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BODIES OF KNOWLEDGE

AN ANATOMY AND KINESIOLOGY OF THE AMERICAN PRISON NATION,
'HUMAN'-MAKING, AND TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY *TECHNO-GODS*

by

LYNDSEY ELDRIDGE KARR

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

2017

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in
Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

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Advisor: Patricia Ticineto Clough

The social production of hegemonic knowledge has historically been legitimized in relation to the sanctioned status of the 'Human'.¹ Beginning with the American Prison Industrial Complex and what sociologist Beth E. Richie conceptualizes as the "prison nation," I will show the 'human' as a contingent and composite status appearing along a spectrum of Flesh, Body, and 'Human' (Flesh-Body-'Human') statuses and subjectivity.

Bringing this 'Human' continuum into conversation with twenty-first-century media, (micro)computational technologies, and contemporary knowledge and social economies, I expand the notion, reach, and scale of the American "prison nation." Following Mark Hansen's treatment of twenty-first-century digital media, I posit that the contemporary, technologically mediated and "datafied" prison nation,² like digital media, performs a further displacement of

¹ Throughout, I am deploying Brian Massumi's conceptualization of the "social" as an articulation of the cofunctioning of the cultural, political and economic, and which, following Gilles Deleuze among others, includes human and nonhuman, organic and inorganic, material and immaterial entities and processes as efficacious actants within these enmeshed spheres.

² For Patricia Ticineto Clough and Mark Hansen "datafication" refers to the full digital landscape of data analysis and computation the scale and capacity of which is unprecedented. This digital landscape includes 'big-data', data mining, tracking, surveillance, capture, and affect-based 'predictive', anticipatory, biometric, and environmental measure and modulation at unprecedented scales of molecular and molar 'visibility' and 'sense-ability'.

the ‘Human’ as “the privileged arbiter of experience.”³ This displacement has various effects which I explore in terms of what I call a *techno-apotheosis* in the advent of *techno-gods*. I propose that subjectivity is affected and should be rethought in terms of networked assemblages of subject positions and thing positions, or ‘*human*’ *selves* and *thing selves*.⁴ With this, a technologically mediated and transnationally competitive economy of the ‘Human’ emerges. (Re)produced as it is circulated through social institutions of neoliberal, law-and-order governance, this globalizing ‘Human’ economy situates each social entity—human and other-than-human, organic and inorganic, material and immaterial—within relational, networked, epistemological and ontological continua operational as the twenty-first-century “datafied” “prison nation.”

³ See Mark Hansen’s work, *Feed-Forward: On the Future of Twenty-First-Century Media* (Hansen 50-52).

⁴ For a rich engagement with *thingness* see Patricia Ticineto Clough’s forthcoming Introduction to *The User Unconscious*, which picks up and expands Sue Grand’s work on trauma and split subjectivity in “Unsexed and Ungendered Bodies: The Violated Self,” 2003.

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At the very time when it most often mouths the words, the West has never been further from being able to live a true humanism—a humanism made to the measure of the world.

~ Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*

INTRODUCTION

The social production of knowledge and knowledge societies in the twenty-first century bears witness to and exemplifies the tremendous social transformations taking place in our technology-driven contemporary epoch.⁵ Interchangeably dubbed the “digital,” “information,” or “third industrial” revolution, twenty-first-century knowledge and social production exhibit what Michael Hardt conceptualizes as the “informatization” of economy⁶ and what Patricia Ticineto Clough and Mark Hansen theorize as the “datalogical turn” or the “datafication” of lived experience (Clough, “Rethinking Race” 435-6; Hansen 76-7).⁷ In contemporary Western knowledge societies and economies, our “networked” and “connected” selves, communities, and environments ever-increasingly create, and are created by, twenty-first-century media and technology and the computational and algorithmic production, circulation, and modulation of quantitative, statistical, or ‘populational’ data. In keeping with this shift to the technologically-mediated “informatization” and “datafication” of lived experience and knowledge production

⁵ Throughout, I am deploying Brian Massumi’s conceptualization of the “social” as an articulation of the co-functioning of the cultural, political, and economic, and which, following Gilles Deleuze among others, includes human and nonhuman, organic and inorganic, material and immaterial entities and processes as efficacious actants within these enmeshed spheres.

⁶ Hardt conceives “informatization” as the passage from the second economic paradigm in which material industry and manufacture was dominate, to the contemporary third economic paradigm by which service and information industries have become dominant. Hardt also refers to “informatization” as “a process of economic *postmodernization*” (Hardt 90-91).

⁷ For Clough and Hansen, “datafication” refers to the full digital landscape of data analysis and computation, the scale and capacity of which is unprecedented. This digital landscape is inclusive of (among other emerging technologies) ‘big-data’, data mining, tracking, surveillance, storage, and affect-based predictive, anticipatory, biometric, and environmental measure and modulation at unprecedented scales of molecular and molar digitally mediated ‘visibility’ and ‘sense-ability’.

conceptualized as networks and flows, Mark Hansen asserts a technical version of pharmacological recompense whereby twenty-first-century media and technology exceed psycho-physiological prosthesis, demoting “[human] perceptual consciousness from its privileged position as arbiter of experience” and marking a “new paradigm of [human] co-functioning with technics [in which] machines are necessary to register and interpret the sensory data constituting experience” (Hansen 50-52).

Placing this twenty-first-century technologically expanded and networked paradigm within the trajectory of hegemonic ‘human’ knowledge societies and economies, a new, historically significant mode of knowledge and social production, legitimization, and sovereignty emerges. Tracking hegemonic knowledge-making from late-medieval and early-modern juridical-theological production by God(s) and translation and dissemination by man, through its construction during modernity by the politico-rational ‘Man’ *qua* citizen, this expansion and migration of autonomous knowledge production to technics and data signals a break in dominant Western, liberal humanist traditions. Continually positioning and valuing knowledge and social production in relation to normative structures of ‘human’ perception, cognition, consciousness, and sociality, these liberal humanist traditions and attendant institutions have persistently sanctioned subjectivity, identity, and the corporeal and social status of the ‘human’ as contingent on these bourgeois, Enlightenment-derived, normativized (and normativizing) structures of modernity.

Viewed within this genealogy, the social production and mediation of knowledge and knowledge societies by twenty-first-century media and technology marks a unique turn in modern Western intellectual, epistemological, and ontological history. This turn witnesses and responds to a reconfiguration and redistribution of knowledge economies to sites, processes, and

multi-scalar networked actants⁸ outside of and accessible to ‘humans’ only through technically modified or perceptually mediated digital enhancements. With this, a transformation of the social signifiers, processes, and economies of the sanctioned status of the ‘Human’ and ‘Human’-making⁹ is engendered, demanding a concurrent rethinking and reconfiguration of epistemological and ontological relations between information *qua* data, knowledge, the ‘human’, and twenty-first-century technics.

Temporally contiguous, or coincidental, with this shift to the technologically mediated “informatization” and “datafication” of lived experience and the social production of knowledge and knowledge societies has been the rise and metastatic proliferation of mass incarceration and the American Prison Industrial Complex, underwritten by a ‘law-and-order’ political climate and governance. Considered in a contemporary context of twenty-first-century media and technology and the rapid expansion and deployment of mechanisms of big-data, bio-mediation, surveillance, and predictive and anticipatory technologies—where technologies are also theorized, following Alexander Weheliye, “as the application of knowledge to the practical aims of human life or to changing and manipulating the human environment” (Weheliye 65-66)—the social production of knowledge as a domain, signifier, and producer of the legitimized ‘Human’ warrants reconsideration. Indeed, notions and constructions of ‘human’ subjectivity, corporeality, and the ‘human being’ itself must be again rethought.

⁸ Again following Gilles Deleuze, Bruno Latour and actor-network theory, I use the term ‘actant’ to include human and nonhuman, organic and inorganic, material and immaterial entities and processes that claim creative efficacy within these twenty-first-century knowledge economies.

⁹ I use the term “‘Human’-making” to introduce a problematization of notions of the human as an inherent producer and consumer, or appendage, of knowledge and experience, troubling this economic model of subjectivity as imparting a status of ‘Human’. This term references and re-deploys Hortense Spillers’ concept of “flesh-making” which she uses to draw distinctions between the subjectivity implicit with notions of “body” versus the objecthood indicated by “flesh” and social processes of “flesh-making.”

Beginning with the American Prison Industrial Complex and what sociologist Beth E. Richie conceptualizes as the “prison nation,” I will show the ‘human’ as a contingent and composite status appearing along a spectrum of Flesh, Body, and ‘Human’ (Flesh-Body-‘Human’), implementing and furthering Giorgio Agamben’s distinction between *zoe* and *bios*.¹⁰ Bringing this ‘human’ continuum into conversation with twenty-first-century media and technology and contemporary knowledge economies, I expand the notion, reach, and scale of the prison nation, proposing that this Flesh-Body-‘Human’ continuum materializes also in relation to varying practices, scales, and permutations of corporeal and digital captivity and capture, or a continuum of captivity/capture-freedom/movement. Probing methods of ‘Human’-making and -unmaking (dehumanization) through an examination of mass incarceration operational within America’s Prison Industrial Complex-cum-“prison nation” and the traces of chattel slavery, human objectification, quantification, exploitation, and exclusion that haunt these modern social institutions, this project further delineates, problematizes, and reconfigures relationships between knowledge economies, subjectivity, bodies in/and capture, and ‘Human’-making in the twenty-first, “datafied,” century.

Following Mark Hansen’s treatment of twenty-first-century digital media, I posit that the contemporary, technologically mediated and deployed “prison nation”—the “datafied” “prison nation”—like digital media, is a further displacement of the ‘Human’ as the privileged “arbiter of experience.” This displacement has multiple effects, which I explore in terms of what I call a *techno-apotheosis* in the advent of *techno-gods*. Drawing on affect theory, speculative realism, object-oriented ontology, actor-network theory, posthumanism, twenty-first-century media and disability studies, psychoanalytic perspectives, and sociological works, I propose that with this

¹⁰ Agamben conceives *zoe* as “mere biological life,” whereas *bios* describes “‘full’ human existence. See A. Weheliye “Pornotropes” 2008 (Weheliye 67).

twenty-first-century *techno-apotheosis*, subjectivity is affected and should be rethought in terms of networked assemblages of subject positions and thing positions, or ‘*human*’ *selves* and *thing selves*.¹¹ Situated in conversation with a tracking of hegemonic ‘human’ knowledge economies, this project engages ‘case studies’ of knowledge production and subjectivity framed by the public sphere out of which Western, liberal humanist knowledge societies arose.

Through this discourse, relationships and dynamics between the contemporary, “datafied” social production of knowledge and knowledge societies, corporeal and digital captivity and capture, and the assemblages of ‘*human*’ *selves* and *thing selves* that compose ‘human’ corporeality and subjectivity are dissected, troubled, and reconfigured in the context of twenty-first-century digital mechanisms of bio-mediation, big-data, surveillance, identification, tracking, and predictive and anticipatory technologies. With the technically furthered penetration, disintegration, and becoming-fluid of boundaries between incarcerated and unincarcerated populations, the public and private spheres, state and social governance, and national and global financial and ‘human’-labor economies, a technologically-mediated, reconfigured, granularized, networked, and multi-scalar epistemological and ontological relationality emerges. Arguing that all social entities-*cum*-actants locate within this reconfigured relationality, this anatomy and kinesiology asserts that with the “datafication” of social processes of knowledge production, captivity and capture, and ‘Human’-making, we all—human and other-than-human, organic and inorganic, material and immaterial, entity and event—situate within, and are constructed, arbitrated, and sanctioned by, the permeating and blinding (search) lights of the American “prison nation” and twenty-first-century *techno-gods*.

¹¹ For an in-depth analysis and examination of Clough’s discernment of *thing selves*, see her Introduction to the forthcoming collection, *The User Unconscious*, which leans on but expands Sue Grand’s work on traumatized split selves in “Unsexed and Ungendered Bodies: The Violated Self,” 2003.

SECTION I—EPISTEMOLOGICAL ‘HUMAN’-MAKING

GROSS ANATOMY—A Theoretical and Historical Framing of Knowledge, ‘Human’ Subjectivity, and Bodies in Modernity and the Digital Age

BONES: A Brief Genealogy of Knowledge

Cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* in verb, adjective, and noun forms, ‘*knowledge*’ has predominantly been affiliated with or defined in relation to ‘human’ processes of acknowledgement, recognition, intuition, cognition, intelligence, intellect, perception, intimacy, familiarity, learning, and consciousness, indicating a persistent historical association with the ‘human’ mind-body, perception, subjectivity, and ‘human’-mediated or authorized systems of production, circulation, valorization, and accumulation. However, it is the emergence in a 1982 edition of *Business Week* of the use of knowledge to indicate “information in the form of facts, assumptions, and inference rules which can be accessed by a computer program” that I would like to highlight. While its use remains significantly less common according to the timeline laid out in the *OED*, this rather unusual definition marks an epistemological and ontological shift beginning in the late twentieth century, a shift that continues to expand and accelerate as we move further into the twenty-first century and the digital revolution.

To begin tracking these epistemological and ontological shifts with regard to knowledge, knowledge economies, and the assemblages of ‘*human*’ selves and *thing* selves constituting ‘human’ subjectivity and identity, following Foucault:

The genealogy of knowledge must first...outwit the problematic of the Enlightenment. It has to outwit what was at the time described (and was still described in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) as the progress of enlightenment, the struggle of knowledge against ignorance, of reason against chimeras, of experience against prejudices, of reason against error. (Foucault 179)

In order to take up Foucault's proposal and press beyond it to a consideration of knowledge production and subjectivity in our datafied twenty-first century, it is important to illustrate the rise of this rational, autonomous, newly-political subject—Enlightened 'Man'—as the purveyor and producer of legitimized knowledge. Emerging alongside technological and economic developments of the Industrial Revolution, capitalism, and structural transformations of the bourgeois public sphere, the figure of Enlightened 'Man' illustrates and embodies the social transition during the late Medieval and early Modern eras from feudal, manorial, and juridical-theological, or "juro-theological" (Wynter 11) systems of authority and knowledge production to structures and institutions of reason, empiricism, and governance that distinguish modernity and sanction the modern, rational-critical subject-*cum*-'Human' and public sphere.

