

THE WOMB OF WESTERN THEORY:
TRAUMA, TIME THEFT, AND THE CAPTIVE
MATERNAL¹

I. MEETING THE CAPTIVE MATERNAL

We are missing the stories of women who are keeping life going in the midst of war.

—Zainab Salbi, 2016²

The nature of this war assumes many different guises, sometimes overtly violent, sometimes economically restrictive, and still other times socially repressive . . . modern wars of US imperialism waged against Third World people have not all been completely military campaigns, but have also included social pacification programs, economic aid to reactionary regimes, political police extermination of legitimate opposition.

—Message to the Black Movement:

A Political Statement from the Black Underground (1976)³

Perspectives from an Arab feminist human rights refugee and an organization associated with a black feminist revolutionary fugitive initiate this reflection on captivity and resistance. Raised during the 1980s war between Iran and Iraq (the United States secretly armed both sides),⁴ Iraqi-American Zainab Salbi notes how women in Middle East war zones forge resistance by maintaining pleasure in their children's lives and personal beauty in their own (one woman declares her desire to

have contraband red lipstick so that when a sniper fires as she walks in public he will realize that he has just “killed a beautiful woman”).⁵ A former member of the Black Panther Party (BPP) and the Black Liberation Army (BLA), an activist in the Black Underground, Assata Shakur maintains her innocence in the shooting death of New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster. Her escape from prison rendered her a political fugitive and “refugee” in Cuba (the United States normalized relations with the nation in 2016). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) engineered a counterintelligence program that hunted, imprisoned, and on occasion, assassinated radicals, such as Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in the December 1969 Chicago raid on BPP headquarters. That same federal police would place Shakur, with a two million dollar bounty on her head, on the 2014 terrorist list with Al-Qaeda, which suggests that ideological links have been formed in the policing of foreign and domestic threats.

Born in different generations and continents, under diverse political and cultural states of siege and violence, the narratives of Salbi and Shakur grapple with persecution, death, and grief. Pursuing fights and flights for justice, despite captivity and trauma, both women’s narratives recognize the unrecoverable years stolen or spent surviving warfare and murder. One woman, Salbi, is elevated from subjugated female to free citizen in her adopted nation (that the United States intervened, invaded, and de-stabilized Iraq triggering genocidal violence is context that might be underscrutinized). Another woman, Shakur, is forced into mutating positions of enslavement: from engineering sickle cell testing and breakfast programs in Harlem, while threatened by police and Cointelpro,

through survival in a militarist underground formation as a “slave” rebel, to being shot, captured, and tortured as a political prisoner who plans her escape into political exile as a “maroon.” Democracy-seeking Salbi emigrates from a dictatorial state to become a sovereign citizen in the West. Democracy-fleeing Shakur in metamorphosis is in constant violent transitions, from that of a “slave” insurrectionist labeled, tortured, convicted, and imprisoned as a “common criminal” into a political prisoner-fugitive who survives a lethal, governmental war that killed or disappeared other black radicals.⁶ The anonymous counterparts to these women’s public lives are the more typical “Captive Maternals”—those most vulnerable to violence, war, poverty, police, and captivity; those whose very existence enables the possessive empire that claims and dispossesses them.

Global dominance in economics, military, and cultural commodities allows the United States’ imperial reach, despite the “blowback” of its devastating, unwinnable wars (alongside the genocidal violence the United States unleashed abroad, its interventionist warfare has resulted, in 2016, in twenty veteran suicides a day, trillions of dollars in military debt, and projected decades of warfare in the Middle East). However, the United States’ longest war is with its domestic target: enslaved or captive black women, a war that dates back to the Commonwealth of Virginia’s 1658 attempts to (re)enslave Elizabeth Key, one of the first Captive Maternals to have her battles enter public record.

Captive Maternals can be either biological females or those feminized into caretaking and consumption. To better understand the meaning of Captive Maternals requires context.

Western theory or Womb Theory provides the historical context that married democracy with slavery; one unintended offspring was the Black Matrix.⁷ Captive Maternals and the Black Matrix are unfamiliar terms that point to the limits of theory that rationalizes the avoidance of interstices or gaps in the world through the consumption of maternal lives and bodies.⁸ In transitioning a colony through a republic into a representative democracy with imperial might, the emergent United States grew a womb, it took on the generative properties of the maternals it held captive. Western democracy, based in American Exceptionalism, merged Enlightenment ideologies with Western theories to birth a new nation (a nascent empire) that fed on black frames. Centuries later, Black Captive Maternals remain disproportionately disciplined, denigrated, and consumed for the greater democracy. Although black males are most publicly policed, imprisoned, and executed by state violence and vigilantism, and remembering to call out the names or images of their female counterparts is an important additive in a black death roll call and mobilization, this lens is shaped by paternal power, imagery, and desires. For Captive Maternals, the chit-chat of the little cuts and rat-like gnawing is the norm; they face verbal slander and intimidation, physical violence, domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, and contempt, policing in schools, jobs, society, and prisons, from every sector. Still, it is not their victimization that marks them; it is their productivity and its consumption. Throughout history, Captive Maternals provided the reproductive and productive labor to stabilize culture and wealth. The Viking mercantile raiders survived and thrived because of slavery: agricultural work and reproductive work by the feminized or female enabled raiders to seek glory through pillage and rape. Even Thor required a

Captive Maternal (although he would likely have denied the fact).

The trauma and theft that produced Western democracy dependent upon slavery also created an unintentional shadow twin within Western theory or Womb Theory: the Black Matrix. The Black Matrix is a fulcrum that exists along a political spectrum that stretches like a plank. The plank-like spectrum upon the fulcrum is shaped by triad formations in racial rape/consumption, resistance, and repression in a renewable cycle of fight, flight, and fixation. The Black Matrix as fulcrum functions when the captive leverages her power against captor and captivity. The weight of oppression rests along the spectrum upon a fulcrum. Atop the spectrum plank are the protagonists. Think of an old-school seesaw on the playground. The fulcrum is the pyramid upon which the spectrum rests. The political actors are seated in various distances on that spectrum plank. The weight of those seated, and perhaps their “erratic” proclivity to jumping off the plank, determines who is elevated to the highest position and who scrunches their knees up with their bottom on the ground. Alexander Kojève’s *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*⁹ argues that the slave has powers that surpass the master; that the latter, in fact, is dependent upon the former. Here I argue that leverage, rather than “feminism” or “intersectionality” or “progressivism” might be a useful term for recognizing power and predation.

When the Black Matrix rends or ruptures captivity, the lofty topple; this is because those aloft have been called out, humiliated, vanquished in some form, whether through large or small rebellion. That rupture is an inescapably bloody, unattractive affair. This is true not just because the balance of the

high and low has been disturbed but because the retaliatory violence to punish that disturbance is inevitable. Hence, most public activism stays on script, within conventional politics or on-continuum politics, where activism sanctioned or approved by governance or funders dominates. Meanwhile, off-continuum politics that resist governance and nonprofits to follow the “rabble,” rebellion through boycott, protest, or even riot becomes an act of the uncivil.¹⁰ The Black Matrix is found in both on- and off-continuum politics. Thus the “political revolution” so prominent in campaign rhetoric in 2016 is not inherently aligned with Captive Maternals.

Captive Maternals work in and for governance, corporations, prisons, police, and the military. Their diversity—from CEOs and university presidents to Attorney Generals and janitors and the incarcerated—indicates ideological difference, economic need, and political desire within a democracy. The concept of the “Captive Maternal” is not fungible. There are distinctions between Salbi and Shakur because of the importance of their respective work for justice and against war. Venerated and employable by governance and nonprofits, Salbi is sovereign in a democracy that installed the dictator Saddam Hussein that terrorized her birth nation, levied deadly sanctions against Hussein that led to the deaths of half a million children, deposed him through an invasion under the false pretext of weapons of mass destruction, an invasion that caused mass destruction. The Ted Talk platform open to Salbi (or even Edward Snowden by bot) cannot be offered to Assata Shakur because the Black Matrix is the expression within which US democracy is a plank in the spectrum. In order for Shakur’s narrative to emerge in its own right, not as a perversion or

pathological mutation of victimization or violence, one cannot ignore Shakur's structural relationship to propping up Western democracy, first as caretaker (Panther breakfast program supplementing for social services denied to the urban poor) and later as demonized criminal. Material conditions, refugee or immigrant status only slightly determine one's status as captive. The resolve and ability to resist captivity through the use of a fulcrum, even if leverage engenders disarray, is a form of politics, disparaged and punished by conventional politics. (The elder's admonition by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that there was a "special place in hell" for young women who preferred to vote for the more radical "Bernie" rather than for "Hillary" in the 2016 democratic primaries comes to mind.) When that fulcrum originates in the Black Matrix, one is talking about a politics tethered to master/slave terror.

