Black Studies, Not Morality: Anti-Black Racism, Neo-Liberal Cooptation, and the Challenges to Black Studies Under Intersectional Axioms.

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> Most Negro intellectuals simply repeat the propaganda which is put out by people who have large economic and political interests to protect. Of course, Negro intellectuals are in a different position from the standpoint of employment…If they show any independence in their thinking they may be hounded by the F.B.I. and find it difficult to make a living. At the present time many of them find themselves in the humiliating position of running around the world telling Africans and others how well-off Negroes are in the United States and how well they are treated.
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> E.Franklin Frazier,"The Failure of the Negro Intellectual," 1973.

Introduction:

In an effort to justify the theoretical advancement of Black Studies as a discipline away from the material-historical sociology which required a study of the actual conditions of Black people towards a more discursive and abstract interpretations of Blackness, the material historical-sociological focus of the field had to be problematized as not only lacking methods capable of dealing with allegedly "new and emerging" complexities of Black life, but charged with being unable to conceptualize the bodies and identities subject to these complexities. Despite critique, the "post" discourse(s) of inclusion, made axiomatic in effort to pluralize how we speak and think Blackness, seeks to problematize Black Studies as a discipline of exclusion—a nationalist relic of masculine, patriarchal rage which focuses primarily on the political interests and death of young Black men and manhood, rather than Black women and progressive (integrationist) Black politics. The masculinization of Black Studies is essential to the neo-liberal logics at play within disciplines and between disciplinarity, since such a label rationalizes "the attacks" upon Black Studies as being an outgrowth of other "dangerous" and "terroristic" social movement like Black Power, Black Nationalism, and Civil Rights. The ongoing attempts to construct Black Studies as a problem by white institutions and bourgeois Black scholars alike resonates with the sentiment of our day which seeks to convince the world that Black studies is the internalization of the outdated modes of Blackness arising from the 1960's and 1970's revolutionary struggles which ignores Black women, demonized Black homosexuality, and craved the power of white supremacist patriarchy.

For the progressive Black left, Black Studies represents a problem discipline, a field of experimentation, where *in vogue* theories of identity can be tested and multiple discourses can be deployed against scholars resisting these theatres of innovation/experimentation which aim towards reformulating both the role and substance of the discipline. Founded upon the notion that Black Studies carries with it the patriarchal logics of the previous Black eras, Black Studies continue to be subject to deradicalizing gestures focusing on the fluidity of racial identity and the performativity of gender, while eliding serious study of white supremacy and the internalization of this ethos. Whereas Women and Gender Studies remain decidedly white and paradigmatically feminist, resistant of hiring or studying racialized men who fall outside the historical category of patriarchy and remain some of its greatest victims, Black Studies has become coerced into a racial détente, not only through the increase of white

scholars in the discipline, but also through the forced adoption of poststructuralist and postcolonial methods deriving from Continental philosophers to problematize the field of Blackness towards anti-essentialist and hence less erroneous categorical impositions. Ironically, Women and Gender Studies departments as well as philosophy departments housing these very same theorists (Foucault, Derrida, Agamben, Deleuze, Kristeva, etc.) remain immune to this anti-essentialist thrust and remain racially homogenous and ideologically committed to gender exclusions historically dictated by their disciplinary program.

Our present day descriptions of the crisis of Black Studies have identified neo-liberalism as a major cause of the financial and political obstacles preventing flourishing of the discipline. In this schema there is a shared concerned with other liberal arts programs that their contributions to the university are being devalued because of the encroaching corporatism in the American university. Henry Giroux's (2002) "Neo-liberalism, Corporate Culture, and the Promise of Higher Education: The University of as a Democratic Public Sphere" warns that under neoliberalism "politics are market driven and the claims of democratic citizenship are subordinated to market values" (p.428). According to Giroux (2002) these are ubiquitous in scope. "As large amounts of corporate capital flow into the universities, those areas of study in the university that don't translate into substantial profits get either marginalized, underfunded, or eliminated…we are witnessing…a downsizing in the humanities …Moreover, programs and courses that focus on areas such as critical theory, literature, feminism, ethics, environmentalism, post-colonialism, philosophy, and sociology suggest an intellectual cosmopolitanism or a concern with social issues that will be either eliminated or technicized because their role in the market will be judged as ornamental" (p.434). But the role of neoliberalism has been underappreciated and understudied in relation to Black politics and the 21st century articulations of "race." While Giroux's analysis suggests a shared neoliberal repression upon the marked Black community of the university, Lester Spence correctly observes that "while scholars and activists alike increasingly use the concept of neoliberalism to explain rising levels of racial inequality they…miss the way this dynamic is reproduced within, and not simply on black communities" (2012, p.140). This "reproduction within" Black communities exposes an unattended aspect of the political economy at work in the valuation of discourse and ideology within the university. The current deployment of neoliberalism in relation to the fields of knowledge and "politics" in Black Studies thereby exposes a paraontological dilemma in our diagnosis; as neoliberalism both represents the market ontology of corporations (our traditional understanding), and the internalization as *homo-economicus* (the Black subject as self-interested economic thinker). As Joy James (2000) observes, "In academe, a self/text preoccupation and careerism may marginalize or psychologize political struggles. In the present form of Black Studies, it is not unusual to find writers advocating for the intellectual-interrogator as more enlightened than the activist-intellectual (we also find the inflation of literary production into a form of political 'activism' without analysis of the relation to community organizing. Professionalizing progressive discourse validating it within academic conversation, has a lot to do with the commodification of not only Black Studies, but Black radicalism within Black Studies" (p.155). This analysis is not all together surprising given the research of Fabio Rojas's (2007) *From Black Power to Black Studies* which argues that the corporate foundations like Ford and Carnegie directly influenced and deradicalized the course of Black Studies departments in the years following the Civil Rights movement from paradigms focusing on material-nationalist-radicalism accounts of racism to poststructuralist-integrationist-reformism accounts of identity through post-doctoral fellowships and grants. In contrast to our present day articulations of neoliberalism, or more appropriately the neoliberal crisis in relation to Black Studies, we are not only bringing attention to the externality of a white supremacist corporatism which devalues Blackness, but the reification of neoliberal axioms in the production and commodification of Black radicalism by Black scholars in Black Studies.

The actual radicality of studying Black people, their social lives, their histories, and their conceptualizations of the world to expose alternative visions of Black existence and the cultural possibility held within has been replaced by the deployment of moral dogmas and a religious fanaticism propagating one's personal politics as the standard from which all other scholars and scholarship can be judged. Dominant paradigms in Black Studies are thereby summarized as caricatures of their actual aims,

the leaders and historical figures of Black Power and the Black Arts movement are caste as unsophisticated, decadent, and parochial, regardless of their "radical rhetoric." This tradition holds that truly understanding Black people can only be had in the post-structural reformulations of our semiotic reference of Blackness—its categorical pluralization. In this world, Black Studies exists in perpetual tension, as antipathy to itself; consumed by the commitment to studying Black people through paradigms endemic to Black life and the ongoing efforts by Black and white scholars alike to subjugate the discipline to the theoretical paradigms and interventions of other white methodologies. Commenting upon the utilization of post-structural theory among African American intellectuals, Aijaz Ahmed's (1992) book *In Theory* observes that the wholesale rejection of all nationalism as fundamentally opposed to "critical" post-structural thought is the product not of theoretical advance, but the consolidation of global capitalism and neoliberalism, where the resulting stagnation of postcolonial states whose previous eras promised radical alternatives to Occidentalism indicate material and spiritual failure of ideas beyond Western conscience. It is this political reality among peoples and empires which drove the process we now find ourselves. A world where cultural nationalism became "discarded as illusion, myth, totalizing narrative" (p.41), and post-structuralism deemed a saving grace. Specifically, Ahmed remarks that "these monolithic attitudes towards the issue of nationalism-shifting rapidly from unconditional celebration to contemptuous dismissal are also a necessary outcome of a radical theory that is none the less pitched self-consciously against the well-known Marxist premises and therefore comes to rely, consecutively and at times simultaneously, on the nationalistic versions of the Three Worlds Theory and deconstructionist kinds of post-structuralism…whether one said so or not, one inevitably believed that ideas ,culture, was the collective term in most mystifications, or discourse…and not the material conditions of life which include the instance of culture itself, determine the fate of peoples and nations" (2010, p.41)

