

BSAM Manifesto (<https://blackspeculativeartsmovement.wordpress.com/bsam-manifesto/>; letzter Aufruf: 5.2.2018)

Afrofuturism 2.0 and the Black Speculative Arts Movement:

NOTES ON A MANIFESTO

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Over the last decade, an embryonic movement examining the overlap between race, art, science and design has been stirring and growing beneath the surface. Afrofuturism is the current name for a body of systematic Black speculative and creative thought originating in the 1990s as a response to postmodernity that has blossomed into a global movement the last five years. Although contemporary Black Speculative thought has historical *roots* at the nexus of 19th century scientific racism, technology and the struggle for African self-determination and creative expression, it has now matured into an emerging global phenomenon. Afrofuturism 2.0 is the beginning of both a move away and an answer to the Eurocentric perspective of the 20th century's early formulation of Afrofuturism. A perspective that wondered if the history of African peoples, especially in North America, had been deliberately eliminated. Or to put it more plainly, future-oriented Black scholars, artists and activists are not only reclaiming their right to tell their own stories, but also to critique the European/American digerati class of their narratives about cultural others, past, present and future and, challenging their presumed authority to be the sole interpreters of Black

experiences and Black futures. Kodwo Eshun asserts: “*Afrofuturism may be characterized as a program for recovering the histories of counter-futures created in a century hostile to Afrodiasporic projection and as a space within which the critical work of manufacturing tools capable of intervention within the current political dispensation may be undertaken*” (2003, p. 288). One example of several approaches within this current wave of Afrofuturism, is the strategic formulation reflecting *Afrofuturism is a critical project with the mission of laying the groundwork for a humanity that is not bound up with the ideals of white Enlightenment universalism*, Eurocentric Critical Theory, science or technology (Anderson, 2015, Ani, 1994, Jones, 2015, Rabaka, 2010, Rollefson, 2008, p. 91). More recently, according to Anderson and Jones (2016):

“Contemporary expressions of Afrofuturism emerging in the areas of metaphysics, speculative philosophy, religion, visual studies, performance, art and philosophy of science or technology that are described as “2.0,” in response to the emergence of social media and other technological advances since the middle of the last decade” (p. ix).

Additionally, the authors define Afrofuturism 2.0 as:

The early twenty-first century technogenesis of Black identity reflecting counter histories, hacking and or appropriating the influence of network software, database logic, cultural analytics, deep remixability, neurosciences, enhancement and augmentation, gender fluidity, posthuman possibility, the speculative sphere with transdisciplinary applications and has grown into an important Diasporic techno-cultural Pan African movement” (p. x).

Therefore, propelled by new thoughts and creative energy, members of this Black speculative movement have been in creative dialogue with the boundary of space-time, the exterior of the macro-cosmos and the interior of the micro-cosmos. Yet, there is historical precedent for this movement around the concepts of the color line, the color curtain, and the digital divide. In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois published his great work, – *The Souls of Black Folk*, drawing on the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, autobiography and history, and made his argument in the era of Jim Crow and imperialism noting: “*The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line, the relation of the darker races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea*” (2007, p. 18). Furthermore, Du Bois suggested, due to their unique experience, African Americans had developed a metaphysical perspective or *Veil* that bestowed a certain insight upon them on life in the West. The *Veil* was a literary and philosophical translation of the inner life of people of African descent in the Americas (Du Bois, 2007). Two years later, Albert Einstein (1905) proposed his Special Theory of Relativity that conceptualized the relationship between space and time, postulating that the laws of physics are invariant in all inertial systems and the speed of light in a vacuum is the same for all observers. Between 1908 and 1910, Du Bois drew upon ideas from natural science, humanities and social science to write a speculative short fiction story, – “*The Princess Steel*.” Du Bois developed this story with a character that invented a Mega-scope that could see across space and time that would amplify his ideas to study the boundary of space-time creatively, “*into a means for perceiving material history*” (Brown & Rusert, 2015, p. 820). The creative ideas of Du Bois and others during this period would be decisive in aesthetic and socio-political formulations of the non-white world of the twentieth century. Later in the twentieth century, Achmed Sukarno, the president of Indonesia and other leaders organized the Bandung conference, a meeting for the *Dark World* that called for the de-occidentalization of the earth. Kwame Nkrumah, the foremost African leader to promote Pan-Africanism in the post-World War II era was an ardent supporter of this 1955 conference. The author, Richard Wright, a conference attendee, reported on the ideas

promoted and discussed them at length in his work, – *The Color Curtain* (1956). This event would influence the imagination of activists like Claudia Jones, Malcolm X, Steve Biko, Thomas Sankara and others, in pursuit of the liberation of the Dark World.

