of cobalt blue and misty greys against a shimmering ocean. Two palm trees—a seemingly dense shadow of form frames a muscular black body tilted in a runner’s stretch. Across the screen reads, “Chase Presents: Serena’s Way.”[60] Next, the take of the horizon expands, featuring a brighter sky followed by a jump shot to Serena Williams jogging through an open market. “I Put a Spell On You,” by legendary Screamin’ Jay Hawkins,[61] swells in the background just as Williams turns the corner and is captivated by a charmed necklace—a vibrant iridescent fish on a blue beaded string. Its allure stops her mid-tread. She pauses a moment to consider its bedazzlement and then, expressing regret, returns to full stride. Perhaps she does not have cash on her, audiences are led to wonder. The eye is taken back to the horizon, now hot with silvery brightness. Audiences make out palm trees lulling at the breeze amid a black woman’s body gesturing steadily in the fold. The scene forecasts a suspended pulse, a temporal elsewhere where flocks of geese rush high above Williams’ form— a miniature shape pushing along the coast.

[60] The video can be watched here: https://www.ispot.tv/ad/d6ev/jpmorgan-chase-serenas-way-featuring-serena-williams.

[61] "I Put a Spell on You,” released in 1956 was written and composed by Jalacy "Screamin' Jay" Hawkins.

Figure 1: Chase Bank. "Serena's Way." *YouTube,* uploaded by Lisa Gigloti, 17 August 2018.

Figure 2: Chase Bank. "Silver Horizon." *YouTube,* uploaded by Lisa Gigloti, 17 August 2018.

Next, a reprieve.

We watch Serena Williams contemplate a thing or two, her furrowed eyebrow accentuated by the force of a close up. Then, with the felt gesture of a declarative nod, she makes up her mind. What follows is a directive, a punchy voiceover instructing audiences that "with Chase ATM, Serena can now grab cash on the go. No card, no problem. Life, Serena's way."[62] Through invoking the powerful force of Serena Williams and, the forms of labor tethered to her body,[63] Chase invites audiences to consider modes of credit ownership, or debt management, the consumer's way—their way. In a growing trend, Chase,[64] and other credit-making apparatuses like them, proffer an engagement with the financial that is propelled by consumers authenticating their sense of self (their way), albeit in the service of debt.

Figure 3: Chase Bank. "Serena Jogs." *YouTube,* uploaded by Lisa Gigloti, 17 August 2018.

[62] J.P. Morgan Chase presents 'Serena's Way.' View commercial here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1BFJzroL0s

[63] Additionally, consider here the fraught representations of Serena Williams, a particularly constructed black gendered body across social media. See Rankine, 2014.

Figure 4: Chase Bank. "Serena, Captivated." *YouTube,* uploaded by Lisa Gigloti, 17 August 2018.

Audiences continue to watch as Williams uses her credit card (via her smart phone) to make a withdrawal. As the commercial draws to a close, she returns to the market and slips the vendor some cash. She continues her run, now donning the iridescent fish.[65] Back at the horizon the sun is setting. Appropriately then, while the Chase logo closes the frame, Hawkins' song echoes, seemingly foretelling for banks everywhere: "I put a spell on you," well, "because you're mine."

[65] I would be remiss not to mention the metaphorical linkage of fish with fertility and prosperity, specifically as passed down through black oral cultures.

Figure 5: Chase Bank. "You're Mine." *YouTube,* uploaded by Lisa Gigloti, 17 August 2018.

Let us pause and think further about what is happening here. Take note of a black woman's body—Serena Williams' body—a very particular black woman's body, standing in for ideas of self-making. And as Chase instructs, such a self can be rendered, and explicitly made sense of at the bequest of, and in the service of the debt economy. The implications are as discordant as they are typical. Consider Williams' body as an infamous black woman's body that has been constructed as unruly and is often at the center of criticisms for undignified gestures and unscrupulous affectivity (Rankine, 35). Writing about what has been popularly narrated and represented as the "wrongness of her body" (29), Claudia Rankine, summoning Zora Neal Hurston, describes Williams' presence in the American public imaginary as "graphite against a sharp white background" (26).

Figure 6: Chase Bank. “Civil Body.” *YouTube,* uploaded by Lisa Gigloti, 17 August 2018.

Here, then, hold tight to the criticisms Williams has repeatedly received for, in some manner or another, “mak[ing] ugly the game of tennis through both her looks and behavior” (30-31). Recall, if you will, Williams literally pounding the pavement, or else soaring gazelle-like over the hushed courts of Wimbledon. During several matches, she was depicted as “abandoning all rules of civility,” through deploying gestures ranging from finger wagging and head shaking, to obscene threats or a tirade of no’s (25). Much to the chagrin of the International Tennis Federation, Williams has outwardly, and justifiably, showed rage against flagrantly absurd calls from referees or else boo’s from nearly all white audiences, resulting in what can only be read as racist acts of punishment[66] in attempts to either curtail her behavior or else disappear her fiery spirit. Through

[66] In 2009, after an “outburst” against Kim Clijsters for making, what was widely considered an egregious call, Williams was “punished with a point penalty, resulting in the loss of a match, and a 82,000 fine, plus a two-year probationary period by the grand slam committee” (Rankine, 30).

such acts of punishment and other racist representations,[67] Williams has been made illegible to the fact of blackness against a historically white space riddled with problematic notions of a black woman's place, or place-less-ness in the American public imaginary. Rankine is helpful here, instructing readers that such acts/representations function to diminish Williams' very existence for a complete "erasure of self as systemic as [it is] ordinary" (32).

So, on one hand, what Chase indeed "presents" is a body frequently narrated as un-belonged and erased from a multi-billion dollar generating economy and its attendant codes for American civility. And on another, audiences are presented with a black woman's body "hemmed in and thrown against an American background" (31), and, via Chase, iridescently staged against the illusive debt economy for the purposes of living a life of debt management our way. That is, Chase tells us that Williams and the legacy of her oft discredited body can be used as a stand-in for us—the general public imaginary to envision our own pursuits of self-making, and particularly in regard to managing our debts. This means a black woman's body can be disappeared in one economy, only to be re-purposed in another. That is, just as sure as a black woman's body can be made casted out, illegible within one credit making industry, she can be used to advance the credit-making system of the debt economy writ large.

What are we to make of Williams's body next to typical anti-black representations of everyday black women, often heralded across the economy as welfare queens, lazy and inert, robbing resources from otherwise hard working populations (Collins, 2008; Ritchie, 2012; Taylor, 2019)? Perhaps there is reason to celebrate the use of Williams in such a major campaign. Such a representation serves to advance a universal invitation into structural mechanisms that have been

[67]See Caroline Wozniacki, who, in 2012 stuffed towels in her top and shorts, in order to mimic the size and proportions of Williams's body.

traditionally difficult for poor and working class black women to access. Powerful move for Chase then, wielding the market value of black aesthetics, thus relying on Williams legitimacy as a black iconic "cross over" figure to woo general publics into better notions of themselves. Furthermore, as audiences watch Williams take a leisurely jog against the backdrop of a golden-beached Florida—the unofficial U.S. destination for rest and retirement from life's labors—what are we to make of the role of time as Chase renders it "Your Way?" Are general audiences to revel in the possibilities of having whole days, indeed, from sun up to sun down, as the commercial shows, to wander, carefree, through sunny neighborhoods, stopping to pick up happy ornaments and tend thoughtfully to the promise of our own muscularity and flesh: our financial needs taken care of and safeguarded, tucked in at the very palm of our hands via smart phones turned debit cards? Let us return to Screaming Jay Hawkins, then, with his own complicated legacy of unruly embodiment, and re-consider his offerings. That is, as the following chapter will show, the hail of the debt economy towards one's authentic self, is nothing but a spell.

A Becoming Gesture

How do notions of self-making sustain the debt economy? In what ways might indebtedness evoke a gesture-based routine with the state? How do black women endure against the backdrop of indebtedness? And how do state-sponsored organizations of time regulate such endurances? In this chapter, I look at *are you you* (2010-current) an online durational performance series by Shantell Martin and her artistic partnership with an American Express backed documentary *Spent: Looking for Change* (2014). I argue that Shantell Martin in similar ways to Williams, is overly associated, or *strategically* associated with her corporeality in ways that American Express promulgates in order to supposedly assist customers with debt management. In this particular partnership, however, unlike Williams, it is Martin's artistic brand of authentic self-

making that buttresses American Express and its attendant hail into indebtedness. Through an analysis of Martin and American Express' partnership for a national campaign on financial literacy, I argue that together, *are you you* and *Spent* reveal a paradigmatic example of how the debt economy hails subjects into modes of debt via black women's corporeality and cultural production. Furthermore, I assert that at the site of the body, gestures may proffer aesthetic means through which indebted ideologies hail black subjects into modes of self-making in the service of the debt economy.

Across the chapter I give close readings of gesture—from the gesture of an invitation to the gesture of a signature—in which a durational regime of movement is enacted, revealing the felt temporal registers of debt on the body. Here, I return to conversations on interpellation found across performance theory and black critical thought (Althusser, 2014; Butler, 1997; Warren, 2018). I theorize what I call the "New Financial Hail"—an interpellative mode—a call from the economy that wields an affective force via a host of everyday gestures. Although I term the indebted economy's mode of interpellation as the "*new* financial hail," such a notion, qua performance theory and black studies, is synchronistic to how Althusser fundamentally shows up in Chambers-Letson's early work (2013), and implicitly across Shimakawa's seminal text (2002). Althusser's theories, then, are an important linchpin in the chapter's coherence. That is, at base, I assert the "New Financial Hail" is a state-serving ideological force that subtly coerces marginalized subjects into performative modes of being. Though, just as soon as the "New Financial Hail" calls black subjects into modes of indebtedness, I ironize my claims to show the debt economy simultaneously casts black subjects out, expelling them into alternative financial services and other illegible economies. At the root of both claims, I argue, such modes of interpellation are codified through aestheticized platforms with felt temporal consequences. The

"New Financial Hail," then, is maintained by state-based organizations of time inherent to the debt economy, from the repetitive 30-day exhaustive cycle of living paycheck to paycheck, to hoping for a future unmarred by debt. This, secondarily, I contend that the "New Financial Hail" all at once structures the day-to-day time, or duration of black indebted subjects, while simultaneously directing black lives towards felt temporal foreclosures.

Having established that such durational forces play out at the site of the everyday with particular hostilities in the lives of black women, lastly I advance that black lives are coerced into what I term as indebted modes of C.P. time. Purposefully evocative of its more colloquial meaning: people of color time, my use of C.P. time also signifies a cyclic palimpsestic time. I show that such a time straddles the distinction that Bergson gave us between quantitative and qualitative time (Bergson, 2001; Guerlac, 2006). In other words, more than being a measurable unit of passing time, C.P. time is felt, most critically, as a durational experience of time (ibid). It is a set of lived rhythms that do not merely go around and around incessantly (cyclic), but a passing time that also inscribes and sediments (palimpsestic) in the psyche, and on the body. C.P. time, then, I argue is written on the black body (singular-plural) and across generations of black flesh as disproportionately distributed time that is characteristic of anti-black violence.

I advance that the "New Financial Hail" is an aestheticized, affective landscape rendered across everyday gestural and temporal properties, revealing the impact of time on the black body/flesh (Heathfiled, 2003). I argue, in ways complimentary to contemporary renderings of the debt economy, that we should look to the "New Financial Hail" and its fraught entanglements in the lives of black subjects as a durational performance. Such performances reveals the therein embodied durational dividends, or the distribution of forces across black women's bodies as they are caught up in and affectively disappeared across the everyday sphere.

Are you, *you?*

Figure 7: Martin, Shantell. “It Begins.” Arylic marker on wall*: Youtube,* uploaded by Topic 6 February 2018.

To begin, a simple gesture. Tips of the fingers pressed firmly against a felt tip pen arrested in the belly of the palm. Viewers watch as a small point lifts, curves, and bellows into a single line turned ambiguous shape vibrant with life—immediacy. In her live performance series, *are you you* (2009- 2014), Shantell Martin, an interactive durational performance artist merges live illustration with digital media, fashion, sculpture, and interior design. Across a series of sketches, she captures what she calls a stream of consciousness rendering of disparate black lines—a repetitive, improvisational process of form on various surfaces—from mural-size canvases to the bare-fleshy arms of willing spectators passing by amid the bustle of a New York city minute.

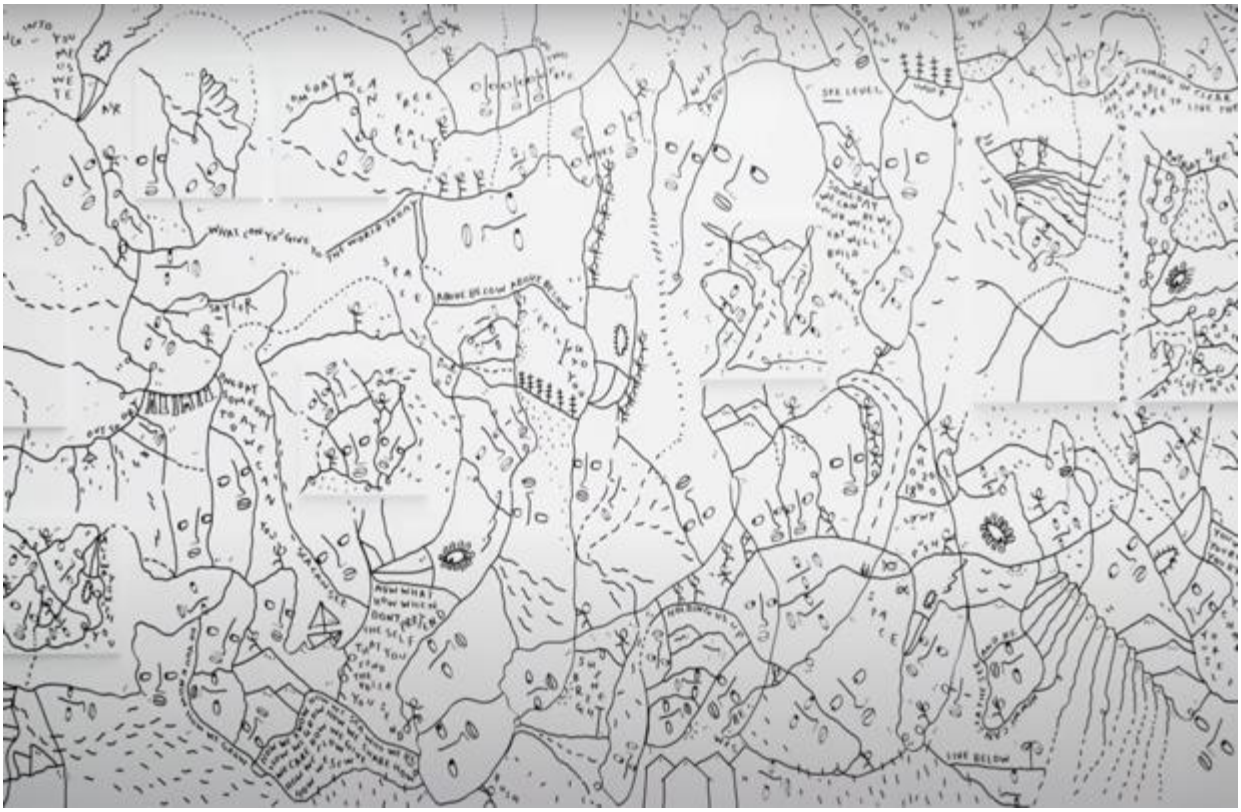

Figure 8: Martin, Shantell. "Illustrative Performance." Arylic marker on wall: *Youtube*, uploaded by Albright-Knox 9 August, 2017.

Undoubtedly her most well-known series, *are you you* is an ongoing illustrative performance based on a written invitation—a discursive gesture, where Martin playfully scrolls the phrase "are you you"[68] across her drawings. At times, Martin coyly shifts the phrase to "you are who," or "you are you," "why are you here," along with the ever probing "who are you."[69] Each rendering, however, gets at the same mechanism: a hail into the managing of a "you" in the process of becoming. According to Martin, such a question is one she raises in order for audiences to interact and reflect on the ethical dynamics of their inner lives as it aligns with the external embodiments that emerge across their daily routines (Martin, 2012). Indeed, Martin notes, she first wrote the

[68] I use *are you you* (italicized) to indicate the performance piece as a whole. I use "are you you" with box quotation marks, to indicate the written prompt.
[69] Each rendering of the prompt is void of punctuation.

phrase on a post-it note and stuck it beside her bedroom door so she could see it each morning before heading out into the jangled streets of New York City. Eventually she began scrolling the slogan into her illustrations, merging language with form.

Figure 9: Martin, Shantell. “The Loving Self.” Arylic marker on wall: *Youtube,* uploaded by Topic 6 February 2018.

Figure 10: Martin, Shantell. "Willing Passerby." *YouTube,* uploaded by The New Yorker, 24 October 2013.

Figure 11: Martin, Shantell. "Martin's Studio." *YouTube,* uploaded by The New Yorker, 24 October 2013.

As Martin's biography and brand of artist-self details, she grew up in a working class area of south-east London as the only black member of her family, having been adopted by white parents. Across her public appearances and online interviews, Martin often chronicles her experiences "of difference" (2012) as setting the stage for the life guiding prompt that became *are you you*. Here she details her experiences of moving in the early 2000s to Tokyo, where she professionally studied illustration in art school, mastering her technique amid the underground nightclub scene as always a bit of an "outsider" in a more or less homogenized society (Uhlir, 2018; see also Rosin, 2015). It was moving to New York City around the turn of the 2010's that the prompt materialized for her as she dared to make it as a quirky outsider in the city of lavish dreams. Since its 2010 early etchings, the series has soared, taking Martin from a relatively unknown, clever artist to what ArtNet News recently noted as an art world star on the rise (Dafoe, 2018). What started as a post-it note on her bedroom wall, flourished across the living rooms of New York City socialites. Moreover, Martin has secured invitations to perform her rendering of lines for black popular figures and high end fashion lines, from globally prestigious institutions to high art galleries, indexing a lifestyle of cultural sophistication and market legitimacy.

For instance, Martin joined multi Grammy award winner Kendrick Lamar for a collaborative performance at Art Basel, Miami. Lamar, known for his "vernacular authenticity" as well as for articulating and holding space for black complexity during the descent into one of the more racially divisive administrations in U.S. history (Trammell, 2018), held court while Martin projected live illustrations of her *are you you* aesthetic behind him. Such a partnership serves to lend credibility to Martin as a valued artist to black collectives, as well as to promote her as a viable figure for cross-over marketing. Consider that Martin signed a contract with Puma, which

ran with her prompt, displaying "are you you" over various footwear and other apparel. She also released a clothing line backed by Queen Latifa, securing support across prominent Hollywood figures as well as within elite QPOC[70] spaces. Shortly thereafter, posh yoga studios featuring the *are you you* mantra popped up, offering Brooklyn new agers deft reminders while they *downward dogged* and *namasted*. Institutions from MIT to NYU hosted her as a special visiting artist of the year, while galleries from SOHO to Milan showcased both her live illustrative performances and completed drawings to standing room only crowds. It was perhaps a high note in her ascent when former First Lady, Michelle Obama caught wind of Martin's aesthetic, making a special home visit to commend the artist on her vision.