LIGAMENTS: Humanism, Enlightened 'Man', and the Bourgeois Public Sphere

Published in 1962 and expansive in scope and methodology, Jürgen Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* traces the formation and eventual dissolution of the bourgeois public sphere of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. While critical interventions—particularly those from feminist, critical race, and queer theories, among others—are important to the reading of Habermas' text, it serves here as a historical resource depicting the confluence of social forces at work in the making of modernity. Arising out of and spurred on by burgeoning early-capitalist market imperatives driven by long-distance trade, mercantilism, industrialization, colonialism, and nascent globalization, this transformed public sphere emerged also in relation to dramatic technological advances enabling 'mass' publication, distribution, and publicity, exponentially increasing the volume, velocity, and circulatory range of communications, social connectivity, and knowledge economies (Habermas 15). While the rise

of capitalism with its “far-reaching networks” of market economies displaced feudal society and manorial structures of power, the ideals of sociability associated with courtly *publicity of representation* established two significant and enduring criteria for legitimized, modern social—and especially, political—participation and subjectivity and, by extrapolation, modernity’s sanctioned status of *bios* or ‘full’ ‘Human’ subjectivity.¹² As such, Agamben conceives *bios* as a matter of representation “only [occurring] in public...there is no representation that would be a ‘private matter’;” and representation as the process by which *someone* or *something* is socially sanctioned as the “sort of being suitable to be elevated into public status” and who is therefore “a being that is capable of representation” (Habermas 7-8). Pointing to exclusionary and regulatory relationships between bodies, identity, subjectivity, and the sanctioned ‘Human’ status required for legitimized rational-critical social participation and knowledge production, Habermas argues that this *publicity of representation* and its “assimilation of bourgeois culture, is an early manifestation of humanism” (9).

Developing in the eighteenth century into a framework demarcating a clear stratum of “good society” within a larger segment of society and separating itself from the state, the “good society” signaled a transition by which private and public spheres became separate in “a specifically modern sense”:

“Private” designated the exclusion from the sphere of the state apparatus; for “public” referred to the state that in the meantime had developed, under absolutism, into an entity having an objective existence over and against the person of the ruler. The public was the “public authority” in contrast to everything “private.” (Habermas 11)

¹² *Publicity of representation* as discussed by Habermas describes feudal and manorial processes of courtly sociability whereby nobility publicly presented themselves as representatives of authority and as embodiments of a “higher power” (Habermas 7-8).

Comprised of “a sphere of private people coming together as a public,” this bourgeois public sphere in turn gave rise to ‘public opinion’ as a “forum in which the private people, come together as a public, readied themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion” (Habermas 27-9). Significantly, it was this transitional period that saw the emergence of the sphere of ‘civil society’.

As the “genuine domain of private autonomy” contrasting and emerging in opposition to the domain of the state, regulation of civil society became “the political task of the bourgeois public sphere” (Habermas 12, 52). In this way, both the public’s understanding of “the public use of reason” and the subjectivity of those who could critically participate in this transforming public sphere were informed by and predicated on structures and norms of the conjugal family. Patriarchal and male-dominated, the conjugal family structure established the social criteria for entry into the critical, and eventually political, public sphere through its determination of the subjectivity of ‘private man’: “The status of private man combined the role of owner of commodities with that of head of the family, that of property owner with that of “human being” *per se*.” Restricted as well to the educated middle class who could avail themselves of the skills of rational-critical debate, the bourgeois public sphere was a gendered, raced, and classed public sphere from which “[w]omen and dependents were factually and legally excluded” (Habermas 28-29). Not only, then, did property ownership, education, and decorum circumscribe who legally qualified as ‘Human’ within this rational-critical public sphere (white bourgeois men), but also, it reciprocally defined who legally qualified as ‘Human’ within the conjugal family and civil society more broadly (white bourgeois men). The accomplishment of a normative, gendered, raced, and classed political public sphere and ‘Human’ status was thus also the

accomplishment of a normative, gendered, raced, and classed ‘Human’ status within the structuring of the family and civil society.

Considering this requirement of property ownership, or private property, in particular, it is crucial to briefly interject two points that will be taken up more fully later: first, from the perspective of critical race theory and postcolonial studies (and others), property ownership in the context of the Americas and slavery arguably implicates *owning humans* as a condition for attaining a socially sanctioned ‘Human’ status and subjectivity;¹³ and second, it is noteworthy that print communications, literacy, and education were key factors in the transformation of the public sphere and the rise of Enlightened ‘Man’ and modernity, and that the denial and criminalization of literacy, education, and certain forms of communication were, concurrently, hallmarks of slavery and methods of dehumanization, oppression, and biopolitical management.

Most salient to the project of this thesis are four intertwining trajectories traced by Habermas: the development of distinct, modern, public and private realms; the social requirements for a participatory, legitimized, ‘Human’ status and subjectivity within this rational-critical and hegemonic-knowledge producing public sphere and its private civil and domestic counterparts; the expectations and norms of social decorum, deriving out of courtly *publicity of representation*, by which *someone* or *something* is socially sanctioned as a being suitable for and capable of public representation; and finally, the historical and social shift from knowledge conceptualized as being produced and legitimized by God and translated, regulated, and distributed by man, to man as an autonomous, sovereign being with the authority to produce, legitimize, and circulate knowledge. On one hand, these social developments and structural

¹³ My thanks to Dr. Karl Steel for his comments on a previous version of this segment concerning the implications of property ownership in the context of the European bourgeois public sphere as compared to the implications in the context of transatlantic slavery and the American public sphere and social order.

transformations conceptually opened and expanded notions of legitimized subjectivity, knowledge production, and the scope of the public sphere, decentralizing it to a certain extent and allowing it to become more accessible and inclusive as it became more quotidian in context. However, on the other hand, the transformation of the bourgeois public sphere—with its Enlightenment-derived humanism and imperatives of modernity—ultimately gives birth to and firmly establishes the Western, white, male, property-owning, educated, abled, and heteronormative subject-*qua*-citizen as the measure and model of corporeal and ideological ‘Human’ subjectivity, sociability, normativity, and legitimacy within the transformed public sphere outlined by Habermas. It is here, then, that we reunite with Foucault and his call to move knowledge beyond its Enlightenment trappings and limitations.

TENDONS: Knowledge, Modernity’s ‘Human’, and the Digital Age

Historically associated with anthropocentric notions and methods of production, possession, and dissemination, the genealogy of Western, hegemonic knowledge and knowledge economies has been inextricably tied to social significations, praxes, and strategies of the ‘Human’ and ‘Human-making’. However, as Wendy Hui Kyong Chun contends, what is new about our contemporary quantified and networked knowledge society is the capacity to render complex populational interactions into visualizable lines of connection and the new, technologically mediated, scales of ‘visibility’ of the entangled ‘*human*’ *selves* (‘human’ subject positions) and *thing selves* (‘thing’ subject positions) that assemble to form identity and subjectivity; “Networks do not produce an imagined and anonymous ‘we’...but rather, a relentlessly pointed yet empty, singular yet plural YOU [that]...in its plural mode...still addresses individuals as individuals” (Chun 2-4). With this, the conceptual, practical, and

empirical boundaries between subject, object, and *thing*, and ‘human’ and ‘other-than-human’, become ever more fluid and leaky, opening relationships between knowledge, experience, identity, subjectivity, and bodies to new scales of molecular and molar technological ‘visibility’, accessibility, and modulation, and to consequent social, economic, and juridical curation and contestation.

It is in pursuing this project of the disentanglement and emancipation of knowledge from its bourgeois, humanist heritage of production by, for, and of the ‘Human’ that late twentieth century and contemporary turns to posthumanism, affect, the nonhuman or other-than-human, and twenty-first-century technology and media become particularly critical and generative moves. Within the context of these turns, the aforementioned 1982 assignation of the term ‘knowledge’ to “information in the form of facts, assumptions, and inference rules which can be accessed by a computer program” becomes significant and prescient. Drawing on and furthering critical social and intellectual projects concerned with the de-centering of man and the “death of the subject,” the more recent turn to affect and the nonhuman have,

extended discussions about culture, subjectivity, identity, and bodies begun in critical theory and cultural criticism under the influence of poststructuralism and deconstruction...[that] return critical theory and cultural criticism to bodily matter ...[and] point to a dynamism immanent to bodily matter and matter generally—matter’s capacity for self-organization in being informational. (Clough, *Affective Turn* 206-7)

Placed in conversation with twenty-first-century media and technology and the “informatization” and “datafication” of knowledge, experience, and “life itself,” this consideration of matter as informational and self-organizing offers a reframing and reconceptualization of what constitutes knowledge, bodies, life, and liveliness, implicating and inviting a concomitant rethinking of the

parameters and possibilities of ‘Human’ consciousness and knowledge production. Evolving out of or alongside intellectual and theoretical developments including affect theory, speculative realism, actor-network theory, forms of new materialism, animal studies, assemblage theory, and systems theory among others (Grusin viii), the turns to affect, the nonhuman, and other-than-human, while not without problematics, offers a way to think about the distribution of experience, knowledge, and knowledge production on a scale, and at a level of granularity, that is historically unprecedented.

What is both remarkable and vertigo inducing about twenty-first-century media and technology and its deployment as an apparatus of bio-mediation is, as Bruno Latour notes, the radical “distribution of agency across a heterogeneous network of human and nonhuman actants...[and the] distributed or cyborg agency of humans and nonhumans in technoscientific practice” (Grusin xv). Mark Hansen, picking up and extending this line of thinking surrounding twenty-first-century media and technology, asserts:

These media systems bypass consciousness and embodiment...they bypass the limitations of consciousness and embodiment...Because the impact of twenty-first-century media occurs in large part peripherally to or entirely outside of perception, we can no longer continue to accord perception the privilege it has held in the history of Western philosophy...Twenty-first-century media...affect the materiality of experience at a level more elemental than that of our perception; more precisely, they impact experience by shaping the ongoing worldly production of sensibility that constitutes the sensory confound out of which perception proper can in turn arise... Bluntly put: there simply is no direct conscious or bodily correlate of the sensory effects of twenty-first-century media. (Hansen 45-50)

Aligning this technological modulation and ‘translation’ of ‘human’ experience with affect theory, conceptualizations of the efficacy, potentiality, and indeterminacy of affect, and process philosophy and twenty-first-century media as treated and expanded by Hansen, we see

the emergence of a redistributed and networked economy of both knowledge and experience, ‘human’ and other-than-human.¹⁴ With the deployment of affective agency and potentiality across this multi-scalar spectrum of the ‘human’ and organismic to the other-than-human and environmental, what emerges is a further unseating of the ‘Human’ as an essential aspect of knowledge and knowledge production. Paired with the conceptualization of the ‘Human’ as a networked and composite entity appearing along interrelated continua of subjectivity (Flesh-Body-‘Human’) and corporeal and digital capture (captivity/capture-freedom/movement) increasingly assembled, mediated, and modulated by twenty-first-century technology, this return to and intensification of the displacement of the ‘Human’ as the privileged “arbiter of experience” recalls histories of knowledge production via divine revelation and the vertical directionality, or flow, of juridical-theological knowledge economies and social production.¹⁵

Putting this theoretical and historical scaffolding to work within Beth Richie’s conceptualization of the contemporary United States as a “prison nation,” this project places theoretical moves and interventions by Patricia Ticineto Clough, Hortense Spillers, Alexander Weheliye, Sue Grand, Mark Hansen, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, and Eunjung Kim (among others) in conversation with sociological works by Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Beth E. Richie, and Michelle Alexander. Drawing as well from several other scholars working in the terrain of twenty-first-century media and technology, subjectivity, slavery, mass incarceration, and the Prison Industrial Complex, I turn now to an examination and mapping—a kinesiology—of the dynamics and

¹⁴ Also referred to as the ‘ontology of becoming’, process philosophy identifies change and processual development with metaphysical reality, as opposed to classic ontology, which considers reality ‘timeless’, substance as essential, and change as thereby accidental and not essential.

¹⁵ Divine revelation: “In religion and theology, revelation is the revealing or disclosing of some form of truth or knowledge through communication with a deity or other supernatural entity or entities” (“Revelation” *Wikipedia.com*).

mechanics between twenty-first-century processes of corporeal and digital capture, hegemonic or legitimized knowledge economies, and ‘Human’-making performed by and through the “datafied” American “prison nation” and twenty-first-century *techno-gods*.

SECTION II—ONTOLOGICAL ‘HUMAN’-MAKING

KINESIOLOGY—Dynamics and Mechanics: Knowledge, the ‘Human’, Bodies, and the American Prison Nation

To begin this kinesiology or mapping of the movements and articulations between hegemonic knowledge societies, ‘Human’ subjectivity, ‘Human’-making, and corporeal and digital captivity and capture, I offer brief examples that clarify overarching ideologies, contradictions, and continuities between the “basic rights” considered essential in egalitarian knowledge societies and the praxes at work in the American institutions of chattel slavery and the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC). These contradictions and continuities carry through, with difference and repetition, into Beth E. Richie’s concept of the American “prison nation” as discussed in her work *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America’s Prison Nation*, and Michelle Alexander’s theorization of an American “undercaste” from her work *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Moving forward, I outline and place key arguments from Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* alongside Beth Richie’s theorization of the prison nation and Michelle Alexander’s conception of an American “undercaste.” These texts offer incisive analyses charting, like Habermas, the convoluted interactions between social and state forces, this time at work within the Prison Industrial Complex and prison nation. Excavating what becomes a spectrum of corporeal and social captivity and capture, I simultaneously conduct a reading and rendering of the subjectivity and status of the ‘Human’ as an amalgam, or

permutation, that appears along a Flesh-Body-‘Human’ continuum as it articulates with a continuum of mobility, or captivity/capture-freedom/movement.¹⁶ Finally, I conclude this kinesiology by proposing that, in the context of twenty-first-century technology and the digitally revolutionized state, not only do carceral statuses of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, or ‘incarcerated’ and ‘un-incarcerated’ disintegrate in tandem with the collapse and conflation of contemporary private and public spheres, but also there is an almost universalizing capacity intrinsic to this digital revolution and the “datafication” of lived experience. Redistributing processes of ‘Human’-making, control, quantification, and dehumanization just as it redistributes and regulates knowledge economies and the socially sanctioned ‘Human’ status, the twenty-first-century datafication of state apparatuses of biopower-*cum*-ontopower leaves no being—‘human’ or other-than-human—‘outside’, untouched, un-affected, or unmediated by twenty-first-century *techno-gods* and the datafied prison nation.¹⁷

GROUNDWORK—Brief Illustrations: Ideologies, Contradictions, and Continuities in ‘Human’-making

Citing Enlightenment-derived ideals of ‘human rights’, participatory inclusivity, and a public knowledge forum in which all members of a society, local or global, achieve “equal and universal access to knowledge, and genuine sharing...[as] the cornerstone of true knowledge societies,” the 2005 UNESCO World Report, “Towards Knowledge Societies,” puts forth three basic ‘human’ rights within knowledge societies:¹⁸

¹⁶ Again following Brian Massumi, I use the term ‘social’ to indicate the enmeshed and inherently interrelated political, cultural, and economic realms.

¹⁷ Massumi defines ‘ontopower’ as an “environmental power” as it locates at the ontological level of affect and affectivity. For Massumi, ontopower is more than a neoliberal concern with human capital, but also it is “a matter of the affective capacity of all matter” (Clough, *User Unconscious* np).

