# Mathematics Black Life

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*We aspire to be modern, as if this were some how a new position and as if blacks and nonwhites were not already clearly and uncomfortably modern, as if modernity were sustainable without the nigger and the fluid in/convenience that is blackness lying, albeit differently, both inside and outside its borders.*

**—Richard Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic*, p. 288**

*The promiscuity of the archive begets a wide array of reading, but none that are capable of resuscitating the girl.*

**—Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," p. 13**

*It's a trap. That much is plain.*
*Still, maybe send snapshots of all your sweet pain. Playin' tortuous games.*
*It goes: Lens. Light. Fame.*
*Read my names on your lips. When the man cracks the whip.*
*And you'll all shake your hips. And you'll all dance to this.*
*Without making a fist.*

**—TV on the Radio, "Red Dress," 2008**

In Saidya Hartman's "Venus in Two Acts," she returns to the deaths of two young African girls who were both violently and brutally killed on the middle passage. Raped, strung up, whipped to death, dying alone: This is the information Hartman pieces together from the ship's ledger and financial accounts, the captain's log book, and the court case that dismissed the charges of murder against Captain John Timber, the man who caused the deaths of the girls. The archive of black diaspora is, as Hartman rightly suggests, "a death sentence, a tomb, a display of a violated body, an inventory of property, a medical treatise . . . an asterisk in the grand narrative of history."[1] The asterisked archives are filled with bodies that can only come into being vis-à-vis racial-sexual violence; the documents and ledgers and logs that narrate the brutalities of this history give birth to new world blackness as they evacuate life from blackness. Breathless, archival numerical evidence puts pressure on our present system of knowledge by

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affirming the knowable (black objecthood) and disguising the untold (black human being). The slave's status as object-commodity, or purely economic cargo, reveals that a black archival presence not only enumerates the dead and dying, but also acts as an origin story. This is where we begin, this is where historic blackness comes from: the list, the breathless numbers, the absolutely economic, the mathematics of the unliving. Recall then, aboard the ship Peggy, aboard the ship Prosperous Amelia, aboard the brig Nancy. The ledgers read:

> Samuel Minton, 60 years, nearly worn out . . . Formerly slave to Thomas Minton, Norfolk, Virginia . . . Gilbert Lafferts, 21 years, likely lad, Mr. James Henderson's possession, proved to be the property of Mr. James Henderson . . . Master & Bill of Sale produced . . . Anny Bolton, 42, stout wench, (James Alexander). Formerly the property of Thomas Bolton, Nansemond, Virginia . . . Jenny Frederick, 32 years, ordinary wench . . . Certified to be free by Jonah Frederick of Boston, New England . . . Betty Rapelje, 21, stout wench, (Peter Brown) . . . *Says she was born free* at Newtown, Long Island.[2]

Worn out, bill of sale produced, certified to be free, ordinary wench, proved to be the property of, formerly slave to, formerly the property of, all with parenthetic possessors. New world blackness arrives through the ordinary, proved, former, certified, nearly worn-out archives of ledgers, accounts, price tags, and descriptors of economic worth and financial probability. The list of slaves upon these ships is a list of propertied commodities. The slave is possession, proved to be property. Yet a voice interrupts: says she. It follows that black freedom is embedded within an economy of race and violence and unfolds as an indeterminate impossibility: wench, property of, likely lad, nearly worn out; certified to be free, says she was born free, formerly slave to. Says she was born free.

The brutalities of transatlantic slavery, summed up in archival histories that give us a bit of (asterisked-violated) blackness, put meaningful demands on our scholarly and activist questions. While the tenets and the lingering histories of slavery and colonialism produced modernity as and with and through blackness, this sense of time-space is interrupted by a more weighty, and seemingly truthful (truthful and truth-telling because iterated as scientific, proven, certified, objective), underside—where black is naturally malignant and therefore worthy of violation; where black is violated because black is naturally violent; where black is naturally unbelievable and is therefore naturally empty and violated; where black is naturally less-than-human and starving to death and violated; where black is naturally dysselected, unsurviving, swallowed up; where black is same and always and dead and dying; where black is complex and difficult and too much to bear and violated.[3] The tolls of death and violence, housed in the archive, affirm black death. The tolls cast black as impossibly human and provide the conditions through which black history is currently told and studied. The death toll becomes the source.