Figure 12: "With Lamar at Miami Basel." *Youtube*, uploaded by American Express, 2 December 2016.

[70] Queer People of Color.

Figure 13: “Martin Lectures at MIT” *MIT Media Lab*, photo credit unknown, 26 January 2016.

Figure 14: “New York City Ballet.” Fashionmaniac.com, photo credit unknown, 17 January 2019.

Figure 15: “First Lady, Michelle Obama at Martin’s Exhibit.” *Twitter*, uploaded by Shantell Martin, 17 June 2015.

Figure 16: Shantell Martin. “Charge Yourself.” *Youtube,* uploaded by Albright-Knox 9 August, 2017.

An Invitation to You

In the contemporary art economy (since the onset of modernity really) the artist's creation is hardly a separate entity from the artist's "self;" at least in terms of market viability. Warhol and the later turn to socially engaged art secured this notion for us (Whiting, 1987; Bishop, 2012; Thomas, 2012; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2008; Schroeder, 2005). Thus Martin's success as an artist is propelled not only by her artistic skill, but equally by her artist brand—a certain story, a lifestyle, *a way of being* that is further legitimized by powerful market and cultural entities. Such viability is typified by paradigmatic narratives that either provoke or evoke popular attitudes, behaviors, and, in some cases, cultural shifts. In a meritocratic economy, such as the debt economy, Martin's tale is a useful one: having risen from a working class population she has become a fixture of a prestigious art world with mainstream influences.

At the same time, consider that Martin indexes a body that approximates both blackness and whiteness, and additionally, renders a play on gender by queering normative modes of dress for the typified female form. Framed by such powerful cross-cultural figures and global institutions, Martin affirms a post-racial/multi-cultural, universal subject attuned and available for the neoliberal hail of being one's self, albeit on the labor of a black woman's body. That is, her rise to fame is evocative of the myth of meritocracy with an important caveat. Martin's brand of artist self is illustrative of an ever-growing tendency where popular artistic personalities merge with markers of black iconicity, ultimately profiting or legitimizing themselves off of black cultural aesthetics and ideological frameworks. Blackness sells. And when markers of blackness are tethered to ambiguously racialized and gendered bodies— blackness sells well.

This is not necessarily a critique of Martin's professional choices around brand affiliation. I am unaware of what her personal urges may have been in making such decisions, nor do I find that as the rub of this story. What I do find problematic is the role of the financial in hailing black women into systems that hurt us, and that is does so through our labor, our bodies, and very own sense of self. So while I have an affinity for Martin's queering of dress/performance, I contend that *are you you* provides an occasion to be mindful that while performance can be used as a tactic to liberate minortarian subjects, as Munoz, summoning Althusser taught us, performance can also recruit minortarian subjects into harmful systems as well (1997).

So on September 23, 2014, when American Express premiered a version of the *are you you* series for their campaign on financial literacy, Martin's brand and labor was primed and ready to synchronize with American Express towards their meritocratic campaign meant to hail the self-made indebted subject. Martin was commissioned by the financial giants to perform the *are you you* illustration series in order to bring attention to the impact of debt on individuals and families, and their ability to participate in mainstream banking practices. Accordingly, Martin's performance acts as an overture to the American Express backed campaign and documentary S*pent: Looking for Change* (2014).

A video performance of Martin's *are you you: financial literacy* found on You-tube[71] opens to a wide aerial shot of New York City, followed by a zoom-in on Martin facing a blank mural-size canvas in front of the iconic Walter Reade Theatre. The video, which plays at 1 minute and 50 seconds, is a sped-up time-lapse version of what, in live time, took over three hours to complete. As a soundtrack of classical music swells and surges, the blank canvas is quickly absorbed by

[71] See Martin and *Spent* here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yRelcGB7Tg

Martin's lines, which dart, sputter, and curve gradually into a quirky, satirical, whimsical world, followed by the weaving in of various last names, such as Rodríguez, Morales, and Johnson.

The presence of the prompt "are you you" in such a cartoon-like, yet eerie world acts as an invitation into an imaginary process of cautious play and strategic wonder while one attempts to answer a more or less, unanswerable question. Such an illustrative world gestures not so much to a fixed space of arrival, but more towards an open ended process of knowing and re-knowing. Martin stages an affective landscape of coming into being, where affect here is meant to move, call the viewer in, for what Amber Musser writes about as "affective processes that bare sensation" (Musser 89). In the same way, we can think of such affects as Stewart's "ordinary affects" which nonetheless "surge and rub" offering a "connection of some kind that has an impact, […] generating intensities" and gesturing towards "a beginning dense with potential" (Stewart 128-129). We may even identify Martin's gestures as hopeful, an affective rendering of what Ahmed points to as a promise of the good life (Ahmed, 2015), or perhaps, with its more foreboding implications, what Berlant warned against as cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011). Affect and gesture work in tandem with one another, then, acting as subtle forces that linger and move between bodies, for what Claudia Rankine describes as "unsettling feeling[s] that keeps the body front and center" (Rankine, 8). Additionally, with hints at ethnic names alongside Martin's ambiguously racialized body and fluid sense of gender, it is the marginalized body being called front and center.

At the same time, Martin's rendering of the prompt next to the logo for American Express tilts the phrase "are you you" and begs the question: What does being yourself have to do with American Express? As I argue, such is the "New Financial Hail." It calls subjects into the debt economy via direct modes of address that is seemingly tailored specifically to them. That is, the "New Financial Hail" is a personalized call to be the "you" of, well, *you*. It is not a generic call

from the state directed toward subjects, writ large. Rather the "New Financial Hail" calls subjects in through a form as apparently direct as an e-vite. Think about it. More and more, rather than apply for a credit, one must turn down the invitation to acquire credit, or, put another way, to go into debt (Lazzarato, 2011; Marazzi, 2011). Recall standing at the checkout counter at any department store or, most commonly, perusing your 'junk' mail. Typically, you receive a personalized letter congratulating you—*you*, dear reader, on qualifying for pre-approved status. You are celebrated by way of invitation into a direct line of credit. The debt economy extends an invitation and one that is geared especially to you and your needs. It is a figurative gesture of goodwill, and at the everyday sight of domestic routine. The seemingly personalized call of the "New Financial Hail," then, functions via aestheticized gestures that are at once figurative and discursive. And they are felt.

To this end, Martin renders queer-like shapes that are all at once snow-capped mountains and quirky puzzle pieces, beyond human while evocative of muscularity and flesh gone awry. In Martin's performance of *are you you* with American Express, a large space of colorless void is gradually overtaken by a surreal, child-like-fantasy of stick figures with whimsical, homogenous faces. They are dotted, broken lines, and curvaceous, continuous lines that glide, hop, and saunter into one another. Twig-like people with forest-like dreams stretched up towards a kooky, jagged sky, while seemingly pushing against a fantastical world of geometrical wonder. Such invitational modes of self-making are rendered across affective life worlds, making like aesthetic gestures that bare sensation, here, in the service of the debt economy. If we understand the "New Financial Hail" and the seemingly personalized invitations it employs as gestures that are at once figurative, discursive, and corporeal (or felt); then we can also see that such gestures address. They beckon.

They invoke a mode of being. We can think of Martin and American Express' use of "are you you" as a co-mixture of self-making aesthetic gestures that are thus interpellative.

As I noted in the introduction to this project, performance studies scholars have demonstrated the role of gesture—figurative and corporeal—in the production of self across the everyday realm (Johnson 1997; Rodriguez, 2016). Gestures are behaviors that carry meaning and function as enunciative acts which produce and reproduce societies. As performance studies have shown, such interpellative behaviors function at the level of aesthetics in ways that condition both experiential (or embodied) and categorical modes of marginalized existence (Hartman, 1997; Chambers-Leston, 2012; Fleetwood, 2011; Lepeki, 2004; Butler; 1997; Shimakawa, 2002; Munoz, 1997). Importantly, many of these scholars draw on Althusser's theory of ideology and the hailing mechanisms through which ideology functions.

Writing to deepen Marxist theory on the function of the state, in *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, Althusser is invested in thinking through the exploitative function of the state in relation to modes of subject making. He theorizes the function of ideologies as felt mechanisms that hail, or interpellate. He notes "the existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing." (Althusser, 191). Thus, ideology—an affective force—hails. To be hailed, then, is to be called to perform in the presence of an affective force that is always already enforced by overlapping and distinct structural powers beholden to the state. With that, Althusser instructs that modes of interpellation are acted out across aesthetic and communicative technologies[72] (Althusser, 247).

[72] Here, Althusser wants the reader to mine the distinctions between the Repressive State Apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatus, while also holding the two together in tension. Not to be confused, ideological state apparatuses are just that, ideological as well as state apparatuses (Althusser, 77). He means that Ideological State Apparatuses are made up of both ideological and structural expressions of power. Further he argues that repressive state apparatuses and the ideological state apparatuses work together to ensure the reproduction of the relations of production (Althusser, 246). As Marx showed, we can think of

The presence of the state, Althusser shows, via mediated aesthetic forms or telecommunications such as "press, radio, and television," dominates subjects via ideological forces (ibid). Further, he writes, "[e]xperience shows that the practical telecommunications of hailing are such that they hardly ever miss their man." (Althusser, 264). He continues:

> "ideology *acts* or *function* in such a way as to recruit subjects among individuals […] or 'transform' individuals into subjects […] through the very precise operation [of] *interpellation* or *hailing.* It can be imagined along the line of the most commonplace, everyday hailing, by (or not by) the police: 'Hey, you there!' (Althusser, 190, original emphasis).

Therefore, via aesthetic apparatuses, ideology recruits for the purposes of transforming individuals into regulated subjects. Martin's work demonstrates this point at the formal textual level of the prompt. Upon a closer look, note that, void of punctuation, the phrase "are you you," sits somewhere between a declarative and an interrogative sentence. Such a phrase is a direct mode of address. Next note that Martin's phrase is formed by the use of one linking verb: "are" and the repetition of two pronouns: "you." Unlike common verbs, linking verbs do not convey direct action, rather they indicate a state-of-being, they "link the subject of the sentence with information about the subject of the sentence," therefore modifying the subject.[73] Thus, through mediated technology—here a durational platform—Martin's discursive gesture recruits subjects into acts of self-modification, or what Althusser notes as subject transformation (190). That is, Martin's

'relations of production' as the given structure of any nation, (or family for that matter) where the basis of that structure is disproportionate ownership of the means of production, such as (capitalist) ownership of property and the enclosure of the commons. Congruent with Marx then, Althusser is concerned with the various modes of exploitation required to enable the means of production of any given society (here, consider across generational and historical epochs—from slavery to credit) and the reproduction of social relations inherent to maintaining such means.

[73] "Linking verbs." Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Online Edition

gesture hails audiences into an ontological quandary over the terms of their engagement with self. And in partnership with American Express, *are you you*/"are you you*"* hails subjects into self-regulated performances towards a sense of self as a "self" to be tethered to and informed by the debt economy.

A Turning Point

In congress with the corporeal investments of performance studies, Judith Butler helps us see the hail functions as a performative event (Butler, 1997). And in the context of the "New Financial Hail," this point requires reiteration and expansion from the introductory chapter. As I have noted, Butler brings us to the gestural body as its caught up in modes of interpellation, establishing that, at base, modes of interpellation are gestural configurations. According to Butler, to be hailed, one must, first, turn towards the voice of the hail—written or otherwise. If, then, as Althusser famously asserts "a policeman hails a passerby on the street, and the passerby turns and recognizes himself as the one who is hailed" then, for Butler, the process of subject formation in relation to the subordinating power of the state is "relentlessly marked by a figure of turning" (Butler, 5). Consider Althusser here:

> "If to offer readers the most concrete sort of concreteness, we suppose that the theoretical scene we are imagining happens in the street, the hailed individual turns around. With this simple 180-degree physical conversion, he becomes a *subject.* (191)"

Butler, building on Althusser, shows that in heeding the call—that is, turning to receive the call, the subject becomes a subject through an embodied, gestural act. That such a gestural act is figurative in terms of "are you you" does not deter its performative consequence on processes of subject making. That is why Butler notes, both the production (self-making) and subordination

(self-regulating) of the subject is marked by this gesture of the turn. We can think of the 'turn' then as a figuratively rendered corporal performance and one that registers its impact across both affective and embodied internalizations of the hail, thus offering "a more insidious route for regulatory power than explicit coercion" (21).

Tellingly, then, Butler finds Althusser's theory of interpellation "facilitates the explanation [of subject making] but also marks its limit" (Butler, 4). If both the production and subordination of the subject is marked by this gesture of the turn, then Butler will have us postulate a temporal conundrum "how is it that a subject is wrought from such an ontologically uncertain form of twisting" (4)? For Butler, if the turn brings forward and/or completes the subject, Butler asks, then what makes the subject a "subject" prior to the turn?[74] In following Althusser's writings on interpellation, here, Butler asserts if the subject becomes a subject upon the turn to the authoritative voice of the hail, then it serves to follow that there is no subject proper prior to the call. Indeed, she writes, "the turn appears to function as a tropological inauguration of the subject, a founding moment whose ontological status remains permanently uncertain" (Butler, 3).

Butler's turn, however indirectly, helps us pivot to modes of subjective foreclosure across black experiential ways of being. As black scholars have persuasively lamented across various overlapping disciplines, anti-black capitalist structures, such as the indebted economy, do not recognize black subjects and having life[75] (Hartman, 1997; Spillers, 2003; Wilderson, 2010; Moten, 2017; Warren, 2018). For example, in Calvin Warren's *Ontological Terror: Blackness, Nihilism, and Emancipation*, he writes about forms of governance as instruments that serve an executive function of the state via certain interpellative mechanisms. For Warren, (in

[74] Butler asserts that one cannot turn to address or receive the hail without first (a priori) wanting, that is, having a desire to turn—a desire to be called upon by the state.

[75] I mean having "life: categorically, or in terms of black subjects being granted the "right" to life and all concepts of daily living. I do not mean that black subjects do not *live* life as an experiential mode.

contradistinction to Butler) the forces of state-governance and their embedded ideological imperatives do not allow for the expression of subjects who bear the mark(s) of blackness. Such an emergence, according to Warren would signal black being, which is impossible, according to Warren, as "being" implies a "standing-forth," an emerging or becoming. He writes, modes of becoming across anti-black structures are, "obliterated through technologies of terror, violence, and abjection," like the debt economy advances (Warren, 13). For the black subject then, subjectivity does not await at the other side nor perhaps even prior to Butler's turn. Butler machinery then sets forth as a temporal state of uncertainty that is relevant to black life. That is, if we understand Butler's turn as an interpellative gesture which inaugurates the subject, then we can think of the "New Financial Hail" as a gestural call that, at the bequest of the financial, ontologically and categorically negates black subjectivity.

From Personalized Invitations to Structural Expulsions

While the last section detailed how the debt economy hails subjects in, followed by a turn to how such interpellative modes are temporally uncertain to black subjects, the following section serves to give more texture to such an account—ironizing the internal mechanisms of the "New Financial Hail." Here, I show that just as the "New Financial Hail" interpellates black subjects into indebted modes, it simultaneously casts black subjects out, expelling them into "alternative financial services" and other illegible economies. This is where American Express takes center stage via its documentary, *Spent: Looking for Change,* which, in the online performance, follows *are you you* as a part two of Martin's piece. As Martin's performance draws to a close, viewers are taken to *Spent,* which advocates for financial inclusion through focusing on several families that represent the "millions of individuals locked out from traditional financial services due to

insurmountable amounts debt" (Spent, 1:11-1:18). In this way, *Spent* is geared specifically to those whom the film refers to as the financially underserved: those who are made to live outside of traditional financial markets. Such a population—over 30 million according to the documentary, speaks to those who, because of low credit scores or "bad credit" have been made excluded from mainstream banking processes and with no other options, are left to manage their finances through alternative financial services (Spent, 8:00-8:45).

As *Spent* details, one common way the debt economy directly facilitates expulsions from mainstream banking processes (like having a checking account) is through popular overdraft protection practices known as high-low sequencing (Servon, 2015). High low sequencing is a bank's response to typical overdraft protection plans that many people utilize across socio-economic positions. When a customer opts into an overdraft protection plan, they authorize the bank to cover a debit from their account should they miscalculate funds and not have enough money at the time of a charge. As Liz Servon poignantly details, say, at the end of a month, you, reader, have written three checks in the following order: one for your student loans, followed by another for your car note, then one for your power bill. All of them clear. But suppose, the power bill went up, effectively emptying your account. Thus, your overdraft protection kicks in, covering you for the missing funds (Spent, 7:00-7:45). However, with high low sequencing practices, banks can opt to re-order your checks and clear the debit for the power bill first— nearly, or completely emptying your account—after which the bank will opt to process the checks for your student loans, followed by the car note. So what would have been one overdraft fee (in the order you deposited the checks), becomes three over draft fees (in the order in which the bank chose to clear them). When black women are living on a paycheck to paycheck basis, they are often not able to afford

the extra fees which thereby accrue on a 30-day cycle, causing households to sink further into more debt.

Once banks realize that they will not recoup the money used to cover the accrual of a borrower's overdraft fees, banks may, and often do, bar customers from having checking accounts. Thus, mainstream financial practices, like having a checking account, are not a possibility and, as such, many lower income and working class people have to turn to alternative financial services. In other words, such a structural booting backed by financial apparatuses, forces customers into alternative financial landscapes, or what economists commonly refer to as the fringe economy. Examples here include pawn shops, check cashing services, and most popularly, payday loan centers. "Payday loans, a growing and highly contested practice, are short-term loans made to last the length of time between paychecks[76] (Servon, 82). In short, they are, as Liz Servon prompts "lenders-of-the-last-resort for borrowers with no other options" (Servon, 83). Typically, with such loans, given the exorbitantly high interest fees, come payday, once all the bills are paid, borrowers may not have the extra funds to pay back the loan plus the interest fees. Tellingly, black women[77] are much more likely to take out payday loans than other groups (Bronson, 2018). Mainstream practices of high low sequencing and their consequent expulsion of borrowers into the fringe economy find black indebted subjects living on a 30-day cycle of living check to check, while going deeper and deeper into debt. Black indebted subjects are therein tethered to a past, stuck in the present, without the material means to reach towards the future in any sustainable way. Such a state-sponsored day-to-day rhythm makes for a dizzying and nightmarish cycle of indebted black generations set on repeat.

