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Ayiana Stanley-Jones. Tamir Rice. Trayvon Martin. Renisha McBride. Michael Brown, Jr. Rekia Boyd. Tanisha Anderson. Walter Scott. Freddie Gray. Sandra Bland. Korryn Gaines.[1]

"It's after the end of the world … Don't you know that yet?"[2]

In the wake of Michael Brown Jr.'s murder on August 9, 2014 by white police officer Darren Wilson, Ferguson, Missouri police made the fragility of American legal structures all too clear. As people mobilized in protest demanding to know what happened, the tension between civilians and the police force escalated quickly. In (failed) attempts to intimidate people and force them out of the streets, the police began a blitz of rubber bullets and tear gas, injuring many protesters. The insidiousness of the police's actions, in conjunction with the city government, surfaced not only in Brown's murder itself and the excessive use of militarized police force in the aftermath but also in the expulsion of news media from Ferguson as these enactments of state violence against the people unfolded. Even though mainstream news channels have a tendency to be biased and sensationalizing, attempts to prevent news media from entering Ferguson to document and report the conditions serve as clear evidence of repressive tactics. Despite these attempts to cover up injustice, Twitter, aided by mobile technologies, exploded with first-hand observations showing the world the realities of Ferguson. Within these tweets, photos, and videos, #BlackLivesMatter[3] rang loud and clear, "resound[ing] loud as the rolling sea."[4] The #BlackLivesMatter movement, while gaining traction in the summer of 2014, was actually started by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the 2012 murder of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. The founders intended #BlackLivesMatter to be "a call to action and a response to the virulent anti-Black racism that permeates our society," citing the movement as "a unique contribution that goes beyond extrajudicial killings of Black people by police and vigilantes."[5] Michael Brown's death certainly was not the first (or the last) of its kind since Trayvon Martin's murder, but the response to Brown's murder, and the wave of lethal acts of police violence across the country since then, has led to a widespread assertion and reminder that the time to build new worlds has come, making #BlackLivesMatter a viral force on the web and in the streets.

This essay aims to develop preliminary thoughts toward a theory of world making that views humans as affective/affected virtual-physical assemblages and examines the relationships between Black social media practices, understandings of the human within critical Black feminist theory, and the transformative potential of virality. On the one hand, the ubiquity of digital technologies opens up an almost unlimited surveillance platform for control societies. At the same time, within these highly monitored spaces, virality presents a strategy of

subversion to these controls. By definition, the viral spreads widely, is hard to contain, and is mutable—all qualities that could possibly facilitate world making within ever-modulating control societies.[6] Critics of "hashtag activism"[7] argue that digital activities do not lead to material transformation(s), but examining virality within #BlackLivesMatter contradicts strict separation of virtual and physical spaces. Recognizing the limitations presented by the digital divide, which indicates different levels of access to digital technologies along socioeconomic and geopolitical lines, I do not suggest that the solution to the precarities that accompany various subjective embodiments lies solely in the digital. Instead, I wish to explore the generative possibilities of putting technological praxes that claim and display blackness in conversation with radical Black feminism in order to understand virtual-physical assemblages as what Sylvia Wynter describes as "new genres of being human"[8] that might catalyze divestment of the Liberal human subject, work to displace hegemonic technologies of the self, and imagine/construct alternate worlds.

Radical Black feminist thought provides liberatory analytical frameworks for recognizing the complexities of humans, embracing multiplicity, and envisioning new worlds. These concepts show up consistently in the works of Sylvia Wynter as she embarks upon the abolition[9] of the Liberal human subject: Man. One of Wynter's key texts, "Unsettling Coloniality," traces the genealogy of Man— the Eurocentric, Judeo-Christian, bourgeois male —situating Man's emergence as a hegemonic human category within broader historical/cultural moments in Europe such as moves toward secularization, the