The tolls inevitably uncover, too, analyses of histories and narratives and stories

and data that honor and repeat and cherish anti-black violence and black death. If the source of blackness is death and violence, the citation of blackness—the scholarly stories we tell—calls for the repetition of death and violence. The practice of taking away life is followed by the sourcing and citation of racial-sexual death and racial-sexual violence and blackness is (always already and only) cast inside the mathematics of unlivingness (data/scientifically proven/certified violation/asterisk) where black comes to be (a bit).[4] Indeed, if blackness originates and emerges in violence and death, black futures are foreclosed by the dead and dying asterisks. And if the dead and dying are the archival and asterisked cosmogonies of blackness, within our present system of knowledge—a system, to paraphrase Frantz Fanon, where the subhuman is invited to become human on terms that require anti-black sentiment—scraps and bits of black life and death and narrative are guaranteed to move toward, to progress into, unlivingness and anti-blackness.[5] With this in mind we would do well to notice that scholarly and activist questions can, at times, be so tightly tied to bits and pieces of narratives that dwell on anti-black violence and black racial death—seeking out and reprising "terrible utterances" to reclaim and recuperate black loss and somehow make it all the less terrible—that our answerable analytical futures are also condemned to death.[6] Put differently, historically present anti-black violence is repaired by reproducing knowledge about the black subjects that renders them less than human. It is a descriptive analytics of violence. The cyclical and death-dealing numeration of the condemned remains in tact, at least in part, through analytical pathways that are beholden to a system of knowledge that descriptively rehearses anti-black violences and in this necessarily refuses decolonial thinking.

How then do we think and write and share as decolonial scholars and foster a commitment to acknowledging violence and undoing its persistent frame, rather than simply analytically reprising violence? How do we ethically engage with mathematical and numerical certainties that compile, affirm, and honor bits and pieces of black death? In order to underscore the urgency here, it is worth thinking about the ways in which slave ship and plantation ledgers unfold into a series of crude and subjugating post-slave accounts:

> The rule in the courts was that a drop of blood made you black; just walking around looking about/This guy looks like he is up to no good or he is on drugs or something; the accusation was beginning to take on a familiar tone . . . Emmett Till . . . Scottsboro . . . Armed with his new political powers Diluilo came to have access to billions of dollars in public funds to launch a program to reform the superpredators by exorcising the evil he saw in them; three-quarters of the persons arrested for such crimes were Negro . . . in Detroit, the same proportions held. . . . Negro males represent 2.1 percent of all male technicians while Negro females represent roughly 10 percent of all female technicians. . . . It would appear therefore that there are proportionately 4 times as many Negro females in significant white collar jobs than Negro males; these assholes, they always get away; it would

> come to be based on degrees of selected genetic merit (or eugenics) versus differential degrees of the dysselected lack of this merit: differential degrees of, to use the term made famous by *The Bell Curve,* "dysgenicity."[7]

We can think of more accounts, more numbers, more math.

In *Demonic Grounds,* I suggest that the markers of captivity so tightly adhere to the black body that seeing blackness involves our collective willingness to collapse it into a signifier of dispossession.[8] While I certainly suggest there, as I do here, that black dispossession reveals the limits of our present geographic order and opens up a way to imagine new modes of black geographic thought, it is challenging to think outside the interlocking data of black erasure, unfreedom, and anti-black violence. Putting pressure on archive numbers that, particularly in the case of the middle passage and plantation life, are the only documents that tell us about the ways in which the practice of slavery set the stage for our present struggles with racism, is difficult. So, what do we do with the archival documentation that displays this unfree and violated body as both naturally dispossessed and as the origin of new world black lives? How do we come to terms with the inventory of numbers and the certain economic brutalities that introduce blackness—the mathematics of the unliving, the certification of unfreedom—and give shape to how we now live our lives? And what does it mean that, when confronting these numbers and economic descriptors and stories of murder and commonsense instances of anti-black violence, some of us are pulled into that Fanonian moment, where our neurological synapses and our motor-sensory replies do not result in relieved gasps of nostalgia or knowing gasps of present emancipation (look how far we have come/slavery is over/get over slavery/post-race/look how far) but instead dwell in the awfulness of seeing ourselves and our communities in those numbers now?[9] This is the future the archives have given me. Yet, the Fanonian moment also disturbs to ask not how we get over the awfulness and brutality, but rather how do we live with it, differently, right now and therefore imagine what Sylvia Wynter describes as "being human as praxis"?[10]