[76] Such loans always have extremely high interest rates, "with the average $375 loan costing $520 (139%) by the time the interest is added" (Servon, 82.)
[77] between the age of 25 to 44.

And while *Spent* highlights several types of debt distress resulting from the likes of medical bills, credit cards, or simply an unestablished credit history, the documentary and its subsequent on-the-ground campaign, focus heavily on student loans, however to the near exclusion of black women's lives.[78] Indeed, while black women make up the largest demographic of student loan borrowers—as well as defaulters—*Spent* obscures this phenomenon altogether (see AAWC, 2018), opting more for a universal tale of merely falling on hard times.[79] Here the documentary highlights the story of Tiffany Richardson, a nurse living in Texas. Viewers learn that after taking a year off of work to provide full-time care for her sick mother, Richardson cannot gain entry back into the work force. The implications of Tiffany Richardson's story, and the (non)representation of black women in the documentary, deepen as we learn over the course of the narrative that, given her mother's health care costs and the high fees associated with being in debt, she can no longer afford to pay the education of her daughter, a young black girl whose name we never know. Tiffany Richardson and her daughter are framed as unlucky individuals who happen to be caught up in the indebted market rather than as subjects of structural mechanisms that disproportionately target black women and other women of color like them. In fact, it is Tiffany Richardson's voice that is summoned during the opening voice-over as American Express instructs audiences that being in debt is a surmountable event. Indeed, as *Spent* tells it, being in debt is the stuff that the American meritocratic tale of from rags to riches is made of. Furthermore, in keeping with the underlining

[78] As an extension to the documentary, American Express launched a three-year pilot financial literacy program that provides financial education and mentorship geared specifically to disenfranchised black and brown high school students in Clarksdale, Mississippi. The pilot program, according to Am/Ex, is meant to steer disenfranchised students into managing large sums of debt, most notably through student loans. In short, the corporation launched a program that seeks to directly invite, hail black and brown youth into modes of debt on the promise of bettering their future through opting into colleges and universities that are unaffordable, but for student loan services.

[79] *Spent* also tells the story of an Argentinean immigrant young woman and first generation college student who, through the triumph of working several jobs at night succeeds in "making it" as a fashion designer.

point of this chapter, American Express centers Richardson voice at the top of the documentary, instructing audiences over the swell of harmonizing chords: “Don’t give up, not even if you want to.” (Spent, 0:45-1:10).

Are You... Spent?

Returning to Martin’s performance preceding *Spent,* we see that her aesthetic use of time lapse, temporal compression, and sonic looping evoke the lived rhythm of the indebted economy for black subjects, like Tiffany Richardson, revealing a felt temporal order of everyday black experiences of the economy. Martin’s video leaps across time, indeed, in a time lapse, while nonetheless invoking loop-like sensations. This is established through the music. Here, the formal structure of the score features the progression of running scales that strike against the drone of an ongoing major chord. The score, “Triangle Music” by Minimalist composer, David Jefferson, suggests an affective parallel consistent with the hypo-cacophony of day-to-day black indebted living across an ongoing cycle of accumulative dispossession.[80] Similarly, Martin’s gestures—both the illustration, itself, and the rhythmic patterning of her arms—reveal a repetition, an endless cycle set against an otherwise seemingly progressive unfolding of form and structure. They offer an affective glimpse into the repetitious cycle of being cast into an “alternative financial landscape,” a structural financial elsewhere—an affective temporal place-less-ness where black subjects live out a 30-day cycle of living paycheck to paycheck while accumulating debt.

If the medium of durational art and performance emphasizes the constructed nature of time (Heathfield, 2008), then “repetition,” or what performance studies scholars think of as “ritual remains by means of performance,” takes on an increased importance here (Schneider 147). As

[80] See Paula Chakravartty and Denise Ferreira da Silva (2013)

Rebecca Schneider and her contributions on performance and temporality may help readers understand, *are you you,* and *Spent* together "articulates not a distinction between remaining and disappearing, or life and death, but an inter(in)animation of registers that is ongoing by passing on" (147). Schneider's "passing on" can be likened to exhausted bodies that learn to pass on through the day, the week, the month: repeat. Such a "passing on" functions like a constructed repetition that living outside mainstream finical apparatus requires. The cringing feeling when the phone rings. The aches in the heel from standing all night at your second job, followed by returning home to read for the night to pass the exam on the way to the higher degree that may or may not get you a job, based, not only on the volatility of the market, but also on the sense of everyday, coerced acts of deference required of black women seeking institutional access to power and resources. Such feelings accrue and repeat, impressing the depressive subject, the depressed subject, the sick subject, the broke and tired subject—passing on, dying for our debts, where such debts outlive, pass on, and survive across generations, attaching to the kinfolk of another. We can think of such a subject as what the American Express documentary perhaps unknowingly gesture towards—a subject who is, indeed, spent.

This means, subjects are called into being*, or* interpellated by normative constructions/social organizations of time for a durational encounter with the state. We can think of such temporal ordering as what Elizabeth Freeman so pointedly refers to as chronormativity, indicating the way in which marginalized subjects are "bound into socially meaningful embodiment through temporal regulation" (3). It is crucial then to hold the financial hail and its attendant modes of self-making together with notions of temporality, specifically duration. Duration brings us to the body where the felt conditions of systemic modes of time become apparent (Jones and Heathfield, 2012). That is, if durational art and performance "marks the unmarked intervals of life—unparalleled in terms

of their use of physical difficulty over extreme durations" (Heathfield 11), then thinking about the debt economy as a durational performance makes sense. Consider common references to the entrepreneurial spirit that affectively regulates notions of surviving the contemporary economy. Such a spirit resides in the subject that, from one calculated risk to another *prevails* though continuous uncertainty, *enduring* through the tumultuous rhythm of the financial stratosphere.[81] Furthermore, in this contemporary moment, the capitalist project has maintained and demanded a temporal mode of acceleration and speed, from fast food to fast cash, all the while fostering the accumulation of debt. The lens of duration, then, can help make visible the corporeal realities of black indebted living across a social logic of temporality that hails, speeds up, expels, loops, commodifies, repeats. Such temporal logics obscure the impact of a lived duration of debt across black lives, from day-to-day to generational enduring. Meanwhile, black lives are confined to temporal foreclosures, felt modes of repetition, cyclic and palimpsestic that keep the body front and center, as Rankine notes, and as I contend: numb and inert.

Bound to (Dis)appear

If we agree that experiences accrue, repeat, and rewrite the repeating body,[82] or the everyday body, then we can understand such day-to-day living as cyclic and palimpsestic—an ongoing cycle that rewrites over what is written. In this way, I contend that ultimately the "New Financial Hail," directs black subjects towards a foreclosed temporal horizon. That is, black people particularly black women are coerced into what I term as indebted modes of C.P. time. Such a temporality performs simultaneous times of deep repetition towards a no place and the same place twice

[81] Recall, a key factor across Bergson's writings on duration is that the subject is someone who endures. Indeed, the enduring subject marks the whole point of duration for Bergson.
[82] See Kimberly Juanita Brown, 2015.

ongoing. Indeed, C.P. time is a social construct that propels the black body into a vicious cycle, as the previous section detailed. And, as the final section shows, state coerced modes of C.P. time ultimately disappear the minoritarian subject.

Just as predatory modes of debt seek to, and are necessitated upon the inclusion of black gendered subjects, they too, expel such subjects into an indebted, temporal place-less-ness. A return to *are you you,* helps us here. Note that towards the end of the performance, Martin's lines eventually escape from the canvas and onto her clothes and body. In the last 20 seconds of the video, Martin stands in front of her creation, facing the camera. She is dressed in a long sleeve white button down shirt with a sharp crisp collar. Martin's shirt is covered in a nearly identical rendering of her darting lines and curvaceous shapes, along with, written across the tail of her shirt, the prompt—a riff on "are you you" that reads "why are you here." Slowly then, Martin's body disappears in a dramatic digitized fade out, leaving the full canvas in sight. It appears as if she has faded into a whimsical eerie world of surrealistic promise and wide-eyed bewilderment. I contend that in a similar fashion, debt and indebtedness disappear the lives of black women and other marginalized groups, taking over life plans, dreams, and relationships, until all that remains are one's debts: a whimsical eerie world of surrealistic promise and wide-eyed bewilderment. Martin's performance thus materializes the immaterialization of black women's debts, and with that, our lives.

Figure 17: Shantell Martin. "Fade Away." *YouTube,* uploaded by American Express 26 September, 2014.

This is why the debt economy is sustained by a two-part exploitative process that invites subjects into mainstream modes of debt, only to expel them from traditional financial processes when they are unable to pay off such debts (Lazaratto, 212; 2013; Wang, 2017). Indeed, across classic and contemporary Marxist theory, scholars have detailed the ways in which capitalism has a dual character: it both homogenizes and differentiates (Harvey, 2015; Wang, 2018). As Jackie Wang notes, in the debt economy, the logic of differentiation reproduces racialized as well as gendered subjects (Wang 101). In order for the debt economy to sustain itself, black women's bodies are required as ongoing sites of exploitation, expropriation, and expulsion. Reminding readers that debt, first and foremost, is a power relationship, Jacki Wang writes thoughtfully about such processes as financial states of exception. In her critical and powerful indictment on the

relationship between the carceral state and capitalism (2018), Wang applies Giorgio Agamben's theorizations on the financial state of exception to current fiscal catastrophes affecting cities across the U.S. For instance, Wang writes about black and latinx populations affected by the Flint, Michigan water crisis and Hurricane Maria (2018) that devastated Puerto Rico. Wang wants readers to grapple with the ways in which states initiate ordinances and processes outside of the juridical norm (151).

Accordingly, she highlights that it was only in the wake of Flint's turning over to private (non-elected) fiscal financial manager the financial processes that are typically the responsibility of the state elected council, that the city was subjected to negligent decisions that resulted in shifting the city's water supply to the Flint river. According to Wang, the responses from Flint, Michigan's and Puerto Rico's state governance demonstrate "a suspension of the so-called normal democratic modes of governance," where "the implementation of rule by emergency managers (EM's) who represent the interests of the financial sector" ensue (72). Congruent with Agamben's writings, Wang emphasizes what Agamben describes as "the physical elimination […] of entire categories of citizens who, for some reason, cannot be integrated into the political system," who are, in effect expelled to "a no-man's-land between public law and political factors […] between the juridical order and life" (Agamben 1-3). Much of what can be gleaned from considering the logic of the debt economy through the state of exception as a theoretical paradigm is outside the purview of this chapter. Rather, having said that, what I am getting at here are the temporal constructs and therein material consequences of the suspension of the so-called norm, a cordoning off to a temporal no-man's-land, such as the fringe economy, between the debt economy and black life.

The "New Financial Hail," then, separates out, it removes subjects.[83] That is, just as the debt economy seeks to, and is necessitated on the inclusion of black gendered subjects, it too expels such subjects into a temporal place-less-ness. Such temporal outsides play out across a cyclic palimpsestic time that stages a durational encounter with the state across the everyday sphere. Such encounters are routine forces in the lives of black women. Everyday encounters with violence have been theorized assiduously by women of color and black feminist thinkers who have detailed the hail of overlapping structures of violence, such as racism and economic oppression, across the day-to-day, affective lives of black women. They are what Sharon Holland describes as habituated "everyday pronouncements that are not so much designed to elicit a response so much as to keep black women in their place[84] (5). Though here, via the debt economy, black women are held in a more or less, place[less]ness.

Holding together the financial, the affective, and the temporal, then, further complicates how forms of state power, such as financial-foreclosure, produce modes of self-making at the same time that they limit forms of black living. Martin's *are you you,* in partnership American Expresses' *Spent,* exemplifies this point by hailing black women into modes of visioning a future, on-coming self at the same time as access to notions of self-hood are often foreclosed in the lives of black women. Meanwhile, as the indebted economy hails subjects into modes of material (or ideological) payment that cannot be met, such subjects are ultimately deemed unmoral, unworthy, and illegible. Such structurally rendered affects stick and remain. They are what José Muñoz, Sara Ahmed, Nicole Fleetwood, and others who offer a queer of color critique of political economies, describe as affects that contribute to the unfolding of inner life worlds, as well as ways in which

[83] Recall my discussion on Karen Shimikawa's work from the introduction.
[84] See De Berry, 2018

marginalized bodies are made known while enduring felt notions of place and time (Ahmed, 2015; Munoz, 2006; Brennan, 2004; Williams, 1997).

Reverb: Second Verse, Same as the First

Such ways of knowing bring us closer to the final point at hand. The seemingly abstract call of the "New Financial Hail" is performed, regulated, and endured at the site of the body. And so, as I wrote at the top of this story, it (the hail) all begins with a gesture. And, we might say that it all ends under the same mechanism. As I have stated, the "New Financial Hail" plays out at the corporeal site of the body across the structure of everyday routine. Here consider that Martin's scrolling hand across the canvas, mural, wall, or what have you—particularly in partnership with American Express—brings to mind notions of the written signature, such as one used to execute a contract. Recall that one becomes an indebted figure, and is hailed officially into financial subjectivity through the utterly quotidian gesture of taking hold of a pen and writing one's signature.[85] Or else imagine the rip gesture of a pen upon historic legislation and the subsequent removal of nations, peoples, families, and lives. Despite analog notions of the pen, the signature is not an obsolete gesture. In contemporary debt apparatuses, if not enacted by a pen, signatures are accomplished by a click or the pushing of an electronic button—making a pulse like gesture with the forefinger, thus applying fleshy pressure to smooth articulations of thin metal. Other corporations go so far as requesting and/or accepting video recordings of soon-to-be debtors

[85] Given the historical and contemporary problematics of having/owning a legitimate name across black, immigrant, and trans lives, in describing this phenomenon of the signature, I have chosen the description of *'writing one's signature'* over '*signing one's name'*. The logic being that not all individuals have had access to 'their name' particularly as it documents a state of being.

nodding their heads—neutral and esteemed faces—making like embodied, gestural agreements to take on debt (Gupta, Tung, and Marsden, 2004).

Scholars at the intersection of performance theory and dance studies suggest that the signature is both document and event. For instance, foundational to the linguistic turn in performance studies, John Austin (1975) and John R. Searle (1969) help us to understand text as performative. That is, according to both scholars, when a subject speaks an utterance, the thing spoken instantiates a new object, place, or meaning. The oft cited Austinian "I do" as uttered by a bride, thus making her a spouse in the legal ordinance of the state, demonstrates this claim. Austin's point is that such speaking does not merely make a statement: it also performs as action, instantiates an event. Building on his claims, Shoshana Felman (2002) writes about literary speech acts as invoking states of being for both the reader, yet more pointedly, for the writer. In contrast to Austin, who focused his claims on spoken text or speech acts, lamenting that written speech does not necessarily "do" anything in terms of a causal regard, Feldman suggests the written speech acts as constitutive to subject-making processes.

In *Writing and Madness: Literature/Philosophy/Psychoanalysis*, Felman links the written (gestural) form to states of affective being. Here, she is invested in the relationship between written language and forms of power. Tellingly, across her body of work, Felman's primary investment centers the relationship between the written speech act and the body. Perhaps one of her more valuable contributions to the analysis of performance and writing is the contention that the body, in relationship to any given speech act, always already creates an excess that subverts the performance of a speech act (Carlson, 2017). In other words, the body and its relationship to text (self-written and self-spoken) spill outside of the material frame of the body and touch upon the

figurative, therein troubling modes of the self and ultimately destabilizing notions of the body. Felman's theories on written text prepare us to think finally of gestures as acts that inscribe a sense of being with temporal consequences.

A number of performance studies scholars likeminded to Felman write about acts of inscription as gestural markings on and of the body. Here, scholars would have us consider gestures as discipline like corporeal structures (Butler, 1996), with orienting modes of micro movement (Noland, 2009), that codify a self-exploratory process (Ness, 2008), as determined across spatialized registers (Derrida, 1998), and linked to notions of time (Lepeki, 2015; Butler, 1996). On one hand, dance scholar Carrie Noland, following the psychoanalytic promptings of Melanie Klein, writes about the signature as an obligatory technique of the body. In her seminal text, *Agency and Embodiment*, Noland wants readers to consider the act of writing as corporal micro-movements set within a socially constructed gestural routine. For Noland, such gestures are oriented towards making a mark and leaving a trace of a subject. Gestures are "operational techniques of the body ... exerted with the intention to fabricate an object [or subject]" to, in a sense, she notes, "leave a mark" or trace. Thus, for Noland, gestures mark both a place as well as place-less-ness (ibid). Likewise, Felman notes, gestures inscribe: they mark a subject into a place (or place-less-ness) as well as a state of being (1986). By extension, other scholars center temporal implications inherent to the form of dance, which ultimately subsumes gestural acts of inscription. Therefore, if following André Lepecki by conceiving of gesture as "the embodying of temporality […] that mark an answer to modernity's anxieties about being in time... use of rhythm, meter, emphasis, stillness" (126,) then we can agree that whether it is through the gripping of the pen or the curvature of the fingers tap, tap, tapping along a keyboard, *are you you* and *Spent* are

paradigmatic of the debt economy: fleshy like durational dividends rendered at the sight of the everyday that subsume the black body just as sure as they expel it.

And so, there is something here to be said about rest—the ability to have an ease in one's stride, to have *the* time—a time that is not borrowed, that is not tethered to exploitative dynamics. Time in regard to the debt economy, or C.P. time, then, to return to Screamin' Jay Hawkins, is like a spell, a suspended mode of felt time not of one's own deciphering. A subconscious notion, felt down to the tips of the fingers—pulses at the counter waiting in line for the loan, while just beneath the fold another year passes—credit score descending (with members of online dating sites disclosing credit scores, a new profile of desirability out of reach for many), a split time then—a treadmill life while all that lives matures, and appreciates in value at the dispossession of your own value, down to the seemingly banal gesture of a nod.

Break.

A reprieve.

Breath.

Given the claims of this chapter, the implications of my argument may reveal a glass half empty kind of analysis, a pessimist's account of black life in the U.S. Let us consider then, perhaps, if only to push into the demands that Afro-pessimissim makes of scholars engaged in black thought, that, in the eyes of the state, black subjects do not have access to legitimate modes of self-making. And as I have shown, such modes are particularly fraught across the debt economy which

systematically recruit black women into apparatuses that negate future options for the self, along with present wanderings with the self, rendering frightful implications across generations yet to be conceived. So what, if anything, is there to be done? Simultaneously then, the implications of my argument are also meant to strike at the possibilities of duration as a mutable property. Vulnerable to intrusion. To change. Transformation. To be clear, this project is not necessarily a directive on how to harness art/performance for the sake of *felt* social unities, as per the growing concern of art criticism since the turn to socially engaged art (Bishop, 2012; Grant, 2011; Wexler and Sabbagh, 2019). Then again, in these times, why would we not put pressure on art practices for any less?