¹⁸ UNESCO signifies the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

Freedom of expression as well as freedom of information, media pluralism, and academic freedom; the right to education and its corollary, free basic education and progress towards free access to other levels of education; and, the right “freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.” (UNESCO 17-18)

Juxtaposed with an 1850 publication suggesting strict discipline, unconditional submission, creating a sense of personal inferiority, instilling fear, and depriving access to education and recreation to “ensure...slaves remain uneducated, helpless and dependent” as the means for producing an “ideal slave,” the contradictions and continuities between these basic rights and social methods of ‘Human’-making and –unmaking at work in the production and regulation of slaves, prisoners, and the socially precarious populations of the prison nation and “undercaste” become undeniably apparent (Christian 144). The following excerpts—two from the 1712 and 1739 South Carolina slave code, and two from the 1971 Attica prisoners' Manifesto of Demands entitled “Man’s Right to Knowledge and Free Use Thereof,” respectively—exemplify these contradictions and continuities:¹⁹ “No slave could work for pay; plant corn, peas or rice; keep hogs, cattle, or horses; own or operate a boat; buy or sell, or wear clothes finer than “Negro cloth;” ...A fine of \$100 and six months in prison were imposed for teaching a slave to read and write; the death penalty was imposed for circulating incendiary literature” (Christian 27-28, 45); and from the Attica prisoners’ Manifesto: “In our efforts to intellectually expand in keeping with the outside world, through all categories of news media, we are systematically restricted and punitively offended to isolation status when we insist on our human rights to the

¹⁹ Attica refers to the Attica Correctional Facility in Attica, New York. According to the *Editor’s Note* for the 2011 SAGE *Race & Class* (Vol. 53(2): 28-35) re-publication of the Attica prisoners’ Manifesto of Demands, on September 9, 1971, prisoners in Attica rioted and forcibly occupied the facility. This resulted in four days of negotiations, after which New York State police, under the orders of Governor Nelson Rockefeller, re-took control of Attica in a bloody conflict that left thirty-nine people dead.

wisdom of awareness;” and, “We demand that better food be served to the inmates... We also demand that drinking water be put on each table and that each inmate be allowed to take as much food as he wants and as much bread as he wants” (Attica Liberation Faction 29-30).

In thinking the continuity between slavery and the expansion of mass social curation, immobilization, and management through mass imprisonment (the PIC) and the prison nation—what threads through not only the methods of producing an “ideal slave,” but also the various conceptions and implications of captivity and capture, psychological, corporeal, and digital—is, as Alexander Weheliye notes:²⁰

The manifold modes in which extreme brutality and directed killing frequently coexist with other forms of coercion and non-coercion within the scope of the normal juridico-political order. This is what invents the *homo sacer* as *homo sacer*, for bare life must be measured against something, otherwise it just appears as life. (Weheliye 68)

Here, Weheliye deftly draws into focus relations between the biopolitical efficacy and finitude, or limits, of corporeal death and the comparatively limitless permutations of regulatory potential embedded in the abject figure and threat of *homo sacer* within hegemonic knowledge societies and economies of the sanctioned ‘Human’ status and subjectivity.²¹ Following Julia Kristeva’s feminist psychoanalytic understanding of the abject and abjection as “preserv[ing] what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be,” the abject precedes the socially

²⁰ *Captive, adjective*: Said of animals caught and kept in confinement, also of a thing restrained from escaping; Said of an animal or thing. *Capture, noun*: Data capture; To cause (data) to be entered into a computer; To represent, catch, or record; To take prisoner; to catch by force, surprise, or stratagem; *Captivate, verb*: enslaved in will and feeling; Enthral (the understanding, reason, affections, will, etc.); To make or hold captive, put or keep in subjection, subjugate (the mind, mental attributes, etc.); To enslave, fascinate, enamour, enchant, charm (www.oed.com).

²¹ According to Kristeva, ‘the abject’ represents both the threat of a breakdown in the symbolic order of meaning and the ‘human’ and social reaction to this breakdown (Kristeva 2).

constructed symbolic order of language, meaning, intersubjectivity, and sociality.²² Marking what Kristeva conceives as a “primal repression,” abjection is the means by which “primitive societies have marked out a precise area of their culture in order to remove it from the threatening world of animals or animalism, which were imagined as representatives of sex and murder.”²³ Disrupting the disciplined distinctions of ‘human’ and ‘animal’, subject and object, self and other, the abject “disturbs identity, system, order...[It] does not respect borders, positions, rules” (Kristeva 10, 12-13). The abject is and inhabits these liminal spaces, dangerously illuminating the constructed and therefore contingent nature of law and order as well as the social authority inscribed in mandates of governance and hegemonic social hierarchies of domination (Kristeva 4). Poignantly, Kristeva describes the threat posed by the abject to the epistemological and ontological interests of the hegemonic social order:

A wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay, does not *signify* death...No, as in true theater, without makeup or masks, refuse and corpses [the abject] *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being. (Kristeva 3)

²² The ‘symbolic order’—Jacques Lacan’s concept of the social world of linguistic communication, intersubjective relationships, and ideological and legal norms—articulates with the imaginary and the Real. Kristeva reads Lacan’s concept through prisms of feminist and queer psychoanalytics, rendering a gendered understanding of the liminality of the abject and abjection as they work in tension with the symbolic order. Contrasting Lacan’s ‘object of desire’ around which a subject organizes their desires, in turn reproducing the symbolic order of meaning and intersubjectivity, Kristeva’s ‘abject’ “is radically excluded” and threatens a collapse in the symbolic order of meaning (Kristeva 2). For full analyses see Kristeva’s *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* and Lacan’s modules on desire and psychosexual development.

²³ Kristeva theorizes “primal repression” as the moment in a subject’s psychosexual development when a distinction is established between human and animal, ‘culture’ and the pre-social, or primitive, and which occurs before the development of relations to objects of desire and representation, and before the formation of the conscious and unconscious.

Like Kristeva, Weheliye places the “invention” and function of *homo sacer*, abjection, and processes of ‘Human’-making and -unmaking squarely in the middle of social productions of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and sociality—‘human’ and other-than-human, subject, object, and *thing*—legitimized or otherwise. In equating practices of coercion in addition to physical brutality and killing with “normal” functions of the juridico-political order, Weheliye explicitly points to the hegemonic state and civil society as mechanisms driving the social production of gradations of the ‘Human’ and ‘humanness’ (agential, legitimate subjectivity). In so doing, Weheliye names the inhumanity intrinsic to these institutions and structures and their ideological and practical underpinnings. As Dipesh Chakrabarty incisively argues, as much as collective violence appears to transform the ‘human’ into a *thing*, it is in fact the initial recognition of the ‘other’ as ‘human’ that underwrites this violence: “It is humans who torture, rape, oppress, exploit, other humans. We cannot do these things to objects...The denial of the victim’s humanity, thus, proceeds necessarily from this initial recognition of it” (qtd. in Kim 297). The hegemonic codification and removal of humanity and its characteristics are thus violent actions implicating will, desire, and choice, effectively fictionalizing any claims or ‘evidence’ of originary, (un)learned, or extra-legal inferiority and concretizing the ‘Human’ status and subjectivity as socially manufactured and distributed. With this, imaginations and proclamations of the hegemonic state, public sphere, civil society, and the ‘free’ market of capitalism as instruments of ‘blind justice’, equalizing mobility, and humane ‘civilized’ society erode, as do the justifications of social wellbeing, law, and order used to substantiate social projects of ‘Human’-making and -unmaking.

Most salient to this project of discerning continua that span and connect incarcerated and unincarcerated bodies as well as the interrelated social strata comprising the body politic—

legitimized, abject, and otherwise—is Weheliye’s discernment of the central features of methods of dehumanization, objectification, quantification, and the disciplining and control of bodies and the knowledges they produce: deprivation, depravation, choice, will, desire, and refusal. Identifying deprivation as “the damaging lack of material benefits considered to be basic necessities in a society,” and depravation as, “to make someone immoral or wicked,” Weheliye, quoting Agamben, proposes that the basis of freedom and, by extrapolation, a ‘full’ humanity (*bios*), resides in the depths and reservoirs of potentiality, or, in the parlance of a Deleuzian theory of affect, the potentiality of indeterminacy:

To be free is not to simply have the power to do this or that thing, nor is it simply the power to refuse to do this or that thing. To be free is...*to be capable of one’s own impotentiality*, to be in relation to one’s own privation. (Weheliye 77)

With this theorization of freedom we see that, while choice and refusal signal aspects of agency involved in exercising one’s ‘Human’ subjectivity, freedom roots itself not so much in choosing or refusing the doing or not-doing of something, but rather, in the self-determination, self-identification, and self-regulation—the processual *being*—implied in the designation ‘human being’. Affirmed in Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s notion of freedom, which she identifies in the context of the contemporary Prison Industrial Complex as “control over one’s bodily habits, pastimes, relationships, and mobility” (12), it is here that I take up Gilmore’s analysis of the rise of the Prison Industrial Complex in *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* in order to situate, complicate, and expand Beth Richie’s prison nation and Michelle Alexander’s American “undercaste.” Conceived and written in the context of post-chattel slavery and post-civil rights America, these works—*Golden Gulag*, *Arrested Justice*, and *The New Jim Crow*—deeply examine continuities between contemporary methods of corporeal and psychological domination, quantification, ‘Human’-making, and dehumanization and those

previously illustrated by the 1850 guide to producing the “ideal slave,” the South Carolina slave code, and the Attica prisoners' Manifesto of Demands as they push up against the UNESCO criteria for equitable knowledge societies. To bring an examination of strategies, tactics, and targets of state- and socially-sanctioned ‘Human’-making, -unmaking, and regulation into the twenty-first-century, I turn now to Beth Richie, Michelle Alexander, and Ruth Wilson Gilmore.

The Prison Industrial Complex, the Prison Nation, and an American “undercaste”: Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Beth E. Richie, and Michelle Alexander (An Overview)

Excavating distinct, albeit inherently related, lines of connection and impact within the web of state and social interests that birth and bleed out from mass incarceration, the Prison Industrial Complex, the prison nation, and the American “undercaste,” Gilmore, Richie, and Alexander each accomplish incisive and timely critical analyses tracing the incestuous workings of hegemonic, racialized, gendered, liberal, neoliberal, and capitalist forces in and behind statecraft, biopower, and civil society. These potent texts offer comprehensive and meticulous mappings of the tentacular, strategic, and often invisibilized connections and dynamics between networked social structures, policies, institutions, and rhetoric. More than mere theoretical or sociological plottings, these scholars collectively unmask and voice the transgenerational fallout of these forces as they persistently reverberate through the lived experience of individuals, families, communities, and populations both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ physical carceral sites, and ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ firsthand, empirical involvement with mechanisms and appendages of the Prison Industrial Complex and prison nation.

Aligning these works toward an elucidation of contemporary methods of domination, quantification, control, and ‘Human’-making, I engage and deploy Beth Richie’s notion of the “prison nation” as an overarching prismatic, or milieu, through which to consider and frame this

alignment. Contextualizing the confluence and relational dynamics of social forces—novel and inherited—that gave rise to mass incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex, the prison nation un.masks and describes the expansion and distribution of ‘criminality’ to civil society and everyday sociality through punishing racialized, gendered, and classed public policy environments. Situating Michelle Alexander’s assertion of an American “undercaste” within the public policy environments of the prison nation allows for a populational perspective that sheds light on the ontological and epistemological scales of ‘Human’-making in the prison nation. Beth Richie constitutes the “prison nation” in this way:

A prison nation reflects the ideological and public policy shifts that have led to the increased criminalization of disenfranchised communities of color, more aggressive law enforcement strategies for norm-violating behavior, and an undermining of civil and human rights of marginalized groups. A prison nation refers to those dimensions of civil society that use the power of law, public policy, and institutional practices in strategic ways to advance hegemonic values and to overpower efforts by individuals and groups that challenge the status quo. (3)

Although Gilmore, Richie, and Alexander all trace the historical forces and convoluted social relations at work in contemporary public and private spheres, where these works complement and inform but also diverge from one other is in the specific socio-spatial terrain of their respective mappings. Gilmore’s work, *Golden Gulag*, surgically plots the social structures, institutions, transformations, and policies that converged in California in the 1980s and 1990s, giving birth to the Prison Industrial Complex. This collaborative construction hinged on the relocation, immobilization, and regulation of populations of people functionally transformed through law, governance, and the (criminal) justice system into economic and political objects of public policy (public opinion) under the influence of capitalism-*cum*-statecraft. Richie’s work, *Arrested Justice*, tracks the socially induced and distributed precarity, exclusion, abandonment,

oppression, disenfranchisement, and violence experienced by disadvantaged and marginalized Black communities, and Black women in particular. These individuals and communities embody and inhabit the social fallout of mass incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex, depicting and populating the geography of the prison nation. Together, these works illustrate the racialized, gendered, and classed formation, maintenance, and reproduction of contemporary systems of subordination, domination, and ‘Human’-making.

Considered in a context of twenty-first-century media and technology, the datafied prison nation broadens and deepens its epistemological and ontological reach, enveloping Michelle Alexander’s “undercaste” and revealing the domestic social dynamics and lines of connection diagrammed by Gilmore as part and parcel of larger global social dynamics of advanced (and advancing) political-economic, neoliberal, and technically-enabled globalization and multi-scalar networked connectivity. To expose the hegemonic fabrication of composite gradations of the ‘Human’ and ‘Human’ subjectivity in the twenty-first century, I begin with a closer examination of Gilmore’s anatomy and analysis of the rise of California’s Prison Industrial Complex. Concerned with the social forces at work in the industrialization of punishment, social control, and ‘Human’-making specific to California, Gilmore’s study articulates clear vectors and networks of social construction reciprocally conditional to and conditioned by the emergence of the prison nation. Paralleling those operational on a global scale, California’s Prison Industrial Complex serves as a prototype of the social production of knowledge and ‘Human’ subjectivity in the advent of *techno-gods* and the “datalogically” enhanced, expanded, and globalizing prison nation.²⁴

²⁴ Clough and her co-authors designate the “datalogical turn” as the “regime of calculation, quantification, and measure” that have transformed not only the humanities and social sciences in the academy, but also to account for the everyday integration and assimilation of calculation,

Ruth Wilson Gilmore with Eunjung Kim: The Prison Industrial Complex and “Unbecoming Human” Through Mass Captivity

Meticulously researched and written, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* traces the rise and proliferation of the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) in California throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Drawing on genealogies and histories of prisons and prisoners deriving out of slavery and the concurrent and transforming relationships between labor, capital (industry), state, and civil society, Gilmore’s project brings contemporary relationships between social ‘Human’-making, legitimized ‘Human’ subjectivity, captivity and capture, freedom, political economy, and statecraft into crystalline focus. Leaning heavily on Marxist theories of political economy, *Golden Gulag* situates itself as an in-depth explication of the co-functioning forces and praxes of productivity, politics, and economy, or bodies, state, and capital. Encapsulating these relations, Gilmore states:

The practice of putting people in cages for all or part of their lives is a central feature in the development of secular states, participatory democracy, individual rights, and contemporary notions of freedom. These institutions of modernity...faced a challenge—most acutely where capitalism flourished unfettered—to produce stability from “the accumulation and useful administration” of people on the move in a “society of strangers (Foucault, 1977: 303).” (Gilmore 11)

It is modernity’s imperatives and practices of manufacturing and maintaining social “stability” that Gilmore points to as the central organizing principles around which the Prison Industrial Complex and the political economy and public policy that supported it cohered. Highlighting the ever-increasing entanglement of state, capital, and civil society, Gilmore traces

quantification, and measure through data mining, capture, tracking devices, etc.—what she refers to as “the full analytic capacities of twenty-first-century media” (Clough, *Rethinking Race* 438).

the shifting interactions and interests of these spheres following the end of the Progressive era through the transition to the ‘law-and-order’ political climate that was a hallmark of the changing and contracting economy and public policy work of the 1980s and 1990s. Following this trajectory, Gilmore tracks California’s shifting demographics and social values as an influx of immigrant labor and the increasing prevalence of jobs in low-wage “high-growth sectors, such as apparel” led to a redistribution of rural and urban populations (45). Occurring alongside these economic and demographic changes were realignments in political and economic allegiances, and dramatic shifts in rhetoric, public opinion, public policy, and social services and entitlements that both brokered and were born out of these shifting dynamics and their social repercussions.