In what follows, I move with the numbers and begin to work out how the uncomfortable mathematics of black life can inform current and future formations of black studies. I suggest that black studies not only names and posits the violent arithmetics of the archive, but that this citation of violence also can and should no longer ethically repeat this violence. Indeed, while not always honored, the intellectual project of black studies—with its long history of citing and surviving racial violence in numbers—provides a deliberate commentary on the ways in which blackness works against the violence that defines it. Thus, across a range of thinkers—I note Dionne Brand, Sylvia Wynter, Audre Lorde, Frantz Fanon, but there are more and many to add—there is a careful effort to show that if we are to name the violent displacement of black cultures, this must be done by both noticing and undoing the compulsion to inhabit safe and comfortable places within the very system that cannot survive without anti-blackness. Indeed,

the research of W. E. B. Du Bois, who turns knowable racial numbers in on themselves to ask how the race is both fixed and unfixed by social conditions, is especially notable here.[11]

The demand of the black scholar might be, therefore, to think the violence of transatlantic slavery as a numerical moment through which anti-blackness was engendered and came to underwrite post-slave emancipation promises, just as this moment, significantly and un-numerically, also provided the conditions through which many black subjectivities articulated an anti-colonial practice that did not (and cannot and does not) twin the emancipatory terms that set blackness free. The post-slave system, its emancipatory terms, guarantees and profits from and repeats anti-black violence. I briefly cite Wynter as exemplary and complementary to this trajectory of black scholarly thought:

> We have lived the millennium of Man in the last five hundred years; and as the West is inventing Man, the slave-plantation is a central part of the entire mechanism by means of which that logic is working its way out. But that logic is total now, because to be not-Man is to be not-quite-human. Yet that plot, that slave plot on which the slave grew food for his/her subsistence, carried over a millennially other conception of the human to that of Man's . . . that plot exists as a threat. It speaks to other possibilities.[12]

Other possibilities. The task is, then, to write blackness by ethically honoring but not repeating anti-black violences—which can be done, I suggest below, through reading the mathematics of these violences as possibilities that are iterations of black life that cannot be contained by black death.

Other possibilities. In reading with and through archival mathematics (and the certification of unfreedom and its unenumerated openings), I suggest that it is the anti-black violence of transatlantic slavery that archived the transparent numbers that many black scholars could not (and cannot) bear as these very numbers provide data that the ex-slave archipelago climbed out of through conceptualizing blackness anew. These new categories differently work blackness as a category by noticing and reworking and mistrusting numerical data and, in this, asserting the doubly conscious/the open door of every consciousness/fantastic/being human as praxis.[13] What follows, then, is a kind of intellectual work black studies opens up in numbers. Says she was born free. Says she was born free. She is not free. She *says* she was born free. The unfree nonperson is embedded in—at work within—the verb "says" and the noun "she." The unfree nonperson *says* she was born free. She says she was born free. She says she was born free at Newtown, Long Island: she is not free. She *says* she is free.

Trust the lies. One of the most ubiquitous representations of blackness in our archives is of the "Rear view of former slave revealing scars on his back from savage whipping, in photo taken after he escaped to become Union soldier during Civil War" (see figure 1). This image, also known as "The Scourged Back, 1863," has been widely reproduced with the black man being identified as "Gordon."[14] For those interested in black history and transatlantic slavery, this image of Gordon is familiar. It is an image

*Figure 1: "Rear view of former slave revealing scars on his back from savage whipping, in photo taken after he escaped to become a Union soldier during Civil War," or "Scourged Back, 1863" or "Gordon" from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture*

that emerges throughout many research projects. We never see Gordon once, we never see him twice; we see him numerous times. The scourged back is everywhere. Here, "the unimaginable assumes the guise of every day existence."[15] For the researcher, the scourged back is commonplace and in some instances predictable. And, if we are not very careful, the image becomes so ordinary that the pleasures of looking, again and again, incite a second order of violence.[16] She says.