The contemporary scholar of Black Studies claiming sensitivity to the need for inclusion and pluralization of Blackness wields intersectional paradigms and post-structuralism with little regard for the political economy determining such proselytizing. These "modern" and "enlightened" Black Studies scholars become prophets of problematization, the bearer of intersectional vindicationism, focusing all their efforts on discourse and how the speech act and the ideas articulated by their interlocutors are indicative of a particular cultural world view and ultimately one's character. Under this paradigm, Black Studies, rather than being a field of inquiry about Black life, becomes a base from which various rhetoric and moralities are launched against the alleged pathological thinking thought to be aboriginally tied to failures of the Black community mistakenly dedicated to an undifferentiated Blackness. As such Black Studies is now synonymous with the predetermined moralities of plurality and discursive inclusion (be it intersectional, feminist, progressive or post-colonial), rather than substantive study about the actual conditions and life of Black men, women and children who continue to be killed, marginalized and impoverished under white supremacism. Ultimately, this paradigm moves reinvents a thesis of cultural deprivation; suggesting that the oppression and problems of Black people ultimately resides in their preference archaic cultural/discursive orientation, over progressive intersectional and feminist politics. This essay would like to problematize three aspects of this "critical" move towards Black Studies. The first area of concern is the alleged masculinization of the primary texts and authors contributing to the paradigms of the field during the 1960's and 1970's. Secondly, I would like to address the popularity of intersectionality alongside post-intersectional concerns of intersectionality as a method. My last section is a brief reflection of radicality and our potential to delineate between the cooptation of Black radicalism by post-structuralism and the substance of radical Black critique.

On the Masculinization of Black Studies: Caricatures and Currency

The now popular historiography of the Black Power movement and Black Studies takes these two historically related epochs to be appositional—standing in for each other politically and substantively. The substitution of these terms has been used primarily as a way to suggest that the hyper-masculinization of Black Nationalism not only defined the political thinking of the times, but determined the disciplinarity of Black Studies which is in opposition to "progressive" Black political theories focused on sexism and

homophobia. This incompatibility is highlighted today as a fundamental opposition between the interests of Black men and Black women socially as well as in the university. However, the first interventions calling for attention to the particular aspects of Black women's experiences under slavery and the violence that followed under Jim/Jane Crowism were not unlike the methodologically distinct from the other studies of their day which were primarily driven by material historical accounts and the political economy of Black labor. For example, Bonnie Thornton Dill's (1979) "The Dialectics of Black Womanhood" relies heavily on Joyce Ladner's analysis of labor and political economy in *Tomorrow's Tomorrow* to attend to an irreconcilable contradiction surrounding the Black woman—"the historical role as a laborer in a society where ideals of femininity emphasized domesticity." (p.553). Dill's early work highlights the structural (economic, historic, and political) exclusion of Black women from femininity through noting that the "dominant image of black women as "beasts of burden" stands in direct contrast to American ideals of womanhood: fragile, white, and not too bright" (p553). Similarly Phyllis M. Palmer's (1983) "White Women/Black Women: The Dualism of Female Identity and Experience in the United States," offered a material history of Black women images and an economic argument using income to show that white women have historically had a wage advantage over Black men and Black women as well as access to the wealth of white men. This economic reality places Black women outside the spectrum of white feminism and Black men outside the patriarchal paradigm. Even Deborah King's (1988) "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology," which argues against additive, and I would add apriori (triple jeopardy) formulations of race, class, and gender argues that interactive models of Black women's oppression must be empirical and situational. She insists that "the importance of any one factor in explaining black women's circumstances thus varies depending on the particular aspect of our lives under consideration and the reference groups to whom we are compared. In some cases, race may be the more significant predictor of black women's status; in others, gender or class may be more influential" (p.48). Unfortunately, under the current gender regime in the academy such nuance and particularity is not insisted upon.

Rudolph Byrd's prologue of his coedited anthology *Traps: African American Men on Gender and Sexuality* entitled "The Tradition of John: A Mode of Black Masculinity" sees Black masculinity without attention to Black feminist consciousness as emasculating masculinities—a type of "masculinity which achieves its power and legitimacy through the denigration of others" (2001, p.8). Because Black masculinity in its archaic forms never attended to sexism and homophobic, Byrd suggests that Black manhood is in need of a radical progressivism which "does not stand in opposition to the progressive goals of feminism and the rapidly developing field of queer theory" (p.10). Pointing to the egregious examples of sexism in the Black Power movement by Elaine Brown and Angela Davis, Byrd draws the reader's attention to the struggle Black women had in the Black Power movement so that this imagery can frame the discussion and controversy surrounding Michelle Wallace's *The Black Macho and the Myth of the SuperWoman* (1978) within the pages of *The Black Scholar* the following year. Focusing specifically on Audre Lorde's response to Robert Staples's (1979) "The Myth of the Black Macho: A Response to Angry Black Feminists," Byrd maintains that Audre Lorde's (1979) "The Great American Disease" is instructive because it recognizes that "black male consciousness must be raised so that he realizes that sexism, and woman-hating are critically dysfunctional to his liberation as a black man" (p.19). The implication of this brief summation for Byrd is that "In the lives of Angela Davis and Elaine Brown, as well as in the issues which emerged within Lorde's critique of Staples, we find disturbing evidence of an orthodoxy that confines Black women to only the most traditional roles" (2001, p.14).

Similarly, Nikol Alexander-Floyd's (2003) "We Shall Have Our Manhood: Black Macho, Black Nationalism, and the Million Man March," maintains that the debates surrounding Michelle Wallace's *Black Macho* were misplaced. Despite the criticisms of Wallace's book ranging from Black male and female historians, sociologists, economists, and artists, Alexander-Floyd dismisses the critics of Wallace en masse as concerned more with her character and charges that "most critics avoided a direct attack or close reading of her argument" (p.172). Touting the *Black Macho* as "a book of great vision" (p.174), Alexander-Floyd ultimately concludes that Wallace succeeds in showing that "Black Power ideology as a political discourse that frames Black liberation as a quest to achieve manhood, and asserts (and this is the

truly scandalous part) that the sexual politics that define Black power ideology are actually borrowed from white society's racist imaginations" (2003, p.178). Ironically, Alexander-Floyd remarks that *all* the criticisms of Wallace's work, no matter how "strident or popular, serve as a commentary on the inability of Black political thinkers to assess the operation of gender in their own rhetoric as opposed to legitimate assessments of Wallace's work" (p.173), yet she seems to be completely unaware as to how her defense of Wallace's text serves to reinforce an illusion that only Black men were adamantly against this specific discussion of Black Nationalism given that she *only* offers the first and last names of Black male critics, and *only* discusses the criticisms of Black male opponents of Wallace, specifically Robert Staples, Molefi Asante, and Maulana Karenga.