California’s transformation from a political economic military-industrial complex and Keynesian welfare state to a workfare-warfare state rooted in post-Keynesian, law-and-order praxes brought with it not only the rise of the PIC, but also a strategically cultivated shift in public opinion and values exhibited, quintessentially, in the image of Ronald Reagan’s “much-publicized welfare queen” (Gilmore 40-45). Brought about by social crises resulting in idled capacities, or surpluses, of “people, land, capital, and state,” Gilmore views prisons as “partial geographic solutions to political economic crises, organized by the state, which is in crisis itself,” and as solutions that were “constructed deliberately—but not conspiratorially—out of [the] surpluses that were not put back to work in other ways” (26, 88). Identifying ‘crisis’ following Stuart Hall and Bill Schwarz as that which “occurs when the social formation can no longer be reproduced on the basis of the preexisting system of social relations,” Gilmore astutely observes that crisis ultimately signals “systemic change whose outcome is determined through struggle...at all levels of society as people try to figure out...what to make of idled capacities” in the “daily, seasonal, and generational” reproduction of society. According to Gilmore, it is these

surpluses that led to California's "prison-building and -filling plan that government analysts have called "the biggest...in the history of the world" (Rudman and Berthelsen 1991: i)" (5, 54).

To execute this "prison-building and -filling plan" a plethora of laws were passed that broadened what counted as a crime, targeted marginalized communities made more precarious through economic, public policy, and public service divestments, and which increased in number and comprehensiveness as the law-and-order political climate led to the so-called 'War on Drugs' and 'War on Crime'. As Gilmore states:

Defined in the simple terms of the secular state, crime means a violation of the law. Laws change, depending on what, in a social order, counts as stability, and who, in a social order, needs to be controlled. (12)

This pattern of legislative creation, amendment, or removal of laws in relation to crisis, stability, and control has a long history still unfolding today. These instances include, but are certainly not limited to: a proliferation of law-making following the Civil War to ensure the availability of cheap labor in the aftermath of abolition; the flourish of Jim Crow laws that followed Reconstruction, "sparked the nationwide apartheid craze," and remained officially in effect through most of the Civil Rights Movement; and, of particular relevance to the wars on drugs and crime, an explosion in laws criminalizing possession, distribution, and manufacture of previously unregulated substances following the end of Prohibition (Gilmore 12-13). What this reveals is that, like economy, state, and sociality, crime is a fluid concept with ever-changing features, functions, and relationships to methods of unfreedom and the control of social and corporeal movement, mobility, and legitimized 'Human' subjectivity. In this way, California began the manufacture of prisoners and would-be-prisoners at an unprecedented rate, justified by social imperatives that, rhetorically and strategically if not realistically, hinged on the premise

that “prisons produce stability through controlling what counts as crime” and who counts as criminals (Gilmore 13).

What Gilmore performs so adroitly is the excavation and enunciation of the becoming-capitalist of the California state, and the becoming-state of California capital that enabled the industrialization of punishment and ‘Human’-making made incarnate in the PIC. Put less abstractly, Gilmore lays bare the collaborations and collusions between statesmen and capitalists that co-opted public opinion, public policy, and their respective roles in civil society, drawing parallels between California’s transforming industries and social structures and those discussed by Habermas in the rise of humanism, modernity, and the bourgeois public sphere. These collaborations, Gilmore notes, engendered the transformation of prisons from sites of rehabilitation in the Progressive era to sites of incapacitation, and the transformation of prisoners from temporarily incarcerated but potentially contributing members of society to affective ‘human’ life-force *qua* capital on indeterminate lockdown. With this transformation of prisoners from ‘Humans’ being rehabilitated, made productive, and returned to society to members of a population of incarcerated ‘human’ capital, what emerges is a (too familiar) objectification and quantification of ‘humans’ through processes of captivity, capture, and immobilization. The transformation of ‘Human’ populations into populations of “quasi-objects” made productive for capital is theorized by Eunjung Kim as being marked by:

...moments when one becomes a “quasi-object” (being a laboring machine or being in an unconscious or immobile state), so that one embodies the characteristics of objects, perceives one’s body or body parts as objects, or suspends what are conventionally viewed as uniquely human capacities and values. (Kim 295-6)

This control of the movement of bodies, or the immobilization and capture of bodies for economic and political purposes, harbors residues and impulses of objectification and ‘Human’-

making reminiscent of slavery and slave codes that similarly regulated and criminalized bodily movement and behaviors. This is exemplified in these additional items from the 1712 and 1739 South Carolina slave code:

- Slaves were forbidden to leave the owner's property unless accompanied by a white person, or with permission. If a slave left the owner's property without permission, "every white person" was required to chastise them.
- Any slave attempting to run away and leave the colony (later, the state) received the death penalty.
- Slave homes were searched every two weeks for weapons or stolen goods. Punishment escalated from loss of an ear, branding and nose-slitting to death on the fourth offense.
- A fine of \$100 and six months in prison were imposed for selling (or giving) alcoholic beverages to slaves. (Christian 27-28, 45)

The overall effect of Gilmore's dense analysis is a diligent rendering of the collaborative efforts between state and capital that furthered and transformed the economic processes of productivity begun by capital with slavery. Continuing through the era of convict leasing and racialized legislation that supported this supply of low-cost labor, these processes ultimately cohered in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries' reconfiguration of social structures, manifesting in California as the Prison Industrial Complex and industrialized punishment and 'Human'-making (Gilmore 2). With an almost 500 percent increase in the prisoner population between 1982 and 2000, "even though the crime rate peaked in 1980 and declined, unevenly but decisively, thereafter," what occurred in California was essentially the creation of a 'class' of convicts largely comprised of "deindustrialized cities' working or workless poor" (Gilmore 7). Paired with Eunjung Kim's theorization of the becoming-"quasi-object" of humans captured, immobilized, and constructed as "laboring machines," what materializes is not only a 'human' status that is not 'fully' 'human' (*bios*), but also the continuum of captivity/capture-

freedom/movement inextricably tied to processes of dehumanization and ‘Human’-making. With this, we see that captivity and capture lend sustenance to methods of ‘human’ subjugation, subordination, control, and quantification made productive for the state and the maintenance of the status quo, and that these methods can be traced back to slavery, perhaps one of the greatest quantifications of ‘human’ life to date.

What Gilmore crucially accomplishes is an articulation of capitalism, statecraft, ‘human’ subjectivity, and captivity and capture (incarceration) as co-functioning, fluid, and adaptable systems of relationality invested in and produced by the social regulation of movement: movement of capital (circulation, accumulation, crisis); movement of bodies and knowledges (or, lack thereof); movement of laws and legislation (shifting notions of public and private, and state, social, and individual responsibilities); and the movement of contradictions, competitions, and alliances within these networked relationalities. In this way, the management of social identity, legitimacy, and voice—the management of full ‘human’ subjectivity (*bios*) and ideological and participatory citizenship (and deviance)—moves much like the rivers, waterways, and irrigation systems that cut across and connect urban and rural California, enabling the geographic redistribution of bodies, labor, and capital. With flows, canals, and lochs formed by the individuals, families, communities, and populations channeled through the social entanglements Gilmore describes, the (criminal) justice-*cum*-political economic systems and the populations of prisoners and would-be-prisoners they manage function as tributaries, reservoirs, holding tanks, and cooling ponds in an intricately enmeshed social order concerned with regulating and curating social participation, mobility, productivity, and varying degrees of ‘human’ subjectivity

conceived as operating within an economy of normativity and deviance.²⁵ “When it comes to crime and prisons, the few whose difference might horribly erupt stand in for the many whose difference is emblazoned on surfaces of skin, documents, and maps—color, credo, citizenship, communities, convictions” (Gilmore 15). As Stuart Hall states, “race is the modality in which class is lived” (qtd. in Gilmore 39).

With this, the ‘human’ and other-than-human are locked into a dialectical and ontologically oppositional and contingent relationship, formed and filled in a capitalist social environment built on hierarchies of domination operational through the hegemonic manufacture and regulation of social “norms which guarantee legality” (Cheah 168). The status of ‘Human’ and ‘human’-subjectivity are thus quantified, objectified, and placed on social continua whose constituent strata are put in competition with one another. These strata must compete inside a political economy where access to life-building services, opportunities, and social mobility are constructed and rhetoricized as finite, zero-sum resources in an economy of scarcity and loss where there is never enough to go around.²⁶ Producing scales of ‘humanness’ and ‘human’ subjectivity—conceived here as legitimate social participation and thereby knowledge production—it becomes clear that the Prison Industrial Complex is one sector at work within a larger prison nation.

²⁵ “A cooling pond is a man-made body of water primarily formed for the purpose of supplying cooling water to a nearby power plant or industrial facility such as a petroleum refinery, pulp and paper mill, chemical plant, steel mill or smelter” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooling_pond).

²⁶ An ‘economy of scarcity and loss’ indicates the economic and rhetorical idea of social, human economies in which human want exceeds resource availability and sustainability.

Beth E. Richie and the Prison Nation: Everyday Mechanisms of Social Captivity, Capture, and ‘Human’-making

Contextualized by Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s preparatory and foundational mapping of the fluid social networks that collaborate to manufacture, accumulate, and distribute the prisoners and would-be-prisoners essential to reproducing the Prison Industrial Complex, Beth E. Richie’s work *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America’s Prison Nation* puts a ‘human face’, so to speak, on the specific and staggering community, familial, individual, and transgenerational effects of these state and social maneuvers. While not a new concept, Richie’s formulation and deployment of the “prison nation” asserts a metaphorical rendering that builds on previous scholarship operating predominantly within a literal understanding of the “prison nation” as:

the situation in which a neoliberal, law-and-order-oriented social agenda has supplanted the state’s willingness to provide basic material resources and opportunity for self-sufficiency for low-income groups...whereby enforcement strategies, criminal justice policy, the creation of new laws, and mass incarceration are used strategically...[to maintain] the power of the elites through the control of marginalized groups...[and] public policies that rely on a socially constructed understanding of the “crime problem.” (Richie 103)

Motivated by and directed toward a more comprehensive, granular, and specific understanding of the institutional and quotidian socio-spatial arrangements and operational scope of the prison nation, Richie’s analysis centers the problem of male violence against Black women in disadvantaged communities as they bear the brunt and absorb the impact of social destabilization wrought by mass incarceration. In so doing, *Arrested Justice* expands the social theater, parameters, and front-line of the prison nation in order to expose and account for the permeating and invisibilized state and structural violence experienced by these women as they

attempt to survive a hegemonic social order that has co-opted anti-violence strategies and put them to work in the service of ‘crime prevention’. This subsumption of grassroots anti-violence organizing by institutionalized leadership marks a tendency by which the issue of violence against women is absorbed and deformed by the “neoliberal conservative contexts of the anti-crime dimensions of the buildup of America’s prison nation.” In other words, the conflation of the issues of violence against women and ‘crime prevention’ lends support, inadvertently or otherwise, to the law-and-order political climate and praxes of neoliberal capital-*cum*-governance. Anchored in “legal reform, bureaucratic management, evidence-based research, and best practices,” this co-optation and professionalization of the anti-violence movement “end[s] up controlling [women’s] behavior through law enforcement, limited resources to activist cause, or constrained opportunities for those women who are hurt but who are deemed “unworthy” of mainstream support” (Richie 104-5).

Demonstrating the destabilizing effects of mass incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex on disadvantaged, marginalized families and communities, Richie’s theorization of the prison nation envelopes and expands the reach, front-lines, and fallout zones of the PIC, demolishing the hegemonic reasoning and rhetoric that control and capture of crime and criminals leads to social stability. As Dan Berger writes, “imprisonment is a form of class war from above. It targets the most marginalized communities—those most likely to resist and those who have, in fact, resisted ... the carceral state punishes the most marginalized and the most rebellious elements of society” (Berger, “Social Movements” 3-5). Engaging four concepts—retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation, and incapacitation—identified by Gilmore as central to state and social attempts to “make prisons produce social stability through applying some mix of care, indifference, compulsory training, and cruelty to people in cages,” Richie’s work

unequivocally exposes the redeployment of these concepts in the biopolitical management of the deprivation and devaluation of disadvantaged Black women and communities (Gilmore 14).²⁷ Drawing connections between the mass incarceration of disadvantaged Black men, structural and male violence enacted against disadvantaged Black women, and the mechanisms of a conservative, post-Progressive era state, civil society, and judicial system working to criminalize these disadvantaged communities and their survival strategies and tactics, Richie graphically illustrates the concrete, on-going, and transgenerational effects of the dehumanizing and ‘Human’-making prison nation.

Introducing her work with three situationally distinct accounts of Black women and their encounters with the (criminal) justice system and “punitive social services, degrading public policy, and rigid institutional regulations,” Richie exposes a demographic of low-income Black women made more vulnerable—and essentially held captive—by the systematic subordination endemic to the “prison nation” (25). One paradigmatic narrative tells the story of Ms. B, a 50-year-old Black woman who had been living in the same Chicago public housing complex for 27 years. Targeted for demolition, the city’s Department of Housing enacted policies that suspended public services in the area, increased surveillance of the residents, and mounted a publicity campaign to convince adjacent communities that this demolition would benefit them. The outcome was a barren, isolating public housing landscape populated mostly by Black women and children, as 75 percent of the complex had been made vacant through the efforts of the demolition campaign (Richie 8). According to Richie, this public policy-induced no-man’s-land

²⁷ Ruth Wilson Gilmore identifies retribution as the “loss of liberty” through incarceration; deterrence as “retribution’s specter [that] allegedly dissuades people” from actions resulting in retribution; rehabilitation as the notion that the “unfreedom of prisons” provides skills and sobriety necessary for inmates’ successful re-entry into legitimized society; and incapacitation as “the [calculation] that those locked up cannot make trouble outside of prison,” and as “the least ambitious” but most practiced of the theories (14).

was the critical element that first enabled what would become a series of attacks on Ms. B by Chicago police. Taking place over three months, the first attack is characteristic of those that followed.