I am moving the reader, then, towards thinking through a black feminist praxis in duration. One that would demand a critical turning our attention towards the minutia of "being" together as an experiential mode, for say, felt ontological arrangements. In order to reveal the full properties of such a praxis, of such arrangements, this chapter first outlines how indebtedness functions as a state-organized temporal force. With that, I have centered how such forces land on black bodies and distribute black livability within and outside of what broader conversations hold as an "abstract" financial processes, which, as I contend, nonetheless materialize at the site of the body. What I ask of the reader to sit with, then, at the close of this chapter and in preparation for the next, is how might scholarly spaces and activist publics feel our way into the worlds we long to inhabit via the durational gestures that bind us. How might we make use of gestures that, as this project goes on to advance, also serve to soften us towards one another? Gestures that may serve to liberate. That may, in the very least, give us more time.

CHAPTER THREE
Here in Black Paradise: A Ritual for Debt

In a 1981 interview with Charles Ruas, Toni Morrison reveals that when writing her novels, she always begins with the ending. "I don't always have a beginning," she states. She goes on:

> I always know the ending of my novels because that's part of the idea, part of the theme. It doesn't shut, or stop there. That's why endings are multiple endings. *That's where the horror is. That's where the meaning rest* (Ruas 101, my emphasis).

Telling, then, that the novel at hand, *Paradise (1997),* begins indeed at the very ending: an ending that, too, marks a powerful beginning that is also underscored by its re-staging at the novel's end. That is, Morrison, from the outset and as a core feature to her novel structures a temporal reckoning with a horrific ending—a brutal attack, a murder of a small community of unruly black women. And this temporal reckoning, a conflation of multiple endings and beginnings, is where Morrison directs our attention in order to attune to the horrors, the meaning of a tale set in an all-black Paradise. In terms of the horrific ending, suffice it to say that with the following paraphernalia: "a rope, a palm leaf cross, handcuffs, Mace and sunglasses, along with clean, handsome guns," nine men set out one predawn morning to "stampede," murder, seize, take the lives of five unruly black women (Morrison 3). In the absence of a detailed rendering of such a brutal attack, the point to consider is that you, reader, undoubtedly, can recall or conjure on your own accord—chances are within the recent 7day news cycle—an act of brutality set against black women's bodies across both cis and trans registers. Multiple endings indeed. And so Morrison may have us know that access to an instant recall of the all-too-real stampeding of unruly black women's lives is also part

and parcel of the novel's horror. Further, as Morrison sets such a tale against the backdrop of an all-black indebted town, where payments on debt are tied to the city's black owned bank just as much as they are to the memory of the town's black ancestors—a co-mixture of debt to the financial as well as debt to legacy—what is to be made of the relationship between black women, indebtedness, and ontological seizure?

Tellingly, writing *Paradise* for Morrison was a reckoning of her own sense of indebtedness to black communities.[86] In an interview with Charlie Rose in 1998, Morrison reveals a sense of the weight she felt in writing *Paradise*, it being her first novel after winning the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature.[87] Summarizing the weight of such a duty, she shares that in writing *Paradise:*

> "I had to make a way for the people who came behind me […] a lot of people put themselves in harm's way in order to make it easier for [me and] my children." She solemnly summarizes, "I have a big debt to black people" (Rose, 46:15-46:23).

This chapter will wrestle with and unravel this sense of debt that Morrison articulates, that, in her attempts to repay it, she writes a devastating tale about ontological seizure, psychic enclosure, and everyday default in the lives of one black community. To say it another way, Morrison's rendering of a black paradise allows us to consider the implications between debt, blackness, and everyday psychic violence. Perhaps one can imagine, in conjuring her own debt to black spaces—to blackness—she may mean the renderings of black life, love, and resiliency that were loaned out—offered to her so that she too might create the worlds she longed to see, read, embody as a black woman surviving across the fraught raced legacies tethered to everyday living in the U.S. Consider, then, Paule Marshall who gave her soul claps from little black girls gathered

[86] I mean this as an amorphous site of variously gendered, classed, and sexed black bodies situated across the US.

[87] Morrison was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993 for *Beloved*.

at Brownstones;[88] or Zora Neal Hurston who offered up the rapture of black women in breezy summer gardens making touch to their own wind-pollinated skin;[89] or else Baldwin's force of fire in the belly.[90] Then again, perhaps Morrison is referencing a payment to the likes of black torch singers like Billie Holiday, lamenting "Strange Fruit"[91] for the first time in New York City in 1939; Recy Taylor's[92] refusal of silence; Mamie Till[93] making space via an illustrated refusal to cover the brutality of everyday whiteness that took her little boy; or Fannie Lou Hammer[94] who literally loaned her body to the movement—police officers ravaging at her surface, her will to keep on, keeping on. Morrison's debt perhaps invites black audiences to conjure the likes of Diahanna Carrol[95] to Shirley Chisholm.[96] She is also perhaps beckoning black minds to imagine the many kitchen tables where, from unsung heroes to the Combahee River collective, black communities have gathered to strategize, to organize, to make a way. And from this sense of debt—indeed a debt to blackness, a black indebtedness—Morrison conjures in *Paradise* an admixture of the financial and the spectral, the material and abstract, the poetic and the sublime, the bone and the marrow as a way to render the legacy and the horror, the honor and the default of black indebtedness across black spaces/psyche.

[88] Paule Marshall, novelist, see *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959)
[89] Zora Neal Hurston, novelist and playwright, see *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)
[90] James Baldwin, novelist, and civil rights activist, see *The Fire Next Time* (1963)
[91] Written by Abel Meeropol, though under the pen name Lewis Allan as protest against lynching in the US south, the song was first performed by Holiday in 1939 and became a signature song for her.
[92] Recy Taylor, was survivor who was kidnapped and gang-raped by a group of white men in Jim Crow Alabama. Recy Taylor refused to remain silent and, in doing so, provided an organizational spurge in the Civil Rights Movement,
[93] Mamie Till, mother of Emmet Till.
[94] Fannie Lou Hammer, Political leader and women's rights activist.
[95] Diahanna Carol, Actress, model and activist, and first black woman to win a Tony Award for Best Actress in the Broadway musical *No String* (1962).
[96] Shirley Chisholm, politician, author, and activist. Chisholm was also the first black women to run for the U.S. Presidency in 1968.

Why is it that a feeling so useful and positive to black spaces, an indebtedness to blackness, can also be both subject and barometer of unsightly psychic horrors? How are such fraught contradictions communicated at the level of the body, across the everyday sphere, in ways that determine felicitous modes of blackness? And what might any of this have to do with duration? In this final chapter, I look to Toni Morrison's novel *Paradise* (1997) in order to theorize the role of indebtedness specific to black communities in the wake of post-Emancipation consciousness through the discourses of the pre #MeToo movement. Centering the overarching thematic and formal literary structure of the novel, I argue that Morrison provides an aesthetic encounter to consider debt as a psychic violence in the lives of black women, particularly as it relates to improper modes of reverence and other unruly (sexually deviant) behavior. I begin by analyzing how a sense of indebtedness and other affective financial themes haunts the town of Ruby and the unruly mixed-race women who live at it outskirts. Here, I show that an indebtedness to blackness, most notably to the town's all black ancestors, is performed via daily acts of exchange. Zooming in, I show that indebtedness plays out at the micro site of everyday gesture, that over time, make like elevated routines. Through such gestures, I assert that Morrison renders black debt as entrenched within the financial and the ancestral—in the metaphysical and spectral sense—as well as across the corporeal site of the body.

Next, I show that such routine like gestures act as stylized modes of behavior, where subject's lives take shape, are organized, and expressed across elevated routines, for what we can think of as black sacred rituals. In conversation with writings on rituals across the fields of performance theory (Madison, 2019; Taylor, 2003; Schechner, 2012) and black theatre studies (Carter-Harris, 2002; Jones, 2015), I establish that Morrison's staging of black sacred rituals function to codify a sense of being and belonging to blackness. Accordingly, I assert that rituals interpellate black

subjects. They call or invite the town's people and the unruly women at its edge into modes of indebted black being. Here, I pivot to show a paradox at the center of the novel: an all-black paradise is meant to include certain modes of blackness in as much as it is meant to exclude others. Having established that such inclusions are not only scripted via heighten stylized acts of behavior, but also at the libidinal site of the body; I turn to Christina Sharp's *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects* (2010). Building from Sharpe, I analyze how a libidinal economy of blackness (phenotypical markers that Morrison scripts as mixed-raced and pure-blooded black subjects) gestures to the historical context of black gendered dynamics at the sight of sexual deviancy and black indebtedness.

Lastly, as the title of the novel itself—*paradise*—invokes a temporal bygone time, I assert Morrison stages phenomenological openings to alternative experiences of collectively imposed modes of black time. Though metaphor and formal use of grammatical structure, she theorizes such openings as durational strategies taken up by the novel's unruly black women in order to resist and reimagine regulating modes of debt. I conclude, then, on Morrison's ritual staging of indebtedness as it pertains directly to duration for what she terms as "stepping in." Such rituals, I assert offer solvent economies that are conjured at the site of black women's psychic-artistic production. I argue finally that black sacred rituals, durational in nature, taken up by black women across the novel feature a different use of time, one that troubles notions of indebtedness, providing an occasion to defer the embodied indebted logics that currently regulate black women's lives.

Conjuring Paradise: A Haunting Presence

One of the more widely read and celebrated novelists in American literature, Toni Morrison is the subject of courses taught across the academy, from traditional public elementary classrooms

to elite private universities. Whether the subject of Oprah's Book Club[97] or the object of psychoanalytic theory, Morrison's literary depictions reveal registers of the human psyche across everyday experiences that a wide range of audiences have taken up for examination, from popular culture to obscure scholarship. Her novels, along with her essays, librettos, and children's books, center the nuances of African-American experience through heightened and vernacular language, cultural/political history, and everyday life. Though, even more precisely, as Valerie Smith writes, Morrison's novels center "the impact of racial patriarchy upon the lives of black women during specific periods in American history, such as the colonial period, the eras of slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow and Civil Rights" (2). Along these lines, in her novel, *Paradise*, Morrison stages an encounter between black patriarchal and matriarchal formations in the wake of Emancipation through the rise of Civil Rights. Published in 1997 and understood widely by scholars as the final installment in a trilogy[98] about the depth and distinctions of black love and community, the novel is centered poignantly around notions rooted in the logics of collective debt, rendered from everyday transactions to thwarted exchanges. Such notions converge at the intersection of gender, sexuality, and regimes of black authenticity, providing an occasion to reflect on modes of debt as a psychic seizure that, all at once captures and occupies the everyday black gesturing body.

Across the novel, Morrison stages debt as a haunting and repressive ideology that comes to form the underlining psychic register of the town and the Convent,[99] staged just at its outskirts.

[97] An offshoot of Oprah Winfrey's popular talk show, by the same title, her book club began in 1996. Winfrey chooses a book each month that an invited group of supporters of the show read alongside of her. Some of the discussions are aired, as was the case with Morrison's *Paradise*--which was so difficult for audiences to grasp, Winfrey held three episodes to fully dive into the book's themes.
[98] *Beloved* (1987) and *Jazz* (1992) being the other two respectively.
[99] I am keeping with Morrison's choice to capitalize 'Convent' across the chapter.

For instance, the novel's lead patriarchs, the Morgans—a set of twins named Stewart and Deek—whose father led the weary migration that settled the town, are described by the town's people as descendants who financed the town, rather than, say, founded it (Morrison, 1997: 115). As the Morgans own the only bank in town, they lend money with strict interest rates, at times foreclosing homes. As Stewart Morgan makes clear, he and his brother are "careful not to mix business with pleasure [...] or else people may get ideas" (56). The Morgan's power and influence weighs heavy on the citizens of Ruby, regulating everyday intimate dynamics. More so, as the wealthiest family in the small town, they use their financial status to regulate the moral conduct of the town's people, specifically the women. Indeed, it is the Morgans, notably Stewart Morgan who lead the charge on the convent, eventually slaughtering the women who reside there.

And while Morrison stages the Convent and the unruly women who live there just at the outskirts of the town, the Convent, too, is as a site where the presence of the financial grounds the material, just as much as it looms large via myth and impending doom. This presence is captured via the tale that surrounds the Convent, which is often whispered among the town's people in Ruby. As it goes, the Convent at one time was run by a pair of pious nuns who, having migrated from Brazil, converted the estate to a reform school for "Indian girls" (47). There, the nuns took over the estate which, prior to their arrival was the prize possession of an embezzler's folly (Morrison, 3-4). As such, the nuns inherited the estate along with its back taxes, which kept the nuns in a precarious position with the state, never quite having the money to pay. Over decades, the nuns were made to directly negotiate with the state, though at times strategically outwitting them in order to keep the property and its yielding land (3-4). Haunted by a potential seizure of property, the nuns eventually default and the Convent consequently shifts from a reform school to a site where weary women from Ruby and across the country wander into, seeking refuge and new

beginnings. Indeed, the Convent houses women who have fled abusive marriages, were rejected as outcasts from their families, or who simply needed a rest from the day-to-day wreckage of living a black woman's life during the mid-twentieth century. The formal plot of the novel, then, picks up after the rein of the nuns, capturing how over the years,[100] such hauntings have remained, shifting from the threat of financial foreclosure at the bequest of the state, to the threat of ontological seizure at the promptings the Morgans, who, disgraced by the women, seize ownership of their property and nullification of their lives.

From the outset, then, Morrison stages debt as a haunting and repressive ideology that comes to form what Lazarrato notes as, the "basis of social life" (Lazzaratto, 2012: 13). Here Morrison stages debt via a series of exchanges—thwarted or otherwise. To this end, the Convent is repeatedly staged as a site where the women who reside there[101] come to exchange everyday artifacts—clothes, personal items, food, and spices—as payment for services rendered such as tending to one another's body after birth, wiping each other's brow during a high fever, or sharing meals when the cupboards are bare. That is why Morrison frequently stages the Convent women around an everyday large wooden kitchen table where they tend to one another's emotional wounds and physical ailments, exchanging everyday acts—or payments over meals that they have prepared for one another.

Or else, consider the following passage about Consolata or Connie, a former midwife to the town's women:

[100] Roughly, 1920s-1970s
[101] the citizens of ruby and from across the US- most specifically mid-western regions.

> she taught them how to comb their breast to set the milk flowing; what to do with the afterbirth; what direction the knife under the mattress should point [...] searched the country to get them the kind of dirt they wanted to eat (Morrison, 271).

Here, the narrator details the exchange of services between Connie, who I shall return to later in the chapter, and the town women via the work of midwifery. Connie, the leader and mother figure of the Convent, carries the gift of sight. She "sees into," or as Morrison writes "steps into" one's life, either resurrecting a black life from death (247) or, in the above scene, ushering black life into the here and now of the novel's time. Indeed, as the reader comes to discover, prior to the murder of the Convent women, Ruby had known not a single death. Such a feat is large part due to Connie and the other Convent women who safeguard, usher, and sustain black life through everyday exchanges, like "combing their breast to set the milk flowing." Morrison constructs such exchanges as payments on an indebtedness to one another for the sake of black survival, sustenance, and new life. So Morrison stages an immortal town and a solvent Convent at it outskirts via the exchanges of various daily indebted gestures. An indebtedness then, Morrison tells us, structures the very basic core of the psychic architecture of the all-black town and its mixed raced unruly subjects at its outskirts.

Sacred Rituals, Financial Exchanges, and Other Evaluated Routines

At the same time, through the formal literary structure and the overarching thematic claims, Morrison stages such exchanges via every day and heightened gestures through which the Convent women and the townspeople perform their loyalty to one another, and for the town's people to their ancestors, the founders of Haven—Ruby's predecessor, which faltered due to the failures of

Reconstruction.[102] That is why Morrison scripts such every day and heightened gestures in the town as "acts of devotion" or as acts of indebtedness (6). For Ruby citizens, specifically the patriarchs, one such act of indebtedness, is in the monumentalization of the town's Oven[103] which, having formerly sat in the center on Haven, resides in the middle of Ruby. In a flashback, the narrator details how brick by brick, the town's founders dismantled the mighty structure and loaded it in a wagon just prior to their migration. After settling the town, the patriarchs reassembled the Oven in the middle of Ruby, a gesture that monumentalized their indebtedness to their forefathers. For the town's patriarchs, most special about the Oven is the inscription which sits just above its opening. For them, it reads in fading etched handwriting: "*Beware* the furrow of his brow" (Morrison, 2014: 86 emphasis mine). That said, the narrator deftly prompts, perhaps consider the inscription instead reads, "*Be* the furrow of his brow," given that only "the furrow of his brow" is all that remains clearly legible (ibid).

The Oven and the language it bears—a discursive gesture—become a site in the novel where conversations and dictums about modes of authentic blackness are approved and determined by the town's patriarchs. The older patriarchal generation contend the inscription reads "Beware the furrow of his brow," arguing for a complete reverential relationship to God that honors his[104] complete power through acts of reverence, devotion, or indebtedness. Conversely, the younger, patriarchal generation advance a claim that only by being the furrow of his brow, one would in essence act as an embodied instrument of God's will. For the younger generation, then, the Oven reads "be" the furrow of his brow and thus gestures towards a unilateral leveling with a God who stands in for notions of blackness as much as, if not more so than notions of the divine (Morrison,

[102] Haven was founded in 1890 and abandoned in 1949.
[103] In the novel, Morrison capitalizes the town's Oven.
[104] Morrison scripts God via the pronoun 'him,' although Dovey secretly wonders about a God in the feminine form... asking herself what's wrong with "be the furrow of *her* brow" (87).

1997: 159). Inspired by the growing civil rights movement, which the older patriarchs despise, the younger generation want a new representation of black liberation—of blackness itself—and one that subscribes to keeping the town free of white psychic terror.

And while building the Oven was an act of devotion to their ancestors, such a discursive distinction functions as a major point of incoherence between the town around regulating performances of blackness, as well as the future of blackness, specifically between the men.[105] Indeed, the Oven and the discursive gesture it bears regulate the racial codes of the townspeople's behavior, specifically the women. That is, even though the initial impulse for the Oven's construction was to provide a safe public location for black women to work unbothered—a deliberate contrast to the "private" spaces where they had been made to work in former master's kitchens, where they were subject to various abuses outside the light of day—Morrison stages the Oven as the final site where the town's patriarchs, led by the Morgan brothers, meet to plan the details surrounding the slaughter of the Convent women.