development of the physical and biological sciences, and the rise of politically powerful city-states. Man's development also coincided with European expansion and colonization, processes that depended upon what Wynter articulates as "the overrepresentation of Man as the human," which has functioned to establish whiteness as the marker of "that fullness and genericity of being human"[10] and place people into hierarchical categories of humanness. Wynter argues that even though the Eurocentric, Judeo-Christian, bourgeois male has come to occupy generic human status, Man is but one genre of the human, and in our current social order, the mandate to assimilate into the genre of Man as a ticket into the fold of humanity lies at the root of all contemporary problems: "all our present struggles with respect to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, struggles over the environment, global warming, severe climate change, the sharply unequal distribution of the earth resources."[11] Wynter describes the radical thrust[12] of Black Studies before its institutional sanitation (along with the broader Black Power movement from which it emerged) as a counter-hegemonic resistance to Man. She argues that the "remarkable imaginative power"[13] that characterized Black Studies during the 1960s led to a brief political emancipation of marginalized groups. However, this emancipation ultimately failed and remains incomplete because it "had been effected at the level of the map, rather than at the level of the territory."[14] In other words, once the various Black Power movements were "sanitized of their original heretical dynamic"[15] in an effort to gain institutional legitimacy, Black Studies shifted toward assimilating

into Man rather than working toward Man's abolishment. In order to displace the dominance of Man, Wynter calls for "new genres of being human,"[16] citing Black Studies, in its original radical conceptualization, as an apt place to explore and develop these genres and to construct new, alternate worlds built on liberation rather than white supremacy.[17] These "potential exit strategies from the world of Man"[18] within Wynter's call to action center the generative potential of Black thought, which lies at the heart of world making through viral blackness that I wish to begin theorizing here.

Virality names an affective condition in which content spreads widely, changing both the form of the original content and the channels through which it passes.[19] As Patricia Clough and Jasbir Puar note in the *Women's Studies Quarterly* issue devoted to virality, "The 'viral' has come to describe a form of communication and transmission in and across various and varying domains: the biological, the cultural, the financial, the political, the linguistic, the technical, and the computational."[20] Historically, virality has been a source of fear primarily because of comparisons between digital virality and biological viruses. In addition to creating fear, which is one of the most important operating affects of control societies, this particular framing of digital virality as inherently debilitating has served a capitalist agenda of profiting from this fear,[21] but these biological-digital analogies concerning virality do not adequately capture its nuances. Just as we have been conditioned to believe in viral forces as spreading harmful material, so the viral can also transmit generative products, such as political movements.[22] Thinking

about virality as a subversion to control societies, and thus, a mode of freedom allows for an understanding of its transformative potential. Within the carceral state, containment is extremely important for maintaining control, but the viral cannot be contained. While the source of viral content can be located, once it is released, control societies cannot dictate how or where it spreads. Additionally, viral content is mutable; it can change forms as it reaches more people. Therefore, the viral changes spaces, whether virtual or physical.

Given this understanding of virality, as both affective and transformative, viral blackness works to shift and/or erode borders/boundaries that inhibit the free flow of blackness. While many discursive formulations of blackness point to it as a stable or essentialized identity category, I do not invoke that definition here. Instead, I use Alexander Weheliye's readings of Hortense Spillers and Sylvia Wynter, which position blackness as a critique to white supremacy.[23] Based on Weheliye's articulation, blackness

> cannot be defined as primarily empirical or understood as the nonproperty of particular subjects, but should be understood as an integral structuring assemblage of the modern human. Once we have taken this into account, we can practice a politics, which, rather than succumbing to the brutal facticity of blackness, introduces invention into existence, as Frantz Fanon argues.[24]

In other words, because Black people have been denied access to the human as Man, blackness, as a dynamic discursive-material

hybrid, rather than a fixed identity marker, combined with the possibilities of virality allows for "the initiation of new humanities"[25] that could serve to liberate us from the shackles of Man. Drawing from these notions of blackness as a liberatory formation, viral blackness works not as a force of contamination, but as a deterritorializing mode of subversion to white supremacist systems that seek to restrict the movement of Black bodies, silence Black voices, and quell Black thought. Examining #BlackLivesMatter provides one example of how viral blackness works. In this movement, not only do we see waves of blackness within the virtual sphere through hashtags and visual media, but we also see blackness spread in physical/material spaces in the form of protests, marches, "die-ins," and highway blockings.