Stopped by five undercover police officers—three with guns drawn—as she entered her apartment building, the officers demanded Ms. B’s keys, forced her into the elevator and then her apartment, which they proceeded to ransack while assailing her with racial and sexual slurs. Breaking down the door of her 19-year-old son’s bedroom, three of the five officers handcuffed Ms. B’s son and a visiting friend, beat them for over 30 minutes, then forcibly removed them from the apartment. In response to Ms. B’s pleas for mercy, the remaining two officers ordered her to undress, lie on the bathroom floor, spread her legs, and perform what Richie describes as “an internal cavity search on herself” while the officers watched (9). Threatening to plant incriminating evidence if Ms. B didn’t produce the drugs that ostensibly justified the ransacking, the undercover officers—all of whom were white and male—never identified themselves as a special unit of the Chicago Police Department, never produced a search warrant for the drugs they did not find, and never read Ms. B her constitutional rights (Richie 9-10). This incident, occurring on April 13, 2003, was the first of six assaults on Ms. B by the same group of officers, all of which included physical, sexual, and verbal assault, destruction of property, illegal substances being planted on Ms. B’s person, and threats leveraged around members of Ms. B’s family who were on parole or probation and thus vulnerable to re-arrest. Ms. B’s efforts to get help from state authorities were futile: two attempts at rape crisis centers, at least three complaints filed with the Chicago Housing Authority and the Chicago Police Department’s Office of Professional Standards, all to no avail. Ms. B began staying home, self-isolating and avoiding interpersonal interactions as she attempted to cope in a situation in which she had no

institutional recourse or structural social support. For almost three decades, Ms. B had been an active member in her church, raising three sons in the community of which she was a part. Tellingly, Ms. B had no criminal background (Richie 10-11).

The methods of systematic subordination, deprivation, deprivation, and humiliating dehumanization illustrated by Richie in the case studies of Ms. B and “Tanya”—an aggregate she creates to refer to the cases of these women and others like them—take many forms. However, all revolve around hegemonic state and social norms of individual, familial, and community responsibility and respectability, demonstrating neoliberal strategies of social responsabilization at work. As Wendy Hui Kyong Chun states:

Neoliberalism...destroys the public by fostering...the rampant privatization of all public services. In a neoliberal society...all human interactions, from love to education, become economic transactions to be analyzed in terms of costs and benefits... It is a system ... based on competition rather than equality or exchange. In this ‘open’ system, individuals’ habits—their abilities to quickly use freely available information—allegedly separate the winners from the losers. (10-11)

Publicized (again) by Ronald Reagan’s “welfare queen” and the War on Drugs, in 1985 the Reagan administration appropriated the burgeoning crack cocaine epidemic, reframing and spinning it in an effort to build public support by “saturat[ing] the media with images of black “crack whores,” “crack dealers,” and “crack babies”—images that seemed to confirm the worst negative racial stereotypes about impoverished inner-city residents” (Alexander 5). Here, neoliberal, socially sanctioned, and normativized signifiers of physical, psychological, financial, educational, material, and behavioral “well-being” are deployed in a public campaign to stigmatize and criminalize—to deprive, deprave, and make ‘deviant’—women who rely on social services and public support to survive physical, sexual, psychological, economic, and

structural violence. Like the story of Ms. B, the accounts of the women in *Arrested Justice* encapsulate and model the three “related pre-conditions” Beth Richie identifies as underwriting the formation of the prison nation:

(1) divestment from low-income communities and the subsequent concentration of disadvantage among poor black women, (2) the co-optation of resistance strategies that activist anti-violence groups were using, (3) isolation and criminalization of Black women...who are attempting to survive violence and other forms of abuse. (Richie 105)

With her analysis of women like Ms. B, “Tanya,” and, implicitly, other marginalized individuals and communities as they struggle to build and maintain lives inside a permeating, ever-watchful, and ever-expanding prison nation, Richie exposes conditions and strategies of social control that reiterate chattel slavery’s methods of dehumanization and ‘Human’-unmaking. Described previously in the excerpted 1850 slaveholders guide to producing the “ideal slave,” the methods of captivity, capture, and social immobilization it suggests—“maintain strict discipline and unconditional submission; create a sense of personal inferiority so that slaves “know their place”; instill fear; deprive access to education and recreation”—could easily have been written today (Christian 144). Pointing to the social abandonment, condemnation, and de facto criminalization of women like Ms. B and their bodies of knowledge *qua* survival strategies as ‘deviant’, depraved, and threatening to the hegemonic social order, Beth Richie gives new meaning to the term prison nation, simultaneously redefining the scope, methods, and geography of the Prison Industrial Complex. As Gilmore observes, “during most of the modern history of prisons, those officially devoid of rights—indigenous and enslaved women and men, for example, or new immigrants, or married white women—rarely saw the inside of a cage, because their unfreedom was guaranteed by other means (12). Richie’s project is thus a political one demanding the recognition—and reckoning—of a body of people held captive in and by a

socially constructed (and constructing) elastic, violent, and insatiable liminal space. With this, ‘human’ subjectivity exceeds the dualism of *bios* (full ‘human’ subjectivity) and *zoe* (other-than-human, “mere biological life”), appearing instead along a continuum of Flesh, Body, and ‘Human’ subject positions that act as nodes in networked ontological and epistemological economies. Formed in relation to the captivity/capture-freedom/movement continuum illustrated through Gilmore’s and Richie’s work, the ‘Human’ emerges as an assemblage of affectively efficacious (agential) *‘human’ selves* and *thing selves*. Contextualized by methods of ‘Human’-making operant within hegemonic knowledge societies and the Prison Industrial Complex-cum-prison nation, I turn now to a discernment of the Flesh-Body-‘Human’ continuum.

**THEORETICAL INTERVENTIONS—Discerning the Flesh-Body-‘Human’ Continuum:
Patricia Ticineto Clough, Hortense Spillers, and Sue Grand**

Positioning the continuum of captivity/capture-freedom/movement at work in hegemonic social productions of knowledge and ‘Human’-making as illustrated by Gilmore and Richie in dialogue with theoretical interventions by Patricia Ticineto Clough, Hortense Spillers, and Sue Grand, what emerges is a conception and modeling of the ‘Human’ and ‘human’ subjectivity as permutational, fluid assemblages of both ‘human’ subject positions and *‘thing’* subject positions, or *‘human’ selves* and *thing selves*. This theoretical frame engages affect theory, speculative realism, object-oriented ontologies, and psychoanalytic perspectives. Elucidating and diagramming a Flesh-Body-‘Human’ continuum of subjectivity made manifest through the objectification, dehumanization, and trauma that attends practices and conditions of corporeal (and later, digital) captivity, capture, and control within hegemonic knowledge societies, I begin with Sue Grand.

Engaging a psychoanalytic narrative of trauma rooted in sexual transgression and violence, Grand, in “Unsexed and Ungendered Bodies: The Violated Self,” proposes the production of a “*thing self*” engendered through experiences of objectifying and objectified trauma:

Th[e] splitting of trauma narratives ensues because the perpetrator is engaged simply not in *humanized malignance*, but also in an it-it encounter devoid of all desire. In the wake of sexual violation, there are traumatized sexed and gendered *human selves*. And there are traumatized unsexed, ungendered *thing selves*. (313)

Here, Grand proposes that in situations of violence and trauma (and I would add, gross neglect—that exceedingly passive yet saturating, objectifying deprivation) the victim is not engaged with as a ‘full’ human (*bios*) but instead, as though they were an object devoid of desire, will, agency, and thus humanity. Grand’s assertion of an “it-it” encounter rests on the becoming-‘it’ of both the victim and the assailant. Recalling Dipesh Chakrabarty’s observation that “the denial of the victim’s humanity, thus, proceeds necessarily from [the] initial recognition of it” (qtd. in Kim 297), we see that in denying or removing humanity from another, the assailant or aggressor forfeits theirs as well. It is important to note that, in a state of exception, this relationship of reciprocal dehumanization is arguably transformed or inconsistent.²⁸ Pursuing this more fully later and returning to Grand, it is through experiences of violent ‘it-it’ encounters—experiences of being acted on as a ‘dehumanized’ object—that the traumatized self splits. In this way, Grand posits ‘human’ subjectivity as including both ‘human’ subject positions and ‘*thing*’ subject positions, ‘*human selves*’ and *thing selves*. However, while Grand establishes a foundation for a

²⁸ ‘State of exception’ is a concept developed by legal theorist Carl Schmitt. It indicates a social situation in which a sovereign is able to circumvent and transcend the rule of law in the name of the ‘greater public good’. Wikipedia contributors, “State of exception” (*Wikipedia.com*).

multiple, pluralistic, and composite conception of ‘human’ subjectivity, it is her “emphasis on a persecuted *disembodied thing-self* [emphasis mine]” (313), that I wish to complexify and expand.

Employing a working definition of ‘human’ as being “linked...to forms of embodied relatedness” while the “traumatized “thing-self” is linked to varieties of disembodiment, unrelatedness, and deanimation” (Grand 322), the tethering of conditions of “disembodiment, unrelatedness, and deanimation” to *thing selves* reinscribes a dualism by which ‘things’ are necessarily made passive and non-agential while the ‘human’ (*bios*) claims the realm of action, assertiveness, and agency. Furthermore, by connecting sexed and gendered selves to the ‘human’ and selves that have been unsexed and ungendered to the ‘thing’, Grand, perhaps limited by the scope or purpose of her specific project, reattributes ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ to the biological ‘human’. With this, the normativizing (and thereby racialized and classed) categories of sex and gender are re-established as markers, makers, and measures of the ‘human’; ‘things’ cannot be sexed or gendered, and ‘humans’ cannot be unsexed or ungendered. To trouble and to queer this alignment of passive non-agency and deanimation with the ‘thing’, and agency, will, and desire with the ‘human’—to reconfigure this dualism as instead a relational network of variant, composite assemblages of *affective and agential ‘human’ selves* and *affective and agential thing selves*, I turn to Patricia Ticineto Clough.

Deploying theoretical interventions rooted in affect theory, speculative realism, object-oriented ontologies, media studies, critical theory, philosophy, and psychoanalytic theory, I take up Clough’s work here, briefly, to extend agency, affectivity, and liveliness—what Mel Y. Chen conceives as *animacy*—to Grand’s ‘thing’ selves and thus to ‘things’ themselves.²⁹ I will return

²⁹ Mel Y. Chen, in the 2011 essay “Toxic Animacies, Inanimate Affections,” distinguishes *animacy* by proposing that “the queering and racializing of material other than the human amounts to a kind of *animacy*...[which] is built on the recognition that abstract concepts,

to Clough more extensively later to expand the scale, scope, and ontological reach of the prison nation as it transforms in the context of populations and the twenty-first-century datafication of lived experience. Along with Brian Massumi, Albert North Whitehead, Mark Hansen, and Gilles Deleuze among others, Clough extends affective efficacy, and thus agency and liveliness, to “a dynamism immanent to bodily matter and matter generally—matter’s capacity for self-organizing in being informational” (Clough, *Affective Turn* 206-7). Framed by Alexander Weheliye’s affirmation of freedom as “[being] *capable of one’s own impotentiality*, to be in relation to one’s own privation” (77)—in other words, as processual self-regulation and self-determination—it is Clough’s assertion of the self-organizing capacity of both “bodily matter and matter in general” that extends affective efficacy and agency to Grand’s disembodied, unrelated, and deanimated *thing selves*. As Clough states, “the capacity to affect and be affected not only is a matter of the human individual or human population but a capacity at every scale of matter, as “intensity,” “incipient action,” indeterminate and dynamic” (Clough, *User Unconscious* np).

With this intervention and its expanded agency and efficacy in mind, I return to the project of articulating and distinguishing the ‘Human’ and ‘human’ subjectivity as assemblages of affectively agential, *animated*, *thing selves* and ‘*human*’ *selves* appearing along a Flesh-Body-‘Human’ continuum. Taking up Hortense Spillers’ work, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book,” which also engages a psychoanalytic approach, these ‘*human*’ *selves* and *thing selves* contribute to and illustrate the stark distinctions Spillers makes between conditions of subjectivity and notions of ‘flesh’ and ‘body.’ Analyzing subjectivity and identity

inanimate objects, and things in between can be queered and racialized without human bodies present, quite beyond questions of personification” (Chen 265).

formations in relation to legacies of slavery, ownership, and bodies *qua* property or ‘things’, Spillers writes:

Severing...the captive body from its motive will, its active desire...we lose at least *gender* difference *in the outcome*, and the female body and male body become a territory of cultural and political maneuver, not at all gender-related, gender specific...I would make a distinction in this case between “body” and “flesh” and impose that distinction as the central one between captive and liberated subject-positions. In that sense, before the “body” there is the “flesh,” that zero degree of social conceptualization. (67)

Identifying the pivotal distinguishing factor between corporeal and social statuses of ‘flesh’ and ‘body’ as the difference between captive and liberated subject positions, Spillers places ‘flesh’ and ‘body’ squarely in relation to the continuum of captivity/capture-freedom/movement conveyed in the preceding analysis of continuities between ‘Human’-making in slavery, the Prison Industrial Complex, and the prison nation. To concretize, or incarnate, the discrepancies Spillers points to as they impact and shape possibilities of the permutations of social ‘human’ subjectivity that manifest the Flesh-Body-‘Human’ continuum, I return briefly to Richie’s story of Ms. B.

Calling to mind Weheliye’s affirmation that “to be free is...*to be capable of one’s own impotentiality*, to be in relation to one’s own privation” (Weheliye 77), it is Ms. B’s forcibly diminished freedom, her socially-induced and state-supported corporeal, psychological, and financial deprivation, and the depravity inscribed and visited on her person and character that establishes the contours of her liminal Bodily subjectivity that is neither fully ‘Flesh’ nor fully ‘Human’. The abuse and threats Ms. B repeatedly endured from Chicago police—the invalidation of her humanity and empirical knowledge indicated by the non-responsiveness of the social institutions she turned to for help; the self-isolation and immobilization—the

captivity—she resorts to as a protective mechanism; and, most significantly, her lack of a criminal record or background—all epitomize the critical distinctions Spillers makes between Flesh and Body, and which also differentiate liminal, Bodily subjectivity from that of the fully ‘Human’. Circumscribed by her race, gender, and class and thus precluded from a totalizing, socially sanctioned, and fully liberated ‘Human’ status and subjectivity, Ms. B, as a formally unincarcerated, non-criminal, and self-sovereign citizen, clearly exhibits the Bodily, not-‘Human’ yet not-Flesh, subject positions of the continuum that Spillers argues and the prison nation actualizes: before the ‘Human’, before the Body, there is Flesh.