Although separated by generational ideologies, slaughtering the women is the one act on which the men can agree. According to Stewart, murdering the Convent women is the ultimate devotion, the ultimate act of indebtedness to the legacy of their forefathers. Perched and nestled at the Oven's structure the men come to determine, seizing the Convent women—those who default on black debt—"is what the deal require[s]" (297). As the narrator notes, the deal called for "unadulterated and unadulterated... blood... [t]hat was their deal. For immortality" (217). Morrison scripts financial language then via a "deal," an exchange. Further, such exchanges are meant to keep the town free from the presence of whiteness in exchange for black racial purity (297). In this

[105] The matriarchs of Ruby are left out of the conversation. Rather, decisions on spiritual interpretation are left solely up to the patriarchs.

way, we can think of such exchanges of debt as everyday gestures—from the womb to the kitchen table—across the heightened and the mundane, for the sake of black life itself.

At the site of exchange, Morrison reveals every day and heightened gestures together function like elevated routines, or black sacred rituals where felicitous acts of blackness and black indebtedness are organized. Just as Morrison theorizes debt as a haunting and repressive ideology with linkages to the state as well as black patriarchy, she accounts for debt as an ideological performative. That is, at the corporeal site of the body, she renders black debt through black sacred rituals that codify a sense of being and belonging over time. Accordingly, the town of Ruby itself is centered on a heightened ritual, and one that is turned into a contractual bargain (113). Here, the narrator paints a haunted journey of the town's ancestors to unfounded land, where a beloved matriarch, Ruby—pregnant at the time—became horribly ill. The patriarchs take her to the nearest hospital, a whites-only hospital where she ultimately dies on a bench in the waiting room, refused help for being black. The towns men, full of grief, and unable to give her a proper burial, carry her life-less body to "unowned land" that they settle as their own.[106] There they found the town Ruby, naming it after the beloved and fallen matriarch. In Ruby the men are at last able to give her a proper burial in "a pretty spot on a ranch" governed by the Morgans (Morrison, 1997: 113).

Deek Morgan recalls burying Ruby as an embodied ritual, a "[...] prayer in the form of a deal," (ibid). More so, as the narrators notes, the "terms and conditions" of such a deal determined how the citizens of Ruby were to behave specifically in relation to ideas of black purity and authenticity (217). From the outset then, it is through the ritual of burying a body, the gestures of digging up packed dirt turned moist soil, arms bent with strain, shovel at the palms, callouses on the rise, sweat sauntering over cheekbone, quivering heartbreak, and sweltering pride that

[106] Before Ruby, the land belonged to a "family of State Indians, and it took a year and four months of negotiation, of labor for land, to finally have it free clear" (Morrison, 99).

Morrison scripts as the founding moment of the town. Here, Morrison renders the burial as an elevated routine made up of everyday day gestures for a black sacred ritual.

Performance Studies as a field has taken to rituals across theoretical pursuits to ethnographic practice (Bell, 2008; Madison, 2019), understanding them as social dramas (Schechner, 2012; Turner, 1986) and aesthetic practice (Roach, 1996; Taylor, 2003). Whether a category of experience or a mode of analysis, performance studies literature reveal rituals to be comprised of everyday acts and elevated routines that are expressed across "secular and sacred symbols" (Roach 458) and constitutive of daily life (Goffman, 1959), thus codifying a way of being through heighten ceremony or everyday behavior (Madison, 2019; Butler, 2017). Indeed, what readers come to learn, in *Paradise*, whether they take place among the town's men, the town's women, or the women who take refuge in the Convent, rituals are the very bone and flesh of the tale's horror just as much as they are its meaning, and too, its promise.

Perhaps in fine-tuned timbre with Morrison, D. Soyini Madison sites rituals as often bound to the "micro movement of the everyday" (Madison, 2019: 118). Madison writes that rituals possess the "poetics to bless" (114) while bringing "blood and bone" to ways of belonging (118). That is, Madison wants readers to understand rituals as a socio-cultural performance that allows for a process of recognition and invention where "culture and performance become inextricably connected and mutually formative" through elevated and everyday acts (146). She means rituals interpellate black subjects into modes of blackness. To this end, if so far I have shown the ways in which Morrison uses ritual—via every day and heighten gesture—in order to call the town into modes of black indebtedness, then the following section shows how Morrison ironizes her literary tropes. Here, via the same construct of black sacred ritual, she shows that such elevated routines

can also cast black subjects out, or can nullify them. Further, specifically for the properly indebted black woman figure, such rituals can and often do seize their very lives.

Ritualizing the Call: From 'Hey You!' to 'Who Do You Think You Are?'

During a black sanctimonious ritual—a wedding that is to join the two most powerful families in Ruby—Soane, feeling pity for Connie and the Convent women, invite them to the reception. On the heels of their arrival however, she and the rest of the town are regretful that the Convent women have showed up, or have, essentially said yes to the call. That is, their very presence ends up ushering in what was to be the "biggest mess" the town had ever seen (Morrison, 154). The scene is worth capturing at length via Morrison's vivid detail:

> None of them was dressed for a wedding. They piled out of the car looking like go-go girls: pink shorts, skimpy tops, see-through skirts; painted eyes, no lipstick; obviously no underwear, no stockings. Jezebel's storehouse raided to decorate arms, earlobes, necks, ankles and even a nostril… They said "Hi" and wondered aloud if there was anything other than lemonade and punch to drink… The Convent girls are dancing; throwing their arms over their heads, they do this and that and then the other. They grin and yip but look at no one. Just their own rocking bodies… One of them, with amazing hair, asks can she borrow a bike. Then another. They ride the bikes down Central Avenue with no regard for what the breeze does to their long flowered skirts or how pumping pedals plumped their breasts. One coasts with her ankles on the handlebars... One, in the world's shortest pink shorts, is seated on a bench, arms wrapped around herself. She looks drunk. Are they all? The boys laugh… Nothing like other folks' sins for distraction. The young people were wrong. *Be the Furrow of Her Brow.* [Ruby knew] about such women… that fun-obsessed adults were

> clear signs of already advanced decay. Soon the whole country would be awash in toys, tone-deaf from raucous music and hollow laughter. But not here. Not in Ruby (157-158).

Morrison stages a moment where the unruly Convent women, having said yes to the invitation, answer the call incorrectly. And they do so devastatingly. Having been called into a sacred black ritual, the women were hailed into certain behavioral modes of blackness, a debt to blackness that they not only denounce, they default on. The five Convent women—Consolata, Mavis, Gigi, Seneca, and Pallas—then provide an occasion for a critique of interpellative practices in historical formations of race, predicated on women who were deemed racially impure on one hand, and morally reprehensible or sexually deviant on another.

Because in Ruby, performances of indebtedness are predicated on a type of regulatory behavior where doing becomes a form of belonging in a very specific way (Taylor, 2016: 19), what are we to make of these hailed subjects who show up for the call, and via Morrison's rendering, they show up erroneously: or as it colloquially said "all loud and wrong?" James Martle's work on misinterpellation is helpful here (Martle, 2016). In his book by the same title, he writes about Kafka's parable "Abraham" where, rather than the famous Abraham that hears God's call to sacrifice his son Isaac, various other Abrahams hear the call as well. They are, for Martle, the unintended Abrahams that nonetheless, being named Abraham, are also subject to the call. In perceiving the call, the "other" Abrahams however, are not able to show up. They are indisposed either with household chores, or in a highlighted case, may not even have a son (1). Still, there is one Abraham—clearly the lowest—who, in fact of all the other Abrahams, "is the least likely to be intentionally called" (ibid). Still, such an unintended subject indeed answers the call. From Kafka's text, Martle notes:

> This particular Abraham "could not believe that he was the one meant, he, an ugly old man, and the dirty youngster that was his child. […] It is as if, at the end of the year, when the best student was solemnly about to receive a prize, the worst student rose in the expectant stillness and came forward from his dirty desk in the last row because he had made a mistake of hearing, and the whole class burst out laughing. And perhaps he had made no mistake at all, his name really was called, it having been the teacher's intention to make the rewarding of the best student at the same time a punishment for the worst one" (1-2).

In Morrison's rendering of the reception scene, she stages a similar phenomenon, where the hail is announced, and indeed responded to, however the unintended subject arrive in its wake. Across the novel the Convent women then refuse the hail of black indebtedness. That is, they show up as improper subjects via embodied acts which the patriarchs deem deviant and immoral. We can think of Morrison's figures then as misinterpellated subjects. That is, if as Althusser notes, interpellative devices are so exacting in that "they hardly ever miss their man" (Althusser, 2014), then Martle will have us consider, what do we make of the moments where a call is sent out, and the "mistakenly hailed subject," or an "unexpected subject" shows up (Martle, 2-3)? Indeed, the women of the Convent are so wrong, unrespectable, or infelicitous in performing black indebtedness that they are declared by the town's patriarchs as "bodacious black Eves unredeemed by Mary" (Morrison, 2014: 18). For Morrison, from this contempt for unruly—sexually and affectively excessive black women—the town's men ultimately lead the brutal massacre of the Convent women at the end close of the novel. As the narrator summarizes:

> The nine 8-rock [patriarchs] murdered five harmless women (a) because the women were impure (not 8-rock); (b) because the women were unholy fornicators at the least,

> (abortionists at most); and (c) because they could— which was what being an 8-rock meant to [the town] and was also what the 'deal' required (Morrison, 2014: 297).

Here, Morrison points to unmoral behavior as it is stuck to the gendered black body and serves as a sight from which to regulate black women's behavior. Additionally, as the above line reveals, such an attack—an expelling of the improper indebted figure, was "what the deal required" (ibid). In this way, Morrison provides a context to reflect on the presence of rituals as a kind of contract ideology, where infelicitous modes of debt embodied across black spaces, can in effect, nullify black subjects.

Gesture and the Rate of Black Exchange

Just as Morrison evokes the act of black sacred ritual as a way of being with blackness, Paul Carter-Harrison in *Black Theatre: Ritual Performance in The African Diaspora* writes about black literary experience as "the ritual reenactment of black experience" via "expressive strategies located in the continuum of African memory throughout the Diaspora (Carter-Harris, 4-5). For Carter-Harris, ritual, as taken up in black texts, marks a direct link towards ways of knowing oneself, of being made legible, called into black consciousness (6). Morrison, too, speaks to the everyday sensual fleshy presence of the reader in relation to her texts, highlighting a pointed intention to draw the reader into a participatory ritual. To return to the 1981 interview between Morrison and Charles Ruas that opened this chapter, there she compares such summoning of the reader's presence to the relationship between the archetypical southern black Baptist preacher and his congregation. She wants us to imagine the music and symbols that set up a celestial scene, the rhythmic call and response—in Morrison's case—between the reader and the text, where, as she foreshadows, something is supposed to happen (Ruas 101). In this way, Morrison notes she wanted

reader to confront their issues on race. She writes, that, in part, she wanted readers to "delve into the power of colorism" in black communities, particularly in light of white-supremacist psychological terror (Morrison, 2014: xiii). Accordingly, Morrison sets a stage where ideas of the black woman indebted figure is not only regulated through ideas of ritualized legacies to blackness but also through her physical embodiment/experiential modes of blackness.

For instance, one of the townswomen, Patricia, journals to her dead mother, a light skin black woman, whose marriage to an 8-Rock patriarch and subsequent membership to the all-black community remained undermined by her light skin and mixed race origins. Patricia, mourning her mother's difficult time with the other matriarchs reflects:

> "So did you talk together about how you all felt? Make tea for hemorrhoids, [share] salt to lick or copper dirt to eat in secret? [...] Did the other women with children too advise you? [...] Did they make you welcome right away, or did they all wait for [...] the following year, when the stream came back, baptize you just so they could speak to you directly, look you in the eyes" (200).

Through flesh, hair, and other stylized acts, Morrison captures ways in which gendered bodies are recognized as black—where blackness becomes intelligible or disputable as authentically black through its very performance. Further, the reader is made to consider how debt is not only embodied and regulated across intracommunity dynamics. Rather, Morrison additionally theorizes embodied notions of debt as tethered to regimes of black authenticity, a racialized choreography brought into being on the surface of the body (Johnson, 2003; Tate, 2016).

What is more, Morrison details how an indebted black racial formation was regulated across the everyday sphere through ritual and behavior, making like practices of belonging. Such practices of belonging are what performance studies scholars have specifically noted as socio-

cultural rituals that parallel the theatrics of group formation special to the everyday realm (Schechner and Turner, 1985; Turner, 2001; Taylor, 2016). They are, as Diana Taylor elaborates:

> "embodied collective procedure[s] made up of rules, codes, and gestural behaviors [where participation] cements membership [...] or further reinforces social subcategorization [and] exclusions [These are the practices in which] doing becomes a form of belonging in a very specific way (Taylor, 2016: 19-23).

At the same time in the Convent, Morrison stages an amalgamation of five women who are also racially ambiguous, identifying them indirectly as racially mixed at best. While the reader is instructed explicitly that one of the women is white, in fact the opening line of the novel begins with the oft cited "they shoot the white girl first" (Morrison, 1997: 3), Morrison never identifies which one of the women is white, or just what the narrator means by "white."[107] Here, Morrison further points readers to the ways white-approximating black women were made and not made to belong. For instance, we learn that Consolata, the lead matriarch of the Convent, and indeed of the novel itself, was bought to the States from Brazil as a young child by a pair of nuns. Morrison scripts Consolata as green-eyed with "tea-colored hair and smoky, sundown skin" (223). The other Convent women are represented through similar phenotypical markers typically associated with mixed-raced black bodies: they are bodies of "racial tampering" (197) with "hazel-eye[s]" and "light-brown hair" (201). Or else, they bear "honey speckled eyes with long brown hair" (200). They are black women with "sunlight skin and no last name" (203) who watch from "eyes like mint leaves" (228), while lazing about and sometimes naked in "beautiful, golden-skinned" (279).

[107] This is a reoccurring theme in Morrison's work, for example see "Recitatif" (1983).

And given they were "outside women with moss-green eyes," they could "trap a man [into doing] carnal things" (ibid).

Such libidinal economies[108] are performed in direct contrast to the all-black town of Ruby. That is why, in the town, Morrison scripts most of the inhabitants as "athletic, coal black and kissed by the sun" (160). In fact, they are "blue black people" (193), "glittering black people" (226)—further, they area "blue-black giants" (200) with "noncommittal eyes" (160). In this way, through centering the town Ruby, the novel fundamentally ask, as Valerie Smith points out, "why is the idea of paradise as much about those we include, as it is about those we keep out" (Smith, 86)? Morrison constructs a world where potential reasons to such a prompt are determined along tensions between proper indebted behavior on one hand, and racial purity on another.

The Convent women not only perform black indebtedness infelicitously, more so, they visibly approximate whiteness. That is, they bear the sign of the white master-father and therein the mark of white patriarchal violence from which the town's forefathers fled. Such bodies make plain the violent histories of black women's forced movement across the Atlantic, whereupon arrival on North and South American shores they were "fucked and fathered" by white slave owners in the pursuit of colonial enterprise (Sharpe, 2010: 32). This suggests that the mere absence/presence of the Convent—staged telling on the outskirts of the racially pure Ruby—and the Convent women embodies the threat and legacy of white supremacist gender-based, sexual violence. The Convent women embody what Christina Sharpe powerfully writes of as monstrous intimacies (Sharpe, 2010).

In chapter one of her book *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-slavery Subjects,* Sharpe writes on Gayle Jones' 1975 novel *Corregidora*. Here, Sharpe sees a text in which "primal scenes

[108] While I am aware of Ltotard's usage of "libidinal economy" and the critique of such, I am engaging the phrase here, outside of that conversation.

of slavery emerge as those familial and legal entanglements that were central to the transformative enterprise of making some persons into kin and some into property" (Sharpe, 28). To this end, she theorizes a libidinal economy of the flesh that emerges at the intersection of amalgamation and incest (1-65). Sharpe is concerned with the admixture and synthesis of forced consanguineous relationships in pursuit of colonial expansion. For the townspeople of Ruby, the Convent women represent such monstrous intimacies, forced entanglements too insidious to behold. They remind Ruby's citizens of unspeakable acts with the father—both the white master and the white state. The father, too, that is bloodline, that is black. They remind Ruby of an amalgamation of adulterated fathers and incestuous patriarchal violence, indeed, the father of them (and us) all.[109]

Such violent legacies encapsulate common experiences across generations of formerly enslaved black people. Indeed, as Sharpe reminds us "the sexual violences of slavery that are not yet past, are passed down through the generations and reanimated in the present" (Sharpe, 23). To this end, Morrison provides a case to consider the differential processes of racialization and sexualization of such re-animations across various presenting black bodies. As many scholars have noted, blackness does not stick to all lack women's bodies the same way.[110] Gender, phenotype, body size, verbal speech, wealth, and class distinctions factor in ways that fold in on one another yet diverge at a moment's notice—systematically and randomly distributing modes of hostility and violence to gendered and sexualized bodies across socio-political and historical contexts. While black women as a group have been socially constructed as sexually lascivious and morally corrupt (Collins, 2008; Nash, 2014; Hammonds, 1996; Cohen, 2005; Keeling, 2007), white-approximating black women are differentially sexualized. They are typically represented as intellectually inferior,

[109] Inspired by my conversation here with Josh Chmbers-Letson.
[110] For example, see: Collins, 2008; Cohen, Royster, 2013; Johnson, 2003; Brooks, 2006; Snorton, 2017; Mock, 2014; Gay, 2018.

emotionally immature—overly sensitive, spiritually suspect, racially conflicted, and all around troubled, specifically as relates to regimes of authenticity.[111]

In Morrison's theorization of gender-based violence, the patriarchs' notions of indebtedness, post the tyranny of chattel slavery is predicated on ideas of racial purity and moral certitude—an embodied and discursive ideology with long durational implications, to which this chapter's close will return. For the point at hand, Morrison's *Paradise* makes for a provocative aestheticized apparatus that stages the lingering effects of white-supremacist state-sanctioned violence across differentiating black gendered psyches and bodies. To gesture back to chapter one, "Forgive Us Our Father's Debts," these lingering effects perhaps reveals underlining dimensions to the Cosby sexual misconduct scandal and the absencing of the many black women and other women of color who came forward to press charges against Cosby. Collectively they all present similar phenotypical markers of blackness similar to how Morrison constructs the Convent women. For example, recall Lili Bernard,[112] one of the more vocal of Cosby's accusers, who stood on the steps of the court house with "smoky sundown skin and tea colored hair" (Morrison, 1997: 223) gathered softly in an Angela Davis like afro, standing in the center of a group of white and black journalists and protestors, who, towering above her small frame, chide her, doubting her allegations as she all but begs through quivering voice to be granted racial legitimacy despite her necessary and timely allegations.