Western theory or Womb Theory creates the template that makes predation of the Captive Maternal invisible, through consumptive relationships that provide the *free theorist* or citizen with plausible deniability. Today, Womb Theory accommodates critiques of feminism, antiracism, and heterosexism to some degree. Womb Theory co-opted genesis for democracy, idealized as the highest form of human self-governance. For centuries, patriarchal, enslaving Womb Theory normalized—as natural, universal, and befitting the diminished capacities of the captive—trauma and theft of labor and time, which legitimized the existence of Captive Maternals as inevitable, inconsequential, and invisible. Citizen and ruler benefit from reproductive labor to accrue leisure and space for theory, war, and power. Oral and written biographies¹¹ and treatises of captive females

embattled against violence offer important perspectives.¹² As forms of theorizing,¹³ such works allow Western theory to be viewed as the anti-soulmate of freedom.

II. WOMB THEORY AND ARISTOTELIAN PREDATIONS¹⁴

The deliberative faculty of the soul is not present at all in the slave; in a female, it is present but ineffective.

—Aristotle, *Politics*¹⁵

Aristotle offers the “deliberative faculty of the soul” as the apex for philosophy and theory, therefore attributing to it an exclusionary property: it sits at the top of the seesaw. In this worldview, the capacity for consciousness to think critically and comprehensively is attributed only to those free from captivity and female identity. Slaves and females are told that they lack such intellectual capacity, and so are forewarned that, in a world dominated by humans, their tenuous links to “human” will be their demise in social and political life, if not an accelerant towards their biological death.

Aristotle’s legacy grants Womb Theory a protected status that legitimizes structures of torture and trauma that transfer agency, labor, and time. Aristotle’s trifurcation produces the free male as human theorist, the slave as antihuman nontheorist, and the nonslave female as semihuman, defective, anti-theorist. This “natural order” of human, antihuman, and semihuman—solidified through the sacrifices of servants and slaves—presents ideology-as-philosophy in which the capacity for theory and freedom are proprietary possessions held against future citizens.

Progressives generally agree that “slaves” are not a manifestation of biology or ontology: they are created through war and acts of enslavement. The philosopher-king is an enslaver or enforcer as well as a thinker. Gender and sexual differences among the enslaved veil vulnerability to sexual violence within and directed at captive communities. Gender/sexual expression as a “human” characteristic is possessed by those already empowered as “human.”¹⁶ All caretakers have maternal characteristics, but the “community of slaves,”¹⁷ across time and space, is disproportionately built by (cisgender, queer, and trans) girls and women who stitch together familial care for children, adults, and elders.

Captive Maternals are the antithesis to Womb Theory. Captive Maternals leverage a Black Matrix to fracture the Western womb. This is not always a project for political reform, diversity, and inclusion. Still, there is no formal declaration of being at war with Western theory. Nor is there geographical territory to capture, a conventional military or drone to deploy. Womb Theory has no termination date. Its longevity and adaptability allow it to incorporate the intellectual labor and theory of feminism, progressivism, radicalism, and antiracism. Western theory’s recognition of Captive Maternals as a fabrication of its enslavement ideology is a public admission to a political opponent, but it can also be a co-optation in which a useful ally emerges to deflect charges of racism and sexism and discipline rebellions that unmask *de jure* freedom as *de facto* parasitism. A parasitic sovereign is neither free of its captives nor does it bring freedom to them. It lacks the legitimacy of a “freedom fighter.” Womb Theory logically defends and guards its reputation against accusations not so much centered on

predation (all victors assume there are failures and prey) but on intellectual bankruptcy.

One daughter of American democracy's founding father Thomas Jefferson protected his legacy by likely burning his records or letters concerning his personal Captive Maternal, Sally Hemings. For the Jefferson daughters, the relationship between their father and their late mother Martha Jefferson's enslaved half-sister, and the unacknowledged cousins that resulted, would have to be diminished in its importance and rendered opaque for analysis. DNA analysis undid the erasure of records, but the narration of the relationship as a love story rather than one of child rape and forced breeding (or perhaps both?), buries trauma, another form of theft.

I have previously used President Thomas Jefferson's decades-long relationship with Sally Hemings to illustrate how Captive Maternals' reproductivity garnered electoral votes (through the 3/5th Clause of the US Constitution and the electoral college) to allow Jefferson to defeat John Adams in the 1800 presidential election. Jefferson's slaves, including those born to Hemings, "voted" for him. The decades that Jefferson took from the fourteen-year-old in captivity that extended beyond his death (he did not free her in his will) can be considered from her perspective as either a gift or theft of time, or perhaps both. But her private perspective is not the only viewpoint worth scrutinizing. From a legal and social standpoint, a slave inherently owns nothing, including herself, which she can bequeath to another (unless, of course, a "master" ensured her agency as derivative of his own). Without self-possession, Hemings has little to offer but rebellion (and the life-threatening consequences that come with that choice).

There is no official record that she ever ran from or fought Jefferson. For some, this suggests an emotional bond to her owner. Perhaps. But her narrow berth built above the amateur architect's comfortable, sizable Monticello bed suggests that rather than "share" Jefferson's bed she likely lived at his beck and call. The potential intimacies within the power imbalances of husband/wife, patron/mistress, or sugar daddy / gold digger are not easily transferrable into a never-breached master/slave dichotomy.

Despite denials—from governments, corporations, and politicians—that their rhetoric and policies have promoted rape, exploitation, and theft, Womb Theory has undertheorized violence against Captive Maternals' reproductive labor, commodified emotional affect, sexual consumption, connectivity, and longevity for the enrichment of the lives of others.¹⁸ Stabilized by the Western canon and academy, it is insufficiently attentive to premature, sometimes violent, deaths of those it has historically portrayed as intellectually and morally deficient.¹⁹ The free theorist, first-tier human is the greatest beneficiary of the forced reallocation of time, space, and pleasure. The negation of consciousness among second-, third-, and fourth-tier "humans" sanctions exploitation of the private realm's household (garden/fields, nursery/orphanages, factories/ labor and prison camps) to nourish the public realm's civic culture. Racial-sexual violence is a policing sector and human marketplace. It does not respect chronological age or protected categories such as "child," "pregnant female/mother," "elderly," or "ill." Unprosecuted police killings of unarmed men, women, children, mothers, the elderly, and the mentally ill are not anomalies or the unfortunate consequences

of safety zealots. They are expressions of structures that form a womb-like captivity.

The divisive trinity is Aristotle's fractured humanity of fully human (free male), incompletely human (free female), and antihuman (ungendered slave). Slaves of ancient Greece as spoils of war have become re-generative. Inside Plato's cave, Womb Theory shadow play misrepresents political reality. Outside the cave, Captive Maternals leverage the Black Matrix as political phenomena. Sustained dialogue between those inside and outside of the cave is difficult, given their different perspectives and objectives. Art presents a bridge between irreconcilable interests. Yet it, too, is influenced by Womb Theory.