Over the course of a generation, many of these radical initiatives would be repressed or betrayed. However, the seeds for a Black speculative movement challenging white racist normativity and Black parochialism, would be sown by creative intellectuals, mystics and artists like Sun Ra, Fela Kuti, George Clinton, Max Beauvoir, Octavia E. Butler, John Coltrane, Alice Coltrane, Samuel R. Delaney, Jimi Hendrix, Jean Michel Basquiat and many others. At the end of the twentieth century, scholars such as Molefi Kete Asante, Audre Lorde, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Greg Tate, bell hooks, Sylvia Wynter, Lewis Gordon, Cornel West and other academics and activists catalogued the increasing deterioration and anomie of Black cultural production and dislocation in relation to the transition to a neoliberal, multi-national, political-economic matrix. Furthermore, Anna Everett, Alondra Nelson, Paul D. Miller, Alex Weheliye, Kali Tal and others, via an online forum during the early conceptual development of Afrofuturism, analyzed an emerging global digital divide that reflected technical, economic and social inequality. This phenomenon was primarily responsible for the interruption of Africa, its Diaspora, and other countries of the global south, from attaining optimal growth or enhancement in political, economic, social or cultural capital. On the other side of the Atlantic, work by Kodwo Eshun, as a member the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU), and John Akomfrah, co-founder of the Black Audio Film collective were crucial to the global theoretical genesis of Black cyber-culture. However, during this time and into the early 21st century, several disparate strands of a new creative Africanist matrix emerged, influenced by *speculative design and world building*, as well as a renewed *radicalized socio-political stance*, and the *Social Physics of Blackness* (the interface of African peoples, myth-forms, technology, behavioral science, ethics and social world). Indispensable to this manifesto is the groundbreaking work done on the *Black Speculative* phenomenon by Sheree Renee Thomas. In the late 90s, in a hostile environment toward *Black Speculative* work, Thomas gathered obscure documents with the support of interviews from Octavia Butler, Amiri Baraka, Charles Saunders, Samuel Delaney and his then wife Marilyn Hacker (Thomas, 2016). Furthermore, these interviews and information gave Thomas the insight to revisit the term speculative fiction and create a project that led to the genesis of her anthology *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora* in 2000 and *Dark Matter: Reading the Bones* in 2004 (Thomas).

This manifesto assembles and recognizes the ideas developed between 2005 and 2015, as the inspiration for the Black Speculative Arts Movement (BSAM) and the event *Unveiling Visions: The Alchemy of The Black Imagination* that established its existence. Black Speculative Art is a creative, aesthetic practice that integrates African or Africana diasporic worldviews with science or technology and seeks to interpret, engage, design or alter reality for the re-imagination of the past, the contested present, and as a catalyst for the future. Moreover, this manifesto explores the question, “What is the responsibility of the Black artist in the 21st century?” Within the Afrofuturist 2.0 frame of inquiry, Tiffany Barber asserts:

“What is compelling about Afrofuturism is that it is historical in its gesture back to previous debates about social responsibility, radical politics, and black artistic production that surged during the Black Arts Movement or BAM of the 60s and 70s. But it rearticulates these debates and expands our understandings of blackness’s multi-dimensionality, the good and the bad, the respectable and the undesirable.”

Afrofuturism 2.0 and the Black Speculative Arts Movement are indebted to previous movements like BAM, Negritude, The Harlem Renaissance, and other continental and diasporic African speculative movements. Moreover, it is a continuation of the historical behavior within the *Veil* to engage the philosophies of thinkers such as Dubois, Wright, Everett and others, in piercing the Color Line, the Color Curtain, and understanding the Digital Divide in the face of similarly relevant 21st century challenges. For example, contemporary artists like Kapwani Kiwanga are revisiting the ideas of Kwame Nkrumah to envision an Afro-Galactic future. Moreover, the goals of the Black Speculative Art Movement manifesto are structured as a pursuit or open sourced path of inquiry to transform the anomie or collapse in ethics and increasing sense of dystopia in the Diaspora and African communities that were displaced by exigencies of the Modern World System and the collapse of space-time.

Several events between 2005 and 2015 shaped the development of BSAM, including the explosion in social media platforms illustrated by Facebook, Youtube, and Twitter (Van Dijck, 2013), and three seminal publications *The Big Short* (Jabko & Massoc, 2012, Lewis, 2015) documenting the global market collapse of Anglo capitalism, Bill Bishop's (2009) *The Big Sort* detailing re-segregation of people and Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* (2011). Tributary events were the election of the United States' first African American president, Barack Obama, racist reactions and subsequent collapse of the liberal post-racial project, the increased use of crowdfunding and other new technologies to design creative projects, escalating environmental stress, and the New Scramble for Africa (Kimeyi & Zenia, 2011). Furthermore, the resurgence of Pan Africanism and outreach to the African Diaspora (now incorporated as the 6th zone) by the African Union; the appearance of state sanctioned deaths of Black people through police brutality, such as the Marikana massacre, and; the current global black social protest response to localized forms of injustice intensified the current social context. BSAM is not a unified school of thought. BSAM is a loose umbrella term which represents different positions or basis of inquiry: Afrofuturism 2.0 (and its several Africanist manifestations, i.e. Black Quantum Futurism, African Futurism, and Afrofuturismo), Astro Blackness, Afro-Surrealism, Afro-Pessimism, Ethno Gothic, Black Digital Humanities, Black (Afro-future female or African Centered) Science Fiction, The Black Fantastic, Magical Realism, and The Esoteric. Although these positions may be incompatible in some instances, they overlap around the term *speculative* and *design*, and interact around the nexus of technology and ethics. Individuals or organizations whose work represents pillars of BSAM would include and are not limited to: Martin Delaney, Paschal B. Randolph, Toni Morrison, Sun Ra, Amiri Baraka, Tananarive Due, Ben Okri, Nnedi Okorafor, W. E. B. Dubois, The Afrofuturist Affair, Samuel Delany, Minister Faust, Jean-Pierre Bekolo, Jarita Holbrook, Milton Davis, Ishmael Reed, Wanuri Kahiu, Sheree Renee Thomas, Andrea Hairston, Janelle Monae, Sanford Biggers, John Jennings, Octavia E. Butler, *Octavia's Brood*, Nalo Hopkinson, Cyrus Kabiru, D. Scott Miller, Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, Steven Barnes, N.K. Jemison, D. Denenge Akpem, Ytasha Womack, Kapwani Kiwanga, John Akomfrah, and Kodwo Eshun.