Rachel Hall writes that the photograph of Gordon is representative of the black visual history that accompanied and in some cases replaced oral and written accounts of slavery. Indeed, Hall notes that such photographic images of suffering slaves conveyed truths—truths more truthful than written accounts—that would complement abolitionist struggles and elicit white sympathy.[17] The image of Gordon, importantly, pictures "a history of violence written on the slave's body and in the master's hand . . . in the scarred back the viewer reads a narrative inscribed by the slave owner himself."[18] The scarred back, therefore, has little to do with Gordon himself but very much to do with the ways in which brutal acts of white supremacy actively mark blackness as they erase black lived experiences and interpretations of slavery.[19] Our archival proclivities have so much embraced "Scourged Back" that it is has become a ubiquitous representation of violence—both mundane and spectacular—that can be enumerated in multiple ways: whips, lash counts, reprinted and circuitous and repetitive circulation of Gordon's pain, calculable white disciplinary markings, another accountable pathway to our doomed future of unfreedom. Or, Gordon's photograph is a visual archive of black suffering, deposited there precisely because it records violence, deposited there because it can tell a truth more truthful than claims written and told by black people: she *says* she was born free. The archives are full of truthful lies and bloodshed. With this in mind I suggest, riffing off of Merle Hodge, that we are presently living in the "shadow of the whip."[20] In these shadows—where the legacy of the plantocracy underwrites and anticipates the

historically present persistence of anti-black violence—we might not simply access black suffering and white supremacy but perhaps generate new ways of encountering the history of blackness.[21] As noted, access to new world blackness dwells on the archival display of the violated body, the corpse, the death sentences, the economic inventories of cargo, the whip as the tool that writes blackness into existence. How might we take this evidence and venture toward another mode of human being—so that when we encounter the lists, the ledgers, the commodities of slavery, we notice that our collective unbearable past, which is unrepresentable except for the archival mechanics that usher in blackness vis-à-vis violence, is about something else altogether.

There are strategies in place worth noting. Carrie Mae Weems rewrites "Scourged Back" to evidence the unutterable of contours of violence.[22] A different kind of strategic un-voicing of the unbearable can be found in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*—where a different unwritten narrative resides between the lines.[23] Aunt Hester's scream, too, as it "open[ed] the way into the knowledge of slavery and the knowledge of freedom" for Frederick Douglass and post-slave populations.[24] Militant slaves, mass suicide, *At The Full and Change of Moon*.[25] The unraveled asterisk: Margaret Garner's decision to kill her children so they would not have to endure the brutalities of slavery as recast in *Beloved* as a story of survival. The chokecherry tree.[26] We can think of more. These strategies allow us to read the archives not as a measure of what happened, but as indicators of what else happened. Notably, the strategies above rest on encountering, thinking about and articulating black absented presences: the unspeakable, the unwritten, the unbearable and unutterable, the unseeable and the invisible, the uncountable and unindexed, outside the scourge, that which cannot be seen or heard or read but is always there. We are therefore also asked to imagine those lives that are so inconceivable, so unworthy of documentation, so radically outside our archives, that they are merely psychic impressions of life and livingness: lies and truths and new stories and familiar scars that, because they are unindexed, cannot provide us with the analytical tools to analytically take black life away.

In many ways, these kinds of strategies tell different stories that are tethered to the scourged back. In many ways, the racial economy of the archive begins a story that demands our betrayal of the archive itself. It gives us the scourged back as a commonly available image that is also an asterisk of history—the archive lies as it tells a truth. Which begs the question: What if we trust the lies—she *says* she was born free—and begin to count it all out differently? What if we harness ourselves to the brutalities of the violence that began all of this, while also honoring the impossibility of understanding exactly what the scars of history mean for post-slave diasporic peoples?