Aristotle's praise for Greek tragedies extends to the playwright Euripides whose *Medea* offers a window into the male womb. In *Medea*, Euripides refuses political agency to enslaved women. The slave chorus chronicles and cautions against their sovereign mistress, Medea, the daughter of a king and granddaughter of Helios, the sun god, in her homicidal rage at her husband Jason who betrays and abandons her. Despite their tears, the slave women do not risk a physical intervention against their sovereign's plot to murder Jason's princess bride, her father the king, or even Jason's own two young sons by Medea, two children that the Captive Maternals had raised. Medea's filicide leaves Jason maddened by her revenge. Strikingly portrayed in Lars von Trier's 1988 film adaptation, the 2016 Harlem School of the Arts (HSA) Theatre Alliance all-black performance marks Medea as black, a product of the Black Matrix.²⁰ Medea is sovereign not slave. Her time is her own. Whatever amount of time she gave to Jason in killing her

brother and fleeing her father's kingdom to enable him to win the Golden Fleece she will take back through killing Jason's new family and his (her) progeny. Her trauma provides capacity for revenge in the male playwright's narrative in which the slave chorus feels and acts as ontological slaves not maternals enslaved by external forces. The potential for unexpected thoughts and unpredictable actions seeking freedom, for agency and thought, emerges in the HSA Theatre Alliance production where peerage exists between Medea and her slaves, so much so that she has to threaten them pointedly with violence to prevent them from intervening in a mass murder. It is all about context, of course, and Medea in black Harlem, or what is left of it in the wake of gentrification, brings the community into action.

The slave women exist to amplify Medea's angst, her emotional landscape of grief and horror, and the moral repulsion of the audience that witnesses her crimes. With a "diminished" intellectual capacity of a female, Medea's heinous crime is expected to be a crime of passion. Only the enslaved women, who with labor loved Medea's children—presumably as she loved them sans labor—surpass her in diminished capacity for virtue in the play.²¹ The slave is more contemptible than the mass murderer (in the United States, four victims constitute a mass killing); for, only the murderer risks her life for honor through vengeance—demanding and obtaining the recognition denied her by a peer and sovereign, albeit a lover who ruins and discards her for a prettier, younger version of herself.

Aristotelian legacies are kept alive not only by art, but also by progeny. The absent dialectic between master and Captive Maternal is a missed opportunity for the evolution of revolu-

tionary theory. Womb Theory progeny may cherry pick their theorists for intellectual consistency, but that strategy is not synonymous with coherency or correlation with the devastations of the material reality of rape and captivity. Unmoored from Captive Maternals, theory itself becomes art—a fabrication that when faced with perspectives of violent captivity from the enslaved might blink rather than see theory. Unfortunately, progeny of Womb Theory can burn more bridges than it builds.

III. PROGENY THEORY, EXCLUSIVITY, AND ELUSIVE FREEDOM

San Domingo developed a fabulous prosperity and by 1789 was taking 40,000 slaves a year. In 1789 the total foreign trade of Britain was twenty-seven million pounds, of which the colonial trade accounted for only five million pounds. The total foreign trade of France was seventeen million pounds, of which San Domingo alone was responsible for eleven million. “Sad irony of human history,” comments Jaures, “the fortunes created at Bordeaux, at Nantes, by the slave-trade gave to the bourgeoisie that pride which needed liberty and contributed to human emancipation.”

C. L. R. James, *A History of Pan-African Revolt*²²

The personal biographies of cultural and biological persecutions of Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault did not lead them to seek intellectual allies and informants among black theorists. Were they hoarding deliberative faculties among western Europeans? Are their antiracist theories hampered by white solipsism?²³ Post-World War II advocacy against racism and genocide was cemented into the loss of white virtue and

the failings of Western democracy, yet without locating a black peer or subject, that is, a first-tier human among the captives. Hence, like Aristotle, they acknowledge no relationship or dependency with a caste that constitutes the foundation of their analysis.

Arendt and Foucault did not recognize black contemporaries as peers. This is not about the integration of Womb Theory, but an inquiry into the capacity of Womb Theory to function beyond its blind spots concerning the white supremacy and captivity infusing it. German Hannah Arendt (1906–1975), Trinidadian C. L. R. James (1901–89), Frenchman Michel Foucault (1926–84), and Martiniquean Frantz Fanon (1925–61) shared the same postwar era in which mass death and genocide altered consciousness and the rise and fall of sovereign powers.²⁴ In response to social theorist James and psychoanalytic theorist Fanon, Arendt and Foucault evince an unconscious white racial “double consciousness.”²⁵ Their proximity to being placed in a concentration camp by Nazis—Arendt was Jewish and Foucault was gay—would have seemingly forged a solidarity with blacks who had endured captivity and genocide for centuries. Any realistic critique of twentieth-century racism would have to competently address African/black experience and analyses. (In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt does discuss the Belgium genocide in the Congo.) Neither Arendt nor Foucault recognizes theory or the specificity of the “black experience” within Western democracy.

As progeny theorists, with a famous, fecund father and anonymous, theory-infertile mothers (feminist analytics disappear in their works), Arendt and Foucault hoard deliberative faculties. Following twentieth-century European genocides

against other Europeans, Arendt sought to stabilize Western democracy while Foucault sought to discredit it. Neither felt that they needed theoretical engagement with African or Caribbean theorists perhaps because both Arendt and Foucault were primarily interested in how racism devastated Europeans; their eponymous theorist remains Aristotle's universal first-tier human.

Foucault wrote of confinement, institutionalization, sexual captivity, prison, and race war. Yet, despite being a gay French intellectual and academic who worked directly with prisoners and their families as a part of *Le Groupe d'information sur les prisons* (the Prisons Information Group, the GIP), Foucault's otherwise impressive critiques of disciplinary regimes missed the depth and dimension they would have likely acquired through a critical engagement with the works of James and Fanon, or a consideration of the existence of the Captive Maternal and Black Matrix. Foucault is a product of French culture and education as is Fanon, but only Fanon notes that the struggle between colonizer and colonized *established* the Manichean divide in Third World struggles. Foucault ignores James' *Black Jacobins*, which exposes France's barbaric relationship to Haiti. James' horrific depictions of enslavement of Haitians and suppression of the Haitian revolution disappear Captive Maternals. Such depictions produce time by demarcating those worthy of taking it from those who create it.²⁶

Academic theoretical investigations placing Foucault in conversation with Fanon or James, or Arendt with Haiti and James, are important but no substitute for real discourse. Thus the lack of perspectives means that European or French racism, colonialism in Algeria, Haiti, Martinique, and Francophone

Africa (or even Germany's genocidal colonialism in Southwest Africa) are missing frameworks. Likewise, French violence against black and Muslim immigrants, French troops' massacres of Muslims in Algeria dissipate. Before a consideration of Europe, it is helpful to review the conceptual divide in democracy's Womb Theory, focusing on Arendt's distrust of the black civil rights movement as an enabler of Western democracy wedded to captivity.

Arendt's acceptance of the Athenian polis' public realm / private realm dichotomy idealizes a template for American democracy based on forced hierarchies. Despite the coerced relegation of women, children, and slaves to the private realm, the site of the laborer as opposed to the citizen in the public realm, Arendt values the polis' differentiation of political worth based on status and sequester. Segregation becomes the marker for "ability." In her lecture notes for *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the pioneering text on twentieth-century genocide and racism, Arendt states that freedom consists not in what one chooses—good or evil—but in the capacity or ability to choose: "The beginning of freedom is resistance."²⁷ Yet, Arendt denies the capacity to choose when black maternal parents enroll or enlist their children to challenge inferior, segregated schools. When the black parents chose to give their children greater options for a future as educated citizenry, Arendt faulted them for electing that they face racist mobs and violent white classmates and indifferent teachers. Yet, this violence was created by the state and white supremacy, not by the black parents.²⁸ Given Arendt's observations and assertions, for black parents, either the beginning of

freedom is *not* resistance or freedom is not a possibility for black families.

The de jure desegregation of US schools through the 1954 US Supreme Court *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision only became de facto desegregation through the later activism of black families. Arendt's controversial 1959 *Dissent* essay criticizes "bad" black parenting for waging antiracist battles with their children as combatants. Her line of inquiry, "If I were a Negro mother, what would I do?" could be paired with "If I were a White racist mother, what would I do?" The answer to the second query would be, "Do essentially what Arendt did": Assert white families' resistance to federally mandated desegregation as resistance and "states' rights." These families, and Arendt, could rely upon Womb Theory to obscure the roots and dependencies of their "resistance" to black equality. White hypocrisy of rebellion against proximity to black families did not extend to those blacks who sharecropped for them, raised their white children, cleaned their white homes, and paid taxes funneled into their two-tier educational system benefitting whites.