Even canonical texts offer this very history and "masculinization" of criticisms against Wallace. For example, Patricia Hill Collins argues in *Black Feminist Thought* that "The virulent reaction to earlier Black women's writings by some Black men, such as Robert Staples's analysis of Ntozake Shange's choreopoem, For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide, and Michele Wallace's controversial volume, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, illustrates the difficulty of challenging the masculinist bias in Black social and political thought"(2000, p.7), but her account here is incomplete as well as inaccurate. Like the works mentioned above, she attempts to perpetuate a historical narrative aiming to masculinize the criticism of Wallace to suggest to readers that it was only Black men who reacted negatively to Wallace, and that this reaction was due primarily to them being Black and male. However, even a brief survey of that May/June 1979 issue of the *Black Scholar* reveals that Black women also criticized Wallace's work and Shange's poem in the very same issue. Julianne Malveaux's (1979) "The Sexual Politics of Black People: Angry Black Women and Angry Black Men" (p.35), argued that "Shange's choreopoem is just a poem, nothing more, and a poem is not a polemic," and that Wallace's work, "her book is being hyped because it is what white people want to hear (Is Gloria Steinem's characterization of it as the book of the 80's anything more than wishful thinking?)" (p.35). Sherely A. William's "Comment on the Curb," agreed with Staples arguing that "Shange and Wallace do not fully understand the culture they set out to describe and examine" (1979, p.50). Actually, the harshest criticism of the time did not come from Robert Staples, it came from Paula Gidding's (1979) article, "The Lessons of History Will Shape the 1980's—The Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman Won't." Giddings accuses Wallace's work of furthering a white supremacist agenda rooted in an agenda ridden revisionism of Black history. Giddings argues,

> Wallace might have benefitted from a more careful look at the story of Sojourner Truth (one of the "Amazons"she describes), particularly as it parallels the situation today. An exslave, Truth was involved with the 19th century feminist movement, or the suffragette movement as it was called. Led by politically minded, middle-class White women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the movement was facing deterioration within its ranks especially as it began to compete for attention and support with the more fundamental issue of the day: Black rights and abolition… When it looked as if Black men would get the vote before women would, Stanton showed her true colors, even going so far as to say it would be better for a Black woman to be the slave of an educated White man than of a "degraded, ignorant, black one. Truth didn't go to that length, but she echoed Stanton's basic sentiments. Wallace quotes her speech at an 1867 Equal Rights Association convention: ... "There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, and not colored women; and if colored men get their rights, and not colored women theirs, you see the colored men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as before ...." But Wallace breaks off the quote. Another part of the same speech clarifies the perspective from- which Sojourner Truth spoke: "White women are a great deal smarter and know more than colored women, while colored women know scarcely anything. They go out washing, which is about as high as a colored woman gets, and their men go about idle, strutting up and down, and when the women come home, they ask for their money and take it all and then scold because there is no food. I want you to consider that, chil'n" (p.51).

Despite the harshness of this criticism by Giddings, Alexander-Floyd's (2003) aforementioned work only cites this Giddings article insofar as it mentions that the *Black Macho* was "Heralded as the book that would shape the 1980's by then Ms. editor Gloria Steinem" (p.172). This citation and paraphrasing not only misrepresents Giddings actual work, but again is an example of how many Black feminist authors erase the criticisms of authoritative Black women academics to preserve the mythology that all of the criticisms against Wallace was waged and driven by the sexism of Black men. In sociology specifically, Black women intellectuals reacted harshly to the decades of work already solidified and the empirical work by Black men and women being ignored by Wallace's text. In La Frances Rodgers-Rose's preface to *The Black Woman*, published in 1980, she like Collins argues that historically Black women have been written about by white social scientists who "have not lived the experience of Black womanhood, nor have they made an earnest effort to be introspective learners" (p.11). According to Rodgers-Rose (1980), "it has only been in the past 10 years or so that the negative perceptions of Black women have seriously been challenged. The works of Bell and Parker, Billingsley, Cade, Crutchfield, Davis, Gutman, Harley, and Terborg-Penn, Hill, Johnson and Green, Ladner, Lerner, Mossell, Noble, Staples, and Walker are all part of the growing social scientific literature that questions the validity of the prevailing characterizations of Black women" (ibid.). Regretfully Rodgers-Rose notes that:

> None of these authors has had the impact on the general public that Michelle Wallace created with her book *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*. It could indeed be real that this book, published in 1979 by a major publishing house, is destroying the revisional work that the previously mentioned scholars have done on Black women and the Black family. One must ask, Why this book at this particular time? Why have people paid more attention to what Wallace had to say than to Ladner or Cade? Could it be that just as Black women were beginning to consider, reflect, and evaluate (see Wilson's article) their existence in the country from a perspective of their African past and slave history, those "forces" that would have them ignorant of that past saw fit to confuse them, to negate what they were beginning to see as their purpose or mission in this country" (p.ibid).

While Black feminists have offered a history telling of hostility towards Black women's concern and resistance towards the study of Black women during the decades marking the decline of Black Power and the rise of Black Studies, other Black scholar-activist accounts tell a different story. Joyce Ladner's *Tomorrow's Tomorrow*, which was originally published in 1972, was a pioneering study of Black girls in St. Louis in the 1960's. Ladner's work utilized the theoretical frameworks of W.E.B. DuBois and the dawning methodologies of Black sociology articulated in her later work *The Death of white Sociology* published a year later in 1973. In *Tomorrow's Tomorrow* (1972), Ladner argues that "Black women do not perceive their enemy to be Black men, but rather the enemy is considered to be the oppressive forces in the large society which subjugate Black men, women and children" (p.283). Another critic of Wallace's text was a now erased Black female activist working with the Sojourner Truth Organization in Chicago, Illinois during the 1970's named Alison Edwards. Edwards (1979) was the author of "Rape, Racism and the White Women's Movement," a fifty-four page publication primarily dedicated to refuting the racist logic of Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (1975). Edwards argued that Wallace's text fails on multiple scholarly grounds: "logical and historical, Marxist and Freudian" (p.41). Lacking the theoretical nuance of Freudians who attend to sexuality among historical and unconscious concerns, Edwards remarks that "It is hard to take seriously a treatise on Black history which reduces 400 years of slavery and oppression, on the one hand, and survival, resistance and revolution, on the other, to the individual male's pursuit of individual male power to be attained by virtue of a (supposedly) superior individual male sexual organ. It is, in fact, capitulation to the worst aspect of both white supremacist and male chauvinist sexual stereotypes" (p.41). Despite the failings of Wallace's work, Edwards is sympathetic to the issues she discusses, however, she warns that the support of white feminists like Gloria Steinem and Susan Brownmiller signal the failure of the text and its cooptation by white patriarchal racism. Edwards is clear in this regard.

What is disturbing about *Black Macho* is not so much its analysis of male supremacy in the Black movement, but the use to which portions of the white feminist movement will (and have) put such an analysis. It is one thing to speak of unity in the women's movement and toward that end to emphasize solidarity with Black women. It is quite another for whites, even if asked, to join a Black woman in an all-out attack on Black men, on the Black movement, and on Black women who have rejected the Women's Movement. The task of white revolutionaries, whether they are in the feminist movement or in other sections of the movement, must be to support Black liberation, not to look for ways in which Black women can be split off from Black men in order to swell the ranks of the women's movement. The latter is the job of the K.K.K. — or the U.S. government (p.42).