Punishment during slavery was, as Gordon's back might reveal for some, intimately linked to counting; lashings are the soundtrack to slavery, four, ten, fifty, one hundred, two hundred.[27] Indeed, the black musical texts that reference this soundtrack and revisit the crack of the whip are numerous, although the work of The Wailers ("Slave Driver," from *Catch a Fire*) and Nas

("Intro" to his album *It Was Written*) stand out for me. To be sure, the body, the lashings, the counting, culminates to affirm crass and familiar itemization, the corporeal consequences of rational reason: counting the cracks discloses measurable discipline. But again: What if we trust the lies—she says she was born free—and begin to count it all out differently? As we all know, numbers signify measurable items, but they also invite chaos. In her essay "Digital Epidermalization: Race, Identity and Biometrics," Simone Browne importantly asks: How do we understand the body when it is made into data? Analyzing the technologies of the border—fingerprints, passports, eye scans, facial recognition technology—Browne looks at the ways in which particular bodies are cast out of normalcy based on the "arithmetics of skin."[28] I borrow the arithmetics of skin from Browne because her work uncovers the ways in which contemporary surveillance practices are inflected with the relief of neutrality as they track biocentric human markers: race, gender, a two-sexed system. Put another way, the seeming neutrality of mathematics—the governmental trust in the technologies that calculate the textures of skin, eyes, hair—is trusted as innocuously objective, thus providing an alibi for racism. A glance above: one drop of blood/the accusation was/2.1 percent/genetic merit. As Browne's research shows, biometrics—the measurement of the living body—are, in fact, laden with digital epidermalization wherein the logic of whiteness is the measuring stick through which other racial technologies are understood. The white living body—spacing between the eyes, fingerprint ridges, hair, skin, thickness of the mouth—is the mathematical measuring stick through which all other bodies are calculated. Indeed, and looking the other way, Browne's research also importantly shows that contemporary surveillance practices can be linked to the tracking of escaped slaves—the black enslaved body, the black escaping body, was recorded and coded as biometrically knowable (or findable and searchable).[29] The future of the scourged back is revealed and Nas's album cover (figure 2) makes good sense. How then might we recast the arithmetics of skin, the truthful lies of the archive, and the making of black subjecthood that is always tethered to that status of nonperson? Or how do we, as Nourbese Philip asks, find freedom within these limitations?[30] Can we really count it out differently?

I hold close the technologies of slavery and the archives that produce the scourged back. I can't let go of the incomplete stories and brutal violence, in part, because letting go might involve not seeing how these violent acts are reproduced now. It might involve reading Nas's album cover through what Rinaldo Walcott calls "global niggerdom," thus underscoring that the making of racial subjectivities—all kinds of racially marked subjectivities that inhabit our white supremacist planetary slums—is a process that is tethered to a violent past and therefore demands a different future.[31] Indeed, I want to hold on to the numbers because "it's the evidence of what transpired" and "the bones actually ground you."[32] The numbers set the stage for our stories of survival—what is not there is *living*. The numbers, the arithmetics of the skin, the shadow of the whip, inspire our insurgency as they demonstrate the ways in which our present genre of the