Arendt fails to consider the agency of black children with an abbreviated or altered childhood under Jim Crow segregation. Unsheltered in the (allegedly) protected terrain of propertied, white childhood, black children were expected to create a space for themselves and others in the public realm of civic culture. Although only a minority of black children were groomed, convinced, or coerced to become shock troops in a battle against segregation and racist terror, their suffering and PTSD would follow (and mark embittered oral histories by women with commentary that they would not repeat such a

devastating battle that harmed their girlhood). The Captive Maternal who led the Little Rock resistance to school segregation was Daisy Bates. Bates was in elementary school when she learned that white men had murdered her birth mother and her biological father, traumatized and threatened, had given her up for adoption to a black couple and left town.²⁹ With the memory of a dead Captive Maternal and the nurturing of adoptive Captive Maternals, Bates became a surrogate mother mentoring children into militant confrontations for the right to a decent education. Some civil rights battles seem like civil wars. In the violent confrontations in Little Rock and elsewhere, black children were physically and psychologically abused and terrorized. Arendt seems to not have initially recognized their suffering. She focuses her criticisms on the black parents. Only when brilliant novelist Ralph Ellison alluded to her essay and what she failed to see—the full humanity of blacks—did she take a more reflective turn. In an interview with Robert Penn Warren, Ellison observes,

the idea of sacrifice is very deeply inbred in Negroes. This is the thing—my mother always said I don't know what's going to happen to us if you young Negroes don't do so-and-so-and-so. The command went out and it still goes out. You're supposed to be somebody, and it's in relationship to the group. This is part of the American Negro experience, and this also means that the idea of sacrifice is always right there. This is where Hannah [Arendt] is way off in left base in her reflections on Little Rock. She has no conception of what goes on in the parents who send their kids through these lines. The kid is supposed to be

able to go through the line—he’s a Negro, and he’s supposed to have mastered those tensions, and if he gets hurt then this is one more sacrifice.³⁰

Arendt’s refugee émigré embrace of a white-dominated democracy fostered public acceptance of her adopted nation without it first repudiating its roots in and reproduction of racial-sexual captivity. Arendt later conceded to Ellison that she had not fully considered the “sacrifice” made by black Americans in the battles for civil rights. Yet, Arendt did not concede publicly that resistance-seeking freedom is an expression of theoretical capacity, of minds in dissident formation.

Civil rights activist-theorists diminished segregation, voter disenfranchisement, lynching, economic exploitation, and discrimination. That is, they expanded democracy. Caged in the private realm of reproductive labor and subjugation, they forced their way into the public realm of citizenry, albeit in movements that also marginalized the leadership of women, LGBT people (luminaries include Bayard Rustin, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Barbara Smith), poor people, children, and militants.

Arendt would not identify the deliberative faculties of the movement or its most venerated and dishonored members. Confronted with a phenomenon she could not analyze—that is, Captive Maternals who executed the strategies of the sovereign, she could only see the paralysis and dependency of a slave chorus. Captive Maternals, like Medea, burned persecuted black “childhood” on a funeral pyre for white supremacy, one in which their own children fanned the flames.

Whereas Arendt attempted to engage with black life and struggles (hence her foray into civil rights protests and her writings on the Belgium genocide in the Congo),³¹ Foucault chose to largely disregard black resistance in history and in the transformation of France's colonial powers during his lifetime. The revolutionary, anticolonial thought of French Martinique's Frantz Fanon³² and the socialist theories of Trinidadian C. L. R. James were not of sufficient interest despite James's investigation into France's genocidal violence in Haiti. With Fanon and James, the *Captive Maternal* is largely invisible. In asserting themselves as black masculinist theorists, they both strayed and stayed within the Western womb of theory. From the standpoint of the most vulnerable, and potentially most volatile, Fanonian ethics maintains that whatever it takes to end the powers of the enslaver is inherently "good."

Foucault's strange silence about Fanon is reflected in abstractions concerning "Europe." Genocidal colonialism, antiblack, and anti-Arab racism are components of the construction of Europe as an economic, ideological, and identity formation. Foucault's genealogy of violence expunged the mass killings of Muslims by French troops in Algeria, the Battle of Algiers, police killings of Muslims in France, France's murderous extraction of wealth in Haiti, and all the torture and trauma and theft throughout Francophone Africa. One gets a different interpretation of madness, sexual fetish, race wars, and carceral networks if there are actually black people existing within one's analysis. While Arendt allows blacks to make an appearance in her dissection of racism, only withholding their intellectual capacity, Foucault presents racism without blacks and hence unmoors ethnic whiteness from fetish, fear, and consumption

of blacks/Africans. Without a history of white enslavement of blacks, obscuring black theorizing from the standpoint of captivity is facile.

Foucault's *The Punitive Society, Discipline and Punish*, and *Society Must Be Defended* avoid detailed discussions of Europe's underdevelopment of and theft from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas (hence it problematizes an examination of captives within colonization).³³ Europe's fratricidal "world wars" required that colonial subjects fight in Europe and beyond. Having served their European "masters," captives later fought in global postwar anticolonial struggles. Foucault focuses on an ethnically diverse Europe where ethnic groups representing "races" wage war on each other. He has no perspective on how they consolidated their "ethnic" differences in a growing animus and consumption of non-European lives and wealth. The battling classes or economic sectors achieved détente through racial imperialism. For instance, Foucault notes that the "vices" that the bourgeoisie sought to codify and enforce against the working poor were also the indulgences of the aristocracy: idleness, lack of productivity, impregnating without obligation to children and unwed mothers, partying, insolence, and taking mind/mood altering substances. Historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham observes that after the US Civil War, white philanthropists and black propertied women sought to discipline black female laborers into a work ethic, admonishing them to abstain from partying, alcohol, and premarital sex. The "punitive society" critiqued by Foucault was in some ways embraced by aspiring black Americans as a vehicle for economic productivity and racial uplift.³⁴

Society Must be Defended argues that war is the uninterrupted frame of history; rebellion is constant in the face of a war (an ethnic race war) never declared but constantly waged. Foucault illustrates biological racism in *Society Must be Defended* only with the Nazi Holocaust against Ashkenazi Jews. Decades later, Sephardic Jews organized Black Panther Party chapters in Israel; still later, African or Ethiopian Jews clashed with police and racist Israeli immigration policies. There is no frame within these writings to anticipate or acknowledge these phenomena. As Foucault notes, even Karl Marx acknowledged that “class” warfare originated from or worked as code for race warfare. Part of Foucault’s consistent failure to address the specificity of black life is that twentieth-century Eastern and Western European Jews (it is the German holocaust that is the cornerstone for the relevance of his critique) did not consider themselves “black” or the antithesis of the European. Juxtaposed with Africans and Native American “savages” who were systematically victimized by genocidal biological racism, they would have denied their commonalities, seeing themselves as European Jews. Distinguishing between ethnic race war and biological race war, Foucault describes how European Jewry faced lethal anti-Semitism, which became genocidal racism under the Nazis, and yet reverted to ethnic racism in the postwar era, with the creation of a “Jewish state” in Israel, supported by the British and Americans. Foucault’s system(s) “shift” between ethnic racial war and biological-genocidal racism.