In short, the disciplinarity of Black Studies and its relationship to the sexism of the Black Panther Party specifically, and the ideology of Black Power more generally, is much more complicated than the aforementioned texts present. The reality is there are many different impressions of this era and none of them will be answered to the service of Black people if we create mythology to justify our reading of history, rather than criteria for what constitutes evidence for how we see history itself. This is not to deny that sexism like any other social inequality (classism, chauvinism, homophobia, even anti-Blackness) exists in Black Studies or was internalized by members of the Black Panther Party. It is however a denial of causality which suggests that the failures of one historical moment is essential to the discipline or the male bodies within it. Vivian Verdell Gordon's "Black Women, Feminism, and Black Studies," for example has, argued that "Although many [B]lack women have been victimized by an unanticipated sexism by [B]lack men…such women in Black Studies have often found extensive support from other of their male and female peers who have worked together to combat such destructive forces (2000, p.169). Gordon's analysis of Black Studies comes alongside her observation of the near complete rejection of Black women (hired or studied) in Women and Gender Studies department during the same time. A similar case can be made for how we understand the activism of the women in the Black Panther Party. Regina Jennings speaks about sexism in the leaders of the party in her essay "Africana Womanism in the Black Panther Party: A Personal Story (2001) while also commending her comrades, the Black men, who defended her and believed that the liberation of women was a necessary component of Black liberation and revolutionary praxis. The development of Black Power Studies has created a whole new perspective which complicates the assumed marriage between sexism, Black masculinity, and the rise of Black Studies during this revolutionary era. Works by Peniel Joseph (2010a; 2010b), Timothy B. Tyson (2001), and Danielle McGuire (2010) complicate not only how sexism was understood by these activists, but also the relationship various actors and organizations had to Black women and the sexuality of Black men. Rondee Gaines dissertation *I Am a Revolutionary Black Female Nationalist* (2013) documents Fulani Sunni Ali's leadership role in the Republic of New Africa started by Robert F. Williams. These works call for a reevaluating of our current history and the mythology which overdetermines our reading and relationship to the activism throughout various disciplines.

The theoretical utility of these texts cited above will inevitably fall victim to the prejudices the reader brings to this controversial debate in either direction. Regardless, the aforementioned analysis is not written as an apologia—it makes no attempt to rescue this historical moment from itself—but it does seek to expose the mythology obscuring our study of Black people within that moment. Specifically, these debates aim to show the inaccuracy and error of attributing to Black men and Black Studies a character and disciplinary *telos* rooted in the ideology of a political party which existed over fifty years ago. Contrary to Black feminist historiography and theories, various works show that Black men have not only historically resisted white patriarchal ideas of masculinity (Blee & Tickamyer, 1995; Hunter & Davis, 1992, 1994), but according to Evelyn Simien's (2007) "A Black Gender Gap? Continuity and Change in Black Feminist Attitudes" many have even surpassed Black women in some areas of gender awareness. This research points to the change in the Black public opinion, and a development of varying sentiments and political thinking in our contemporary moment. Contrary to the insistence of anti-nationalist works which insist on an ahistorical determinism casting Black men as misogynists, and Black

Studies as their disciplinary home, the complexity of Black social life resists such essentialism. The study of Black people requires us to see the transformations within Black life, and demands an interrogation of the gender category itself when it is deployed to affix privilege, patriarchy, and ignorance to persons and disciplines through the very same logics deployed by racism and imperial colonial history to justify the backwardness and danger of Black bodies the world over. As Greg Thomas correctly notes in *The Sexual Demon of Colonial Power* (2007):

> Over the last several decades, commercialized gender and sexuality talk in Western academia has had little or nothing to say about the neo-colonial context in which it is produced. The material and symbolic condition is instead embraced as an ordinary fact of life. This geopolitics of empire may be best illustrated by the vilification of nationalism (or nationality) in now-standard discussions of sexism and homophobia. The nationalism vilified is typically the nationalism of the colonized, not the colonizer who invents nationalism as a bourgeois form of rule. Hence, many people come to see Black "nationalism" as synonymous with any given evil…White nationalism is never conceived or mentioned as such, by contrast, let alone castigated as the ruling force of the globe. Why is this canonical criticism of sexism and homophobia couched as a criticism of colonized "nationalism," in its insurgent mode? (p.130).

Nationalism, or more accurately the self-determination of Black people collectively, cannot be allowed to be demonized *in toto* for the convenience of preserving or perpetuating the social, and thereby cultural, and configured—and allowed—political sentiments of the day. Black politics as well as Black disciplinarity insofar as they reflect the dialectic and antithetical motivations against the stagnation of empire towards liberation resist moral categorization. Because these movements, and our study of these moments, call forth judgment, we must be reflective upon the imposition of set categories (like race, gender, or class) as well as utopian envisions which take the end of progressive politics to be the embodiment of one's personal ideological commitments. These set of problems, the hermeneutical dilemma of Blackness looking upon itself within disciplines committed to anti-Blackness and racial acquiescence instead of Black self-determination, stand against study.

Too Big to Fail: A Note on Intersectionality, Post-Intersectionality, and the Cooptation of Diverging Theories in the Study of Black people.

Though relegated to footnotes, Patricia Hill Collins (1998, p.264, n.16) admits that there were "proto-intersectional" theories introduced by Black female social scientists before the dawning of the term in the 1980's. Collins specifically references the aforementioned works of Joyce Ladner (1971) and La Francis Rodgers-Rose (1980) which were calling for the decolonization of white methodological assumptions and highlights the importance of utilizing a political economic analysis in descriptions of Black gender and sexuality. Collins, however, suggests that it was the focus on gender and race in the 1960's and 1970's that generated this research, effectively overlooking the references in Ladner and Rodgers-Rose text pointing to the work and methods of W.E.B. DuBois and other Black male and female sociologists (many of DuBois students) attempting to create Black labor studies (Wilson, 2006). Despite the insistence of previous authors like Ladner, Rodgers-Rose and King that gender inequities are dynamic, today's intersectionality theorists view social asymmetries between Black men and women as ontologically fixed towards Black male privilege, disregarding those multiple cases where Black women sociologically demonstrate economic, political, and educational advantage over their male counterparts. Rather than being an empirical articulation of disparity among oppressed populations through various matrices of oppression and disadvantage, current intersectionality theory assigns ontological disadvantage to Black female existence despite decades of evidence showing that Black men suffer greater systemic economic disadvantage due to unemployment and incarceration (Stewart & Scott, 1978; Mincy, 2006; Alexander, 2010), and share none of the cultural notions of masculinity and patriarchy of their white male counterparts (Staples, 1978; Blee, 1995; Hunter & Davis, 1992, 1994). Despite the growing amounts of evidence that show that Black women have historically had an advantage over Black men in terms of

education (McDaniel et. al., 2011), and social mobility (Kaba 2005, 2008, 2011), Black males are claimed to benefit from their masculine privilege. Intersectionality, then, has not only become a theoretical apparatus which stands in for "the Black woman," but a mechanism that brings with it apriori disadvantage next to any other racialized subject. Instead of being a *system of analysis* through which comparisons between subjects of differing race, class, and gender positions can be tested, intersectionality remains committed to a predetermined deployment of categorical oppression which is absolute, Black, and female.