In the occidental realm, the epistemic boundaries of speculative design is limited largely to objects, how they mediate the human experience and are primarily interpreted through ideas originating with the Frankfurt school of critical theory (a body of thought usually dismissive, in the case of Theodor Adorno, silent or Eurocentric in regards to Black cultural knowledge production and performance). Furthermore, this occidental approach limits the framework of the speculative to Western philosophy and science. For example, Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby (2013) argue that, in relation to speculative design, only the present, probable, preferable, plausible and possible should be zones of concern, noting:

Beyond this lies the zone of fantasy, an area we have little interest in. Fantasy exists in its own world, with few if any links to the world we live in... This is the world of fairy tales, goblins, superheroes, and space opera (p. 4).

However, this approach eschews or avoids alternative speculative cultural worldviews and attempts to establish a system where Europe assumes the teacher position and all others as the recipients and consequently users of this limited perspective. For example, there is historical evidence that demonstrates, via the route of alchemy, that magic is a gateway into the study of science. In contrast to Dunn and Raby, Lewis Mumford (1934) previously noted:

Between fantasy and exact knowledge, between drama and technology, there is an intermediate station: that of magic. It was in magic that the general conquest of the external environment was decisively instituted. For the magicians not only believed in marvels but audaciously sought to work them: by their straining after the exceptional, the natural philosophers who followed them were first given a clue to the regular (p. 36-37).

Another Western outlier of this position is the work of philosopher Paul Feyerabend. An Africanist example of this phenomenon is the work of Max Beauvoir, a trained biochemist and Voodoo priest who synthesized these approaches in medical treatments, as a healer and activist. Digital scientist Nettrice Gaskins, building on and moving beyond previous work done by Ron Eglash with African fractals, along with other contemporary scholars, demonstrate the possibilities of re-conceptualizing African Cosmograms as cultural tools to interact with digital technology, augmented space and augmented reality. Moreover, there are implications for culturally situated learning, STEAM, and holistic health. Nnedi Okorafor's novel, *Akata Witch* (2011), reveals the overlap or merger between magic and technology as a case for these implications. Therefore, in contrast to the occidental speculative design approach, BSAM freely embraces the Africanist approach to speculative design and incorporates earthly and unearthly intuitive aspects of Esoterica, Animism and Magical Realism. This integration generates overlapping zones with other knowledge formations when formulating or conceptualizing theory and practice in relation to material reality. The brevity of this manifesto does not permit deeper exploration of the global multifaceted dimensions of Black art, however, we would be remiss if we did not discuss an important argument that Black artists in the West have wrestled with for several generations – their relationship and contributions to radical politics.

The role of Black artists in relation to politics is a century long debate. Prominent in these debates is W. E. B. DuBois's *Criteria for Negro Art*, published in 1926, which specifically focused on the politics of beauty, propaganda, and social recognition:

What do we want? What is the thing we are after? As it was phrased last night it had a certain truth. We want to be Americans, full-fledged Americans, with all the rights of other American citizens. But is that all? Do we want simply to be Americans? Once in a while through all of us there flashes some clairvoyance, some clear idea, of what America really is. We who are dark can see America in a way that white Americans cannot. And seeing our country thus, are we satisfied with its present goals and ideals? (p. 290).

The socio-political world Du Bois articulated was also argued by Hubert Harrison and similarly by Langston Hughes in his work *The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain* (1926). Oswald Spengler also characterized this socio-political environment several years later in his book *The Hour of Decision: Germany and World Historical*

Evolution (1963). Spengler, noting the internal crisis in White Western civilization, in relation to the rest of the world, commented:

It crosses the horizontal struggle between states and nations by a vertical between ruling classes of the white nations...and in the background the far more dangerous second part of this revolution has already set in...the whites in general are under attack by the collective mass of the "colored" population of the earth, which is slowly becoming conscious of its community (p. 81).

Other writers, including Spengler and Lathrop Stoddard were responding to recent movements of people of color, such as Pan African leaders Marcus Garvey and Amy Jacques Garvey of the U.N.I.A., Sun Yat Sen of China, Gandhi of India, The Frente Negra Brasileira of Brazil, The African National Congress of South Africa, Sultan Pasha al-Atrash of Syria and Zapata of Mexico. These names and organizations do not represent an exhaustive list of *liberationists*. Liberal Humanist Pearl Buck, author of *The Good Earth* (1931), among others, warned Westerners of the rising anger of non-Westerners against racism, imperialism and colonialism. A decade later, at the 1942 Yenan forum, revolutionary leader Mao Tse Tung of China, supported the political significance of literature, art, social change and the influence of the gun and the pen.