Viral blackness, as it emerges through #BlackLivesMatter, can be situated within a broader history of Black technological activism. With very limited access to mainstream media forms, Black people have utilized cyberspace to affect change within Black communities. For example, Black women used the internet and computer technologies to publicize and document the Million Woman March in 1997.[26] Additionally, Black artists have used digital technologies "to advance new modes of storytelling and art via new media,"[27] thereby engaging politics through developing digital Black aesthetics. While viral blackness owes its contemporary formulation to these pre-social media forms of digital activism, the significance of Twitter as a community-building space for Black people (i.e., Black Twitter)[28] demonstrates the role of social media in heightening viral blackness' potential,

especially in the age of the hashtag. As social media expert André Brock argues, hashtags have been responsible for "exposing Black Twitter to a mainstream unconcerned with its prior existence"[29] and "mediat[ing] communal identities in near-real time; allowing participants to act individually yet en masse while still being heard."[30] The founding of #BlackLivesMatter as a hashtag speaks to the centrality of the digital/physical border crossing (and merging) in Black community building.

One of the earliest actions within #BlackLivesMatter that exemplifies the movement's flow between the virtual and the physical happened during Labor Day weekend of 2014 when over 500 people from cities across the United States took buses to Ferguson in what has been dubbed the "Black Lives Matter Rides." Organized over the span of two weeks, this action depended heavily on virtual spaces for advertisement and fundraising, leveraging resources such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, and GoFundMe. Even though people all around the world had begun to show solidarity with Ferguson protesters through participating in marches in their local areas and flooding the web with #BlackLivesMatter, these bus rides represented a specific kind of coalition in the movement of physical bodies to the physical space of Ferguson. Upon arrival, #BlackLivesMatter riders dialogued and made action plans with local community organizations and activists, gathered in communal spaces for services and entertainment, and marched through the streets of Ferguson. Additionally, people posted their photos, videos, tweets, and blogs from the weekend's events on various digital/social media platforms. The

Black Lives Matter Rides constitute viral blackness through the spread of information, spread of bodies across the nation, and the spread of people within Ferguson, thereby highlighting blackness as a political framework and representing the interconnectedness of the virtual and material realms. The Black Lives Matter Rides represent only one part of a series of sustained #BlackLivesMatter formations across the country that continue to permeate and transform the virtual and the physical. Local #BlackLivesMatter organizations have formed in at least 23 cities,[31] and several hundreds of #BlackLivesMatter demonstrations (marches, rallies, highway shutdowns, etc.) have taken place on a consistent basis since the summer of 2014.

One of the most significant demonstrations that shows the continued relevance of #BlackLivesMatter is the Baltimore Uprising of 2015, which began in the wake of Freddie Gray's murder by Baltimore police. The Baltimore Uprising marked the biggest bout of widespread unrest the city has seen since the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. When Gray died in police custody on April 19, 2015, Baltimore citizens, including Gray's family, demanded answers. Even though many mainstream media outlets did not begin reporting Gray's story until the demonstrations in Baltimore became characterized as riots, people had been protesting in Baltimore on a daily basis since Gray's death. These smaller protests led up to an organized "shut it down"[32] effort that happened the Saturday after Gray died. Interestingly, the White House Correspondents Dinner took place at the same time that the Baltimore protests began to turn "violent." According to various reports, this shift from

peaceful protesting[33] to violent rioting happened in Camden Yards before a game between the Baltimore Orioles and the Boston Red Sox. One protester tweeted, "'No justice, no game.' Headed to Camden. #FreddieGray #FreddyGray."[34] According to the Facebook status of another protestor, Jenelle Tillman, "We were peaceful. We walked thru [sic] 3 miles of Baltimore's worst neighborhood and nothing jumped off. Black non protesters were using their cars to block traffic. No police were there when we were in the hood, and no violence happened." Based on Tillman's account, and other similar recollections, the peaceful gathering turned violent once the protesters moved closer to the sites where Orioles fans gathered:

> We got downtown and the police were on every corner, the whites were calling us niggers, calling the white protesters nigger lovers, trying to plow us with their cars, and in turn they got drug out of their cars and their cars were damaged. My son and I were pushed by white men … Yes it did turn chaotic but only after outsiders instigated.[35]