Populational and Precarious ‘Human’-making: Michelle Alexander’s “undercaste” and Economies of “Slow Death”

Writing in 1987, the distinctions between ‘flesh’ and ‘body’ that Spillers locates in conditions, and thereby degrees, of captivity, capture, mobility, and freedom are critical to this analysis and topography of the Flesh-Body-‘Human’ continuum and its constituent assemblages of *‘human’ selves* and *thing selves*. Spillers’ distinctions are also central to charting the scales, or degrees of agency, potentiality, and legitimized social subjectivity and knowledge production that attend statuses of Flesh, Body, and the fully legitimized ‘Human’.³⁰ Taken together, Gilmore, Richie, Clough, Spillers, and Grand illustrate the social manufacture and curation of the ‘Human’ and the uneven and fluid distribution of social legitimacy, visibility, mobility, and deviance operant as and through the prison nation. Following Spillers’ suggestion that “if the “black woman” can be seen as a particular figuration of the split subject that psychoanalytic

³⁰ Giorgio Agamben’s *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* was published in 1995, eight years after Hortense Spillers calls attention to distinctions between ‘flesh’ and ‘body’. Arguably, then, Spillers articulates a notion of ‘bare life’ before Agamben, also situating it in a context of transatlantic slavery. Many thanks to Dr. Karl Steel for bringing this to my attention.

theory posits, then [the twentieth] century marks the site of “its” profoundest revelation” (65), I return to Richie to begin mapping the populational scale and reach (and eventually, the datafied expansion) of the modern-day prison nation and the split subjectivities of the Flesh-Body-‘Human’ continuum that it manufactures as it manages the social order.

Richie’s exposure of the persecution and criminalization of Black women and their survival strategies as they seek safety and social support in the face of state, structural, and male violence demonstrates that contemporary techniques of ‘Human’-making include an ever-expanding range and granular specificity of methods of captivity, capture, deprivation, and depravation. Rooted in institutional slavery and aimed (as always) at reproducing the hegemonic social order-*cum*-capital, these methods are apparatuses of larger neoliberal social engineering projects designed to manufacture competition-based economies of ‘human’ social viability, precarity, and subjectivity at the register of populations. Coupled with the expansion of the Prison Industrial Complex and its assimilation into the prison nation, what is unmasked is a social order concerned with the quotidian management and distribution of precariousness, or what Lauren Berlant conceives as “slow death.” As Berlant writes, in “slow death”:

the general emphasis...is on the phenomenon of mass physical attenuation under global/national regimes of capitalist structural subordination and governmentality...In the scene of slow death, a condition of being worn out by the activity of reproducing life...the physical wearing out of a population and the deterioration of people in that population...is very nearly a defining condition of their experience and historical existence. (754, 759)

Producing and populating the capacious, insatiable, and elastic liminal space between the full ‘Human’ of the legitimized body politic (*bios*) and the socially dead, ‘merely biological’ Flesh of an un-bodied non-politic divested of all citizenship rights (*zoe*), Richie’s prison nation is the

purveyor of “slow death” in the manufacture of what Michelle Alexander controversially terms an American “undercaste.” Arguing that current modes of legal discrimination against criminals and the formerly incarcerated replicate modes previously legal in the discrimination of African Americans, Alexander points to mundane yet vital forms of legislated inequity that, as Berlant also suggests, locks people into conditions of socially constructed and maintained precariousness: “employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service” (Alexander 2). Creating “a zone of ordinariness, where life building and the attrition of human life are indistinguishable” (Berlant 754), these methods of curtailing, managing, and withholding the means of well-being in turn serve as justification for further exclusion, attenuation, and criminalization of these precarious populations. Inclusive of the social processes by which the ‘Human’ is made Body and the Body made Flesh—what Spillers calls “flesh-making”—Alexander’s “undercaste” describes the populational yield, or output, of a prison nation less concerned with controlling crime than the industrialized, biopolitical reproduction of the neoliberal social order:

The current system of control...operates through our criminal justice institutions, but it functions more like a caste system than a system of crime control. Viewed from this perspective, the so-called underclass is better understood as an undercaste—a lower caste of individuals who are permanently barred by law and custom from mainstream society. (Alexander 13)

In framing the production of groups of people “permanently barred by *law and custom* from mainstream society [emphasis mine]” as a caste system masquerading as systems of crime control, Alexander not only points to historical continuities between slavery and contemporary practices of ‘Human’-making and –unmaking that span the public and private spheres,

confirming their coextension and modern-day conflation. But also, read alongside David Oshinsky's study of Mississippi's notorious Parchman State Penitentiary, Alexander's "undercaste" discloses its American social, legal, and historical precedent as well as its ancestral parentage in modernity's Enlightened humanism and the social ordering of the bourgeois public sphere.³¹ Discussing what he also considers an American caste system, Oshinsky effectively refashions the '*norms of publicity of representation*' that circumscribed the legitimized 'Human' of the bourgeois public sphere as '*racial etiquette*' while also reconfirming the white (bourgeois) male as the authority in both daily life (private sphere) and the legal system (public sphere) (Habermas 7-8, 29-30). Citing sociologist Robert Ezra Park, Oshinsky writes:

In the segregated South "racial etiquette ... was the "very essence of caste ... since the prestige of a superior always involves the respect of an inferior ... Racial caste and custom also pervaded the legal system ...[as] racial etiquette ... [and] its meticulous customs defined and regulated all aspects of daily life. (Oshinsky 122-124)

Affirming and socio-spatially expanding Oshinsky's observations, Alexander's "undercaste" extends modernity's accomplishment of gendered, raced, and classed public and private spheres and legitimized 'Human'-making and -unmaking through the eras of slavery, mass incarceration, the Prison Industrial Complex, and into the social order of the twenty-first century and the globalization and datafication of the prison nation.

³¹ Parchman State Penitentiary (also known as Parchman Farm or the Mississippi State Penitentiary) is Mississippi's only major state prison and one of the largest penal institutions in the United States. Built in 1904 and turning a profit by 1905, Parchman began as a prison farm and is still operational today (Oshinsky 109, 252).

SECTION III—DATAFIED ‘HUMAN’-MAKING

CIRCULATORY SYSTEMS—The Twenty-First-Century Datafied Prison Nation: Neoliberal Economies of Populational ‘Human’-making

Deliberately designating populations permanently barred from hegemonic society an “undercaste” rather than an “underclass,” Alexander draws attention to and disrupts the physical, social, and financial mobility and possibility implicit in notions of ‘class’. Replacing the potentiality of social and corporeal mobility and movement (class) with a stasis and unfreedom that transcends generations (caste), Alexander confirms, reframes, and redeploys Spillers’ claim that, “If “slave” is perceived as the essence of stillness (an early version of “ethnicity”), or of an undynamic human state, fixed in time and space, then the law articulates this impossibility as its inherent feature” (Spillers 78). Recalling the “disembodiment, unrelatedness, and deanimation” marking Grand’s traumatized *thing selves* (322) and Berlant’s “slow death” or the mass wearing out of populations “under global/national regimes of capitalist structural subordination and governmentality” (Berlant 754, 759), Spillers’ alignment of stillness and undynamic human states with a legislated impossibility is a critical one. Not only does Spillers connect legally sanctioned social and physical stasis (deprivation, captivity) to slavery and methods of dehumanizing captivity and capture more broadly. But also, in pointing to the *impossibility* of achieving this stillness and undynamism, Spillers discloses the way in which the law, permeated by caste-making social custom and etiquette, imbued itself with a boundlessly creative social regulatory capacity. As Derrida suggests, “normativity and responsibility originate in an “experience of the impossible.”” (qtd. in Cheah 182)

Considering the explosion, trajectories, and targets of legislative activity, public policy initiatives, increased surveillance, and the social and cultural ‘wars’ discussed by Gilmore, Richie, and Alexander in the making of an American “undercaste” and prison nation, Spillers

positions the law and legitimacy as the central pivot point, arbiter, and arm in the meeting and meeting-out of capital and statecraft—in other words, in the production, distribution, and circulation of Flesh, Body, and ‘Human’ subjectivity and potentiality. As Dan Berger states,

the criminal justice system is an index of inequality... This massive state apparatus works to categorize and castigate communities by class, race, gender, sexuality, and religion. The prison is but the most concentrated place where its impacts are felt, for the entire country lives within this carceral state. (“Social Movements” 5).

In addition to centering the law and legitimacy as operational pivot points, or ordering nodes, in the entanglements and transubstantiations of capital and statecraft that administer economies of Flesh-, Body-, and ‘Human’-making, Spillers underscores and indicts the transnational and transatlantic heritage of these co-functioning racialized, gendered, and classed economies. Situating Spillers’ indictment among Gilmore, Richie, and Alexander’s works, the prison nation transcends local, state, and national boundaries and bureaucracies, extending these networked economies of social subjectivity and the legitimized ‘Human’ to a populational scale made global. Transported and circulated by and with transnational neoliberalism, capitalism, and law-and-order governmentality, the twenty-first-century prison nation is a globalizing, datafied, and “datafying” prison nation.

Speculative ‘Human’-making: “Population Racism,” the “Social Logic of the Derivative,” and “Slow Death” in the Globalizing Prison Nation

Conceived by Richie as the “public policy environment...where conservative state forces have gradually but systematically eroded the rights, privileges, and opportunities afforded to disadvantaged groups” (7), the prison nation models Foucault’s conceptualization of “state

racism in its biologizing form.”³² Returning to Clough and Hansen, the datafication of lived experience that marks the accelerating expansion of twenty-first-century media and technology has particular potency when considered in the context of a globalized and globalizing prison nation. To continue tracking hegemonic knowledge and social production through the rise and expansion of the PIC, to a prison nation with attendant “undercaste,” and into the twenty-first-century datafied prison nation, it is essential to introduce and implement Clough’s concepts of affect and, with Craig Willse, “population racism.” Following Spinoza, Deleuze, and Massumi among others, Clough theorizes affect and affectivity as:

a substrate of potential bodily responses...in-excess of consciousness...Affect refers generally to bodily capacities to affect and be affected or the augmentation or diminution of a body’s capacity to act, to engage, to connect...Affect is a non-linear complexity out of which the narration of conscious states such as emotion, are subtracted, but always with “a never-to-be-conscious autonomic remainder”...[A]ffect is not only theorized in terms of the human body [but also]...in relation to the technologies that are allowing us both to ‘see’ affect and to produce affective bodily capacities beyond the body’s organic-physiological constraints. (*Affective Turn* 2-4)

Responding to affect theory’s engagement with “the pre-cognitive, pre-conscious capacities of human subjectivity inhering in bodily matter” as well as twenty-first-century media and technologies of surveillance, control, governance, (anti)terrorism, and war, Clough and Willse extend Foucault’s notion of state racism to what they term “population racism.”³³

³² As noted by P. Clough and C. Willse in *Gendered Security/National Security*, Foucault proposes state racism as the biopolitical justification for the legitimate killing or letting-die of “populations marked as inferior and harmful to the larger body of the nation” (Clough and Willse 49).

³³ It is important to note that Clough’s treatment of affect informs and is informed by her proposal of the “self-organizing” capacity of matter as liveliness. This aligns with Randy Martin’s political economic conceptualization of “the social logic of the derivative” as well as Hansen’s implementation of affect in the context of twenty-first-century media and technology.

Reconceived to account for the globalization of neoliberal capital-*cum*-governance and the biopolitical regulation and distribution of ordinary, everyday “life chances and death probabilities,” “population racism” points to transnational economies of ‘human’ viability, precarity, “slow death,” and what Catherine Malabou terms “sociopolitical trauma” (Clough and Willse 5). Situated in neurology and psychoanalysis, Malabou argues for “*the impossibility of separating the effects of political trauma from the effects of organic trauma*. All trauma of any kind impacts the cerebral sites that conduct emotion, whether it is a matter of modifying the configuration of such sites or, more seriously, rupturing neuronal connections” (Malabou, *Preamble* xviii). She continues:

The behavior of subjects who are victims of trauma linked to mistreatment, war, terrorist attacks, captivity, or sexual abuse display striking resemblances with subjects who have suffered brain damage. (Malabou, *Preamble* xviii)

Naming these non-organic cerebral modifications and ruptures “sociopolitical traumas,” Malabou points to striking similarities in the behavioral and emotional effects of organic and “sociopolitical” trauma as “to differing degrees, they all display permanent or temporary behaviors of *indifference* or *disaffection*” (*Intro* 10). With this, the traumatic split subjects—the ‘*human*’ selves and *thing selves* that assemble to compose the Flesh-Body-‘Human’ spectrum of subjectivity—also circulate with and inside “population racism” and the transnational prison nation. Paralleling affect theory’s engagement with “the pre-cognitive, pre-conscious capacities of human subjectivity inhering in bodily matter,” Malabou’s organic, “sociopolitical,” and multi-scalar traumas substantiate, model, and operate across the “increasingly porous border ... [separating] organic trauma and sociopolitical trauma” (*Intro* 10-11). Revealing economies of affective “sociopolitical” trauma, ‘*human*’ selves, and *thing selves* circulating in tandem with transnational “population racism” and “slow death,” as Samir Amin confirms, the shift from

national sovereign formations to globalized “world-systems” connects individual and populational circumstances of autonomy, dependency, and the reproduction of daily life in a transnational, “constitutive,” and networked relationality (qtd. in Cheah 173). In this way, “sociopolitical” trauma circulates in tandem with the public policy environment of neoliberal capitalism-*cum*-governance that marks the transnational prison nation. Underscoring the globalized competition for access to life-building and -sustaining resources, “population racism” thus exposes a racialized, gendered, and class-biased economy of ‘human’ agency, subjectivity, crisis, and trauma that knows no national or bureaucratic borders (Clough and Willse 5).

Emphasizing the borderless, multi-scalar, and networked relationality of individuals and populations nationally and transnationally, Clough and Willse stress that with twenty-first-century media and technology, not only has hegemonic biopolitical regulation infiltrated the already racialized, gendered, and classed access to and distribution of everyday resources necessary for life-building and -maintaining. But also, these interrelated economies of ‘human’ viability and precarity now circulate in the manner of neoliberal capitalism-*cum*-governance, or what Randy Martin conceives as “the social logic of the derivative.” Writing after the 2008 financial crisis Martin states, “capital has claimed economy as the name of its social relations” (86). Developing this further, Martin describes “the social logic of the derivative” as the condition of neoliberalism in which the state or performance of the economy in a transnational context becomes the measure of the political efficacy of governance, supplanting imperatives of the legitimacy of governance with imperatives of efficiency (87; Clough, *Rethinking Race* 438). For Martin, “the social logic of the derivative” describes an economy in which knowledge and its accumulation is no longer the underlying ‘logic’ of the market.