The era was characterized by complete transition from the Pre-WWI era into a new international order exemplified by "*the collapse of the League of Nations in favor of autarchic empires, protectionism, nation-state economies, and their associated empires, rise of fascism in Europe, Soviet 5 year plans and the American New Deal*" (Arrighi, 1994, p. 293). However, in the African diaspora, and on the African continent, the ideological struggle centered largely on the tenets of Marxism and Nationalism in pursuit of freedom, liberty and national liberation. During this time, elements of the Black Speculative Arts perspective remained vibrant, sometimes underground and contested, with approaches from the dark arts represented by Rollo Ahmed, advisor of voodoo and spiritual subjects to British occult novelist, military intelligence officer Dennis Wheatley, the esoteric practices and hoodoo influenced writings of Zora Neale Hurston, and the magic of Garveyite supporter Black Herman. The art of Aaron Douglas, and writer George Schuyler in his literary works *Black Empire* (1933-1940) and *Black No More* (1931) and various Black literati were exposed to the philosophies and mysticism of George Gurdjieff and Peter D. Ouspensky. The 1939 work of D. O. Fagunwa in his novel *Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter's saga*, impacted future generations of Nigerian writers. The engagement between Africanist Hoodoo practitioners and Asiatic esoteric philosophies was not unusual, as a significant number of conjure men and women would engage the work of alchemists like Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, or John Dee, in their work. Hurston's work during this period would be persuasive in its account of Black folklore, magic and the connection to Africa. Despite her victimization by the chauvinism around race, sex and knowledge of the times, intellectuals like the novelist Alice Walker, ultimately rediscovered Hurston's remarkable and meaningful works. Moreover, scientists vindicated Hurston's work as Jarita Holbrook and others authenticated the relationship between culture, astronomy, and esoteric practices with research on indigenous cultures like the Dogon people of Mali, West Africa and their interpretation of the Axis Mundi (cosmic axis). More significantly, it was during this important juncture, during the modern advent of Black speculative production, that the flawed education African Americans received in relation to the broader society came under scrutiny. The scholar, Carter G. Woodson (2006) noted:

If you can control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do. If you make a man feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself. If you make a man think that he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door. He will go without being told; and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one (p. 71).

Woodson was referring to the newly urbanized African American population the philosopher Alain Locke referred to as *The New Negro*. This reference was descriptive in the African Americans' interaction or engagement with modern foundations, think tanks, international or domestic finance, and emerging mass media propaganda. For example, Edward Bernays (1928) further articulated the ideas of his uncle Sigmund Freud in explaining the impact of crowd psychology and engineering consent on African Americans and the broader American society relative to corporate interests and government. For example, Woodson was aware *The New Negro* was not receiving an education orienting them to prioritize Black interests in development or politics. He observed, "*The oppressor has always indoctrinated the weak with his interpretation of the crimes of the strong*" (2006, p. 131). Furthermore, Woodson understood that the *New Negro* was harmed by *Jim Crow* theology and *Share Cropper* philosophy, which were products of White Eurocentric seminaries and higher educational institutions designed to coerce and maintain Black dependence on White hegemony. An illustration of this phenomenon was the reported quote by Woodson that, "*Harvard has ruined more Negroes than bad whiskey.*" The ramifications of Woodson's observations demonstrated in ideological battles over politics and the cultural sphere between intellectuals and artists over real and imagined communities of interest. In addition, this mis-education and alienation was also prevalent in the colonial sphere throughout the Black world in Africa and its diaspora, as articulated by Aime Cesaire, Suzanne Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, Amy Jacques Garvey, George Padmore, Claudia Jones and other intellectuals.

In fact, leading up to and after WWII, these politically imagined communities or ideological camps of Marxism, liberalism, and nationalism would influence the politics surrounding art for the remainder of the 20th century. The Marxist's visualized communities of interest asserted that human inequality was a derivative problem caused by material conditions; liberal communities argued inequality was a philosophical problem, and nationalist thinkers believed in particular cultural characteristics, imagined communities with the goal of political sovereignty. Following WWII, these philosophical positions and art were influenced by the new world order ushered in after the nuclear violence of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the Bretton Woods international financial system, and the new United Nations charter (Arrighi, 1994). A cinematic illustration of the racial and sexual anxieties of the era (that resembled the storyline of W. E. B. Dubois's *The Comet*) was the film *The World, The Flesh and The Devil* starring civil rights activist Harry Belafonte portraying a post-apocalyptic America in the wake of a nuclear holocaust (Larrieux, 2010).

Elsewhere, Afrodiasporan artists, such as Wilfredo Lam, Namba Roy, and the Afro-Brazilian Yoruba priest-artist, Deoscóredes Maximiliano dos Santos, characterized the growing Africanist agency in Diaspora art. Four African American artists important to this argument were Paul Robeson, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and Lorraine Hansberry. Robeson, Wright, Ellison and Hansberry, with varying levels of interest, were at the center of debates focused on the merits of nationalism, communism and leftist impulses. Ellison asserted that, as far as ideological commitment, African Americans were only interested,

“to the extent that they are helped to see the bright star of their own hopes through the fog of their daily experiences... it will only be solved by a... leadership that is aware of the psychological attitudes and incipient forms of action which the black masses reveal in their emotion-charged myths, symbols, and wartime folklore”(1943, p. 302).

Despite Richard Wright’s prose surrounding the topic of Black Power and the Bandung conference, his perspective on African/Black folk culture and practices biased him to the mytho-forms that Ellison and Hansberry were sensitive to in their artistic creations. Moreover, if Richard Wright had lived long enough to see the emergence of the Black Power Movement and Black Arts Movement, he may have had to revise his earlier position on African cultural practices.