These types of accounts of the events that took place on Saturday, April 25, 2015 speak to some of the hidden factors behind the escalation associated with the Uprising. Throughout the week following Gray's murder, people continued demanding answers, protesting the 10:00 p.m. curfew implemented by the National Guard, and spreading awareness via social media about the uneven enforcement of the curfew. Some Twitter protesters noted in predominantly white

neighborhoods, law enforcement officers gave people several warnings to disperse after the curfew while people in Black neighborhoods received no warnings. In some cases, officers did not enforce the curfew at all in predominantly white neighborhoods. Within a week of the Baltimore Uprising's eruption, Baltimore City State's attorney Marilyn Mosby announced that Freddie Gray's death had been ruled a homicide, and the city would bring forth charges against the six officers responsible for his murder. Even though these charges did not lead to conviction, both the Baltimore Uprising and the Black Lives Matter Rides—as examples of #BlackLivesMatter activities—speak to the political and world-making capacities of viral blackness.

Identifying and articulating "what spreads" during viral encounters, helps illuminate what virality does.[36] Because the essence of the viral cannot be captured in discourses that attempt to distinguish the biological and the social, an analysis of what spreads with any viral force requires recognizing the falseness of such boundaries. To understand viral blackness as something other than a mob moving through town breaking stuff, it is important to point out that viral blackness moves several materialities and ideas. First, viral blackness spreads actual Black bodies through physical spaces. When considering mutability as a characteristic of virality, the fact that multiple #BlackLivesMatter gatherings happen at different places at any given time shows one way that viral blackness works. The materiality of viral blackness not only takes the form of people gathering and demonstrating in physical spaces, but it also shows up in the virtual. Hashtags—

#BlackLivesMatter, #BaltimoreUprising, and #BlackSpring—as well as videos and photos of the demonstrations are material artifacts of viral blackness.[37] Given the range of content available in cyberspace, not all viral materials that circulate through virtual channels are useful to the political functions of viral blackness. For instance, images of Black suffering and death work against viral blackness' world-making capacities. However, despite their counterproductive nature, these images have sparked conversations and education within #BlackLivesMatter, leading to many Black social media users' refusal to reproduce the spectacle of Black death through their circulation.

In addition to materiality, viral blackness spreads ideas, one of the key ideas being confronting and dismantling white supremacy. The sustained momentum of protests comes from a desire to expose the state-sanctioned violence responsible for so many Black deaths across the country. Within #BlackLivesMatter demonstrations, this process of exposure often begins with the police officers in charge of enforcing white supremacy, which is embedded in the American legal system. But the critiques do not end there. Socioeconomic decay brought on by systemic racism functions as one of the most effective incubators for viral blackness. In this way, any city or town in this country is a breeding ground for viral blackness because "racism is a pervasive problem that affects all levels of everyday experience, but sometimes in oblique ways that aren't overtly visible."[38] Therefore, in addition to racially motivated police brutality, viral blackness, particularly in cities like Ferguson and Baltimore, helps to reveal structures of poverty. In the wave

of "looting" that happened during the Baltimore Uprising, one critique of poverty manifested as people stealing items they normally might not be able to afford. Trying to assess the perceived "usefulness" of those items misses the point. As senior editor of *Ebony* magazine, Jamilah Lemieux writes:

> while I certainly pity any small business owner or retail employee who will suffer as a result, it's hard for me to feel a sense of moral outrage over some stolen sneakers and hair weave bringing a fleeting feeling of power or pleasure to people who have had their humanity assaulted to the point that they thought to grab sneakers and weave at a time like this.[39]

As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri point out, "Although the poor are defined by material lack, people are never reduced to bare life but are always endowed with powers of invention and production."[40] For people who have so little, stealing mundane material goods operates as a source of power provided through material possession denied them on a daily basis. These powers among the poor, the disenfranchised, the dispossessed, serve to incubate viral blackness.

