

Introduction: Transnational Black Politics and Resistance: From Enslavement to Obama: Through the Prism of 1619

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Four centuries after the 1619 arrival of forty Africans to Jamestown, marking the birth of US slavery, the year 2019 reminds us that the presence, triumphs, and struggles of African-descended people in the Atlantic world represent a history whose roots extend deep and long into the transnational origins of the so-called new world. The English settler John Rolfe famously reported the arrival of “20. and odd Negroes” at Point Comfort in Virginia at the end of August 1619. As historians have established, these Africans were the survivors of a transatlantic passage on the Portuguese slave ship *São João Bautista*.¹ Sailing under Captain Manuel Mendes da Cunha, the transport was part of a commercial arrangement between a Portuguese investor from Lisbon who had contracted an *asiento* with the Spanish crown for an annual payment of 115,000 ducats.² Off the coast of Cuba, approximately fifty prisoners were again captured from the Portuguese slaver by two English captains who then transported their human cargo to Virginia in the summer of 1619. These captives for the most part lived in a state of bondage with English settlers in Virginia, even though hereditary or racial slavery had not been legally introduced there at the time.³

While 1619 is pointed to in the imagination of many in the US as an origins moment of Blackness across the white settler landscape, this vision obscures the more than century-old presence of Blacks—free and enslaved—throughout the Americas by the time the forty Africans enter the seventeenth-century world of Jamestown. At the close of the presidency of Barack Obama, few would have predicted that we would enter the four hundredth year—mark of the Jamestown forty on the heels of

unprecedented public pronouncements and acts of antiblack sentiment. In 2016 the social climate in the US was clearly turning to eerie reminders of Jim Crow America, but there was still President Obama's rhetoric of hope emanating from the corners of US liberal rhetoric.

Even after the end of his presidency, Barack Obama, the first Black and arguably transnational American president, remains a contested symbol for a supposedly post-racial and cosmopolitan America. In his first speeches as future contender for the presidency, Obama himself carefully constructed the image of a public persona that navigates, contains, and resolves the multifaceted conflicts and antagonisms riveting American society at the beginning of the twenty-first century. As early as his speech to the Democratic National Convention in 2004, the political hopeful appealed to an ideal of national unity expressed in the nation's appellation as "the United States of America."⁴ Moreover, in his now famous campaign speech at Independence Hall in Philadelphia in 2008, the senator from Illinois countered the political, social, and racial divisions in the United States with his fervent declaration of hope and belief in the founders' vision of "a more perfect union."⁵ In light of the media scandal surrounding his then pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, Obama's speech on racism in America looked back to the preamble of the Constitution as well as to the histories of the abolitionist and Civil Rights Movement to defend his belief in the inherent ability of American society "to narrow that gap between the promise of our ideals and the reality of their time."⁶ Echoing the emancipatory rhetoric of the abolitionist and civil rights movements, Obama developed a narrative of racial healing that pictured the racial divides as being replaced by a new sense of national belonging.

For Obama, the United States's long history of immigration has transformed the nation into a multiethnic, multireligious, and multicultural society, providing a home and a sanctuary for ethnic groups from all over the world. In his inauguration address of 2008, Obama invokes this "patchwork heritage" of American society to assure his audience of his belief that "we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace."⁷ With his hopeful rhetoric, Obama placed himself in the tradition of a prophetic rhetorical mode, the African American Jeremiad, that was powerfully employed by leaders and activists such as Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King, Jr. to address continuing racial and social injustice.