In Sirma Blige's recent article entitled "Intersectionality Undone: Saving Intersectionality from Feminist Intersectionality Studies" (2013), she argues "subject centered" analysis ultimately dilutes the power of intersectional frames.

> Framing social life not as collective, but as the interaction of individual social entrepreneurs, neoliberalism denies preconditions leading to structural inequalities; in consequence, it congratulates itself for dismantling policies and discrediting movements concerned with structures of injustice. Thus neoliberal assumptions create the conditions allowing the founding conceptions of intersectionality—as an analytical lens and political tool for fostering a radical social justice agenda—to become diluted, disciplined, and disarticulated (p. 407).

Blige's work recognizes the distance today's notion of intersectionality has from its original theorization. Like the poststructuralist turn before it, intersectionality's subject driven analysis disregards actual materiality for the ontologizing of historical disadvantage despite facts to the contrary. It makes empirical inquiry irrelevant to the ultimate and predetermined conclusion of the analysis. This fixed knowledge and conclusion is thereby taken as absolute truth, and incentivize academic communities to regard individual claiming intersectional identity as experts, not by their knowing of the social facts surrounding their existence, but through their physical being itself. "Intersectionality, originally focused on transformative and counter-hegemonic knowledge production and radical politics of social justice, has been commodified and colonized for neoliberal regimes. A depoliticized intersectionality is particularly useful to a neoliberalism that reframes all values as market values: identity-based radical politics are often turned into corporatized diversity tools leveraged by dominant groups to attain various ideological and institutional goals" (p. 407-408). Under the neo-liberal regime of the academy and the staunch ideological reification married to disciplinarity, intersectionality has become representational rather than analytic. It represents a particular body, rather than the relationship racialized bodies have to various systems which have historically stratified societies.

It is widely accepted that intersectionality was introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw's (1989) "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Anti-Discrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Anti-Racist Politics." In that essay, Crenshaw is specifically concerned with Black women's experience of discrimination. She argues that: "Black women sometimes experience discrimination in ways similar to white women's experiences; sometimes they share very similar experiences with Black men. Yet often they experience double-discrimination-the combined effects of practices which discriminate on the basis of race, and on the basis of sex. And sometimes, they experience discrimination as Black women-not the sum of race and sex discrimination, but as Black women" (1989, p.149). One of the problems of understanding oppression as being particular to or active only on individuals chosen as the subject implied under intersectionality is that it focuses on demographic categories (race and gender) without any attention to the larger processes that operate to define the particular case of race and gender in the given context/society. For example, we say we are interested in studying the Black woman, but what Black woman are we talking about? The large class of socially mobile highly educated Black women that empirical studies like Penner and Saperstein's "Engendering Racial Perceptions (2013) argue have become known as the "educated woman," or are we talking about the socially marginalized impoverished Black woman. Intersectionality, or rather that idea of intersectionality which suggests that Black women, and only Black women have a unique causal relationship to oppression, rests on a disclosure of revelatory knowledge to the world by the Black female

oracle, not research which can be socially challenged and debated socially. Intersectionality declares *apriori* that it is only Black women who have this special relationship and can verify or reveal these realities. In more practical terms, intersectionality as a political tool argues that despite the empirical realities and various asymmetries of social life where Black women can and do have some advantages over Black men, these material demographic advantages are of no consequence when one considers the "special oppression," experienced by Black women. Since we cannot verify the truth of such claims, we are now bound by disciplinary morality to trust, and not question, the causal relationship that only Black women have to the world.

This paradigm insists that identity politics, the speaking of "this" oppression is synonymous with verification of said oppression, and furthermore that "this" oppression is of greater magnitude and severity, because it is specific to the Black woman/female, and therefore outweighs the empirical and material oppressions observed. In short, intersectionality loads the stack so to speak; implying that because of "this" ultimate "intersectional" oppression only experienced by Black women/females, all other race/class/gender bodies ultimately have an advantage or privilege in relation to them. This was precisely the danger Peter Kwan (1997) points out in "Jeffrey Dahmer and the Cosynthesis of Categories,"

> scholars who wrote about intersectionality responded to marginalization by creating new marginal categories that, by their very nature, themselves encourage the idea of categorical hegemony..by focusing, for example, on the particularities of black women's experience, intersectionality stands in danger of pushing to its margins issues of class, religion, and able-bodiedness, as well as issues of sexual orientation. Thus, without a more developed theory of how to "factor in" these issues, as Crenshaw predicted, intersectionality stands in danger of perpetuating the very dangers to which it alerted with regard to male dominance in racial discourses, and white supremacy in feminist discourses" (1276).

Despite the critiques of intersectionality's applicability and methodological soundness, intersectionality remained largely unaffected. Unlike other theories which respond to criticisms as a defense of the original position, Crenshaw has never responded to multidimensionality or cosynthesis (post-intersectionality) theorists. Uninterested in diversifying the subjects of primary concern (Black women), intersectionality theorists developed apologetics claiming that the intersection of race, gender, and class was the ultimate oppression, and as such was the subject par excellence in any diagnosis of oppression. By focusing on one subject materially, intersectionalists were able to suggest other groups could be studied as more privilege analogs to the Black female experience. By making their inquiry the ultimate moral/political cause, Instead intersectionalists have simply assimilated the methods and critiques of other scholars as their own. Because intersectionality was never developed as a full theory by the original theorist, there was no articulated method of applying intersectionality to other bodies besides the Black woman. Championing the study of "the Black woman," centering her experience in all conversations about race or gender become a valued ideological statement where simply uttering the words race, class, and gender indicated the progressivism and rightness of the speaker. Intersectionality became a correct political stance in itself and criticisms were dismissed as immoral. This allowed intersectionality theorists to coopt the works of other scholars under their rubric. Athena Mutua characterizes this in "Multidimensionality is to Masculinities what Intersectionality is to Feminism" saying that "through the process of a multitude of scholars explaining, interpreting, and using intersectionality, the theory was broadened, turning many of the critiques into mere expansions and elaborations of the theory, a theory that Crenshaw herself initially saw as transitional" (2013, p.355).

Methodology was not the only concern for postintersectionality theorists, how intersectionality depicted the Black male as a privileged subject was also questioned. Extending her criticism of intersectionality, Mutua insists that Darren Hutchinson's (2001) insights in "Identity Crisis: Intersectionality, Multidimensionality, and the Development of an Adequate Theory of Subordination" has not been fully appreciated. Hutchinson (2001, p.312) argued that "Multidimensionality complicates

the very notions of privilege and subordination" largely assumed to be categorical in intersectionality. Hutchinson held that Black male identity is much more complex and nuanced than intersectionality presents given the history of murder, sexual violence, and incarceration specifically linked to Black masculinity. "…By focusing on intersecting 'privileged' and 'subordinate' categories," Hutchinson (2001) found that "the heterosexual stereotypes that inform the "sexualized racism" endured by all people of color. Lynching, for example, was frequently 'justified' through a racist, sexualized rhetoric that constructed black males as heterosexual threats to white women. Thus, heterosexual status, typically a privileged category, has served as a source of racial subjugation. This history complicates the apparent stability of privileged and subordinate categories; the meanings of these identity categories are, instead, contextual and shifting" (p.312). Hutchinson's work was meaningful, but ignored precisely because his historical analysis of the categories placed upon Black male sexuality refuted the notion of gendered privilege which was a bedrock of intersectionality. As he says "Intersectionality… typically considers women of color subordinate relative to men of color and white women. The inclusion of sexuality hierarchies in a multidimensional analysis destabilizes this framework (ibid.). For many intersectionalists Black men are *structurally* advantaged by their gender, but disadvantaged by their race. Following Huchinson's work from over a decade ago, Mutua argues that the categorical assertion of Black male advantage over Black women necessitated by Crenshaw's system is anti-empirical and inaccurate when studied empirically.