The issues of racism, poverty, violence, crime, and failing schools impacting many urban areas are all tied to white supremacist hegemony that "disciplines people into categories of human, not-quite-human, and non-human,"[41] with Man (white, Judeo-Christian, bourgeois male) representing the generic human. This ranking system determines who has access to resources, and in this capitalist society, access to resources is directly tied to the perceived value of one's

life. Facing these oppressive structures, Black youth play an important role in mobilizing viral blackness against white supremacy, socioeconomic decay, and other injustices. We have long held the notion that youth lead revolutions. The connection between viral blackness and youth disillusionment is strong because viral blackness requires a population of people who are no longer invested in the status quo. These people tend to be youth who have lived their entire lives within a system that has not convinced them to buy into it. During one of the events held as part of the Black Lives Matter Rides, a young girl spoke about why she came from Los Angeles to Ferguson: "I am here because I am worried about my life. I'm only 10 years old. I should not have to be worried."[42] The reflections of this young girl, along with seemingly reckless actions of some of the youth in Baltimore show that Black children, and children of marginalized populations in general, do not necessarily have optimistic notions of the future. The conditions that create these questions among the youngest people in this country, along with the ways in which young people keep changing the landscape of activism through their engagements with social media, make youth spaces potential sites for viral blackness. Viral blackness depends on the willingness of youth to continue expressing their frustrations in myriad forms and making people listen.

In thinking about world making in the twenty-first century, it is hard not to consider the role of digital technologies in human interactions. Within the United States and other "developed" nations, the prevalence of digital technologies, especially mobile ones,

has altered our ways of being. As affect theory scholar Anna Gibbs points out, "the boundaries between individual and social are in constant negotiation such that the individual can never be a given. The individual, then, is not a microcosm of the social, but … 'the whole cosmos conquered and absorbed by a single being.'"[43] My formulation of viral blackness recognizes this affective nature of the body and the how digital technologies merge with these affective surfaces. Within #BlackLivesMatter, the ways in which people "[took] the hashtag off of social media and into the streets,"[44] shows how human bodies work as virtual-physical assemblages. The mobile devices used as a means to record experiences have become an integral part of what it means to be human for people who use these tools in quotidian manners. Therefore, cell phones, cameras, and other mobile technologies cannot necessarily be separated from what we think of as a human body. Many of the photos and videos that appear online during #BlackLivesMatter protests comprise actual footage of events experienced by physical bodies, including the person (or people) posting these items on social media. The very act of sharing this content, as well as the ways in which this act of sharing continues to catalyze demonstrations in physical spaces, merges the virtual and the material.

Thinking of humans as virtual-physical assemblages provides one example of a new genre of being human and challenges Man's hegemonic technologies of the self in the following ways. First, while Man relies on a notion of human bodies as closed and decipherable through strictly "objective" biological means, the virtual-physical assemblage

disrupts the notion of humans as purely organic/genetic content. #BlackLivesMatter illustrates a dissolution of borders that have served to maintain oppressive systems through the construction of hierarchical categories of difference and how our everyday uses of digital technologies renders these borders even more fictitious. Thinking of the body as "multiplicity of movement"[45] challenges the strict separation of physical bodies and the digital realm as our various interfaces with technology constitute processes that are included in our bodily assemblages, thus highlighting Sylvia Wynter's sociogenic principle,[46] which speaks to the affective components of "what it is like to be human."[47] Additionally, the virtual-physical assemblage, as constructed through viral blackness, subverts social hierarchies by placing the needs and desires of Black bodies at the center. For example, within #BlackLivesMatter the virtual-physical assemblage calls attention to white supremacy embedded in juridical structures. Even though many of the protests that have spilled into the streets do take on a so-called peaceful nature allowed within legal frameworks, many other #BlackLivesMatter actions, such as blocking highways and "rioting," push legal boundaries. These types of actions operate on both the recognition that current legal apparatuses are not designed to protect Black lives and the desire to eradicate these oppressive systems altogether. Finally, the virtual-physical assemblage uses images, hashtags, and embodiment to de-center colonized languages and the relationships of those languages to knowledge production. Turning to #BlackLivesMatter again, the demonstrations within this movement (especially in virtual form) do not