[111] Such an encapsulation of white-approximating black women does not, however, negate the various, overlapping ways that such bodies have historically been given access to resources and representational modes, often times at the expense, or disappearance of darker, black bodies.
[112] See figure below.

Figure 18: "Lili Bernard Pleads with Reporters." *The* Washington Post. Photo by Ashleigh Joplin, 15 June 2017.

Figures in Time: Black Women, Black Indebtedness, and Hi-Tech Rituals

Importantly, the historical context in which Morrison composed the powerful novel, offers much in light of black collectives, sexual violence, and notions of debt. Furthermore, the socio-political context of the novel underscores the stakes of black women's misinterpellations. Such stakes were played out across socially mediated frenzies during the birth of high-tech rituals. That is, the decade spanning 1987 through 1997 marks a crucial period in the lives of black women in regards to proper modes of indebtedness to black patriarchal figures. While the 1990's alone ushered in the language of sexual harassment via a black woman's body, and therein birthing new understandings and legislative procedures in regards to sexual harm in the workplace, she was hardly celebrated across black publics. In 1991, when Clarence Thomas became the first African

American nominated to the Supreme Court since Thrugood Marshall's 1967 appointment, allegations surfaced of his unwanted sexual advances against Anita Hill. Millions gathered in living rooms, neighborhood bars, and other shared spaces to watch the live televised court hearings of Hill recounting gruesome advances that Thomas allegedly made while supervising Hill, who was employed as his Equal Employment Opportunity Office at the time. It was the first highly televised case that put black women, sexual violence, and black patriarchal authority (and in direct proximity to white paternal rule) in mainstream conversations. In response to Hill's timely allegations, black publics were outraged. Thomas, in response to the white racist media frenzy that used the moment to recirculate familiar tropes of constructed black male predatory behavior, infamously referred to the frenzy as a "high tech lynching" (Jordan, 2007).

The ruses of white supremacy, particularly as they gather at the intersection of juridical order and mediated publics inherit longstanding legacies from various modes of lynching, systemically disfiguring black male figures via the flesh and the psyche. Such a framing in this case is therefore warranted. However, public discourse did not acknowledge that such a controversy represented both a moment that was characteristic of historical racist acts of systemically attacking black men, *and* a moment that continued the legacy of publicly shaming and ultimately discounting black women's allegations of sexual violence. Rather, what took center stage were conversations that sought to regulate and punish Hill. Her untimely testimony demonstrated no such indebtedness to having membership to a community that was on the heels of witnessing a significant moment for one of our own—a black patriarchal political figure, who landed a position of ultimate power in the ultra-white nation-state.

Additionally, the 1990's showcased the Mike Tyson and Desiree Washington scandal. Tyson, then heavy weight champion was accused of sexually assaulting Washington, then a contestant for

the Miss Black America Pageant. In Washington's case, Minster Louis Farrakhan,[113] African American activist and then leader of the Nation of Islam, famously mocked and shamed Washington in a public speech to a room full of cheering black men. While Tyson was later found guilty in 1992, just a few years earlier in 1988, actress/model Robin Givens made similar accusations to an unforgiving black public. Strikingly, during this same time period, while *The Cosby Show* was at the height of its broadcast ratings, Erinn Cosby—Bill Cosby's oldest daughter also made accusations against Tyson for attempted sexual assault.[114] It was Bill Cosby, himself, who prompted his daughter to drop all charges.[115] Indeed, Cosby had spoken of his own daughter as morally unhinged. Out of all his children, he noted:

> "This particular daughter appears to be the only one who is really very selfish [...] she uses her boyfriends [...] she wants the finer things but can't stand anybody's else's dirt [...] she can't come [home]. She's not a person you can trust" (Christon, 1989).

Across each of these highly publicized incidents, black women were deemed untrustworthy—racially disloyal, indeed, morally incorrigible for accusing black iconic male figures. Such high-tech mediated rituals were the making of the #MeToo Movement, though for black women, different than their white woman counterparts, ideological performatives rooted in the logics of debt repressed and silenced black women's narratives of sexual harm and violence. And while such

[113] Farrakhan infamously asserted: "You bring a hawk into the chicken yard and wonder why the chicken got eaten up. You bring Mike to a beauty contest and all these fine foxes just parading in front of Mike. Mike's eyes begin to dance like a hungry man looking at a Wendy's beef burger or something. She said, 'No, Mike, no.' I mean how many times, sisters, have you said 'No' and you mean 'Yes'?" http://articles.latimes.com/2004/jul/20/entertainment/et-pollard20/2

[115] Cosby reportedly convinced Tyson to commit to psychological counseling in lieu of pressing charges. There are many sources that site this detail, for example see: https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/lists/15-times-bill-cosby-was-a-huge-hypocrite-20150709/cosby-and-tyson-20150709

instances were highly dramatized, they circulated though mainstream and black spaces via embodied and discursive gestures—ultimately disappearing the lives and/or grievability of black women who have been harmed, violated by patriarchal figures and forces.

Figure 19: "Erinn Cosby Poses with a Cigar." Getty Images. Photo Credit Unknown, Date Unknown.

A Future Ongoing: Black Women and Practices of 'Stepping in'

Critical to the context of Morrison's novel, 1997, the year *Paradise* was published, saw an estimated 750,000 Black women congregating on Ben Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia, PA for the Million Woman March.[116] It was the largest gathering of its kind—a public platform dedicated

[116] These thing have long embedded histories—the legacies of sexual violence in the lives of black women span from the moment captive slaves were brought across the Atlantic to the current #MeToo movement.

to issues that dominant women's rights movements often dismiss, most specifically sexual violence against black women. It was a moment that captured the many ways black women have and continue to step up for one another, to intercede and to step-in to one another's lives, offering modes of collective support. Such a historical context along with this particular moment, bears insight into Morrison's ultimate rendering of debt in the lives of black women which she theorizes through her trope of "stepping in."

In one way, the title of the novel itself, "paradise" invokes a bygone time based on a Judeo-Christian notion of a utopian space that is a sanctimoniously regulated world on the horizon. The title also suggests a nostalgic site of holy origin from which the improperly indebted figure is ultimately expunged. Perhaps unsurprising to any casual or avid Morrison reader, the novel, in fact tells the story of many tales woven across a kaleidoscopic rendering of historical time and narrative telos—a novel where, in the blink of an eye the reader jumps 50 years forward or 50 years back, a novel where the living and the dead communicate and where lives are resurrected (Smith, 94). Here Morrison stages phenomenological openings to alternative experiences of structurally imposed modes of time. Though metaphor and formal use of grammatical structure, she theorizes such opening as strategies taken up by black women in order to resist and reimagine regulating modes of debt, particularly as they apply to past and future constructions of the self.

Let us return to the site of the women in the Convent tending to one another. A fleshy sensuous scene, everyday erotic, where plush fingers peel back the thin wet skin of citrusy peppers—heated and ripe. Then too, Morrison features tips of the thumb steadying a thin and sleek pod, a breach, an opening to sweet pea—plump tiny oval for the tongue. These are everyday gestures—a ritualized act that highlights the work black women have participated in with one

http://blackyouthproject.com/from-the-million-woman-march-to-metoo-how-movements-created-by-black-women- for-black-women-are-appropriated/

another while gathered in circle for centuries (Davis, 1983; Lorde, 2007). Though too, such rituals are simultaneously a call forward—toward engaging a solvent economy that is all at once side by side, steeped in, and perched towards modes of black gendered subjectivity.

Morrison scripts these moments as acts of "stepping in" (Morrison, 2014: 98). Such a term is a metaphor for Consolata's (or Connie's) gift of stepping into a dying body where, through the gift of sight, she has the ability to resurrect the dead. Consolata expands on such modes of stepping in and shares them with the other women in the Convent. Together, as if seemingly sensing their own impending demise from the town's patriarchs, they take to the basement, drawing figures of their bodies in chalk, months before the brutalization of their lives. From the site of such an aestheticized rendering of their flesh, they hold daily rituals. Here they recount painful histories for one another—often through pictures and artifacts. Each woman takes a turn telling a story and stepping into one another's figure. They project themselves into futures that they rescript—new orientations that their pasts might otherwise suggest. After their brutal slaughter, their bodies somehow mysteriously disappear. The reader is left uncertain if they were in fact murdered. Here, Morrison stages the women's lives as not so much resurrected, but re-lived in another time, congruent to the very futures they collectively constructed for one another.

Additionally, Morrison underscores such a maneuver through the formal grammatical structure of the book. For instance, as the town's patriarchs descend upon the Convent to slaughter the women, Morrison provocatively slips into the tense of future continuous, as if to foreshadow what will ultimately become of the Convent women's lives.

> "Shooting the first woman (the white one) has clarified like butter: the pure oil of hatred on top, its hardness stabilized below. Outside, the mist is waist high. *It will turn silver soon and make grass rainbows low enough for children's play before the*

> *sun burns it off, exposing acres of bluestem and maybe witch tracks as well*" (Morrison, 2014: 4, emphasis added).

Consider that the past tense shows when something that has already taken place or occurred, while the future tense conveys something that is going to happen, or has yet to happen. The future continuous however, emphasizes duration. It is a perfect idealized time, a utopic time projected into the future—continuously. Moreover, the future continuous is typically used to emphasize the "progression and duration of an action up to a certain time in the future."[117] Morrison theorizes such a "certain time" as open, as porous, and suggestable to collective action in the present—a choreographed shared ritual in the tic-toc of the right now with unrestrained implications in the future. The Convent women's acts of stepping in, then, can be thought of as shared durational aesthetics of the body. They are as Fred Moten notes, "intense interaction[s] that comes with playing with others [...] in which [...] one composes in real time with other people, [...] where one is [also] discomposed in real time" (Fitzgerald and Moten, 2015).

Further, they step in for one another, projecting themselves out of time and making use of a different time, contrary to the temporal logics of debt. Such logics demand a constant tethering to the past aimed at futures over which they have no control. Futures that do not belong to them. Rather, in response to acts of exchange—material and affective, Morrison theorizes indebtedness as shared activities of care[118] or solvency and on conditions and terms that each woman sets for herself. Accordingly, Morrison presents a scene where subjectivity challenges subjection via an opening to an alternative felt time.

[117] https://english.lingolia.com/en/grammar/tenses/future-perfect-progressive
[118] conjuring Sharpe here

As Morrison constructs practices of stepping in for one another—an affective, temporal fluidity towards new modes of being—she is advocating for ways of being that are vulnerable to shared embodied consciousness. To step in, then, is to step *with* one another, a direct rebuttal to debt economies which demand our solitary confinements across the socio-economic sector. Debt is an individual's responsibility. When your debts are due, reader, it is your name alone on the dotted line, you, alone, who must come up with a payment, not forsaking co-signers. So there is something powerfully striking in a debt economy to proclaim, we need one another. We must rely on one another to be in step with each other, together, so that we might imagine, make use, and put to task new solvent economies. Here, I am indebted to the work of queer of color theory in the wake of José Muñoz (2019), E. Patrick Johnson (2005), Cathy Cohen (2005), Joshua Chambers-Letson (2018), Francesca Royster, Uri McMillan (2015), and Sandra Ruiz (2019), where such writers, often in debt to José Muñoz, call for queer counter-publics and queer dreamscapes: "communities and relational chains of resistance that contest the dominant public sphere" (Muñoz, 1). Morrison gives readers a way to engage our own potential queer dreamscapes and luscious economies—be it from acts of stepping in, or from colorful renderings of the Convent women's collective bodies aimed towards a future-ongoing—so that we may enliven the worlds we long to occupy at the fleshy site of gesture and embodiment, where, indeed, as D. Soyini Madison implores, "blood meets bone" (Madison, 2019: 118).

To offer, then, a queer reading of Morrison's text, a lens that the author would notably refuse, we can see that the Convent women—from their everyday comportment, recall the reception scene, to their racial ambiguity—trouble blackness in as much as they trouble, shake, stir up, and queer indebtedness. As "bodacious Eves unredeemed by Mary" (Morrison, 2014: 18), the Convent women are strange and mettlesome women who, in a debt-based social order, blatantly refuse the

rules, they ruin sanctified plans, they rebuke and queer the norm—audacious acts—wayward and irrevocable by the sublime. I liken such audacious acts to what Francesca Royster writes about as eccentric performances that are:

> both familiar and strange [that] push the edges of the present to create a language not yet recognized [via] new [modes of corporeality that] maintain ties to the familiar, to home, to community, [and where] eccentric [ways of being are also] fueled by contradictory desires for recognition [or for what has been paid] and freedom [or for what is left undone]" (1-10).

As Royster instructs, "[e]ccentricity is more than a critical intervention, in the academic sense, and it is about more than survival." She continues, "[e]ccentricity creates a space for dreaming, a declaration of fun, funk, play, and pleasure" (33). To make eccentric, to queer, to make strange, and to make new indebted ontologies, then, is to do so in ways that are as shared as they are as felt. New modes of indebtedness take root and gesture forward from the site of the singular-collective body, a durational endeavor anchored in the affective body-psyche.

Let us return, once more, to Morrison's staging of the Convent women at an expansive kitchen table, which, one of the Convent women, Gigi, describes as "the longest table she had ever seen" (Morrison, 69). Francesca Royster and Ann Russo in their essay, "Building Community and the Expansive Possibility of Queer Love," write about the everyday practice of queer collectivity, which, in their essay, as well as across their body of work, they situate as taking place at a dinner table. In this way, they advocate for an "open table" that opposes "tight circles of segregated belongings of gender, sexuality, race, class, […] age, ability, and more." For Russo and Royster, such an open table might hold "the subtle and not so subtle ways we're seen and not seen, [or] awkward and tense moments of recognition and misrecognition." Here, Russo implores us to ask

of ourselves "who's well-being is essential to our own? And who's survival, [macro and micro, abstract and embodied], must we overlook in order to connect to power in ways that we do" (234)? They continue, advocating, then, for a practice where we may "reach deep underneath our skins, bringing our strengths forged from home spaces, and past places" (ibid).

Along these same lines of imagining queer practices towards more sustainable collectivities, Royster captures how such formations reveal "the erotic power of collaboration" (Royster, 2013: 32). Such erotic collaborations might include the quiet acts of cooking for one another, or tending to each other wounds—Morrison's exchange of everyday acts in the Convent—as well as audaciously feeling for, and with one another, whether we are living it up on the dance floor (Rivera-Servera, 2012), or huddled together "after the party" (Chambers-Letson, 2018). Such modes also demand, and this is the distinction my project offers, sitting within the power differentials we occupy within such acts of togetherness, because of our attempts at togetherness, in more conscious, sensual, erotic ways. In her oft cited "Uses of Erotics," Lorde refers to erotic ways of being as internal knowledge that brings forward the "potential and power to scrutinize all aspects of our existence—evaluate those aspects honestly […] in ways that heighten, scrutinize lived experience" (55-57). How might we engage such logics across our modes of indebtedness? Might we proffer for one another creative, imaginative, eccentric worlds that remake ways of being, particularly around notions of being tethered to one another?

What are the implications, then, of reading *Paradise* in a time of mounting existential crisis in the lives of black women, people of color, and other disenfranchised communities under a violent U.S. administration? How may Morrison's work prompt us towards queerer dreamscapes and other-worldly potentials for a renewal of "new collaborative structures" (Royster, 171), and a remaking of shared assets? How might we turn to one another at our "open," collective tables and

engage in a continuous present—a future-ongoing—in spite of our debts, because of our debt, while unbound by them as well? Such times beckon, call forth, and demand a renewal of practices in queer collaborations, for queer counter-publics, as they have, and may continue to proffer the very bone marrow towards embodied, felt liberation. Thus, in pivoting to the following afterword, which crystallizes the base provocation of this project, consider, as Russo writes, that to queer practices in family and collective making, "we must queer time" (232). She notes: "queering time means […] making a commitment together, […] with friends and family who have created space of support for […] healing and transformation […] from trauma and [other kinds of] difficult[ies]." Queering time signifies "forging paths" in non-normative ways of being with one another (234). And, most critically, such paths are forged at the routine site of the everyday.

CONCLUSION:

Notes on Duration to Arrival

And so now what…?

To begin our closure, I offer gratitude to you, dear reader, for having gotten this far in the reading of this project's claims. That being said, this section is meant to serve both the reader who has read the previous chapters, as well as the reader who may be starting here as a point of entry. Let us consider, then, a summation of points to ground you in your reflection of my overall claims followed by a point or two for you to 'take home.'

First, consider that debt is an abstract, albeit material process of moving IOUs and promises back and forth across notions of space and time (Lazzarato, 2015; Harney and Moten, 2013; Hartman, 1997). That such a process is abstract does not deter (although it may obscure), the structural and day-to-day impact of debt on the black gendered body and collective psyche (Hanchard, 1999; Wright, 2015; Butler, 1997). Indeed, debt is an interpellative force. Debt calls black women into indebted modes of being that are, in turn, regulated at the behavioral and affective site of the body via gesture. Helpful for the performance studies project, gesture brings us to the body and/or allows for notions of phenomenological experiences of cultural aesthetics. Gestures—be they figurative, discursive, or corporeal—attest to the felt and aesthetic properties of debt as they are played out across the black psyche via public narratives, collective imaginaries, and intra-personal dynamics. Accordingly, we can follow the logics of debt and indebtedness via

a host of aesthetic platforms, such as: historical legislation (recall crop lien laws and notions of coverture); televised and online performances (from *The Bill Cosby Show* to *are you you*), and across enduring texts (commercial campaigns by American Express as well as *Paradise* by Toni Morrison).

I have attempted to make clear that the aesthetic and embodied dimensions of debt, then, play out across the everyday sphere via heightened or hypo staged encounters (Chambers-Letson, 2013; Shimakawa, 2002; Fleetwood, 2011) that are centered on subconscious agreements (Hartman, 1997; Lazzarato, 2012) between individuals and groups with varying and/or disproportionate access to power (Hunter, 2019; Wang, 2018; Ahmed, 2014; Munoz, 2006). Within this dynamic, debt (material) and indebtedness (affective) take root, sediment, and pass on across generations of black lives through routine arrangements and/or sacred rituals (Morrison, 1997; Schneider, 1997; Moten. 2017). For this reason, I have maintained that temporality, specifically duration, emerges at the site of the routine—the banal, the everyday—as a mutable property through which performances of debt materialize. Such performances are also subject to change, to disruption, to interruption, re-dress, and solvency. It is here that the initial prompt of this project crystalizes: if processes of debt and the routine signal an accumulation of behavior over a period of time, how might we employ time as an aesthetic device in order to interrupt such processes?

Allow me to elaborate.