> When intersectionality was applied to black men, it was initially interpreted to suggest that "black men were privileged by gender and subordinated by race;" that is, black men sat at the intersection of the subordinating and oppressive system of race (black) and the privileged system of gender (men). Intuitively this notion seemed correct. It also seemed to support the dominant social and academic practice of examining the oppressive conditions that black men faced from a racial perspective. Yet, the interpretation of black men as privileged by gender and oppressed by race appeared incorrect in our observations of racial profiling...while this interpretation of intersectionality seemed to capture some of the differentials between women and men in the black community, as in wage differentials for example, it did not capture the harsher treatment black men seemed to face, not only in the context of anonymous public space that often characterized racial profiling, but also in terms of higher rates of hyper incarceration, death by homicide and certain diseases, suicide rates, and high unemployment as compared to black women (2013, p.344-345).

Here again we the problem of verification and the rationalization of Black male advantage in opposition to Black female disadvantage apriori. Intersectionality and the multidimensional/post-intersectional critique of its position are rooted in the accuracy of this categorical reductionism of all social reality to the causal relationship of oppression claimed to originate only in the Black woman/female subject.

Despite the explosion of the categories of gender in addition to race and class claimed to be accounted for through intersectional discourse in the 80's and 90's, the social, economic, and political position of Blacks changed little due to the ever present conditions of racism. While there is no denying an economic elevation of a small segment of Black people to the ranks of the middle class since the birth of intersectionality, the revelation of the social constructiveness/contingency of race and gender have done little to address the codified position of Blackness within the political economy of America's empire. Such a reality demonstrates contrary to the initial impulse of intersectionality theorists that despite the multiplication of categories to describe an actual subject, or population, these entities remain empirically unaffected by the complexity of the language in the description and continue to endure the primary effects of their social condition. Ultimately, intersectionality demands a Kantian physiognomy to account for the history, intent, and character of the subjects set in opposition to the Black female. This logics, which focuses solely on the body of the subject "seen" is rooted in the over-representation of the body itself in the Western imagination. The Black (male) body is overdetermined by history such that the sociological and contingent problems of Black male social life become metaphysical and therefore

ontological problems of Black male existence. As Oyeronke Oyewumi (1997) has articulated in her groundbreaking text *The Invention of Woman*, " the biological determinism in much of Western thought stems from the application of biological explanations in accounting for social hierarchies. This in turn has led to the construction of the social world with biological building blocks. Thus the social and the biological are thoroughly intertwined. This world view in male dominant discourses, discourses in which female biological differences are used to explain female sociopolitical disadvantages" (p.35). Because the body is seen to be its "sexual difference" and this difference is predetermined to indicate social position, the sexual biology of the subject ever-present; "the conception of biology as being everywhere makes it possible to use as an explanation in any realm, whether it is directly implicated or not" (ibid.). This biocentric conceptualization of gender founded upon Western man is immune to the splintering of its substance through race or class. Intersectionality reproduces the Western determinism of "othered" bodies. Intersectionality simply chooses to specify that within the category of Blackness, all Black men like their white counterparts, are predestined to be advantaged because of their biological sex (male) to Black women. The intuitiveness of the conclusion, its reproduction of the ontological opposition between male and female only found in the West, suggests that the analytic basis of this method requires further attention.

It's Not Radical Because You Say So: The Caricatures of Black Studies in the Service of Moral Determinancy.

There is a mythology at work in how Black people think about the utilization of knowledge against the structures of racism and white supremacy that result in the inevitability of anti-Black death. In the academy and the concentric communities that center scholarly knowledge as the basis of discourse, there is a practice among various levels of students that de-radicalize the potential of these criticisms to make meaningful change in the structures and mentality of all those involved. The Black undergraduate and graduate student lacking the professional credentials to assert their opinion as true, or insightful, as the product of scholarly research, utilizes mimicry to convince the listener of the rightness of their position. In taking on, or parroting, the radical literature of their heroes and heroines, they strive to transform the insights of these/ their professors, lawyers, activists into a new morality. This morality seeks to escape any practical debates about the construction and constructing of a new world, or new consciousness. For these students, repeating the sacred texts of high intellectuals; the manipulators of post-structural texts/postcolonial discourse/psychoanalytic theories of death, life, power, gender, the Black woman, capitalism, bare life, vestibularity, and of course race, seek to convince the world that as disciples of these texts, they (the poor, the Black, the female, the marginalized student) in fact do hold the key to understanding the world beneath them, as they are now elevated to the realms of theory, from the perspectives of their gods who reside in the Ivory tower.

The mistake Black theorists make in understanding the ineffectiveness of their theories to transform the world is fundamentally rooted in the actuality of the world before them. Despite the radicality—the (new) content, the (revolutionary) ideas, and the (existential) ethicality— of the proposed theory, there is an apriori belief by the "radical (Black) theorist" that the oppressor class, be they: white, bourgeois, or male; the people the theory is directed towards, are in fact moral people able to be persuaded, convinced, and transformed through their own capacities and recognition of the "other realities" suffered by the oppressed. There is an erroneous belief that Black theory can be understood, acted upon, recognized by a person that can understand, or a newly emerged person that can now understand, the perspective of the "representative of the oppressed" speaking to them. Why is this case? What is it in the act of critiquing whites, the bourgeoisie, or men that make the oppressed believe fundamentally that these groups can change? For the people who are "actually oppressed," "materially oppressed," "silenced," or the Black male who is killed/dead and cannot speak, but only be spoken about by the academics who use his death as a symbol—a catalyst—of conversation with whites, this belief does not exist. But for this group, Black theorists and their parrots, who are the "representatives of the

oppressed" that merely act as sleeping dictionaries, or in the case of Black men, talking monkeys this belief is substantiated by an ancient faith in reason and the modern hope of discourse.

A Black intellectual socialized to imitate white theories and by effect the pre-established semiotics that signify "intellect" as the basis of their discourse with whites under the banner of radicality, pessimism or anti-racist realism is of the greatest concern. In its brute reality, this discursive replication was the primary concern of Carter G. Woodson's *The Miseducation of the Negro* (1933). Contrary to the pop culture summation of Woodson's 1933 work, Woodson was not primarily concerned with the general education of Blacks by whites, Woodson was concerned with the "highly educated Negro," who in studying the ideas founded upon white understandings of philosophy, economics, law, and religion, sought to apply this knowledge to the Black community. "The educated Negro have the attitude of contempt toward their own people because in their own as well as in their mixed schools Negroes are taught to admire the Hebrew, the Latin and the Teuton and to despise the African" (Woodson, 1933, p.1). Woodson's comment upon the disciplinary/civilizational basis of "theory," is profound, despite being almost a century old. The highly educated Negro, the same culprit of E. Franklin Frazier's Failure of the Negro/Black Intellectual, seeks to distant themselves from the Black community who remain mere objects of study. Seeing themselves as ontologically different from the other-Black-objects they study, these Black theorist(s) speak to white gatekeepers and members of their own intellectual class who reward them for the adamancy and spread of the ideas offered as morality. By claiming to be enlightened and spreading "truth" the post-structural/intersectional theorist need not know about the actual conditions of the people they speak of, they need only present these bodies and their conditions through the theories accepted by their particular discipline and/or disciplinary community. Black Study effectively becomes the process of confining/distorting/revising Black life to fit theory. As Ahmed reminds us, "facts require explanations, and all explanations, even bad ones, presume a configuration of concepts, which we provisionally call 'theory,' In other words, theory is not simply a desirable but a necessary relation between facts and their explanations" (1994, p.34). It is when this theory is considered to be ontological—fundamental and necessary to the facts they seek to explain—that they become apriori and ideological. It is this paradigm from which the theory we concern ourselves with, and its effect upon the actual study of Black people, are placed at odds with Black Studies. Since the ontological claim is apriori, it dismisses the need for the study of Black life since it takes the relation between the facts of Black existence and theories proposed to be necessary to the Black bodies observed. The truth concerning Blackness thereby becomes revelation of some constant unchanging principle within Blackness rather than the study of structures, historically conditioned and dynamic, upon Black peoples. This bourgeois fanaticism voids the world of actual Black people and replaces them with Black subjects found wanting for knowledge, recognition, and the politics of the "Black theorist-observer."