always resemble the activism of the 1960s, which we have been conditioned to accept as the only "valid" forms or languages of protest. During the Baltimore Uprising, media sources exploded with opinions about "depraved" Baltimore youth, urging young people to protest in positive, constructive ways, warning them not to tear down their "own communities," and berating parents and other adults who have allowed these children to go astray. This sentiment of romanticizing '60s-style protests was so strong that one mother, Toya Graham, became famous for slapping her son in the street and pushing him away from the protests. Droves of people on social media congratulated her for stepping up and "taking control" of her son.[48] Even though rioting has clear limitations and drawbacks, the critiques of these youth stem from deep investment in a hegemonic protest ideal. However, the virtual-physical assemblage, particularly created through viral blackness, facilitates the creation of alternate languages and modes of expression. These alternate ways of being work against dependence upon certain kinds of institutions (i.e. mainstream news media, government, schools, and churches) for the "truth" because these formations present multiple ways of knowing, experiencing, and embodying multiple truths. Uncovering and privileging these subjugated epistemologies as components of being human, the virtual-physical assemblage displaces Man as the gatekeeper of knowledge, thereby inspiring people to desire something other than the status quo.

The compulsion to change the hashtag from #BlackLivesMatter to #AllLivesMatter, born out of discomfort with blackness, shows just how powerful viral blackness can be in its refusal to accommodate white supremacy. #AllLivesMatter, and its various watered-down counterparts, have not sustained the same kind of momentum as #BlackLivesMatter because the viral blackness that emerges from this movement transforms those it encounters through its insistence upon not only exposing white supremacy but also forcing people to grapple with their complicity in white supremacy. Furthermore, hashtags like #AllLivesMatter or #BlueLivesMatter do not work because they are co-opting a hashtag to assert identity, and viral blackness does not work through stable, territorializing identity categories. To be clear, #BlackLivesMatter has not been completely free from identity politics: the movement continues to receive (justified) criticism regarding its elision of certain subjectivities such as women, queer and trans folk, or disabled people.[49] But these exclusions point to the dangers of stabilizing blackness into a fixed identity. We have to release blackness from essentialism so that it may be deployed toward liberation within a multiplicity of subjectivities.

Notes

1. These are names of only a few of the Black people who have been killed by police and vigilante violence. The exact number of civilians killed by police is unclear because of inconsistencies in reporting standards across departments. According to the database on police killings complied by the *Washington Post*, 990 people were murdered by police in 2015, and 491 people were killed by police in the first six months of 2016. See Kimberly Kindy, et al. "Fatal Shootings by Police are Up in the First Six Months, Post

Analysis Finds," *Washington Post*, July 7, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/fatal-shootings-by-police-surpass-2015s-rate/2016/07/07/81b708f2-3d42-11e6-84e8-1580c7db5275_story.html.

2. Alexander G. Weheliye (quoting June Tyson), *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

3. I use the hashtag here to indicate the connection between the virtual and physical manifestations of the "Black Lives Matter" movement.

4. James Weldon Johnson, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," also known as the Negro National Anthem.

5. Black Lives Matter. http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/.

6. Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October* 59 (1992): 3–7.

7. See Malcolm Gladwell, "Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted," *New Yorker*, October 4, 2010 and Evgeny Morozov, "Foreign Policy: Brave New World of Slacktivism," *NPR*, May 19, 2009, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=104302141.

8. Sylvia Wynter, "On How We Mistook the Map for the Territory, and Reimprisoned Ourselves in Our Unbearable Wrongness of Being, of Desetre: Black Studies Toward the Human Project," in *A Companion to African-American Studies*, ed. Jane Gordon and Lewis Gordon (London: Blackwell, 2007), 114.

9. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 4.

10. Sylvia Wynter, "Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, Identity, the Puzzle of Conscious Experience, and What It Is Like to Be 'Black,'" in *National Identities and Sociopolitical Changes in Latin America*, ed. Mercedes F. Duran-Cogan and Antonio Gomez-Moriana (New York: Routledge, 2001), 40.

11. Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3 (2003): 260–261.

12. Wynter, "On How We Mistook the Map for the Territory," 108.

13. Ibid, 110.

14. Ibid, 116.

15. Ibid, 112.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid, 114.

18. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 28.

19. Ashleigh Wade, "There's a Hack for That: Subverting Repression through Hacktivist Modes of Freedom," *Powerlines* 3 (2015), http://amst.umd.edu/powerlines/there%E2%80%99s-a-hack-for-that-subverting-repression-through-hacktivist-modes-of-freedom/.