Both Arendt and Foucault present blackness without blacks. Arendt does so through theory and constructs of black suffering that under-address black resistance: the hallmark to agency and freedom. Foucault does so through the writing of

repressive sites such as Attica, following the 1971 repression of its prison rebellion where black men were disproportionately tortured and killed. But it is the architecture and not the people by which he seems to be mesmerized. In other writings, he transfers blackness to Ashkenazi or European Jews (African Jews seemingly do not exist), unwittingly following psychiatrist Sander Gilman's arguments in *Pathology and Difference*³⁵ but without the black presence that Gilman accepts, a presence that is the heart of psychiatrist Frantz Fanon's magisterial *Black Skin, White Masks*. Gilman addresses misogyny as central to his analysis. Fanon does not. Foucault does not. Foucault would have had to engage interviews and investigative journalism to recover the narratives and analyses of French women captive in Nazi extermination camps.³⁶

The Nazis in some fashion replayed the total war that France waged to wrest its wealth and prestige from its Haitian colony.³⁷ The French Revolution helped to launch the first successful slave revolt in the Americas, in Haiti. When Toussaint Louverture—whose attempts to negotiate with French powers were rebuffed—waged total war, he was defeated and eventually died imprisoned in France. Fanon's uneasy alliance, noted in *The Wretched of the Earth*, between “the black” and “the Arab” is about land and racism. Early twentieth-century German leaders admired the US genocidal reservation system for Native Americans, as Germans practiced genocide against Herero and Nama Africans in the colonization of Namibia, using slave labor camps, sex slaves, starvation, and medical experimentation on children.

Foucault's lecture on January 31, 1973, offers insights into time:

The time of life becomes an exchangeable material; on the other hand, the measure of time allows the quantification of the exchange, through the relation established either between a quantity of labor and a quantity of money, or between a quantity of time and the gravity of the offense. The form refers to the essential phenomenon, which is the introduction of the quantity of time as measure, and not only as economic measure in the capitalist system, but also as moral measure.³⁸

Black women as Captive Maternals historically configured as lacking morality, intellectual capacity, and ethics confront their subjugation with trauma and stolen time (like stolen lives) as central to political battles.

IV. TRAUMA AND TIME THEFT

I am a Black revolutionary woman, and because of this i have been charged with and accused of every alleged crime in which a woman was believed to have participated.

—Assata Shakur³⁹

In 1619, the British colony Jamestown, Virginia, marked its impoverished Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans as indentured servants; but it began to seek the mechanism through law and custom to turn a free indentured person of color into a slave. In 1658, Elizabeth Key, a “free woman of color,” not a “Negro/African/Slave,” petitioned the Virginia colony to end her captivity. Key argued that her deceased father had been a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, had her baptized, and provided a guardianship under an indenture

before his death. English common law ruled that children inherited the legal status of their fathers who must acknowledge and financially support them. Key successfully proved that, based on English ancestry, Christian status, and record of indenture, she was free.

Three years later, Virginia abandoned English common law and ruled that slave or free status would follow the status of the mother;⁴⁰ black women would be slaves and if a white mother chose to give birth with a black/African father, then slave status would follow the African bloodline. This split the Captive Maternal into distinct racial categories. The majority of bonded women as African could no longer follow the example set by Key.⁴¹ Captivity followed Black Maternals—mothers and fathers. The paternal womb erased moral and financial obligations of the white father to the black family but preserved his political agency. It erased these obligations of the black father to the black family by criminalizing his political agency. The augmented freedom for the white and diminished freedom for the black father meant the negation of child and birth mother. Intimacy and bonding dissipated into the loss of “childhood” and “motherhood” as understood among the free. A slave child is a *slave*. A slave mother is a *slave*. Their social standing is obliterated by their captivity. Expressed in the concept of time means that there is no sacred or protected “time” of black childhood under white governance, or colonialism, or occupation, or war. The time of captivity does not recognize “childhood” or “motherhood” as possessing unique rights other than those granted to the enslaved.

Centuries after Key’s winning legal strategy and the subsequent changes in the law, Harriet Jacobs self-published her

1861 memoir (written under the pseudonym Linda Brent): *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*.⁴² The work describes a society shaped by torture. Jacobs structures her own captivity into an active crawl space for nearly seven years until she stole her time and self into rebellion and flight. Tortured for years by her slave masters, Jacobs created an attic prison as a form of freedom: she damaged herself in order to minimize the violence of others. Jacobs's historical reality plays out in contemporary prisons and refugee camps and cellars, where there is no direct remedy given the function of government (police, education, health systems, employment) largely as managerial sectors not vectors for social justice (there is also the injustice that said agencies manufacture as they stabilize and maintain governance). Foucault argues that governance exceeds the scope of ideology. If so, then it also exceeds the capacity of on-continuum political paradigms insufficiently prepared for wartime analyses or full inspection of the ramifications of a Captive Maternal within Womb Theory.

In the theft and transferal of time to her consumers, Jacobs became a timekeeper and timepiece. With seven years of time as “moral measure” of her attic prison, she reminds one that mid-twentieth-century European genocide, while it is the apex of Western moral theory or contemporary Womb Theory, is not the height of human suffering and resistance. Jacobs was motivated by sacrifices for her children.⁴³ Such sacrifices are never repaid (activism does not bring back slain children; surviving children cannot repay the debt given for their lives). The time of the captive fugitive within the larger captivity of slavery is filtered today through notions of “black time” and nonblack or “white time.” In prison, hard time is black time in both

duration and duress shaped by longer sentences for similar offenses and harsher conditions during imprisonment and moral outrage at the injustice of justice. (In foster care and schools, a “harder” time relative to an “easier” time in confinement produces negative consequences.)

Even in resistance for freedom, differentiated time is tied to captivity. Captive Maternals organize mourners and protesters against police or vigilante violence that disproportionately kills sons and disproportionately often requires a female kin to mount public campaigns in memory and honor of the slain and in search for justice. The time and trauma of mothers, aunts, sisters, and daughters fill public political advocacy and private domestic duties (and political campaigns, if one notes Hillary Clinton’s ability to incorporate the grief of black women who lost children or siblings through police violence into her presidential campaign⁴⁴). Entering the public realm of protest requires leaving to some extent the private realm of reproductive or domestic labor. Who will now pick up kids after school, get dinner on the table, oversee homework, and help family manage grief? Surrogate maternals, many times younger or older women, such that teenage daughters or grandmothers might be utilized to fill the void more than their masculine counterparts.

Trauma and time theft, including the loss of leisure to recover from fatigue and violence, altered markers on genomes in which African Americans allegedly share the intergenerational challenges of Native Americans,⁴⁵ and Hmong⁴⁶ who survived genocide.⁴⁷ Thus, time for health is shortened within the biological womb of the captive. Crunk Feminist perspectives on black girls waiting for their verb extends through

time,⁴⁸ as an expression of resistance in the face of a daunting recovery.

Time exists as and in slave status (the duration of the lives of one's owners), penal status (the duration of legal sentence until parole, pardon, escape, or death), and maternal status (the duration of the neediness of children, adults, and elders). Love appears to suspend time (a human fabrication) but cannot restore it. Time is lost, fragmented, broken in family terrors (that Sigmund Freud conveniently suppressed to resurrect his career), constant negotiations with whiteness-as-property owners (that structure the inequalities in schooling, employment, housing, and mental health⁴⁹), and time is lost in memories of genocide.⁵⁰ To grapple with such phenomena requires sanctuary and vision. Suffering produces the conditions under which sanctuaries are imagined, and constructed within minds, at times extended into the physical world.

V. WOMB, ROOM, VIEW

There is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind.

—Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*⁵¹

Womanist Alice Walker⁵² contrasts poet Phillis Wheatley⁵³ with author Virginia Woolf (whose 1928 *A Room of One's Own* was based on her lectures at Cambridge's women's colleges). Walker observes that Woolf's entitlement to wealth and sanctuary was unavailable to Wheatley, an enslaved African girl-child poet who lived several centuries before Woolf and toured London with her American "owners" to promote the publication of her poetry. With white benevolent Bostonian masters,

Wheatley was educated and became a writer. Her 1773 *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* was well received in England and in America, where it earned the praise of President George Washington (whose vast wealth, \$535 million in today's currency, stemmed from slavery). Wheatley never publicly critiqued her white benefactor-owners. Because she praised whites who profited from slavery, some argue that she failed to condemn enslavement. Wheatley, though, denounced enslavement without *rebell*ing against it:

But how, presumptuous shall we hope to find
Divine acceptance with the Almighty mind—
While yet o deed ungenerous they disgrace
And hold in bondage Afric's blameless race
Let virtue reign—and then accord our prayers
Be victory ours, and generous freedom theirs.⁵⁴

Walker juxtaposes Woolf's race and class privileges with Captive Maternal vulnerabilities. This should not obscure Wheatley's conundrum. Woolf has the political agency to withhold praise from her would-be handlers because she is female, not slave. Not needing the endorsements of presidents, she condemns her subjugation and servitude—perhaps while being served tea. Noting that no gate, lock, or bolt chains her mental landscape, Woolf announces her freedom from benefactors and the desire to interiorize their needs as her captivity. Wheatley is not free in that way. Pragmatism influences Wheatley's art: survival with resilience is preferable to demise in rebellion. Even if it is only one's words that are lost, the "Wheatley conundrum" (or even the "Hemings conundrum") opens the door to speculation: What would she have written if her "masters" had emancipated her and left her in peace to live in England on the sales of her

publications? What is thinking like, conditioned or seasoned within Womb Theory, once it is outside that womb? Bostonians paraded her as a slave through London for a literary debut—centuries before Woolf’s books were sold—for poetry readings, endorsements, and book contracts. Or, perhaps Wheatley would have written the same content even if outside of American democracy: incendiary language from *Captive Maternals* is never really in vogue.