For example, Amos Tutuola, influenced by the work of F.O. Fagunwa wrote the Nigerian speculative novel *The Palm-Wine Drinkard and My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* in 1952. Furthermore, in response to the uninformed beliefs of other Western scholars, Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe produced a powerful trilogy of novels; *Things Falls apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960), and *Arrow of God* (1964), which would emphatically destroy the Eurocentric notion of a history-less Africa, before the coming of White people, imperialism and colonialism. Extending this critique further, on the Wright/ Ellison conflict, Larry Neal, a co-founder of the Black Arts movement, noted posthumously that there was the recognition by members of BAM that the Black and White literary left never forgave Ralph Ellison for promoting the rejection of White controlled left wing politics (1989).

The primary purpose of the Black Power movement, the Black Arts movement, and anti-colonial struggle was to address both the political and cultural imbalances imposed by White supremacy and the mis-education Woodson and other anti-colonial scholars referenced decades previously. These movements focused on the fact that a Jim Crow education, and or colonial training abetted by western media, had crippled the ability of the African Diaspora and Africans to govern or intelligently pursue their own interests in their societies. African American revolutionary Malcolm X succinctly summed up the situation shortly before his assassination, when he noted: *If you’re not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing* (Breitman, 1965, p. 93).

Conversely, in the second half of the 20th century, as the Dark World moved on a global horizontal plane to end Jim Crow and colonialism, White Western leadership moved on a vertical axis to incorporate a few token people of color who would help them maintain their supremacy. For over two generations, a group of African American and African leaders comprised of individuals such as Ralph Bunche, Mobutu Sese Seko, Franklin H. Williams, Blaise Compaoré, Felix Houphouet Boigny, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice and Susan Rice for example, assisted the West in undermining or overthrowing progressive governments, especially if these governments’ leadership supported Pan African Unity or autonomy. Furthermore, these individuals were rewarded with either Nobel peace prizes (in the case of Bunche) or with quasi-influential relationships with Western corporate/political interests.

Nevertheless, by the middle of the 1960s, with the start of the decline of the American civil rights movement and the struggle between neocolonialism and the African revolution, a new generation of writers, artists and creatives added to the Black speculative tradition. Notable radical literati John A. Williams, and Sam Greenlee were a part of this phenomenon. Williams and Greenlee’s work contrasted the liberal humanism and production

of race in projects such as Gene Rodenberry's *Star Trek* (Bernardi, 1997). Speculative novels and cinema, such as *The Man Who Cried I Am* (1967) and *The Spook Who Sat By The Door* (1969, 1973), represented a move away from the earlier works of James Baldwin and other early writers. Furthermore, radicals of the era consumed Gillo Pontecorvo's 1967 movie *The Battle of Algiers* in an effort to translate and materialize their vision into *real* urban guerilla warfare (Kaufman, 2003). However, the Black Power movement signaled a rejection of the Civil Rights movement and advanced against the backdrop of the historical genocide of the indigenous Indian civilization, the living memory of Japanese internment camps, German Nazi death camps and Title II of the Internal Security Act of 1950, also known as the McCarran Act. These works represented a tradition started by Martin Delany, in the middle of the 19th century, with his speculative work *Blake* (1859-1962, 1970), and continued by Sutton Griggs in the 1890s with *Imperium in Imperio* (1899) and George Schuyler's *Black Empire* (1936-1938, 1993). Furthermore, the speculative works of Ishmael Reed, Amiri Baraka, Sun Ra, Betye Saar, and later Octavia Butler and Toni Morrison were developed against the backdrop of the American aerospace program, the Cold War, concern over peak oil production, and the environment. Moreover, neo-fascist science fiction written by Robert Heinlein, and to a lesser extent Isaac Asimov, resonated with the concerns of the Black creative community. Of special note during this time was the intersection between science fiction, speculative imagination, social realism and the future, in the work of Samuel Delany's *Nova*, and the missed opportunity for rapprochement between the artist Sun Ra and The Black Panther Party. Published in 1968, *Nova*, set in the 31st century, speculatively describes future means of production, sexual identity, cyborg technology, artistic creativity, and the agency of people of African descent. In contrast, in 1971, a philosophical conflict emerged between modern jazz artist Sun Ra and the Black Panther Party over how to re-appropriate technology to impact the consciousness of African Americans, revealing ideological differences over approaches to struggle (Kreiss, 2008).

Other Afrodiasporan artists, such as Jamaican Everaldo Brown, with his fusion of Rastafarianism and Ethiopian church motifs, and continental African writers, also put forth speculative ideas based upon their approaches. These respective styles sought to capture the transition of former colonies and Africa from colonial rule, in pursuit of a future with creative productions by Ghanaian writer Ayi Kwei Armah, via his novels *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968), *Fragments* (1971), and *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973) and Ama Ata Aidoo's play *Anowa* (1965). Creative African intellectuals, such as Ousmane Sembene, produced social realist work in film and literature that could overlap with speculative practice and commented on White imperialist hegemony and Black/African elite corruption or betrayal. A similar sentiment reverberated in the radical practice of Afrodiasporic artists, such as Emory Douglass and Lorraine Hansberry's character *Beneatha*, in Act III of the play *Raisin in the Sun*, who said,

What about all the crooks and thieves and just plain idiots who will come to power to steal and plunder the same as before, only now they will be [B]lack and do it in the name of the new independence...?" (p. 133)?