A brief review of chapter one will have us know that in the wake of Emancipation, contract ideology—the foundation of any debt—was used by former slave owners as a way to certify their moral decency having supposedly transitioned former slaves into freedom. That contractual logic assumed equality for all parties involved meant that contract ideology also obscured new modes

of exploitive labor between black subjects and the white patris, thus making for asymmetrical access to an accumulation of wealth. This is made evident in the use of sharecropping practices, which forced black subjects into modes of material debt for, say, having to borrow the needed equipment to till land. Consequentially, former slave owners often put excessive liens against the future crops and wealth of newly freed black men who were often the head of black households.

Meanwhile, as new forms of asymmetrical relationships emerged between black men and the nation-state, contract ideology took formidable root in the black domestic unit between black men and black women. Through juridical practices in coverture, black women were made to owe all her belongings to her husband, down to her very word. Just as coverture ensured black women/wives could never legally speak against (or sue) her spouse—the black patriarch, I argue that notions of collective coverture surface in the public testimonies from key black women figures during the Bill Cosby sexual misconduct scandal. Recall Phylicia Rashad's interview with Linsey Davis next to socially mediated discourses that sought to defend—to cover for Cosby in the wake of his rise to a paternal iconic figure. I showed that indebtedness remains, has taken root across black collectives in ways that constrict and restrain black women's behavior. Building on Saidiya Hartman's readings of debt (1997), which turned to the nineteenth century to analyze notions of debt between black subjects and white agents of the state, I examine indebted logics across the turn of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Additionally, I take up such logics as they take shape especially within black collective spaces.

Having shown that debt and indebtedness enforce subconscious arrangements between individuals, chapter two turns to the making of individuals, or selves, and examines the internalized mechanisms of debt through its interpellative registers. Chapter two teaches us that debt calls individuals into notions of self-authenticity at the bequest of the financial and, cleverly, though

black women's labor. Reminding readers that as Althusserian lineages in performance theory have shown, ideologies like debt and indebtedness calls, hails individuals into performative modes of being. Such a hailing is what I call the New Financial Hail. Similar to Louis Althusser's and Franz Fanon's concepts of the hail, the debt economy calls in and organizes minoritarian subjects into modes of conduct congruent with the entrepreneurial subject and/or myth of meritocracy. Here recall that Shantell Martin's *are you you* alongside an American Express campaign for financial literacy, show the discursive dynamics of indebted gestures. Thus, through written acts, from the invite to the signature, I show that debt calls subjects into modes of internal regulation at the behest and benefit of the state. Such a calling disproportionately targets the lives of black working class women through student loans, or payday loans, for example, leaving black women in unremitting forms of debt. Here, I ironize those claims to show that just as debt calls black women in, debt, too, casts black women out into fringe economies or alternative financial landscapes.

I have tried to show that such landscapes function like a felt temporal place-less-ness, and as such, coerce black subjects into modes of CP Time: temporal disjunctures—cyclic and palimpsestic—between black women and the financial. Such disjunctures, I assert, capture the thirty-day repetitive cycle of living pay-check to pay-check, where, due to exploitative fees, black women become more and more in debt. And although time seemingly tarries onward, in this context, black indebted women remain tethered to the past, foreclosed to a future, all the while sustaining 'life' across an impossible reverb.

Finally, chapter three acknowledges that debt can also be 'good.' That is, some debts, as Toni Morrison attests, can inspire black women artists towards aesthetic renderings of black culture that inspire a call and response with the work just as if one were engaged in a southern black church procession. An analysis of *Paradise* (1997) and Morrison's thoughts on her own

indebtedness to black spaces/people which spurned her to write the novel shows us this and more. As I argue, Morrison's black indebted figure also shows that black debt, while celebratory of a collective legacy, can also mark who belongs just as much as it marks who is left out, particularly in terms of black phenotypical authenticity. Morrison also reminds us that in regards to notions of patriarchal renderings of back debt and the properly indebted subject, black women's unregulated gendered and sexual behavior can, and often is a threat to their very lives. Though, as I have shown, the deviant, black (queer) women centered at the heart of the novel also proffer solvent modes of collectivity. Such solvencies not only resist and redress current harmful logics of debt, they also, as I argue, proffer ways that re-purpose—or forebear—structural arrangements of felt time. Recall Morrison's strategic use of future continuous tense just as the reader discovers the unruly Convent women *will have been* slain by the novel's close. As the narrator later discloses, the Convent women defy the reader's expectations and rather revitalize, resurrect, and re-live their lives after the brutal slaying. Having invoked every day routines and sacred rituals, the Convent women show duration to be a mutable property with phenomenological openings towards new ways of being—indeed, to new lives. This is an important linchpin in the project—duration as a mutable property, and gestures towards this project's contributions, as well as its practical implications.

Offerings, Contributions, and Practical Implications

I hope my contributions are several, and I offer them in the spirit of Morrison's debts to her mentors and peers who have nurtured her impulses, buttressed her claims, who have indeed, made a way. As I mentioned in the introduction, black feminists and women of color writers are the pillars and whisperers across these pages. They have spearheaded the concepts of debt (historical, racial, and gendered), they have accompanied us into the trenches of analyses (aesthetic

and discursive), and pointed towards modes of redress (collectivity and performance praxis). Along these lines, while critical analysis has been offered on the subject-making processes inherent to contemporary modes of debt, what is generally missing is an account for the psychic costs of debt across black spaces, particularly in the lives of black women. Additionally, this project aims to offer an account of the asymmetrical dynamics inherent to indebtedness *within* black spaces just as much as it accounts for the modes of racist violence inflicted on black subjects via global white supremacist values. Further, while projects have engaged performance theory to pursue an in-depth look at the aesthetics of indebted living (McClanahan, 2017; Harney & Moten, 2009), a gap remains on what the artistic production of black women reveal about indebted economies and psychic life/ontological capacities under neoliberal fraught logics. This project hopes to, if but partially, fill this gap.

Towards a Black Feminist Praxis of Gesture and Duration

Breath.

Coda.

Here's the thing, although the themes I have covered across these pages are theoretical and conceptual at base, they nonetheless have anchored my pedagogical and performance practices towards demystifying notions of indebtedness (along with other structural forms of power) in the lives of black women and people of color. Lastly, then, this project aspires to signal a call to action: we (performance scholars/practitioners/black feminist activists) ought to bring a somatic criticality to our everyday gestural vocabularies, particularly when engaging analyses that seek to upend routinary, harmful dynamics and the exploitive systems to which they are tethered. Consciously

engaging affect and duration at the site of gesture makes such practices possible. Here, I suggest we be willing, eager even to work from the minutia, engage the banal. How might we throw our everyday felt encounters off kilter, invoking an asymmetrical relationship with the body/self/collective? What may such asymmetries provoke? Thus, in what follows—the last of what remains—returns us to the original prompt that gave life to this dissertation. Again, if processes of debt and the routine signal and accumulation of behavior of a period of time, how might we use time as an aesthetic devise in order to interrupt such processes? In closing then, via a brief analysis of *11.10.10* by Alexndria Eregbu, it is my hope to offer a way into the practical implications of this project's claims, particularly when engaged up on their feet and into the body.

In what follows, I briefly examine hypo-affects: chronic, routinary, micro-forces that linger and undergird the day-to-day living of various subjects under the logics of racial capitalism. Such affects, durational in nature, circulate through habituated gesture in the service of repressing a capacity to be present, to apprehend the other and/or one another as living, as lives that matter. I return us, then, to the scene of the everyday and highlight habituated modes of registering (or perception) which emerge via affect and gesture. In conversation with Tavia Nyong'o (2012), and Rebecca Schneider (2012), who write about embodied temporality—through the lens of "zombie time"—I ask, what may gesture and temporality offer in dismantling the harms of mundane, every day, hypo-affects, such as indebtedness? How might we engage felt durational performatives in order to remake individual and collective ways of being?

On a late summer mid-day, Alexandria Eregbu, a young, Nigerian-America woman and performance artist took to State Street in down town Chicago, with the company of one friend, Hannah, who Eregbu describes as a young, white, friendly, art student (Eregbu, 2014). Eregbu,

dressed in a white cotton dress laid on the sidewalk, face down, while Hannah stood nearby, behind a tripod and video camera. So begins the performance of *11-10-10*.

Figure 20: "11:10:10: Alexandria Eregbu Lays Down." *YouTube.* Uploaded by Alexandria Eregbu, 10 January 2011.

The video recording of the performance shows a wide shot of a busy midday sidewalk featuring passersby dressed in business attire or casual clothing. Some walk at a brisk pace with a sense of urgency, while others loll, perhaps consumers considering their next place to shop, or employees strolling back to work, hesitant to return to the daily grind. To the left of the scene, we see Alexandria Eregbu's body laying lifeless among an assortment of people moving about within their daily routine. Her dress is pulled up, exposing most of her long brown legs and bare feet.

Seconds unfold to minutes[119] showing an array of people walking around and at times over Eregbu's body.

Figure 21: "11:10:10: Passersby, Passing by." *YouTube.* Uploaded by Alexandria Eregbu, 10 January 2011.

Unfortunately, there are a myriad of reasons why someone would not pause to make contact with a body, specifically a black woman's body, lying in the middle of the sidewalk. For one, as I have discussed, black women's bodies do not signal an ability to be cared for, valued, or recognized as a worthy life in the general public imaginary. Another reason may be that Hannah, a "friendly white woman," standing nearby with recording equipment, relieves the passersby's discomfort, signaling authority over a controlled environment. Yet, another reason is that those who experience

[119] Alexandria Eregbu has performed *11.10.10* at several locations, often laying down on public sidewalks for hours at a time. This particular performance lasted approximately 90minutes.

housing insecurity are seen sitting or lying on city blocks every day. Passersby have simply gotten used to seeing, and hence *not* seeing their bodies. This latter possibility gets at the heart of this conclusion. As Nicole Fleetwood writes "[t]he process of deciphering itself is a performative act of registering [otherness]" (6). At the center of this mode of registering, Fleetwood highlights abjection defining it as "a process that attempts to radically differentiate something that, although deemed repulsively other is, paradoxically, at some fundamental level, an in-differentiable part of the whole" (46). Particular to Fleetwood's analysis is the notion that such acts of registering are habituated. Thus, to return to the central provocation of this project, if processes of habituation signal an accumulation of behavior over a period of time, how can we employ time as an aesthetic device in order to interrupt such processes?

Every Moment We Have

In an essay about protestors who performed zombie walks during the occupy wall street protest in Zuccotti Park, Rebecca Schneider centers the zombie—a temporally suspended figure—as a symbol for protest, reflecting "life" under white supremacist logics (152). I apply a similar understanding to hypo-affects as excessive ephemeral forces, gross fleeting subtleties that accrue to an impasse of emotion, a non-presence that animates—from hyper to hypo, a fleeting encounter, here/not here simultaneously—and vulnerable to duration and time. According to Schneider, in the context of temporally suspended performatives, such affects can break, flatten, surge in a moment's notice. To say it another way, affects can be interrupted at the site of the body, particularly as the body is engaged in routinary behavior.

Upon a closer look at isolated moments in *11.10.10*, indications for such interruption begin to emerge.

Figure 22: “11:10:10: Passerby, Relaxed Gait.” *YouTube*. Uploaded by Alexandria Eregbu, 10 January 2011.

In the image above, *figure 22,* bring your attention to the balding gentlemen centered in the frame. Note his body posture and gait is relaxed.

A moment later, in *figure 23* below, note he seems disoriented, as if he is searching to make meaning of the scene. His furrowed eyebrow, and squinted eyes imply a hesitation, a momentary break in his gestural vocabulary.

Figure 23: “11:10:10: Passerby, Makes Meaning.” *YouTube.* Uploaded by Alexandria Eregbu, 10 January 2011.

Figure 24: “11:10:10: Passerby, Tightened Lip.” *YouTube*. Uploaded by Alexandria Eregbu, 10 January 2011.

Next, consider that in the image above, *figure 24*, he continues on his way. Although the tightened lips, stiff upper body, and furrowed eyebrows implies a movement from an affective reluctance to a gestural apathy, we cannot know for sure what he is responding to. More important to the point at hand is to consider what gesture might tell us about the temporal dimension and resistive potentials within habituated perceptions, or routine ways of making meaning? What may such felt temporalities, such a pause, a sudden suspension, or a moment of hesitation reveal about the possibilities of habituated body?

As Alia Al-Saji notes in “A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racialized Ways of Seeing,” hesitation performs a temporalized affective openness that is felt (2014). According to

Al-Saji, to hesitate is to "feel one's way tentatively and receptively through... an experimentation that does not [necessarily] dictate the future it will find" (143). Thus a temporal experience of a slight delay may open into felt possibilities for new modes or alternative of being. If we can think of the temporality, or the durational encounter of such a moment on the sidewalk as a hiccup, a stutter, or a slight interruption within habituated modes of being and seeing, we can see that time and affect breaks, it ruptures if for but a blink of an eye.

In "The Scene of Occupation," Tavia Nyong'o takes up the rupturing of time through performances of zombie dances in Occupy London. Similar to Rebecca Schneider's thoughts on temporality, Nyong'o summarizes performances of zombie dances as an exploration of time and duration as a tactic for social revolution (*Scene,* 139-142). For Nyong'o, embodying a suspended temporality is to perform a "sensual epistemology of a particular moment suspended in time" (145). He writes that the snap-of-the-finger, a moment, an instant, a rupture, is "an intensified opening of temporality" within the mundane, day-to-day time, and may allow for an interruption to routine, habituated modes of being (142).

Furthermore, returning to the scene of *11.10.10*, Eregbu's performance invokes what Nyong'o refers to as a social contagion: a collective feeling that haunts, and lingers as a ubiquitous affective presence (139). In congress with Nyong'o, Teresa Brennan defines transmission as an unconscious projection of affect "that may be felt and taken on by others" (Brennan, 6). Brennan notes that "the atmosphere of an environment [can] literally get into an individual [whereas] the transmission of affect or emotion, whether it is grief, anxiety, or anger... alters the biochemistry and neurology of an individual [and becomes] responsible for bodily changes" (Brennan, 1). According to Brennan, this means the theory of affect is always a theory of the group, of the collective (51). To this end, she notes entrainment as the process whereby human affective

responses are linked through unconscious consumption of body movement and gestures (71). These processes unite gesture with affect and inform group members' responses to one another.

For this reason we may see that *11.10.10* reveals multiple moments of affective transmission evidenced by passersby pausing to break into groups, often times mirroring each other's gestures and expressions. Such responses travel much like Brennan's (72) and Nyong'o's (146) social contagion. They are taken up and repeated, what Ahmed may refer to as that which sticks (2014), or what Al-Saji terms as that which becomes habituated (2014). This means affect can be performed, aestheticized, repeated, and transmitted among and between individuals, particularly when gathered in groups. The implications are that affect and their attendant gestures, can be re-habituated, consciously to inform the ways collectives register, apprehend, and treat one another. Furthermore, as Nyong'o tells us, the transfer of energy or affect implies paradoxically, a surplus of time (145). This added value to time accrues towards a temporal register where time may become elongated or stretched out, where moments can feel like hours, where hours feel like days, days like months, where time—takes longer (145-146). Accordingly, time, or duration, can be engaged and felt at the site of the body as a material substance or aesthetic tool.

Reader, note, affect in tandem with duration is slippery, if you will, because I am deploying affect with duration to help us bring us to the very thing that is difficult to name. Particularly, I am nudging us to engage temporal aspects of affects in embodied, explicit means. I am asking us to grasp onto these concepts intellectually, as well as from the body, in ways that are felt. Doing so, as I teach in my workshops, throws the body off kilter. In the context of debt and indebtedness, such an "off kilter" feeling presents an asymmetrical relationship with the senses. The lesson, then, is not so much about the debt one may with the economy, with the father/patris, or with the nation, so much as about keying into how we come to occupy disproportionate feeling structures and

power relationships with one another. Our work, then, is about honing in on what, and how we long to be bound—the ways we have accrued being bound and tethered to one another—to the body, singular and plural.

Here, consider that what prompted Alexandria Ergebu to stage *11.10.10* at that specific site was the relationship she, herself, had as a regular passerby with another artist, an unnamed black man standing just opposite of Alexandria Ergebu's body, and who, at times, is captured in the video performance (see *figure 23* and *figure 24*). Viewers of the online performance can also hear him speaking, informing other passersby of Alexandria Erebu's scene at play. Notably, Ergebu would encounter the artist on her daily commute home from The Art Institute of Chicago, where she was studying performance art. According to Eregbu, the black gentleman we see and/or hear off camera, holding what appears to be flyers (but is his written poetry), would often chide Alexandria Eregbu daily for "not being a real artist of the people" since Eregbu chose to study art in a prestigious, "white" institution (Eregbu, 2014). As the anecdote goes, Alexandria Eregbu passed by the poet for several weeks, opting to remain silent. Sometime late, after giving her response some thought, she chose to lay her body down, in front of him for a performance of *11.10.10* in protest to his claims. As Eregbu describes, she wanted to demonstrate what her art practice and her political beliefs, together, meant to her. She wanted to signify, not what she ought to prove to him, or what she owed to him, but what she owed to the movement for black lives, in general: her body on the line—a body simultaneously at rest within and poised to break the everyday routinary scene (Eregbu, 2014).

Breath.

What I ask readers and participants to sit consciously with are the felt intensities of what is owed, to whom we are bound, to whom we belong, and to which groups, processes, and resources from which we are excluded. I am seeking to engage us in the minutiae of the sensing body across such dynamics. I am claiming that as we work to dismantle structural mechanisms large and minor—aesthetic and practiced, we ought to engage those very dynamics, with primed urgency, up close on the body, especially as the sensing body is caught up in the collective. Here, I maintain that felt durational aspects of such encounters, enlivens the experiential body in ways that can be consciously invoked towards making better felt, sustainable publics with one another. Thus, I am moving this project towards a black feminist praxis in embodied duration and gesture. Such a praxis would demand a critical turning our attention towards the minutiae of 'being' together as an experiential mode, for say, felt ontological arrangements.

I am reminded here, of Audre Lorde who notes that poetry is the most economical form of all the arts. In part because it requires the least material and "can be done between shifts, on the subway, [writing] on scraps of surplus paper" (116). I leave us with this image of Audre Lorde riding the subway, between shifts, making use of every scrap of surplus paper she could get her hands on and extend that image to a use of time. Although from the performance *of 11.10.10,* I cannot be sure that time interrupts the habituated body enough for new modes of relating to emerge and transmit a social revolutionary contagion. Still, the question begs to be asked, in the service of creating new modes of being and relating, how do we make use of every moment we have?

Bibliography

Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge, 2014. Print.

——. *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. Print.

——. Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. Print.

Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception*. Translated by Kevin Attell. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005. Print.

Alexander, Jacquie, M. *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred.* Durham: Duke University Press. 2006. Print.

Althusser, Louis, Etienne Balibar, and Jacques Bidet. *On The Reproduction Of Capitalism: Ideology And Ideological State Apparatuses*. Translated by G. M. Goshgarian. London; New York: Verso, 2014. Print.