Trading instead in “risk, uncertainty, and nonknowledge” as “derivatives [make] something out of nothing,” Martin points to three critical social moves occurring alongside these shifts in twenty-first century economic structures and flows. First, in this informatized and datafied global neoliberal economy, “production is inside circulation” (Martin 85).³⁴ As such, Marx’s material model of production, circulation, and accumulation is reconfigured, becoming speculative as ‘products’ and ‘capital’ become processes of maintaining the continuous circulation of “risk, uncertainty, and nonknowledge.”³⁵ Second, with this re-ordering of capital and economy toward uncertainty and ‘nonknowledge’, twenty-first-century knowledge economies and societies are re-ordered as well. Displacing juridical-theological and rational-critical economies in which knowledge is the arbiter and indicator of social access, power, and legitimized ‘Human’ subjectivity, twenty-first-century speculative economies invert this in such a way that access and accessibility supplant knowledge as vehicles of power, agency, and legitimized subjectivity. Put differently, the *knowledge*-power dynamic of industrial capitalism transforms with informatization and datafication into the *access*-power dynamic of speculative capitalism now trading in nonknowledge and moving in the manner of “the social logic of the derivative.” As Chun notes, “[digital] search engines are hardly new or exciting, but they have become the default mode of knowledge acquisition”(1). Following this to its logical conclusion, the greater one’s access to search engines the greater one’s access to knowledge. While the

³⁴ Mentioned in an earlier footnote, Hardt conceives “informatization” as the passage from the second economic paradigm in which material industry and manufacture was dominate, to the contemporary third economic paradigm by which service and information industries have become dominant. Hardt also refers to “informatization” as “a process of economic *postmodernization*” (90-91).

³⁵ “M-C-M’ is therefore in reality the general formula of capital as it appears *prima facie* within the sphere of circulation” (Marx 108). This is the representational formula Marx uses to describe the circulation aspect of capitalist production that circulates exchange values, and in particular, exchange values in the form of prices.

knowledge-power dynamic certainly turned on degrees of social status and access inherent to notions of privilege and admission to the educated, literate, rational-critical bourgeois public sphere, access itself shifts from ‘human’ processes of knowledge acquisition and synthesis. Bypassing ‘human’ learning, reasoning, and problem-solving, knowledge acquisition in an access-power model turns primarily on accessibility and thus, on purchasing power and/or proximity; it is longer necessary to actually ‘know’ something so long as search engines are available and technologically accessible. Finally, and of particular importance to this thesis and the conception of a transnational prison nation, with the becoming-speculative of capitalism and the global economy, capital-*cum*-governance also becomes speculative and rooted in circulation (Martin 85). This marks a shift from governance concerned with (re)producing full ‘Human’ subjectivity (*bios*) to global economies of continuously circulating ‘human’ subjectivity distributed along transnationally relational Flesh-Body-‘Human’ continua. With this, the coextant continuum of captivity/capture-freedom/movement operational as a neoliberal, law-and-order public policy environment—the prison nation—also transcends local, regional, and national boundaries, becoming transnational as well.

Contextualized by “the social logic of the derivative” Clough writes, “the market functions as a principle of intelligibility and a principle of decipherment of social relationships and behaviors, not in terms of a measure of exchangeability, but in terms of a formal structure of competition, the underside of the liberal promise of equality” (Clough, *Rethinking Race* 438). Considered alongside Richie’s explication of the structural deprivation, deprivation, and criminalization of disadvantaged Black women and communities as they struggle for access to life-building resources in the American prison nation, “population racism” names the American prison nation and Berlant’s “slow death” writ large. Illustrating the structures of neoliberal

capital-*cum*-governance at work, “population racism” accounts for the global deployment and transnational relationality of these structures in the distribution and circulation of ‘human’ subjectivity, agency, viability, and trauma. As Fred Moten and Stefano Harney state, neoliberal governance is “the annunciation of universal exchange. The exchange through communication of all institutional forms, all forms of exchange value...The hospital talks to the prison which talks to the university which talks to the NGO which talks to the corporation through governance...as the realization of universal exchange on the grounds of capitalism” (Moten and Harney 13). “Population racism” thus reveals the biopolitical fostering of competition for resources that exceeds regional and national boundaries, distributing “life-chances and death probabilities” across global populations in a relational system in which, again, “individuals’ habits—their abilities to quickly use freely available information—allegedly separate the winners from the losers” (Chun 11).

Crisis and Struggle: Transnational Economies of Flesh, Body, and ‘Human’ Subjectivity

To concretize and illustrate the lived effects and ‘human’ manifestations of the economic-*cum*-social circulation of constant change or disjuncture that is the “social logic of the derivative,” I begin by returning to Stuart Hall and Bill Schwarz’s definition of crisis. Introduced by Gilmore in *Golden Gulag*, Hall and Schwarz write: “crises occur when the social formation can no longer be reproduced on the basis of the pre-existing system of social relations” (qtd. in Gilmore 54). As Gilmore goes on to state, the verb “to reproduce” is quite significant here, as it “signifies the broad array of political, economic, cultural, and biological capacities a society uses to renew itself daily, seasonally, generationally. Crisis is not objectively bad or good; rather, *it*

signals systemic change whose outcome is determined through struggle [emphasis mine]” (Gilmore 54).

Paired with a hegemonic, neoliberal, law-and-order public policy environment aimed at substantiating and reproducing the circulation of “risk, uncertainty, and nonknowledge,” the “social logic of the derivative” describes a social order designed to manufacture, maintain, and reproduce multi-scalar crises. In a digital era witnessing massive shifts from material production and labor to immaterial and affective production and labor, the circulation of crisis as an economic and thereby social imperative anchors in Martin’s observation that, in our twenty-first-century datafied economy, “production is inside circulation” (85). Conceived by Maurizio Lazzarato and Michael Hardt as “immaterial” production and “affective labor” respectively, the ongoing informatization and datafication of economy and lived experience feeds and sustains this global social ordering centered on crises.³⁶ As Lazzarato asserts, “capitalism seeks to involve even the worker’s personality and subjectivity within the production of value” (136). Crucially, this transformation lends itself to a situation in which hegemonic knowledge and social production is no longer concerned with the ‘value’ of ‘finished’ material products, Marx’s ‘commodity’, or by extrapolation, full ‘Human’ subjectivity and agency (*bios*).³⁷ Identifying ‘commodity’ as “an object outside us, a thing that by its properties *satisfies human wants*

³⁶ Michael Hardt defines “affective labor” as one aspect of ‘immaterial labor’ and one of the “highest value-producing forms of labor” for capital (90-91). Situated primarily within the information and service sectors, affective labor marks a large aspect of the shift from material production to immaterial production. Maurizio Lazzarato identifies immaterial labor as the production process of non-material goods and services, or “labor that produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity” (133). For Lazzarato as well as Hardt, immaterial labor and production is not necessarily limited to ‘human’ endeavors, as it can include information and knowledge economies not circulated and produced by humans.

³⁷ Marx identifies a ‘commodity’ as: “an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another. The nature of such wants, whether, for instance, they spring from the stomach or from fancy, makes no difference” (Marx 27).

[emphasis mine]” (Marx 27), our datafied, affective, and neoliberal economy-*cum*-social order profits instead from transnational *struggles to satisfy ‘human’ wants* that are the pay dirt of manufactured crises. Arguing that the global structures of immaterial production, labor, and ‘human’ subjectivity are “organized within computerized and multimedia networks,” Lazzarato points to the datafied production-*qua*-circulation of global economies of ‘human’ subjectivity, trauma, and crisis (137). Situated in the company of Martin, Lazzarato, Hall and Schwarz, the American prison nation and its twenty-first-century datafied (re)production exemplifies contemporary neoliberal social economies of multi-scalar crisis and ‘Human’ subjectivity.

(Un)Reasoning ‘Man’ and ‘Human’: Knowledge, Twenty-First-Century Revelation, and *techno-gods*

Returning to Clough, Hansen, and the datafication of the neoliberal social order and its management of knowledge, experience, and the Flesh-Body-‘Human’ continuum of subjectivity with its attendant *‘human’ selves* and *thing selves*, I move to a critical examination of twenty-first-century media and computational and sensory technologies in the context of transnational “population racism” and the datafied prison nation. In keeping with Clough’s observation that “digital media and computational technologies, neoliberalism, and biopolitics continue to reach into the ontological grounds of human subjectivity and sociality” (Clough, *User Unconscious* np), I engage Hansen’s analysis of twenty-first-century media, and in particular, his notions of “worldly sensibility,” “feed-forward,” and his concern for a technical version of pharmacological recompense. Hansen’s use of the term “twenty-first-century media” encapsulates the critical difference in operational temporality between earlier forms of media with their “past-directed recording platform[s]” and those becoming prevalent in our current digital era. Ranging from data -mining and -gathering to social media, ‘big-data’, and microcomputational technologies of

‘passive’ and ‘environmental’ (micro)sensing, the operational temporality of twenty-first-century media has shifted to the “data-driven anticipation of the future” (Hansen 4). Placed in conversation with economies of physical, psychological, material, and financial well-being, crisis, and trauma that circulate through the neoliberal and datafied transnational prison nation, Hansen engages affective and affect-based technologies as they displace Enlightened ‘Man’ and modernity’s ‘Human’ as the legitimized authority of experience.

Centered on the critically distinct operational temporality of twenty-first-century media and technology, this analysis focuses on digital, ontological, and epistemological access and accessibility. Framed as ‘digital insight’, I attend to notions, capacities, and implications of datafied ‘visibility’, surveillance, capture, subjectivity, and the multi-scalar, ‘predictive’ and anticipatory capacities of these networked technologies. Read alongside the progression of hegemonic knowledge societies, neoliberal and international social ordering, and the “datalogically” expansive prison nation, Hansen’s work demands a re-thinking of subjectivity, agency, captivity, and freedom—indeed, of ‘Human’ consciousness and the ‘Human’ being itself.

Pursuing Hansen’s assertion that the multi-scalar sensory and computational capacities of twenty-first-century media and technology demote “[human] perceptual consciousness from its privileged position as arbiter of experience” (50-52), I posit the datafied, neoliberal, and transnational prison nation as a further displacement of the ‘Human’ as the arbiter of experience, as well as knowledge and social production. Arguing that Albert North Whitehead’s conceptualization of “nonsensuous perception,” or “perception in the mode of causal efficacy,” forecloses a non-anthropocentric account of experience and the potential for “direct contact with the domain of causal efficacy *beyond perception*,” Hansen advocates instead for what he terms

the domain of “worldly sensibility.”³⁸ This domain “*does not and cannot appear through (human) perception ...[and] can only be accessed indirectly* by humans through the technical supplement afforded by biometric and environmental computational sensing,” as these technologies operate at a timescale, or temporality, to which ‘humans’ have no direct, non-supplemented access (Hansen 24). As noted previously, Hansen states:

Twenty-first-century media...bypass the limitations of consciousness and embodiment ...[as they] affect the materiality of experience at a level more elemental than that of our perception; more precisely, they impact experience by shaping the ongoing worldly production of sensibility that constitutes the sensory confound out of which perception proper can in turn arise. (45-50)

It is this lack of direct access and an already-existing ‘human’ correlate that underpins Hansen’s concern for a twenty-first-century re-conceptualization of ‘human’ experience and a technical version of pharmacological recompense.³⁹ This concern responds to contemporary media industries (such as Google and Facebook) and their capacity for extracting “data-value from our every web search” through ever-advancing technologies of mining, gathering, ‘visualizing’, and selling data about our behaviors, choices, desires, and relations. These capacities completely bypass ‘human’ consciousness, targeting instead what Hansen calls the “operational present” of “worldly sensibility.” As the larger domain or “sensory confound” out of which ‘human’ material and perceptual experience and consciousness emerges or is

³⁸ For Hansen, ‘worldly sensibility’ indicates “the operation of a sensibility that is prior to the division of the subject from the world” and thus precedes and exceeds human perception, conscious and nonconscious. Thus, according to Hansen, Whitehead’s nonsensuous perception (perception in the mode of causal efficacy) “identifies causally efficacious perception with...and limits it to...the immediate past of sensory perception...foreclosing...direct contact with the domain of causal efficacy *beyond* perception” (Hansen 24).

³⁹ Jacques Derrida and Bernard Steigler identify ‘pharmacological recompense’ as processes by which technologies “simultaneously diminish and supplement sensory, perceptual, and expressive characteristics of humans,” and as an expression of Derrida’s *pharmakon*, “a poison that is its own antidote” (qtd. in Hansen 273).

subtracted, “worldly sensibility” names Hansen’s “claim about access to data of sensibility” (CADS). Accounting for the fundamental change in ‘human’ experience caused by “the complex entanglement of humans within networks of media technologies that operate predominantly, if not almost entirely, outside the scope of human modes of awareness (consciousness, attention, sense perception, etc.),” “worldly sensibility” also situates Hansen’s ““operational present” of sensibility.” Put more succinctly, the “operational present” names the larger, ontological confound of “worldly sensibility” and experience out of which ‘human’ experience and consciousness is derived, but to which ‘humans’ have no direct access. Returning briefly to Google, Facebook, and other media entities, the “operational present” of sensibility is exactly the ontological level of experience accessible to and targeted by twenty-first-century media and data mining technologies, and which are thus accessible to any entity—private, public, corporate, state—with access to twenty-first-century media or the data it mines (Hansen 4-5).

Crucially, twenty-first-century media and microcomputational sensing, data mining, capture, and ‘visualizing’ technologies also:

capture a wealth of data from worldly sensibility—including data about our own implication in it—and feed this data forward into a future or just-to-come moment of conscious perception...operat[ing] to reground the human on the basis of a *non-anthropocentric* account of the world and of the environmental dimension that is at issue in any and every event, including events involving humans. (Hansen 24)

Thus, while twenty-first-century media expand the domain of ‘human’ sensibility, they do so in a manner that is not prosthetic—“humans must rely on technologies to perform operations *to which they have absolutely no direct access whatsoever* and that correlate to no already existent

human faculty or capacity [emphasis mine]” (Hansen 5).⁴⁰ Modeling a “new paradigm of [human] co-functioning with technics [in which] machines are necessary to register and interpret the sensory data constituting experience” (Hansen 50-52), “worldly sensibility” performs, or names this “technical distribution of sensory contact with the world whereby humans, with their limited sensuous *and their limited nonsensuous* perceptual capacities, are given *digital insight* [emphasis mine] into their own robust sensory contact with the world” (Hansen 24).