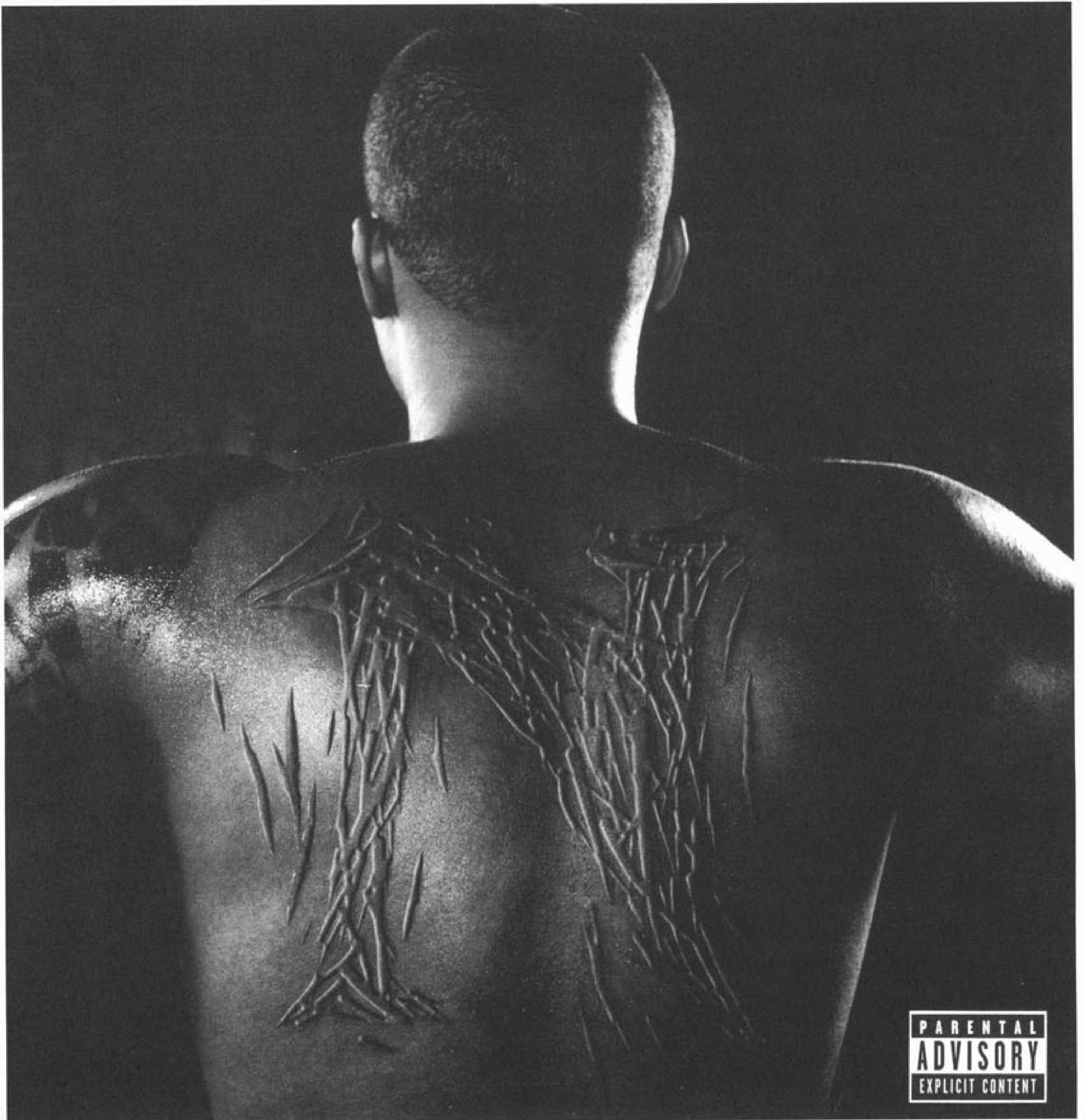


*Figure 2: Nas, (Untitled) LP Artwork*

human is flawed. Indeed, numbers, like the archives, are truthful lies that can push us toward demonic grounds, a place not where one must choose between white supremacy and oppression, but rather honors the ways in which blackness is archived as a violent beginning and, to be sure, does not consider this beginning as inevitably tied to trajectory that leads to something rightful or natural or ethical. Put differently, we might emphasize how the demonic—in physics and mathematics—is a nondeterministic schema; it is a process that is hinged on uncertainty and nonlinearity because the organizing princi-

ple cannot foresee the future. This schema, this way of producing or desiring an unanticipated outcome, calls into question "the always non-arbitrary pre-prescribed" parameters of sequential and classificatory linearity.[33] This forecloses the descriptive analytics of violence. The methodological and intellectual work of black studies, I am suggesting, is embedded with this organizing principal precisely because the mathematics of blackness and white supremacy are seemingly knowable (because accountable and counted) and always laden with a chaotic uncertainty. This schema understands arithmetical-epidermal history as a violent unfinishing with numeric bursts that uncover a logic that fosters the anti-colonial human being as praxis. This is the future that black studies, at its best, has given me. What is not there is living.

This forces us, in my view, to wrestle with our present anew, and think seriously about what Saidiya Hartman calls the "incomplete project of freedom" and imagine that Sylvia Wynter's being human as praxis does not, in fact, embrace a bitter return to the scourged back, breathe a sigh of presently emancipated post-race relief, or find comfort in the dismal dance of authenticity—for all of these strategies refuse to take us anywhere new.[34] Instead, I trust that the unindexed lies of our world and the evidence of what transpired are not blueprints for emancipation, or maps to our future, but instead are indicators of the ways in which the brutalities of racial encounter demand a form of human being and being human that newly iterates blackness as uncomfortably enumerating the unanticipated contours of black life. She says she was born free.