Poetry and prose that please presidents eclipses the poetry of rebellion and political prisoners. In a punitive society, originating in enslavement, evolution has produced black female social workers, schoolteachers, principals, and professors, police officers and prison guards, as well as multiracial overlapping in disciplinary regimes. This type of resilience is generally preferred over rebellion. The Wheatley conundrum is not just about prestige, it is about survival.

Two centuries after Wheatley (and Hemings), Wondaland prose and poetry liberated time and earned the praise of a black president. In 2015, protesting against the “stealing of black lives,” artist Janelle Monáe and her Wondaland ensemble toured the country with “Hell You Talmbout.” The song title is a compression of words and sentiment, uttered by a black person, tired of irritations and aggressors, who responds to verbal assault with “Hell You Talmbout.” Shorthand for “What the hell are you talking about?,” this compact rejoinder retakes time from intruders with brevity and force. “Talmbout” was featured in *Billboard*, *USA Today*, and on National Public Radio (NPR).⁵⁵ During her NPR interview, Monáe recalls the honor of being asked to perform at the White House, where Valerie Jarrett, presidential adviser to Obama, sat at a table

upon which Monáe danced, knocking over glasses.⁵⁶ Monáe introduces the last track on *The Electric Lady*:

This song is a vessel. It carries the unbearable anguish of millions. We recorded it to channel the pain, fear, and trauma caused by the ongoing slaughter of our brothers and sisters. We recorded it to challenge the indifference, disregard, and negligence of all who remain quiet about this issue. Silence is our enemy. Sound is our weapon. They say a question lives forever until it gets the answer it deserves. . . . Won't you say their names?

“Silence is our enemy and sound is our weapon” is the lead-in to “Hell You Talmbout” (Nigerian artist-activist Fela Kuti declared, “Music is the weapon.”).

Monáe reflects not only on mass movements sparked by unarmed blacks killed by police but also the economic struggles of her father and mother, and female laborers. The daughter of Kansas City janitors and sanitation workers who “worked their way up in poverty to post office jobs,” Monáe grew up with parents “always wearing uniforms.” Arriving in New York City without funds, the artist became uniformed, cleaning houses with older black female domestic workers. As they cleaned, the women implored her to sing—an intergenerational language of field, factory, and prison labor. Monáe is an Afrofuturist with lineage traceable to dystopian science fiction theorist Octavia Butler⁵⁷—she left domestic work to earn Grammy nominations and White House invitations to State Dinners. Participatory gospel and R&B, “Hell You Talmbout” links the names of black children, women, and men slain by police. A raw trauma song with cracking voices, it audibly rends womb. The greatest

force comes not from Monáe but the “slave chorus” as anonymous maternal males usher in an audience that demands to be a participant not just a spectator in the traumatic spectacle of black grief shredding a womb in order to birth a freedom movement:

Walter Scott, say his name! Eric Garner, say his name.
Say his name! Say his name! Eric Garner, won't you
say his name! Freddie Gray, say his name! Freddie
Gray, say his name! Aiyana Jones, say her name!
Aiyana Jones, say her name! Aiyana Jones, won't you
say her name?! Sandra Bland, say her name! Sandra
Bland, say her name! Sandra Bland, say her name!
Sandra Bland, won't you say her name?!⁵⁸

When “Hell You Talmbout” calls out “Fred Hampton!,” (the name of the BPP leader assassinated by FBI-Chicago police), its recognition of “killer cops”⁵⁹ as political phenomenon opens a circle wide enough to embrace Monáe’s glow in *ELLE*’s 2016 Cover Girl makeup advertisement evoking Star Wars’ *The Force Awakens*. Kitsch and camp and play are part of the performance of rebellion.

In theory, philosophy exceeds the scope of ideology. In practice, it might be a template that rationalizes injustice. Shedding claims to universality, contesting democracy’s governance and proprietary stakes in and preferences for *theory* as possession predicated on the Captive Maternal—all of this suggests that *theorizing* through a fulcrum can unseat Womb Theory, by allowing the Captive Maternal to leave the seesaw. This in turn provides hope that despite stillborn rebellions, resilience will manifest without the praise of presidents or the

incapacitation of conundrums. The deliberative faculties shared among the least recognized, shaped by battle, offer new theories as leverage for freedom.

NOTES

- 1 This essay is part of a larger project entitled, “Fulcrum: Captive Maternals, Leverage, and a Theory of Democracy.”
- 2 Zainab Salbi, “How Do People Live and Cope in the Midst of Violent Conflict?” *TED Radio Hour*, NPR, February 11, 2016.
- 3 From the perspective of the Black Liberation Army, its most prominent member was Assata Shakur. This was a reaction to lethal repression from the police and FBI Cointelpro. See Coordinating Committee: Black Liberation Army, “Message to the Black Movement: A Political Statement from the Black Underground,” (1976), 12, <http://archive.lib.msu.edu/DMC/AmRad/messageblackmovement.pdf>.
- 4 Seymour M. Hersh, “US Secretly Gave Aid to Iraq Early in Its War against Iran,” *New York Times*, January 26, 1992, <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/01/26/world/us-secretly-gave-aid-to-iraq-early-in-its-war-against-iran.html>.
- 5 Salbi, “How Do People Live and Cope in the Midst of Violent Conflict?”
- 6 Senate Hearings on CIA/FBI illegal or extralegal warfare and malfeasance against the Black Panther Party and radical activists is public record. Most though are unfamiliar with the Department of Homeland Security and FBI maintaining surveillance files on Black Lives Matter. With Jeh Johnson, former counsel for the Department of Defense, as the Secretary of Homeland Security and Barack Obama as president, the government sought influence or control over black political leadership in resistance to racist violence. Black Lives Matter activists also publicly critiqued FBI requests that Apple create software to compromise security on its devices following the December 2, 2015, San Bernardino mass killings by Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfin Malik. *The Intercept* maintains that the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force has also monitored Black Lives Matter. See:

The Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (The Church Committee), 1976, <http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/investigations/ChurchCommittee.htm>; George Joseph, “Feds Regularly Monitored Black Lives Matter since Ferguson,” *The Intercept*, July 24, 2015, <https://theintercept.com/2015/07/24/documents-show-department-homeland-security-monitoring-black-lives-matter-since-ferguson/>; and, Beats, Rhymes & Relief, Letter to Judge Sheri Pym, March 3, 2016, “[http://images.apple.com/pr/pdf/Beats Rhymes Relief Center for Media Justice The Gathering for Justice Justice League NYC Opal Tometi and Shaun King.pdf](http://images.apple.com/pr/pdf/Beats_Rhymes_Relief_Center_for_Media_Justice_The_Gathering_for_Justice_Justice_League_NYC_Opal_Tometi_and_Shaun_King.pdf).”