In the cases of intra-group critiques like that of Black feminism, or Black queer/quare theories of Blackness, the reaction of the Black theorist becomes peculiar. Knowing that the objects of their criticism are powerless, in the sense that they do not generate the ideologies or control the institutions that allow them to be patriarchs, owners, or capital "O" oppressors, these critiques construct the Black community as the masculine extension of the Black male's pathology. The Black community then is not dynamic, but despotic. In its discursive rendering of the gender and sexual dynamics that produce homophobia and sexism, Blackness is masculinized, so that the creation of the image needed to give teeth to these accounts resonates with the negrophobia of the white listener. In other words, these theories are not geared towards the cultural and psychical transformations in the Black community, as seen from the perspective of those in these communities, but rather they exist in methodological and derelictical crisis (Curry, 2011a; 2011b) being fundamentally geared towards the formulation of accounts that epistemologically converge with theories given by the academy so that these reflections about Blackness gain currency with mainstream academic thought and given the title of "theory." This process is valued even though the cost of making these theories recognizable resulting in pathologizing the community these theories are supposed to reflect. This is not to say that there is not homophobia, sexism, classism, colorism, and other manifestations of derivative power differences maintained by white supremacism in the Black community. It is to say however, that isolating gender to females as if Black men do not suffer from their

hetero-maleness, or making queerness/quareness into a universal corrective to Blackness without attending to the class differential of those queer/quare speakers and the impoverished heteronormative Christian Blacks they speak about only perpetuates the conceptual and actual distance that "highly educated Negros" have from the problems their theories claim to represent. Suggesting that the Black community can be seen through its problems, without attending to the causes of these phenomena, is in all reality an erasure of the complexity of Black life. These "theories" are in fact demanding that the actual lives of Black people be erased, eradicated, and demonized for the convenience of theoretical coherence/currency amongst other "educated Black elites." For the narrative of grand theories like Black feminism, or queer theory, or Marxism to remain legitimate, the complex lives of Black people who fall out of their universalist accounts have to be censored. The desire to censor that which does not support "the grand narrative," is why fundamental aspects of anti-Blackness, and routine aspects of Black life remain unattended to in Black scholarship. This expurgation of texts, topics, and themes to reflect that which is "theoretically permissible" is why the sexual abuse of Black men and boys by Black men and Black women in our very own communities, even when shown to us by the memoir of Antwone Fisher's *Finding Fish* (2001), or historically with the rape of Black men by white men and women documented by Thomas Foster's (2011) article "The Sexual Abuse of Black Men under American Slavery," remain ignored and denied by the intellectuals /disciples of these moralities/theories. What the presence of these ideologies show, in Black debates about Blackness, is that the presence of Black bodies, and Black voices, do little to change the dominant power structures in society, or the academy alike.

The quotidian repetition of the trinity, "race, class and gender," does nothing to challenge, uproot, or reorient Western categories of knowledge. In fact, the adoption of these categories only extend the Europe's taxonomic claim over Black bodies, distorting them epistemologically, over-determining them ontologically, and confining them politically. Accepting these categories ergonomically contoured upon the bodies and anthropology of whites only reproduces, or rather indicates the reification of, white supremacist logics upon Black inquiry (Luguones, 2010). The decision to "see" and "understand" that which was deemed Black and non-human through the machinations created by the white human indicates that the contingency of white cultural inventions, and the anti-Blackness carried within, has have been elevated to the status of universal and nature human (social) delineations. Politically, this commits Black theorists to the legitimacy of white reformist apparati which fit these categories used to describe disadvantage. Under these white anthropological categories, the Black thinker asks for (human) recognition, demands the (equal) rights of citizenship, cries out for the (justice) thought to be held in the rule of law, despite their claims of radicality which suggest that Blackness is founded only upon violence, invisibility, and tyranny. Though acknowledged rhetorically, the positionality of the colonized/civilized/white is taken to be the end of the racial suffering for the native/uncivilized/ Black. In short, race, class, and gender demands us to attend to the extent that we are racially, sexually, or economically disadvantaged for not being recognized and embedded within empire as white, not a divestment in that which is presented as natural, but in fact only the cultural inventions of white supremacist taxonomies.

The liberal translation of racism-white supremacy, sexual exploitation, and economic deprivation into race, gender, and class functions as an outstretched hand allowing the white imagination and the Eurocentric canon an opportunity to grasp onto the problems created by the Eurocentric order of knowledge that produced them. These realities of dehumanization are originally rooted in the racist anthropology that essentialized hierarchy into sexuality and ordered capital and property around these prior divisions. This is what is meant in the distinction made in "On Derelict and Method" (2011a) between pseudological criticism and culturalogical formulations of knowledge which create and situate knowledge, and the theories used to explain Black existence, upon the relation Blackness has to the world immediately, rather than its assimilation into the world by the extent to which it adopts the standards and pathologies of occidentalist anthropology (e.g. humanity, gender, unconsciousness, etc.). Pseudological criticism is not meant to overthrow the systems of knowledge, or question the existence of the oppressor class. It seeks recognition from them and as such proceeds to engage white consciousness, or Black moral/ideological sentiment as the basis of claiming to "transform" the subject matter of the critique. The

Black theorist, as pseudological advocate, is now propagandist: where arguments are not based on the rigor by which facts concerning Black life are explainable through a particular theory, but rather how a said theory is valued axiomatically—being preferred to all other explanations simply there is goodness associated politically within disciplines and the concentric Black emanating from the university that see the world from this particular view. The inherent goodness or badness of a theoretical is dangerously anti-social. Situated as a means by which the recognized morality of theories creates and expands its following, rather than communities able to criticize, test, and examine the claimed relationship between itself and the facts of Blackness in the world.