However, by the early 1970s, the drive for Black/African autonomy was derailed by assassinations, the intentional influx of drugs by the U.S. government into the anti-war movement and the African/Black community, and the rise of the *Black Anglo Saxon*. The term *Black Anglo Saxon* and a book by scholar Nathan Hare (1965, 1970, 1990), does not refer to direct familial relationships of American Africans to Anglo Saxons, but to a certain social type that disassociates from the broader Afrodiasporic community and instead, identifies with white Anglo Saxon protestant elites or WASPs. The Martinique born

revolutionary psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon, had them in mind when he wrote *Black Skin, White Mask* (1952), chronicling the need for this social stratum of colonial Blacks to be accepted by Whites and equating Eurocentric ideas about civilization, education and culture with progress. A prime example is the behavior of Carl Rowan. Rowan was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of State by John F. Kennedy, Director of The United States Information Agency by Lyndon B. Johnson, and was the first African American to hold a seat on the National Security Council. Rowan spent much of his time in the 1960s attempting to discredit the activities of Malcolm X to African leaders. The same social stratum helped to undermine or neutralize grassroots organizers from the mid-1960s onward and along with White Liberals, conspired or worked to co-opt the energy and dynamism of the era. The domestic intent was to undermine initiatives for autonomy, which were carried out by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party of Fannie Lou Hamer and other local Black activists (Payne, 2005, p. xii). However, the international intent for the *Black Anglo Saxon* is to be one of the selected as agents of *The Five Eyes*. *The Five Eyes* is the international intelligence-gathering network with ties to a *global entertainment-military –industrial complex* is comprised of the five Anglo speaking countries that were victorious in WWII, including The United Kingdom, The United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia (Cox, 2012). This behavior is illustrated when White political/economic behavior, foreign or domestic, acts in aggregate to promote issues central to their whiteness, is considered rational public policy. On the contrary, in protesting this aggregate behavior, Blacks or other cultural groups are portrayed as irrational in conduct. Consequently, the *colored* leadership or *help* intervene in shutting down the *loud* Blacks responsible for *unrest* as they challenge discriminatory public policies (for more information see critiques of the Obama administration and the POTUS). For example, until Colin Kaepernick recently protested the American national anthem, the contemporary promotion of Black athletes in corporate media, such as Kareem Abdul Jabbar in Time magazine, and Michael Jordan are to act as *cool out* agents for the *Five Eyes* with the African American population. However, the revolts surrounding the killings of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling are eerily similar to events of a generation ago. Eldridge Cleaver commented on this behavior in his 1968 book *Soul on Ice: The effect was to take the “problem” out of a political and economic and philosophical context and place it on the misty level of “goodwill,” “charitable harmonious race relations,” and “good sportsmanlike conduct.”* (Cleaver, p. 112). Furthermore, the recent declaration by Michelle Obama (FLOTUS) pronouncing America as a *Great* nation is linked to the fact her family lives in the White House, a building built by slaves. However noble the intent, this assertion by Ms. Obama is insufficient and is contrasted by the fact of high incarceration rates of black and brown people, infant mortality rates, and the maintenance of international hegemony of America over weaker nations to maintain the *American way of life*. Almost 50 years ago, the writer James Baldwin described this phenomenon in his 1969 essay *The Price May Be Too High*. Baldwin remarked: *...What is being attempted is a way of involving, or incorporating, the black face into the national fantasy in such a way that the fantasy will be left unchanged and the social structure left untouched* (p. 108).

Paradoxically, an equivalent social stratum worked toward inclusion within the White academy, the Democrat and Republican Parties and what can legitimately be called the *non-profit industrial complex*. The emerging *knowledge* class of the late 20th century, with a similar agenda, worried about being characterized with descriptions of *essentialism*, embraced the Eurocentric aspects of postmodernism. Despite occasional flickers of aesthetic brilliance from performers such as disco artist Sylvester, Grace Jones, Frankie Knuckles, Grand Master Flash and the Furious Five, or the genius of artist Jean Michel Basquiat, the socio-political scene of Black creative autonomy was in serious decline by the 1980s. A singularly brilliant example of post-industrial Afrofuturism was the work by Detroit Techno pioneers Jeff Mills

and Mike Banks with the formation of the Techno collective Underground Resistance. Furthermore, the work of Derrick May, Juan Atkins and Kevin Saunderson artistically captured the forces of capitalist accelerationism blending the European sounds of Kraftwerk and Depeche Mode with the P-Funk of George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic (Noyes, 2014). Correspondingly, by the mid-1980s, this *liberal* stratum within the Black community attempted to de-politicize blackness and embrace the liberal agenda of color-blindness in the name of a type of *diversity* that ensconced *Whiteness*. For instance, the promotion of diversity initiatives in the last quarter of the 20th century frequently left intact the very structures that oppressed Black people – insulating White elites from charges of White supremacy, which became the linchpin for post-civil rights racism.