It is this ‘digital insight’ that is at the heart of Hansen’s concept of “feed-forward,” as well as twenty-first-century media’s displacement of the ‘Human’ as the privileged authority and author of experience and hegemonic knowledge and social production. The ability of twenty-first-century media and technology not only to access, measure, and modulate the environmental “worldly sensibility” out of which conscious, lived, ‘human’ experience arises; but also—and this is the crux—the ability to then *feed* this technically captured, mediated, and modulated “operational present” of sensibility *into the temporality* of ‘human’ sensuous and nonsensuous perceptual capacities. In other words, twenty-first-century media can ‘see’, access, capture, process, *and affect* the foundational sensory confound out of which ‘human’ experience emerges. In this way, twenty-first-century media, in exceeding the limitations of ‘human’ capacities of non-supplemented perceptual consciousness, displace Enlightened ‘Man’ and modernity’s ‘Human’ as the legitimized authority, achievement, and administrator of knowledge production and the hegemonic social order. As Hansen writes, “twenty-first-century media mediate sensibility itself” (47) and in so doing give rise to twenty-first-century *techno-gods*.

⁴⁰ Prosthetics are generally considered to be technologies (material or immaterial) that replace, accentuate, or extend human capacities that are already existent. Thus, as twenty-first-century media have no already existing human correlate—they exceed human sensory and perceptual capacities—these media are not prosthetic.

Networked ‘Humans’: Digital Insight, Capture, and Twenty-First-Century Revelation

Historically associated with intelligence, cognition, and consciousness as well as anthropocentric notions and methods of production, possession, and dissemination or circulation, Western philosophical, epistemological, and ontological genealogies of ‘knowledge’ and social production are inextricably tied to the hegemonic social order and its legitimized (re)production of ‘Man’, the ‘Human’, and processes of ‘Human’-making. In this context, the aforementioned 1982 *Oxford English Dictionary*’s assignation of the term ‘knowledge’ to indicate “information in the form of facts, assumptions, and inference rules which can be accessed by a computer program” becomes significant and prescient (“knowledge” *oed.com*). Placed in conversation with the informatization and datafication of knowledge and experience, the ‘digital revolution’ has critical potency when considered alongside global neoliberal social ordering operant as and through the twenty-first-century datafied prison nation. With the ability to technically ‘visualize’, affect, and “feed forward” networks of multi-scalar, ontological relationalities, what is especially significant about twenty-first-century media and technology is the granular specificity and sectionability it permits. Considering issues of social and technological access and accessibility, the biopolitical and onto-political implications of this granularized specificity are daunting.⁴¹ As the prison nation-cum-neoliberal governance operates through classification, “officially separate[ing] people by sex and criminal offense [and dividing] them further, if unofficially, by race, religion, political views, and sexual orientation or gender presentation” (Berger, *Captive* 6),

⁴¹ Massumi defines ‘ontopower’ as an “environmental power” as it locates at the ontological level of affect and affectivity. For Massumi, ontopower is more than a neoliberal concern with human capital, but also it is “a matter of the affective capacity of all matter” (qtd. in Clough, *User Unconscious* np). I use ‘onto-political’ then to indicate the deployment of ontological capacities in the service of political machinations, in keeping with biopolitics but at the level of affect.

what emerges is a commensurate increase in the ‘visible’ spectrum of deviance, depravity, and patterns of behavior used to criminalize *and anticipate* criminality.

What is remarkable and terrifying, then, about twenty-first-century technology as a biopolitical apparatus of transnational social ordering and statecraft is the vast expansion of quotidian methods of captivity and ‘Human’-making enacted through racialized, classed, and gendered mechanisms of “population racism”—now digitalized. With this, the conceptual, practical, empirical, and sanctionable boundaries between incarcerated and unincarcerated, captive and free, ‘*human*’ selves and *thing* selves, and distinctions between Flesh, Body, and ‘Human’ subjectivity become ever more fluid and leaky. This further opens relationships between subjectivity, bodies, and social ordering to new scales of molecular and molar technological ‘visibility’, accessibility, and modulation and to consequent social and juridical curation and contestation. With the intensifying assimilation of twenty-first-century media and technology into our daily lives as well as state and social institutions and infrastructures, the granularity—and thus the creative capacity—of the categorization on which these systems rely increases exponentially; or rather, algorithmically and permutationally. Paired with increasing capacities of digital capture, storage, and the instantaneous ‘sharing’ of information across networks of entities, private and public, the patterns of our daily activities, behaviors, and deviances become ‘visible’, atomize-able, and computationally traceable, accessible, and *rearrangeable* at spatio-temporal scales that exceed and bypass ‘human’ oversight.⁴²

As we continue to digitally shop, ‘chat’, pay bills, file taxes, date, misbehave, make bad choices, watch deplorable movies, purchase condoms, fill prescriptions, community organize,

⁴² Digital capture indicates processes by which information in the form of analog media and non-digital formats of data, such as audio, video, and other ‘raw’ data are converted into digital files and information that can be processed by computers.

attend school, and travel—as we continue *to be*—so too does the accessible and (re)arrangeable information about these “bodily habits, pastimes, relationships, and mobility,” the control of which Gilmore identifies as freedom (12). Thus, as we continue to exercise our ‘freedom’ in the datafied milieu of twenty-first-century technologies of access, surveillance, capture, and tracking, the reach of the neoliberal prison nation and its mechanisms of social legitimization and criminalization increase to a scale of granular specificity that is unparalleled. Further still, as the availability, scope, and deployment of computational, anticipatory, and so-called ‘predictive’ technologies continue to flourish, our digital traces become not only ‘visible’, accessible, and atomizable; but also, they are opened to (re)configuration within a digital confound of networked information. As many researchers, writers, artists, academics, marketers, and politicians (among others) would likely attest, in our datafied and data rich society, if one is searching for patterns—of behaviors, choices, values, deviances, similarities, etc.—patterns can be ‘found’. In this way, the very markers of ‘Human’ freedom and agency, our “motive will and active desire,” become informational, able to be captured, analyzed, policed, sold, manipulated, and used to ‘anticipate’ behaviors and choices. These everyday behaviors—habit, passing interest, or glitch—can then be ‘visualized’, criminalized, and used to regulate ‘Human’ subjectivity and access to life-building resources with a digital nuance and granular specificity that is historically unprecedented. “Smart phones no longer amaze, but they increasingly structure and monitor the lives of their so-called owners” (Chun 1).

**DIGITAL REVELATION—
Knowledge, ‘Human’-making, and Twenty-First-Century *techno-gods***

Noted previously, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun asserts that in our contemporary “datalogical” and networked knowledge society and social order, what is new is the capacity to

render complex populational interactions into visualizable lines of connection, “illustrat[ing] the relationship between two vastly different scales that have hitherto remained separate—the local and the global, the molecular and the molar...pierc[ing] through the ‘mass’ or community to capture individual and preindividual relations” (2-3). However, as Foucault’s conceptions and distinctions between anatomopolitics and biopolitics reveal, it is not necessarily the illustration or hegemonic management of these relational scales alone that is new.⁴³ Rather, it is the technological capacity to access, affect, modulate, reconfigure, and with Hansen, to “feed forward” these pre-individual and pre-populational relations at an ontological timescale that exceeds that of ‘human’ conscious and nonconscious perception, arbitration, and authorization; it is the ontological temporality, access, and accessibility of twenty-first-century media and technology that is critically significant.

Most germane to this analysis are the new, technologically mediated, scales of ‘visibility’ of the entangled *‘human’ selves* and *thing selves* that assemble along and inside the Flesh-Body-‘Human’ continuum of subjectivity; “Networks do not produce an imagined and anonymous ‘we’...but rather, a relentlessly pointed yet empty, singular yet plural YOU [that]...in its plural mode...still addresses individuals as individuals” (Chun 2-3). This disintegration between public and private, personal and population, enabled by the datafication of our everyday lives firmly establishes both spheres as locations of relational neoliberal ordering and ‘Human’-making. The collapse of distinct public and private spheres and the multi-scalar capacity of technological ‘visibility’, connectivity, and ontological accessibility produce a situation in which ‘human’

⁴³ Foucault identifies anatomopolitics as one trajectory of biopower that focuses on disciplining the individual through social institutions such as the school and the prison, and which center on the surveillance and the regulation of the daily reproduction in the life of the individual. Biopolitics refers to these regulatory mechanisms at the level of populations (Clough and Willse 48-9).

economies of crisis, trauma, *'human' selves* and *thing selves*, and the Flesh-Body-*'Human'* continuum of subjectivity are also opened to new scales of digital *'creativity'* and distribution.

As Clough states:

digital media and computational technologies, neoliberalism, and biopolitics continue to reach into the ontological grounds of human subjectivity and sociality, both in their operating on nonconscious, bodily responses of affect and in their flooding the domain of connectivity with other-than-human agencies or datafication. (*User Unconscious* np)

However, this creativity is a creativity that exceeds, bypasses, and *is revealed to* the un-supplemented *'human'*, reflecting and moving in the manner of social orders and knowledge societies produced through *'divine'* revelation and incarnation.⁴⁴ With this, epistemological and ontological *'Human'*-making are no longer arbitrated or legitimized by reasoning, empirical, Enlightened *'Man'* or modernity's *'Human'*. As twenty-first-century media and technology exceed and ascend to a multi-scalar dexterity above and below *'Human'* authority and intervention, I contend that this performs a technological apotheosis in the advent of *technogods*, operational as and through the transnational, neoliberal governance of the datafied prison nation.

With their unprecedented epistemological, ontological, and temporal capacities and reach, twenty-first-century microcomputational, algorithmic, sensing, and affective technologies are apotheotic in two ways particularly salient to this thesis: first, in the sense of apotheosis as "the fact or action of becoming or making into a god"; and second, as the "exaltation or crediting someone or something with extraordinary power or status."⁴⁵ These computational, algorithmic,

⁴⁴ "In religion and theology, revelation is the revealing or disclosing of some form of truth or knowledge through communication with a deity or other supernatural entity or entities" ("Revelation" *Wikipedia.com*).

⁴⁵ ("apotheosis" *Wiktionary.com*).

creative, and anticipatory *techno-gods* speak not only of the neoliberal governance-cum-datafied prison nation and its networked distributions of ‘human’ selves, *thing selves*, and the Flesh-Body-‘Human’ continuum of agency and subjectivity. But also, they reconfigure and demand a re-thinking of the hegemonic social order, knowledge societies, normativity, criminality, captivity, freedom, and ‘human’ and other-than-human experience and consciousness in our “operational present” as it “feeds forward” into our operational future.

Furthermore, with the advent of twenty-first-century media and *techno-gods*, Enlightened reason, knowledge economies, and the social order are reconfigured engendering what Disability Studies scholar Lennard Davis names a ‘dismodernity’ with ‘dismodern subjects’ that:

in contrast to a whole and stable subject, representing the norms of a culture...reveal that [the] seemingly intact body is really a body-in-the-making, or maybe even a body-in-the-unmaking, one that is always at risk of disintegration, dismemberment, and re-configuration...All bodies, then, exist within social and political networks made up of other bodies and forces, including the biological and the technological. (qtd. in Godden, 1274)

This ‘dismodernity’ also inverts (or reverts) imperatives of empiricism and the scientific method which have long been used to circumscribe and sanction knowledge, reason, ‘Man’, and modernity’s ‘Human’, and which have served as justification for the objectification, regulation, exploitation, and exclusion—the management and ordering of access to ‘Human’ subjectivity and the ‘human’ status. In this way, twenty-first-century science and technology move into a relationship with the ‘Human’, empiricism, and ‘visibility’ that is incommensurate with modernity’s insistence on objective observation and rational-critical reason to discipline and legitimize knowledge and the ‘Human’. With twenty-first-century media and technology ‘seeing’ is no longer a predicate for ‘believing’.

In this way, our contemporary moment is witnessing a fundamental shift in relationships between belief, religion, science, technology, fact and faith that undercuts Enlightenment tenets, mimicking the belief in the ‘unseen’ that has been historically associated with faith, religion, and god. In fact, the relationship between twenty-first-century media and technology, science, knowledge, and ‘Human’ subjectivity goes a step further than simply re-creating a knowledge society and social order built on economies of ‘divine’ revelation and incarnation; twenty-first-century *techno-gods* need no priest, no scribe, no scholar, and no ‘human’ authority of any sort. Indeed, the un-supplemented ‘human’ no longer has a point of entry at the scale necessary to act as either translator or arbiter, and as such, ‘Man’ and the ‘Human’ lose their status as the sanctioned and sanctioning Creator of Knowledge, Experience, and the ‘Human’.

It would seem, then, that we find ourselves at a precipice, leaning out if we haven’t already tipped over, at which we must ask: Have we, or to what degree have we, technologically ‘made’ our ontological, epistemological, and “datalogical” ‘makers’—our microcomputational, affective, creative, (automated) reasoning, ‘human’ and ‘thing’ Self-determining yet indeterminate *techno-gods*? And if so, how can we know or be certain? Critical questions remain: What of our “motive will,” our “active desire” as they continue to move into digital landscapes from which our corporeal bodies are separated? What of the ‘Human’ ‘right to be let alone’? What of the twenty-first century’s concern for the ‘right to be forgotten’?⁴⁶ And of

⁴⁶ The ‘right to be let alone’ was articulated in an 1890 Harvard Law Review written by Louis Brandeis and Samuel Warren. Concerned about protecting the person and securing the individual as technological developments such as the portable camera were leading to ‘celebrity journalism’. See (Burrows ‘To be let alone’). The ‘right to be forgotten’ “is a concept discussed and put into practice in the European Union (EU) and Argentina since 2006. The issue has arisen from desires of individuals to "determine the development of their life in an autonomous way, without being perpetually or periodically stigmatized as a consequence of a specific action performed in the past." There has been controversy about the practicality of establishing a right to be forgotten to the status of an international human right in respect to access to information,

particular importance in this era of ever increasing networked connectivity, speculative social economies, affective agency, and datafied ‘visibility’: What of the ‘right to remain silent’ and ‘the right not to communicate’?⁴⁷ For while it may indeed be “a joy to be hidden and disaster not to be found,”⁴⁸ in the datafied twenty-first-century, it is also sometimes necessary to be hidden and disaster to be ‘found’.

due in part to the vagueness of current rulings attempting to implement such a right” (“Right to be forgotten” *Wikipedia.com*).

⁴⁷ D.W. Winnicott discusses ‘the right not to communicate’ in an analysis exploring the work of communication. Written in 1965, Winnicott uses the children’s game ‘Hide and Seek’ to consider “a protest from the core of me to the frightening fantasy of being infinitely exploited,” and is described in the essay by Alice J. Pitt and published by *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education*, Vol. 7.1, 2000 (Pitt 65).

⁴⁸ This quotation from D.W. Winnicott can also be found in the essay by Alice J. Pitt and published by *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education*, Vol. 7.1, 2000. www.tandfonline.com (Pitt 65).

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