This tendency must be resisted by culturalogical constructions of knowledge and real BLACK RADICALISM; a radicalism like that urged by Sylvia Wynter (2006) in "On How We Mistook the Map for the Territory and Re-Imprisoned Ourselves in Our Unbearable Wrongness of Being, of Desétre: Black Studies Toward the Human Project," that does not presuppose the philosophical anthropology and humanism of a white/western world as the basis of corrective for the ills of knowledge. The vulnerability of Black Studies, the appeal to conceptualizations of white being as the basis and template from which thought about Blackness emanates, was driven by three factors for Wynter: (1) the end of the civil rights movement, (2) the defection of the most creatively original practitioner of the Black Arts movement Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka, and (3) "the rise of Black feminist thought and fiction, which took as one of their major targets the male and macho hegemonic aspect of the Black nationalist aesthetic and its correlated Black Arts Movement, even where Black women had played as creative a role as men" (Wynter, 2006, p. 110). "The *coup de grace* to both the Black Arts and the Black Aesthetic Movements, however, was to be given by the hegemonic rise of a black (soon to be 'African-American') poststructuralist and 'multicultural' literary theory and criticism spearheaded by Henry Louis Gates, Jr." (p.110). The rise of post-structuralism, its designation as high theory, and its application to visceral Blackness divested the power of the Black Arts Movement and the political ideals of the Black Power Movement to challenge and replace the disciplinary pillars of white literary and philosophical foundations. Gates application of Continental philosophy was not without baggage. These theories carried with them certain metaphysical presumptions that were, like the veracity of their universal claim to humanity, illusory. Following Madhu Dubey's analysis put forth in her book *Black Women Novelists and the Nationalist Aesthetic* (1994), Wynter sees the argument waged against the Black Nationalist aesthetic as somewhat contradictory. Though "Gates poststructuralist critique had now come to accuse practitioners of Black Aesthetics and Black Arts, in Derridian terms, of putting forward a metaphysical concept of Blackness as presence and thereby, instead of displacing an essentialist notion of identity, of having merely installed Blackness as another transcendent signified" (p.111). Rejecting such a tendency in articulations of Blackness became itself a recognized and cherished good throughout the academy, so much so that waging the charge of essentialism, this metaphysical Blackness, in another's work was tantamount to being "seen" as profound critique. Morality therefore stands in for rigor in the disciplinary anxiety towards a "Black" Black Studies and buttresses the popular recognition (the confirmation bias) of these good values shared between scholars which stand in for actual argument.

In short, Black Nationalism was accused of being "entrapped by racial essentialism which by its reversal of the Western definition of Blackness had come to depend on the absent presence of the Western framework it sets out to subvert" (ibid.). Recognizing that Gates' critique of Black Power/Nationalist Aesthetics simply recentered the metaphysical framework by which ontology is viewed in the West, Wynter concludes that it was in fact "Gates' poststructuralist activity itself [which] depends on the absent present of the very same Western framework that it was also ostensibly contesting" (ibid.). Similar to the analysis of Aijaz Ahmed's (1994) *In Theory*, Wynter points out the disciplinary, and hence political, normalization of Black Nationalism as irreverent rhetorics with little theoretical content able to substantively provide an alternative to Western metaphysical problems of MAN. This reductive reading of Black Power/Nationalism outside of its aims toward decolonization (of knowledge and society) is the natural defense mechanism of white disciplinarity. According to Wynter, the recognition of Black Power's transformative cultural substance is incomprehensible in our present order of knowledge for two reasons: "the first is due to the imperviousness of our present disciplines to phenomena that fall outside

their predefined scope; the second, to our reluctance to see a relationship…between the epistemology of knowledge and the liberation of a people" (p.113). This is a relationship Wynter ultimately concludes that "we are not properly able to theorize" (ibid.). The title of Wynter's essay is of the utmost importance in our consideration of her immediate point. Mistaking the map for the territory is a rarely spoken of reification fallacy by which one mistakes the abstraction of an entity/object for the material object itself. In appealing to "theory," Black people have come to experience themselves as désetre/dysbeing ultimately making Blackness, even in its allegedly critical moments imitative of the Absolutely Being— the dispositions, ills, and failures of European man under the veil of the cherished HUMAN and his REASON. Such mimicry is only the triumph of white supremacy, not its refutation—a goal requiring its disentanglement from the Black humanity.

Conclusion:

There are no liberation strategies against anti-Blackness that can occur within discourses or debates presuming the liberatory processes of dialectic and dialogic remedy if the categories Black people are confined to remain enclosed within the assumptions and predilections of European man. The oppositional logic ignited by the deployment of gender constructions on Black bodies making the Black hetero-male the mimetic equivalent of white patriarchy, as well as the assumptions of Enlightenment liberalism codified as recognition of the plight/invisibility of the racial/gendered/marginalized other, concretizes rather than dispels the mythology of Black pathology. To suggest that within Blackness—the zones of non-Being that precede the genocidal rage of white negrophobia—Black inhumanity is imitative, not only desiring, but confining itself to the existing oppressive relations of white people to the world, is to hold that within Black people unable to live out their existentially known humanity under white supremacy there actually resides multiple axes of self-actualized and hierarchialized power over other non-Beings that remains structured, existing, and a mirroring of white actualized Being. This thesis, which selectively assigns moral revelation and escapism to intersectional subjects, ultimately suggests that Black life, Black existence has no content and substance of its own. It is to theorize Blackness as completely mimetic and impotent to create fundamentally different relations to the world and others outside of the colonial meanings and oppositions taken to be essential to race, class, and gender.

The aforementioned problem of "thinking Blackness," theoretically is the product of what Lewis Gordon (2006) has termed disciplinary decadence, or the inability of thinking to escape the ontology of the disciplines and decadent traditions from which they originate. The weight of Gordon's reflection is not in its corrective vision of thought within the university, but its articulation of the consequences suffered in "our thinking" about Blackness through the codifications of anti-Blackness trapped within the works, texts, and histories of Europe. Blackness, when left to be accounted for within thinking of the Black theorist-observer, and I would add teleological impetus assigned to Black "Man" as *homo politicus*, and *homo economicus*, inscribes the racist presumptions of a barbarous Black nature incapable of reflective thought and alternative orders which emerge from their existence that can sustain a civilization. It is to presume that the Black political can only be the imitation, assimilation, and preservation into the realm of Western man. This is why Wynter rejects Western man, gender, white anthropology, precisely because she understands that this is not a matter of focus as if reason is universal, but cultural construction, since reason like man is the contingent product of Europe's aspiration to "BE." Wynter rightly notes,

> it was to be as a function of the West's institutionalization of itself in terms of its then epochally new self-conception or sociogenic code as Absolute Being (whether in its first form as *homo politicus*, or from the nineteenth century onward, in its purely supernaturalized form as biocentric *homo oeconomicus*, with both variants over-represented as if they were the human), thereby, that the majority of the darker-skinned peoples of the earth (all of whom were now to be incorporated, willy nilly into the West's epochally new conception of the human and its correlated formulation

of a general order of existence) would come to be seen, known, and classified, as we also came to see, know, and classify ourselves, not as other human beings but, instead as Native, Negro, Blackfellas, and ultimately, Nigger Others to the True Human Self of the West's Man (p.146).

Thus critique, our application and turning of reason/dialogue/consciousness to Blackness is assimilationist; only achieving "Being" hypothetically, as being recognized like a white human because Black people exhibit the same ontological failures of white humanity. Such discussions therefore insist upon the substitution of Blackness for whiteness so that to "Be" in a world that is situated in "Non-Being," is to act, think, be pathological like the biological western man, but as we know this is an inadequate answer to the sociogenic analysis put forth in Frantz Fanon and Aime Cesaire which demand the creation of a NEW MAN and by effect new knowledge and the end of disciplinarity. Black Studies must rededicate itself to positions of Blackness rooted in the aesthetic inclination, the creative potential of Black existence, freed from the disciplinary mandates of Western man and the invention of the Black masculine which haunts the historiography of Black Studies. High theory, (i.e. the liberal, poststructural/psychoanalytic, intersectional, feminist, reformism of the day) will not do.

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