Starting in the mid-1980s, through the war on drugs, global structural adjustment for Africa, and The Cosby Show, warm fuzzy visuals promoted non-threatening *smiling* Black people. Leaders like Nelson Mandela, and *clean* fair complexioned, (as described by his future vice president Joe Biden) political operatives such as Barack Obama – represented the *post-Black* perspective in select urban elite settings, think tanks, liberal enclaves and swank art salons. The economic crash of 2008 exposed these concepts as having the political value of a sub-prime mortgage in the face of the racist backlash that allowed for the election of the country's first Black president. Another illustration of this behavior occurred during the now famous Beer-Gate controversy on July 30, 2009. Beer-Gate was an incident in which a sitting President of the United States, Barack Obama, had to have a White House meeting over a beer with a prominent Black scholar and the cop who racially profiled him. The shame of it was as though the racial problem could be discussed over something as trite as a mug of beer. Again, a similar social stratum of Black elected officials, liberal multiculturalists, labor, religious leaders, media, and non-profit organizations were used to pacify the Black community and bargain for *symbolic* gains like government appointments, commissions, and Black faces on money. Similar actions this stratum believed should and would placate the public, after the killings of Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Renisha McBride, Freddy Gray, Tamir Rice, The Charleston 9, Sandra Bland, Alton Sterling, and Philando Castile. However, the recent attempt by media to construct the behaviors of accused assassins Ismaaiyl Brinsley, Micah Johnson, Gavin Long, and Korryn Gaines as deranged and suicidal deserves more scrutiny.

Previously, Black Panther leader Huey Newton examined this phenomenon from the perspective of reactionary suicide (a person who takes their own life in response to social conditions) and revolutionary suicide (a person who knowingly loses their life to oppose forces that drive them to self-murder) (Newton, 1973). Therefore, for the sake of discussion it is necessary to pursue this vein of inquiry to examine why these Black men and woman chose their path. Revolutionary Suicide does not mean these people have a death wish but a strong desire to live with dignity and hope that requires they oppose oppressive forces at the risk of death (Newton, 1973). Therefore, it is because America is NOT a great nation yet, but has the potential to be one; these young Black millennials, and other groups like *The Huey P. Newton Gun Club*, have taken up arms. However, prior to these recent events, at the end of the 20th century, a convergence around technology and creativity had profound implications on the *Social Physics of Blackness* for Africa and its Diaspora.

In America, the cybernetic revolution articulated by Norbert Weiner in the late 1940s and militarized as Arpanet by the U.S. government during the cold war, came of age in the 1980s with the personal computer. Young Black people who grew up in the video gaming era playing Pac Man, Sega Genesis or *Pong*, a game designed by the Atari Corporation and released in the fall of 1972, were early adopters of the internet. They were familiar with

Japanese anime, loved Parliament Funkadelic, watched Blaxploitation flicks and Star Wars, or played with a Rubik's cube, and collected comic books. Moreover, they listened to rap music on their Sony Walkman or boombox and were sucked into the convergence of media, art, computers, post-industrialization, hypermedia and its resultant impact on the global division of labor following the end of the Cold War and South African Apartheid. By the 1990s, writers, such as Octavia Butler (USA), in her *Parable of The Sower* series (2000), Nalo Hopkinson (Canada), Jewelle Gomez (USA), Peter Kalu (England), with *Black Star Rising* (1997), Ayi Kwei Armah (Ghana) *Osiris Rising* (1995), cultural critic Greg Tate (USA), and publications like Milestone Comics began to make their speculative presence felt in response to the emerging age. Angelique Kidjoe (Benin) and her Vodun influenced music, John Akomfrah and the Black Audio Film Collective, the Afrocentric aesthetics of rapper Paris and X-Clan, the rap group the Ultramagnetic MC's, the techno group Cybotron, Drexciya, Outkast, and Deltron 3030, were prominent examples of the new emerging performance aesthetic. However, this generation was largely unaware that Black people were living in the middle of a global transition of *Social Physics* and the social construction of *Blackness* influenced by *The Californian Ideology* and *The Dark Enlightenment*.

Alex Pentland defines *Social Physics* as: *a quantitative social science that describes reliable, mathematical connections between information and idea flow on the one hand and people behavior on the other* (2014, p. 4). Furthermore, *Social Physics* examines how the flow of ideas and productivity influence social norms and networks (Pentland, 2014). Extending and intersecting the argument of *Social Physics* in relation to Africa and its diaspora, the scholar Michelle Wright, in her text *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology* (2014), argues for a:

Blackness that operates as a construct (implicitly or explicitly defined as a shared set of physical and behavioral characteristics and as phenomenological (imagined through individual perceptions in various ways depending on the context) (p. 4).

This manifesto conceptually hacks both texts and asserts the *Social Physics of Blackness* of the 21st century is informed by cultural analytics, resource depletion, economic collapse, and genocide, as the world transitions from a Western dominated world system to a multi-polarized one, in the near future. Ultimately, the world will face a stark set of potentially dystopian choices for survival. How then, will *The Dark Enlightenment* influence the *Social Physics of Blackness*?