20. Patricia Clough and Jasbir Puar, "Introduction," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 40 (2012): 13.

21. Jussi Parikka, "Digital Monsters, Binary Aliens—Computer Viruses, Capitalism, and the Flow of Information," *The Fiberculture Journal* 4 (2005), http://four.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-019-digital-monsters-binary-aliens-%E2%80%93-computer-viruses-capitalism-and-the-flow-of-information/.

22. See Tony D. Sampson, *Virality: Contagion Theory in an Age of Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Tim Jordan and Paul Taylor, *Hacktivism and Cyberwars: Rebels with a Cause?* (London: Routledge, 2004); Clough and Puar, "Introduction."

23. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 3.

24. Ibid, 31–32.

25. Ibid, 32.

26. Anna Everett, *Digital Diaspora: A Race for Cyberspace* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2009).

27. Janell Hobson, *Body as Evidence: Mediating Race, Globalizing Gender* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2012), 122.

28. See André Brock, "From the Blackhand Side: Twitter as Cultural Conversation," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 56 (2012):

529–549; Sarah Florini, "Tweets, Tweeps, and Signifyin,'" Television and New Media 15 (2014): 223–237; Meredith D. Clark, "To Tweet Our Own Cause: A Mixed Methods Study of the Online Phenomenon 'Black Twitter'" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 2014).

29. Brock, "From the Blackhand Side," 534.

30. Ibid, 539.

31. This number is based on an interview with Patrisse Cullors, one of the co-founders of #BlackLivesMatter. See Michael Segalov, "We Spoke to the Activist behind #BlackLivesMatter About Racism in Britain and America," Vice Media, February 2, 2015, http://www.vice.com/read/patrisse-cullors-interview-michael-segalov-188.

32. "Shut it down" or #ShutItDown can be seen as an iteration of #BlackLivesMatter. The idea behind "shut it down" demonstrations is to make everyday activities such as driving on the highway or attending a leisure event impossible because of people blocking certain areas. The "shut it down" demonstrations are intentionally inconvenient in order to highlight the drastic difference between bystanders being inconvenienced and people of color being killed.

33. I use the term "peaceful protest" because that is the language/rhetoric that informs how we view certain demonstrators in comparison to others. Protests are not necessarily (nor do they have to be) peaceful. This insistence upon "peaceful protests" functions as another way to control people's movement.

34. https://twitter.com/nickfountain/status/592083785904160769.

35. https://www.facebook.com/jenelle.bcusistillhaveoptions.

36. Sampson, Virality.

37. It is important to point out that not all videos and photos shared of the protests are examples of viral blackness. Some are manifestations of the very power structures that viral blackness aims to dismantle. However, the fact that people feel compelled to disparage Black people participating in the protests shows that viral blackness is indeed at work.

38. Ann Cvetkovich, Depression: A Public Feeling (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 120.

39. Jamilah Lemieux, "Baltimore Been Burning," Ebony, April 28, 2015, http://www.ebony.com/news-views/baltimore-been-burning-503#.VU_R8ZNahL_.

40. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Commonwealth (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009), 180.

41. Weheliye, Habeas Viscus, 4.

42. Brittney Cooper, "'I Am Not Afraid to Die: Why America Will Never be the Same Post-Ferguson," Salon, Sept. 3, 2014, http://www.salon.com/2014/09/03/%E2%80%9Ci_am_not_afraid_to_die%E2%80%9D_why_america_will_never_be_the_same_post_ferguson/.

43. Anna Gibbs, "Panic! Affect Contagion, Mimesis and Suggestion in the Social Field," Cultural Studies Review 14 (2008): 138.

44. Alicia Garza, "A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movment," The Feminist Wire, October 7, 2014, http://thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/.

45. Lisa Blackman, Immaterial Bodies: Affect, Embodiment, and Mediation (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 2.

46. Wynter, "Sociogenic Principle," 31.

47. Ibid., 32.

48. Abby Ohlheiser, "Mom Filmed Berating Her Son at Baltimore Riots didn't 'Want Him to Be a Freddie Gray,'" Washington Post, April 28, 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/local/wp/2015/04/28/woman-called-mom-of-the-year-after-beating-a-young- man-out-of-baltimore-riots/.

49. The founders of #BlackLivesMatter are queer, Black women who have all been vocal about the ways in which a focus only on cis, heterosexual, able-bodied men does not accurately capture the visions or goals of the movement.

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