- 7 In “Afrarealism and the Black Matrix,” I describe the Black Matrix as a maroon philosopher who defined the boundaries of Western democracy through her flight to its borders where she established marronage (both in the act of departure and reconstitution in exile). The flight is from democracy’s growth of white citizenship through black female or feminized captivity. The Black Matrix becomes, then, the space of utility and coherence in response to predatory relations, excessive exploitation, and terror in productivity. As a fulcrum traveling along a spectrum of power and domination, it emerges from within triad formations of racial rape/consumption, resistance, and repression. Distinctions between racial “theft” (police homicides of black people as codified in the “Stolen Lives” project) and racial “genocide” (US training of Brazilian forces that diversify into paramilitaries and dictatorship) in domestic and foreign policy require more study. See Joy James, “Afrarealism and the Black Matrix: Maroon Philosophy at Democracy’s Borders,” *The Black Scholar* 43.4 (Winter 2013): 124–31; “Confronting the triads of black life/death,” AAS21 Forum, October 24, 2015, <https://medium.com/focus-series/confronting-the-triads-of-black-life-death-bf0ed82a4d6e#.8sp6mkr26>.
- 8 Intersectionality is a more widely known or popularized framework. Linked to critical race/feminist theory and legal scholar Kimberly Crenshaw, intersectionality has worked to counter simplistic constructs of “women,” “blacks,” “poor,” and “queers” as isolated identities. It became a talking point in the Clinton 2016 democratic presidential primary campaign against Bernie Sanders and was used to highlight Clinton as the superior candidate, whose inherently more “progressive” politics were tied to her feminism. “Intersectionality” is presented as a theory;

- however, in its fungible nature without reference to any specific ideology or specificity of agency (rather than victimization), it seems to be used by some to conflate the powerful with those less structurally empowered. See Clare Foran, "Hillary Clinton's Intersectional Politics," *The Atlantic*, March 9, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/03/hillary-clinton-intersectionality/472872/>.
- 9 Alexander Kojeve, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, ed. Alan Bloom, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980).
 - 10 On-continuum politics, with its distrust of leadership rooted in unauthorized activism, seeks access to power through philanthropic and bureaucratic governance, while off-continuum politics demands that governance cede power and control to the populace, which at times includes the rabble, the boycott, and sometimes the riot. A brief contrast of on-continuum and off-continuum politics in prison abolitionism appears in Joy James, "7 Lessons in 1 Abolitionist Notebook," *Abolition Journal*, June 25, 2015, <http://abolitionjournal.org/joy-james-7-lessons-in-1-abolitionist-notebook/>.
 - 11 Although possibly censored for icon respectability, the most well-known biographies or autobiographies of black radical women in twentieth-century politics and movements include Shirley Chisholm, *Unbought and Unbossed* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970); Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Chana Kai Lee, *For Freedom's Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2000); Angela Y. Davis, *Angela Y. Davis: An Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1985); and Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography* (London: Zed Books, 1987).
 - 12 The 1977 Combahee River Collective Statement is a manifesto that dissects predatory violence from multiple sectors. See <https://wgs10016.commons.gc.cuny.edu/combahee-river-collective-black-feminist-statement/>.
 - 13 For a discussion of black feminist theory's use of the term "theorizing," see Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory," *Cultural Critique* 6 (Spring 1987): 51–63.

- 14 Contemporaneous with Aristotle, Chinese militarist Sun Tzu executed two favored women of the Emperor for their coquettish recalcitrance to lead mock armies of concubines into battle exercises. Writing, in *The Art of War*, that self-knowledge is a prerequisite for battle and that one must know when and when not to fight, Tzu made no mention of the Captive Maternal being reduced to expendable props in war. See Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, <http://classics.mit.edu/Tzu/artwar.html>.
- 15 Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. T. A. Sinclair (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 95.
- 16 Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 64–81. Rape and biological reproduction make "ungendered" black captivity a gendered phenomenon.
- 17 See Angela Y. Davis, "The Role of Black Women in the Community of Slaves," *The Black Scholar* 3.4 (December 1971): 3–15.
- 18 Sensationalizing selective rapes to demonize one's enemy while underreporting rape within one's ranks and among one's allies is dismissive of the phenomenon. For reports of child rape by UN Peacekeepers and US allies in Afghanistan, see Dionne Searcy, "U.N. Peacekeepers Accused of Rape in Central African Republic," *New York Times*, February 4, 2016. <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/05/world/africa/united-nations-peacekeepers-central-african-republic.html>.
- 19 Theoretically speaking, theorists in the academy would significantly increase if free public college/university tuition were instituted in the United States. Yet, cautions against rebel thinking may still dominate; the academy offers permits to pass cautions: "Welcome. Please check theorizing trauma and theft." Even nonconventional theorists might (inadvertently) sing the praises of the masters.
- 20 Adapted and directed by Alfred Preisser, HSA's "modernist interpretation fuses the spirit of the ancient play with a contemporary awareness of the plight of women living in dangerously sexist societies today." The production featured HSA student actors and professional actors Khalil Kain and Tracy Johnson. <http://hsanyc.org/medea/>
- 21 The enslaved women's willingness to sacrifice their safety on behalf of sovereign children (sacrificed in sovereign warfare) embodies honor.

- 22 See C. L. R. James, *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012), 38. Whereas C. L. R. James recounts the creation of fortunes and national economies based on the theft of black labor, in *Black Marxism* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2000), Cedric Robinson observes the theft of human identification from blackness. Of mid-eighteenth-century Colonial America, Robinson writes:

[the] invention of the Negro was proceeding apace with the growth of slave labor. Somewhat paradoxically, the more that Africans and their descendants assimilated cultural materials from colonial society, the less human they became in the minds of the colonists. Just as instructive, the rebels among these Africans and “negroes” were described as “runaways” (119).

- 23 An Ashkenazi Jew pursuing doctoral studies, Arendt did not have the social standing of philosophers Heidegger and Husserl, the non-Jewish white males who mentored her. Her success as a thinker is tied to her brilliance, connections, and ability to absorb the Womb Theory of her professors into her own project. Arendt condemned evil while politically functioning as Aristotle’s progeny. Her biography is compelling: Fleeing the Nazis, she was interrogated by the Gestapo for eight days. After she escaped Germany, she worked with the French Resistance. She immigrated to New York City, where she became an influential political philosopher and a distinguished professor at the New School, questioning show trials in Israel for captured Nazis war criminals and authoring numerous books.
- 24 C. L. R. James was born in Trinidad and died in London. He was the author of *The Black Jacobins* (1938); he was also a Pan-Africanist and Marxist theorist.
- 25 W. E. B. Du Bois, “Strivings of the Negro People,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 1897, was slightly modified and published as “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” in *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005). Du Bois observes:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a

Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (7).

- 26 See *Salar Mohandesi*; Michel Foucault, “Manifeste du GIP” (1971), *Dits et écrits* I, no. 86 (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), 1042–43.
- 27 Hannah Arendt, “The Great Tradition and the Origin of Totalitarianism,” New School University 1953 Lecture, The Hannah Arendt Papers, The Library of Congress, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mharendt_pub&fileName=05/05145a/05145apage.db&recNum=13.
- 28 Hannah Arendt, “Reflections on Little Rock,” *Dissent* 6.1 (1959), 45–56.
- 29 Daisy Bates, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1986).
- 30 Robert Penn Warren, “Interview with Ralph Ellison” (February 25, 1964), Tape #1, transcription page 26. <http://whospeaks.library.vanderbilt.edu/sites/default/files/Pg.%20742-767%20Reel%201%20Ralph%20Ellison%20Intv.%20Tape1.pdf>.
- 31 See Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1999).
- 32 Frantz Fanon explored the agency of “the wretched of the earth” both in his life as a revolutionary physician in the Algerian War of Independence and his 1961–1963 anticolonial text of the same title. *The Wretched of the Earth* would become a global classic among progressives and radicals. The twentieth century’s foremost theorist on antiblack male racism and anticolonial struggles, Fanon embraced revolutionary violence to assert that whatever elicits the colonizer’s grief or disarray manifests as a “good” to the oppressed. See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963).
- 33 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1975); and “*Society Must Be Defended*”: *Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–1976*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003); *Security, Territory, Population*:

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- Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); *The Punitive Society: Lectures at the Collège de France 1972–1973*, ed. Bernard E. Harcourt, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).
- 34 Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
- 35 For a discussion of Jews as “blacks” during the rise and reign of Nazi Germany, see Sander Gilman, *Pathology and Difference* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).
- 36 See Caroline Winter, *A Train in Winter: An Extraordinary Story about Women, Friendship and Resistance in Occupied France* (New York: Harper Collins, 2011).
- 37 C. L. R. James, *A History of Pan-African Revolt*, 38. In 1801, Toussaint Louverture sent a constitution to Napoleon Bonaparte declaring Haiti free and himself governor for life. Napoleon sent 60,000 troops to arrest him and to bring him to France. Louverture died from pneumonia in April 1803, in Fort du Joux prison, a castle dungeon.
- 38 Foucault, *The Punitive Society*, 83.
- 39 In the death of NJ Trooper Werner Foerster, Assata Shakur was shot by troopers and partially paralyzed; her companions are alleged to have shot him. An analysis of Shakur and her legal counsel's perspectives are found in *Assata: An Autobiography*, 1987 (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2001). Officer Down Memorial Page of Trooper Foerster presents its version of events: <http://www.odmp.org/officer/4964-trooper-werner-foerster>. I offer my analysis in “Framing the Panther: Assata Shakur and Black Female Agency,” in *Want to Start a Revolution?* eds. Dayo Gore, Jeanne Theoharis, and Kozomi Woodard (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 138–60.
- 40 See Pamela Barnes Craig, “Slavery and Indentured Servants,” *American Women: A Library of Congress Guide for the Study of Women's History and Culture in the United States*, online edition (Library of Congress, 2001), <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/awlaw3/slavery.html>.

- 41 Sharon Block argues that while seventeenth-century British law made rape of women or girls a capital offense, American eighteenth-century law emphasized interracial rape to deflect from the sexual assaults of white men and to diminish their vulnerability to execution. According to Block, rape was racialized and politicized by whites in the eighteenth century, not the postbellum nineteenth-century society. Block also notes that black and Native women raped by white males faced grotesque forms of sadistic violence not visited upon white rape victims. See Sharon Block, *Rape & Sexual Power in Early America* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
- 42 Harriet Jacobs (Linda Brent), *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).
- 43 Christian morality and religiosity are part of contemporary Western democracy. Blood sacrifice for the eradication of sins is understood to be heroic and divine as is the act of forgiveness. Theologian Delores Williams has written of the precariousness of black women assuming the role of the crucified in order to sustain their churches (in which some are still under the sway of patriarchal leadership). See Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist-God Talk* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013). When family members of those slain by mass murderer, white supremacist Dylann Roof, publicly forgave him for the 2015 massacre in Charleston, South Carolina's Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church became a catalyst for retiring the Confederate flag from government buildings. That blood sacrifice in an AME Church, linked to the nineteenth-century slave insurrectionist Denmark Vesey, also repudiated Vesey's bloody slave rebellion.
- 44 Shirley Chisholm's campaign for president in 1972 represented her refusal to disavow the Black Panther Party. In 2016, Bernie Sanders's gradual incorporation of Black Lives Matter analyses in his Racial Justice platform featured the "It's Not Over" video produced by Erica Garner. Erica Garner is the daughter of Eric Garner, whom NYPD killed by chokehold in 2014 (his mother Gwen Garner campaigned for Clinton), and her narrative incorporates the experiential activist theory of the Captive Maternal into her trauma and protest culture. Erica Garner identifies herself as an "activist" for a year, during which she protested weekly the killing of Eric Garner. Speaking as a mother of a six-year-old who

misses her grandfather, someone that Erica Garner also mourns as a murder victim, Garner notes that Malcolm X died for the right to be free and she asserts that only Sanders seriously protests the killings of black people by police. “It’s Not Over | Bernie Sanders,” YouTube video, 3:56, posted by “Bernie 2016,” February 11, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Syln8IkOIqc>.

- 45 When the Cherokee Nation expelled Black Freedmen in 2011, their former slaves included their relatives (counted by tabulators who listed all blacks who survived the Trail of Tears as non-Indian and all whites as Indian. Black Freedmen protested before the Muskogee, Oklahoma, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) office, led by Descendants of Freedmen Association President Marilyn Vann. BIA stated that the Freedmen’s citizenship rights cannot be revoked due to an 1866 US treaty with the Cherokee for equal rights that it signed with the United States.
- 46 The US bombings of Cambodia and French Indochina, Vietnam by Presidents Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, opened the door to Khmer Rouge killing fields in the 1975–79 Cambodian genocide. Journalists also maintain that the United States enabled the genocide of Cambodians during the Carter, Regan, and Bush Administrations. Gregory Elich, “Who Supported the Khmer Rouge?” *Counterpunch* 16 (October 2014), <http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/10/16/who-supported-the-khmer-rouge/>.
- 47 See Dan Hurley, “Grandma’s Experiences Leave a Mark on Your Genes,” *Discover*, May 2013, <http://discovermagazine.com/2013/may/13-grandmas-experiences-leave-epigenetic-mark-on-your-genes>; Judith Shulevitz, “The Science of Suffering,” *New Republic*, November 16, 2016, <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/120144/trauma-genetic-scientists-say-parents-are-passing-ptsd-kids>.
- 48 Brittany Cooper, “Black Girl is a Verb: A New American Grammar Books,” *Crunk Feminist Collective*, March 28, 2016, <http://www.crunk-feministcollective.com/2016/03/28/black-girl-is-a-verb-a-new-american-grammar-book>.
- 49 Cheryl Harris, “Whiteness as Property,” *Harvard Law Review* 106.8 (June 1993): 1707–91.

50 After the ethnic cleansings and genocides in Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the UN created the International Criminal Court in 1998; the UN Security Council declared rape an act of war or a war crime in 2008. There has been more attention to race and less to rape in warfare. Civil war, despite its fratricidal mayhem, encompasses a recognizable fraternal humanity, one to be reconstructed from the ashes of genocidal violence.

Non-European/American wars in which Hutus battle Tutsis seem to be depicted by Westerners as inherently, unfathomably “foreign”; even when national policies and players are invested, as was the case in the 1994 Rwanda genocide where French weapons contractors fueled the conflict, UN peacekeepers failed to protect victims, and Clinton Administration officials blocked the UN from effective intervention to block the genocide. For an analysis of the genocide in which 70 percent of the Tutsis and 20 percent of moderate Hutus, who opposed the slaughter and mass rape, were killed, see Philip Gourevitch’s *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998).

51 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*, annotated by Susan Gubar, ed. Mark Hussey (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2005), 75.

52 Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972).

53 Sondra A. O’Neal, “Phillis Wheatley, 1753–1784,” <http://www.poetry-foundation.org/bio/phillis-wheatley>.

54 “Letter from Phillis Wheatley to Mary Wooster, July 15, 1778,” <http://www.masshist.org/database/772>.

55 Katie Presley, “Janelle Monáe Releases Visceral Protest Song, ‘Hell You Talmbout,’” August 18, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/sections/all-songs/2015/08/18/385202798/janelle-mon-e-releases-visceral-protest-song-hell-you-talmbout>.

56 Ibid.

57 Joy James, “Captive Maternal Love: Octavia Butler and Sci-Fi Family Values,” in *Literature and the Development of Feminist Theory*, ed. Robin Truth Goodman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 185–99.

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- 58 Walter Scott's 2015 murder by a white police officer in South Carolina was recorded on cell phone. Eric Garner's 2014 execution in Staten Island by the NYPD using a chokehold and chest compression was captured by cell phone. Sandra Bland, a Black Lives Matter activist, who was found hung with a plastic garbage bag liner in her Texas cell in 2015 had her violent arrest recorded on cell phone (her death was ruled a suicide by the state). Freddie Gray died from a severed spine while in the custody of Baltimore police in 2015 with no digital record. Seven-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones was killed by Detroit police in a 2010 drug raid; her death has no video record. "Hell You Talmbout" was released as a single online: "Janelle Monae & Wondaland—Hell You Talmbout (Eephus Tour Philadelphia 8-12-15)," YouTube video, 6:57, posted by "NastyBD Concerts," August 13, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SttWb9mDp3Q>.
- 59 Michel Foucault, "The Assassination of George Jackson," in *Warfare in the American Homeland*, ed. Joy James (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 140–60.