The Dark Enlightenment (a phrase coined by Nick Land) paralleled the emergence of *The Californian Ideology*. *The Californian Ideology* is a hybrid philosophy of libertarian individualism and technological determinism understood by cognitive scientists, software developers, engineers, bloggers and Silicon Valley entrepreneurs who embrace classical economic liberalism and individual liberty as an alternative to collective freedom (Barbrook & Cameron, 1996). On the other hand, the *Dark Enlightenment* reflects a desire to return to older social norms in government and gender roles, while embracing a libertarian or reactionary conservative worldview to economics (Bartlett, 2014). A contemporary illustration of this is the Silicon Valley libertarian futurist billionaire and co-founder of PayPal, Peter Thiel (a supporter of presidential candidate Donald Trump). This perspective embraces the emerging hypermedia of a retro-utopia return to past forms of classical economics and politics amplified by the visions of science fiction writers like Isaac Asimov or Robert Heinlen; or on the other hand pursued Eurocentric visions of utopia, emblematic of science fiction novelists like Kim Stanley Robinson or Ernest Callenbach (Barbrook & Cameron, 1996). The irony of *The California Ideology* and its derivative, *The Dark*

Enlightenment, is the Jeffersonian Democracy that it idealizes was based upon the right to own people as private property, demonstrating that freedom for White People required the enslavement of Black people (Barbrook & Cameron, 1996). Furthermore, the contemporary proliferation of this perspective extends from the American prison-industrial complex to the mining of rare minerals and corporate land grabs in Africa. Most of all, *The Californian Ideology*, and dystopian aspects of *The Dark Enlightenment* (although ostensibly anti-capitalist), are casting their shadows in areas of human augmentation or transhumanism, a resurgence of fascism or crypto fascism, amplified by social media, a fear of the underclass, seeking self-fulfillment in the electronic market place or electronic agora, (a virtual place free from censorship and free expression) (Barsook et al., Roudinesco, 2009). Ultimately, these belief systems regards human beings as surplus flesh, and some of their adherents participate in a revitalized Pro-Western atavistic occult practice, and a desire for creation and control of the artificial intelligence of “*The Golem...a strong loyal slave whose skin is the color of the earth*” (Barsook, 1996, p. 14).

As a final point, the level of energy driving the contemporary creative environment surrounding the emergence of Afrofuturism, Black Speculative art+design, a renewed radical politics, and the social physics of Blackness will be in direct proportion to the dystopian aspects of global change occurring now into the near future. For example, in light of recent events in Turkey, Great Britain’s departure from the European Union, the rise of the Economic Freedom Fighters in South Africa, the dark impulses of Trump-ism in America, and the emerging geo-political struggle between the United States and China, the faint outline of a new social context is arising out of the slow de-composition of the existing world order. The take away from this phenomenon is this epoch transition will require a proportional response from Black creative intellectuals and friends, to meet the challenges of the next few decades as faith in traditional institutional structures declines. For example, across Africa and its global diaspora, a Garveyistic fervor is rising among the grassroots in the ghettos, favelas, barrios, and shantytowns, in response to the current clash of civilizations. Therefore, the ability to recognize contradictions and stay focused on a liberatory project will be paramount during the transformation. For example, Black political economy must intersect critically with Afrofuturism to engage the challenges of race and digital labour, and critique or disrupt the power of capital and reliable futures developed in the interest of multinational conglomerates and elites (Clegg, P. &Pantojas-Garcia, E. 2009, Adebajo, A. 2013, Cornelissen, Scarlett, Fantu Cheru, & T. Shaw, 2016, Marable, M. 2015, Eshun, K. 2003). Furthermore, the practice of Quantum Mapping and Black Quantum Futurism can re-map temporal processes and re-calculate relations between body, space, memory and methods now to re-shape the future (Phillips, 2015). On the other hand the work of Lonny Avi Brooks utilizes Africological tools in re-imagining the future in regards to framing and forecasting (Brooks, 2016). Moreover, the speculative strategies of resilience identified in the works of Nnedi Okorafor, Nalo Hopkinson, and Octavia Butler, identified by Esther Jones offers another valuable approach (2015). Jones outlines their collective works along “intersection of race, gender, disability, and ideology”, “reconstructing the cult of tradition away from practices of militarized rape, forced impregnation, and female genital cutting” and “healing in hostile environments” (p. 147, 148, 149). Finally, in the emerging *near future* post capitalist society, Africa and its diaspora must master the technology of blockchain technology, the sharing economy, virtual currencies, bioethics and transhumanism, peer-to-peer networks, smart contracts, De-centralized Autonomous Organizations (DAOs) and Distributed Mobile Applications. The *long-term* implication is that Africa, and its diaspora, will swiftly have to incorporate, hack and master emerging technologies and strategies required for survival in a multi-polar, *potentially* social Darwinist era. In conclusion, resource depletion, environmental collapse, food and water shortages and possible

postmodern genocide; militarily delivered by biotechnology such as CRISPR (Clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats) or the intellectual pitfall of accelerationism or teleoplexy (a self-reinforcing cybernetic intensification) will challenge the grit, imagination and creative abilities of the people within the *Veil*.

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How to Write a Manifesto. A manifesto is a document wherein a person, government, or organization outlines their intentions, motivations, and/or views. These texts ask and attempt to answer the question: What do I believe?<http://www.swar...> Read other manifestos on a similar topic for useful tools and arguments. Famous manifestos include: The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx, "I Have a Dream" by Martin Luther King, or John F Kennedy's "Man on the Moon". Strengthen your arguments by reading the opponents of your views online. Take a class if you have the time and the money. Note: It is usual to use metaphor, hyperbole and alliteration to write a manifesto and it should be brief (about 200--300 words). Thanks! Yes No.