Al-Saji, Alia. "A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racializing Ways of Seeing." *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment, and Race*. Emily S. Lee. Ed. Albany: State University of New York Press. 2014. Print.

American Express. *"are you you: Time-Lapse of Artist Shantell Martin Creating A New Art Installation About Financial Literacy." YouTube,* uploaded by American Express, 26 September, 2014. Accessed 22 December, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yRelcGB7Tg. Web.

——. "Spent: Looking for Change." *YouTube,* uploaded by American Express, 4 June, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTd9Z2nCjM0. Accessed 10 November, 2016. Web.

Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things with Words*. 2nd ed., Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1975. Print.

Bailey, Moya and Trudy. "On misogynoir: citation, erasure, and plagiarism." *Feminist Media Studies.* Vol 18, Issue 4, 13 Mar 2018. Pp. 762-768. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14680777.2018.1447395?journalCode=rfms20. Accessed 15 November 2019. Web.

Bell, Elizabeth. *Theories of Performance*. 1st ed., Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2008. Print.

Bergson, Henri. *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*. Mineola, N.Y: Dover Publications, 2001. Print.

Berlant, Lauren. *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2011. Print.

Bishop, Claire. *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship.* London: Verso. 2012. Print.

Bowley, Graham. "Bill Cosby Assault Case: A Timeline From Accusation to Sentencing." New York Times. April 25, 2018. Online Edition. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/25/arts/television/bill-cosby-sexual-assault-allegations-timeline.html. Accessed, 10, October, 2019. Print.

Brennan, Teresa. *The Transmission of Affect*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004. Print.

Bronson, Eric. "How Black Mothers are Disproportionately Impacted by PayDay loans." September, 18, 2018. https://www.ywcaworks.org/blogs/firesteel/tue-09182018-0930/how-black-mothers-are-disproportionately-impacted-payday-loans. Accessed 7 July, 2019. Web.

Brooks, Daphne. *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. Print.

Brown, Juanita Kimberly. *The Repeating Body: Slavery's Visual Resonance in the Contemporary.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2015. Print.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 1st ed., New York: Routledge, 2016. Print.

——. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London ; New York: Verso, 2006. Print.

——. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1997. Print.

Byres, T.J. *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers.* 2nd ed., London: Taylor and Francis. 2005. Print.

Carter-Harrison, Paul. *Black Theatre: Ritual Performance In The African Diaspora.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 2002. Print.

Canales, Jimena. *The Physicist and the Philosopher: Einstein, Bergson, and the Debate That Changed Our Understanding of Time*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015. Print.

Chambers-Letson, Joshua. *After the Party: A Manifesto for Queer of Color Life.* New York: NYU Press, 2018. Print.

——. *A Race So Different*. New York: University of New York Press. 2013. Print.

Christon, Lawrence. “The World According to THE COS.” *Los Angeles Times*. Los Angeles: December, 10, 1989. https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-12-10-ca-365-story.html. Accessed 15 February, 2018. Web.

Collins, Hill, Patricia. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 1st ed., New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

Cohen, Cathy. “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics.” *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology,* edited by E. Patrick Johnson and Mae G. Henderson, Durham: Duke University Press, 2005, pp. 21-51. Print.

Cooper, Brittnay. “Clair Huxtable is Dead: On Slaying the Cosbys and Making Space for Liv, Analise, and Mary Jane.” Crunk Feminist Collection. October 23, 2014. Online Edition. https://www.crunkfeministcollective.com/2014/10/23/clair-huxtable-is-dead-on-slaying-the-cosbys-and-making-space-for-liv-analise-and-mary-jane/. Accessed, 11, November, 2019. Web.

“Cosby finds humor in daily life.” *Toledo Blade.* April 2, 2004. Online Edition. https://www.toledoblade.com/sports/high-school/2019/11/20/all-northwest-district-football-selections-annnounced/stories/20191120101. Accessed, 10, October, 2019. Web.

Dafoe, Taylor. “How Shantell Martin Turned Her Deceptively Childlike Drawings Into a Successful Multiplatform Business.” *ArtNet News.* New York: Artnet Worldwide Corporation. November 16, 201*8* https://news.artnet.com/art-world/shantell-martin-1398100. Accessed 3 March, 2019. Web.

Daniels, Lee A. “A Black College Gets Cosby Gift Of $20 Million.” *The New York Times.* 8 November 1998, Online Edition. https://www.nytimes.com/1988/11/08/us/a-black-college-gets-cosby-gift-of-20-million.html. Accessed 6 July 2016.

Davis, Angela. *Women, Race, and Class.* New York: Random House, 1983. Print.

Darity, William Jr., Darrick Hamilton, Mark Paul, Alan Aja, Anne Price, Antonio Moore, and Caterina Chiopris. (2018, April). “What We Get Wrong About Closing the Racial Wealth Gap.” Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity Insight Center for Community Economic Development. https://socialequity.duke.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/what-we-get-wrong.pdf

Darnton, John. “Television; Yes, It's Kelly and Scotty, Together Again.” *New York Times*. August. 8, 1993. Online Edition. https://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/08/arts/television-yes-it-s-kelly-and-scotty-together-again.html. Accessed, 10, July, 2017. Web.

Deb, Sopan. “Camille Cosby Compares Husband to Emmett Till and Blames Media.” *New York Times*. 3, May, 2018. Online Edition. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/03/arts/television/camille-cosby-emmett-till.html. Accessed, 7 July, 2017. Web.

De Berry, Misty. “little sister: An Afro-Temporal Solo-Play.” *Journal of Lesbian Studies.* vol. 21, Issue, 3. 12 September, 2017. pp. 223-350. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10894160.2016.1156937. Accessed 17 November, 2019. Web.

Derrida, Jacques. “Signature Event Context.” *Limited INC.* Translated by Samuel Weber. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988. Print.

Dubois, W. E. Burghardt. *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*. New York: The Free Press, 1999. Print.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Berkeley, Calif.: Grove Press, 2008. Print.

Felman, Shoshana. Writing and Madness: Literature/Philosophy/Psychoanalysis. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986. Print.

Fitzgerald, Adam and Fred Moten. “An Interview with Fred Moten, Part 1.” *Literary Hub.* 5 August 2015. Online Edition. https://lithub.com/an-interview-with-fred-moten-pt-i/. Accessed 6 September 2018. Web.

Fleetwood, Nicole R. *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. Print.

—. On Racial Icons: *Blackness and the Public Imagination.* London; New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2015. Print.

Freeman, Elizabeth. *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. Print.

Gay, Roxane. *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers. 2018. Print.

Gaztambide-Fernández, Rubén A. “The Artist in Society: Understandings, Expectations, and Curriculum Implications.” Curriculum Inquiry. Vol. 38, No. 3 (Jun., 2008), pp. 233-265. Web.

Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: DoubleDay Dell Publishing Group, 1959. Print.

Grainge, Paul, ed. *Ephemeral Media: Transitory Screen Culture from Television to YouTube*. London: British Film Institute, 2011. Print.

Graves, Lucia. “Hannibal Buress: How a Comedian Reignited the Bill Cosby Allegations.” *The Guardian*. 26, April, 2018. Online Edition. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/26/hannibal-buress-how-a-comedian-reignited-the-bill-cosby-allegations. Accessed, 10, October, 2019. Web.

Graham, Renee. “Cosby Show Comedy Had a Serious Impact.” *The Boston Globe.* August 2, 2005. Online Edition. http://archive.boston.com/ae/tv/articles/2005/08/02/cosby_show_comedy_had_a_serious_impact/. Accessed, 18 August, 2018. Web.

Guerlac, Suzanne. *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2006. Print.

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. *1619 Project.* Adizah Eghan and Annie Brown (Executive producers). (2020-present). The New York Times, The Daily [Audio-Podcast].

Hartman, Saidiya V. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Print.

Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia Press, 2013. Print.

Heathfield, Adrain & Tesing Chi. *Out of Now: The Lifeworks of Tehching Hsieh.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015. Print.

Hunter, Tera. *Bound in Wedlock: Slave and Free Black Marriage in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019. Print.

Jicha, Tom. “Cos and Effect, the cosby Show, Which Saved a Network and Made Sitcoms Hot Again, Says Goodbye Tonight.” S*un-Sentinel.* April 30, 1992. Online edition. https://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/fl-xpm-1992-04-30-9202050833-story.html. Accessed, 10 October, 2019. Web.

Johnson, Patrick, E. *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. Print.

—-. “Quare Studies,’ Or (Almost) Everything I Learned about Queer Studies, I Learned from My Grandmother.” *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology,* edited by E. Patrick Johnson and Mae G. Henderson, Durham: Duke University Press, 2005, pp. 124-157. Print.

—-. “Snap! Culture: A different kind of ‘reading.’” *Performance and Text Quarterly.* vol.15, Issue, 2. 1995. pp.122-142. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10462939509366110. Accessed 20 May, 2017. Web.

Jones, Amelia, and Adrian Heathfield. *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History*. Bristol: Intellect Books, 2012. Print.

Jones, Omi Osun Joni L. *Theatrical Jazz: Performance, À̀se, and the Power of the Present Moment*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2015. Print.

Joseph, Miranda. *Debt to Society: Accounting for Life under Capitalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017. Print.

Kaufman, Scott Eric. "Fox News' Elisabeth Hasselbeck justifies Sandra Bland's arrest: She could have used cigarette as a weapon." *Salon Magazine.* 27, July 2015. Online Edition. https://www.salon.com/2015/07/27/fox_news_elisabeth_hasselbeck_justifies_sandra_blands_arrest_she_could_have_used_cigarette_as_a_weapon/. Accessed 11 October 2019. Web.

Kester, Grant. *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2011. Print.

Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Crossing Press. 2007. Print.

Lazzarato, Maurizio. *Governing by Debt*. Translated by Joshua David Jordan. Los Angeles: Semiotext, 2015. Print.

Lazzarato, Maurizio. *The Making of the Indebted Man: An Essay on the Neoliberal Condition*. Translated by Joshua David Jordan. Los Angeles: Semiotext, 2012. Print.

Lepecki. Andre. "Exhausting Dance." *LIVE: Art and Performance*. Adrian Heathfield and Hugo Glendinning. Eds. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.

Locke, John. *Locke: Political Writings*. Indianapolis: Penguin Books, 1993. Print.

Madison, Soyini, D. *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance*. 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2020. Print.

Mandle, Jay R. *Not Slave, Not Free: The African American Economic Experience Since the Civil War*. 2nd ed., Durham: Duke University Press.1994. Print.

Marable, Manning. H*ow Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society*. Boston: South End. 2015. Print.

Marazzi, Christian. *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*. Translated by Kristina Lebedeva. Los Angeles: SemioText(e), 2011. Print.

Martin, Shantell. *Shantell Martin*. https://shantellmartin.art/. Accessed 5 July, 2016. Web.

Martle, James. *The Misintepellated Subject.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2017. Print.

Marriott, David. *Wither Fanon?* California: Standford University Press, 2018. Print.

McClanahan, Annie. *Dead Pledges: Debt, Crisis, and Twenty-First-Century Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017. Print

McMillan, Uri. E*mbodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance.* New York: NYU Press, 2015. Print.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Donald Landes. New York: Routledge Press. 2014. Print.

Mills, Charles. *The Racial Contract.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997. Print.

Mock, Janet. *Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More*. New York: Simon and Schuster Press, 2014. Print.

Montgomery, David and Michael Wines. "Dispute Over Sandra Bland's Mental State Follows Death in a Texas Jail." *New York Times*. 22 July, 2012. Online Edition. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/23/us/sandra-blands-family-says-video-sheds-no-light-on-reason-for-her-arrest.html. Accessed 19 October 2019. Web.

Morris, Christopher W. *The Social Contract Theorists: Critical Essays on Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999. Print.

Morrison, Toni. *Paradise*. Random House, 1997. Print.

——. *Paradise*. Random House, 2014. Print

Moten, Fred. *In The Break: The Aesthetics Of The Black Radical Tradition*. Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Muñoz, José Estaban. *Cruising Utopia, 10th Anniversary Edition: The Then and There of Queer Futurity.* New York: NYU Press, 2019. Print.

——. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color And The Performance Of Politics*. New York: NYU Press, 1999. Print.

—-. "Feeling Brown, Feeling Down: Latina Affect, the Performativity of Race, and the Depressive PositionFeeling Brown." *Signs.* vol.31, No. 3, 2006. pp. 675-688. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/499080?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents. Accessed 17 November, 2019. Web.

Moten, Fred. *Black and Blur.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2017. Print.

—-. *In The Break: The Aesthetics Of The Black Radical Tradition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. Print.

—-. "Not in Between: Lyric Painting, Visual History and the Postcolonial Future." The Theatre Review. Vol 47, No 1, Spring 2018. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/39935/pdf. Accessed 23 November 2019

Musser, Amber. *Sensational Flesh: Race, Power, and Masochism*. New York: NYU Press, 2014. Print.

Noland, Carrie. *Agency and Embodiment: Performing Gestures/Producing Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 2009. Print.

Noland, Carrie, and Sally Ann Ness. Migrations of Gesture. London; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008. Print.

Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.

Piper, Julia. "Student Debt Is Worse for Women." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 20 August 2018. Online Edition. https://www.chronicle.com/article/Student-Debt-Is-Worse-for/244145. Accessed 15 February 2019. Web.

Poniewozik, James. *Audience of One: Donald Trump, Television, and the Fracturing of America*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2019. Print.

Rankine, Claudia. *Citizen: An American Lyric*. London; Minneapolis, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 2014. Print.

Richie, Beth. *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation*. New York: NYU Press, 2012. Print.

Rivera-Severa, Ramón. *Performing Queer Latinidad: Dance, Sexuality, Politics.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012. Print.

Roach, Joseph. *Cities of the Dead*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. Print.

Rodriguez, Juana Maria. *Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures, and Other Latina Longings*. New York: NYU Press, 2014. Print.

Rose, Charlie and Toni Morrison. "Toni Morrison interview on *The Bluest Ey*e and *Paradise* (1998). *Youtube,* uploaded by Manufacturing Intellect. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSLbTtMiEzY.

Royster, Francesca. Sounding Like a No-No: Queer Sounds and Eccentric Acts in the Post-Soul Era. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013. Print.

Royster, Francesca, and Aimee Carrillo Rowe. Loving transgressions: Queer of color bodies, affective ties, transformative community." Journal of Lesbian Studies. Vol 21, Issue 3, 12 Sep 2016. pp 243-253. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10894160.2016.1156976. Accessed, 7 September 2018. Web.

Russo, Ann and Francesca Royster. “Stone Soup: Building Community, Creating Family—The Expansive Possibilities of Queer Love.” *Queer Praxis Questions for LGBTQ Worldmaking*. Dustin Bradley Goltz and Jason Zingsheim. Eds. New York: Peter Lang, 2015. Print.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Rousseau: The Basic Political Writings: Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts, Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, Discourse on Political.* Translated by Donald E. Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011. Print.

Ruas, Charles. *Conversations With American Writers*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1986. Print.

Ruiz, Sandra. *Ricanness: Enduring Time in Anti-colonial Performance*. New York: New York University Press, 2019. Print.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness.* Translated by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1992. Print.

Schneider, Rebecca. *Performance Remains*. New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.

Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. 3rd ed., New York: Routledge Press, 2012. Print.

Schechner, Richard, and Victor Turner. *Between Theater and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985. Print.

Schroeder, J. (2005), "The artist and the brand.” *European Journal of Marketing*. Vol. 39 No. 11/12, 2005. pp. 1291-1305. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/03090560510623262/full/html. Accessed 13 November, 2019. Web.

Servon, Liz. Unbanking of America. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2017. Print.

Sharpe, Christina. Monstrous Intimacies: *Making Post-Slavery Subjects*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. Print.

Shimakawa, Karen. *National Abjection: The Asian American Body Onstage.* Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2002. Print.

Smith, Valerie. *Toni Morrison: Writing the Moral Imagination*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell Press, 2012. Print.

Snorton, Riley, C. *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press. 2017. Print.

Spillars, Hortense. *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. Print.

Stanley, Amy Dru. *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation*. New York: Cambridge University Press,1998. Print.

Stewart, Kathleen. *Ordinary Affects*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. Print.

Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2003. Print.

——. *Performance*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2016. Press

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*. Chicago: Hay Market Press. 2016. Print.

——. *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019. Print.

——. "W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Reconstruction in America 1860–1880." *International Socialist Review.* Issue 57, January-February 2008. Online edition. http://www.isreview.org/issues/57/feat-reconstruction.shtml. Accessed, 10 October, 2019. Web.

Tate, Shirley Ann. *Black Beauty: Aesthetics, Stylization*. New York: Routledge, 2016. Print.

Thomas, Nato. *Living As Form*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012. Print.

Trammell, Matthew. "DAMN., by Kendrick Lamar." *The Pultizer Prizes.* https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/kendrick-lamar. Accessed 11 October, 2019. Web.

Turner, Victor. *The Anthropology of Performance.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988. Print.

—-. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001. Print.

—-. *The Ritual Process.* New York: Routledge Press, 2017. Print.

Walker, Tim. "Bill Cosby: The rise and fall of 'America's Dad." *The Independent*. 30, December, 2015. Online Edition. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/bill-cosby-the-rise-and-fall-of-america-s-dad-a6791381.html Accessed, 10, October, 2019. Web.

Wang, Jackie. *Carceral Capitalism*. Los Angeles: Semiotext, 2018. Print.

Warren, Calvin. *Ontological Terror: Blackness, Nihilism, and Emancipation*. Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2018. Print.

Wimple, Eric. “Fox & Friends': Maybe trooper in Sandra Bland stop feared Cigarette Assault.” *The Washington Post.* 27, July 2015. Online Edition. https://www.washingtonpost.com/. Accessed 11 October 2019. Web.

Wexler, Alice; & Vida Sabbagh. *Bridging Communities through Socially Engaged Art*. New York: Routledge, 2019. Print.

Widder, Nathan. “Deleuze on Bergsonian Duration and Nietzsche’s Eternal Return.” *YouTube.* Uploaded by Actual Virtual Journal, 2 January 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=siRqBlqK1bM. Accessed 18 November, 2019. Web.

Williams, Patricia. *Alchemy of Race and Rights: Diary of a Law Professor.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997. Print.

Whiting, Cécile. “Andy Warhol, the Public Star and Private Self” *Oxford Art Journal*. vol. 10, No. 2, 1987. pp. 58-75. https://academic.oup.com/oaj/article-abstract/10/2/58/1454036?redirectedFrom=fulltext. Accessed 11 October, 2019. Web.

Wilderson, Frank. Red, *White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. Print.

Wright, Michelle. *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology*. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press. 2015. Print.