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## Endnotes

1. Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," p. 2.

2. These ship ledgers are from the *Book of Negroes* and can be found at www.blackloyalist.com/canadiandigitalcollection/documents/official/book_of_negroes.htm. Accessed May 3, 2010. Emphasis added.

3. On black modernities, see Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, and Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic*. I borrow "meta-Darwin" from Sylvia Wynter. See also Wynter and McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?"

4. Cf. Mbembe, "Necropolitics."

5. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p, 103.

6. I discuss the dead-end analytics of racial violence at length in McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place." "Terrible utterances" is from Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," p. 3.

7. The "one drop" quotation is from the memoir of Essie Mae Washington-Williams, *Dear Senator: A Memoir by the Daughter of Strom Thurmon*, as quoted in Sharpe, *Monstrous Intimacies*, p. 193n26. The "familiar tone" quotation is from Browne, *The Condemnation of Little B*, p. 5. The quotations regarding Negro "crime" and "technicians" are taken from Moynihan, *The Negro Family*. The "Bell Curve" quotation is from Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom," p. 323. The quotations "just walking

around," "up to no good," and "they always get away," are taken from City of Sanford, "Cellphone Call."

8. McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*.

9. Cf. McKittrick, "I Entered the Lists."

10. Wynter and McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?"

11. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*; Weheliye, "Diagrammatics as Physiognomy." Also notable for purposes of this essay is Booker T. Washington's invitation to Du Bois to teach mathematics at the Tuskegee Institute in 1894. Du Bois declined due to his commitment at Wilberforce University in Ohio. See Broderick, *W. E. B. Du Bois*, p. 32.

12. Scott, "The Re-Enchantment of Humanism," p. 165.

13. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*; Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 232; Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic*; Wynter and McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?"

14. Gordon's presence in slavery and anti-slavery texts and histories are too numerous to list.

15. Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," p. 6.

16. Ibid., p. 5.

17. Hall, "Missing Dolly, Mourning Slavery."

18. Ibid., p. 88.

19. Ibid., p. 89.

20. Hodge, "The Shadow of the Whip," pp. 111–118.

21. Cf. McKittrick, "Plantation Futures."

22. Jackson, "Visualizing Slavery."

23. Whitsitt, "Reading Between the Lines."

24. Moten, *In the Break*.

25. Brand, *At the Full and Change of Moon*.

26. Morrison, *Beloved*. On Sethe's scarred back/chokecherry tree, see pp. 18, 20, 93.

27. Many thanks to A.J. Paynter for thinking about this with me. In our conversations about black modernities, A.J. imagined the tools of transatlantic slavery through black science, explaining that the whip was the first man-made tool to break the sound barrier (much like that of a supersonic jet creating a sonic boom and breaking the sound barrier). She then asked: What is the relevance/significance of breaking the sound barrier while simultaneously breaking black skin and how does this connect to the who, the what, and the where of modernity's beginnings? I will continue to take up A.J.'s challenge in *Dear Science* (in preparation).

28. Browne, "Digital Epidermalization."

29. Browne, "'Everybody's Got a Little Light Under the Sun.'"

30. Marlene NourbeSe Philip in Saunders, "Defending the Dead, Confronting the Archive," p. 65.

31. Walcott, "The Problem of the Human." See also Nas, "N.I.G.G.E.R." Nas's album title decisions provide another aspect of the global niggerdom unexplored here. For an overview of his decision to change the title of his 2009 album from *Nigger* to *(Untitled)*, see Reid, "Nas Explains Controversial Album Title," and Reid, "Nas Changes Controversial Album Title."

32. "The evidence of what transpired" is Patricia Saunders in "Defending the Dead," p. 69. "The bones" is Marlene NourbeSe Philip in "Defending the Dead," p. 69.

33. McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, p. xxiv; Wynter, "Beyond Miranda's Meanings," p. 365.

34. Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," p. 4.

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