However, Obama's inaugural address also illustrates the conflicts and complexities that his speeches attempted to navigate and reconcile. As he himself acknowledges on the opening pages of his autobiography *Dreams from My Father*, written at the age of 33, even he with his cosmopolitan and interracial background cannot escape the "tragedy" of American racial discourse.⁸ Echoing Du Bois's concept of an African American "double consciousness" that describes the formation of an African American identity as a struggle with America's "contempt and pity" for its "seventh son," Obama presents himself as subjected to the "ghostly image of the tragic mulatto

trapped between two worlds.”⁹ Confronted with denigrating racialized stereotypes from America’s troubled past, Obama holds fast to his own “incurably naïve” expectation that American society as a whole is ready to recognize the continuing racial divide that is regularly exhibited “on the nightly news for all to see.”¹⁰ In his autobiography, Obama counters “the tragic cycle” of American racial realities with his ingenuous hope and belief in the nation’s unity to move beyond long-entrenched racial categories.¹¹ Telling the story of the “skinny kid with a funny name,” he explores his own family’s connection to Kenya, Indonesia, and Hawai’i in order to establish the United States as a transnational community of immigrants.¹² This shows how Obama, as a “racialized, transnational child ... of globalization,” problematizes the intersection of national and racial identities in a globalized world.¹³

Obama’s form of Black cosmopolitanism differs markedly from previous forms of Black internationalism such as W. E. B. Du Bois’s Pan-African congresses, Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association, or the revolutionary Black internationalism of the 1960s. Peniel E. Joseph observes that upon Obama’s return from his visit to Kenya, Obama embraced neither the anticolonial politics nor the spirit of international racial solidarity that has informed these earlier forms of international Black resistance.¹⁴ With his more universalistic and humanist cosmopolitanism, Obama also shies away from a structural analysis of a transnational condition that is characterized by displacement, migration, the expansion of a globalized market economy and the emergence of new transnational diasporic identities across national boundaries in the twenty-first century. Obama’s autobiographical project also sits uneasily with a transnational literary tradition of Black resistance that Paul Gilroy has characterized as being motivated by “a desire to escape the restrictive bonds of ethnicity, national identification, and sometimes even ‘race’ itself.”¹⁵ As *Dreams from My Father* suggests, Obama rather moves back and forth between race and nation, offering a primarily individualistic account of how he negotiates both his racial and national belonging.

By citing the possibility of his own success as a sign of the nation’s progress with regard to race relations, Obama has sparked a critical debate over competing new directions of Black intellectual discourse, as the recent debate between Ta-Nehisi Coates and Cornel West, among others, has shown. Next to his speeches and writings, it was Obama’s winning of the presidency that reignited searches for new ways of conceptualizing racial identities and racial relations. Inspired by his election victory, some Black intellectuals adopted the idea of “post-Blackness,” a transcendence of traditional and constricting definitions of Blackness. As Touré has argued, Obama personifies this new sensibility in setting an example for how African Americans can be “like Obama: rooted in but not restricted by Blackness.”¹⁶ In the alleged “post-Black era” inaugurated by Obama’s presidency Touré finds that African Americans can now choose from a “limitless” number of “identity options” that allows for embracing the “dynamic hyper-creative beauty of modern individualistic Blackness.”¹⁷

Such euphoric celebrations of “post-Blackness” have been openly contested.¹⁸ Ta-Nehisi Coates points to the circumstances surrounding the 2016 presidential

election to demonstrate the “limits of his optimism.”¹⁹ While Coates defends Obama against allegations of not having directly addressed the rampant structural racism in American society, citing “the exceptional nature of his presidential victories,” he identifies a somewhat lighthearted misrecognition of more fundamental racial barriers in the United States: “Only Obama, a man who emerged from the best of white America, and thus could sincerely trust white America, could be so certain that he could achieve broad national appeal. And yet only a black man with that same biography could underestimate his opposition’s resolve to destroy him.”²⁰ For pundits like Cornel West, a former Obama supporter during the 2008 campaign, the shortcomings of Obama’s presidency consist in the economic policies adopted in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008 and his unwillingness to embrace the revolutionary Christian tradition that West sees as constitutive for the African American intellectual tradition.²¹ For many like West who believe that policies must show themselves through benefits for the people, Obama’s idealism seemed to primarily serve the white status quo. Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor has harshly criticized the illusion of “postrace” as the celebration of a small number of successful African Americans in stark contrast to the US’s past and present “endemic” structural racism. The rhapsodies of a postracial America, according to Taylor, are at the heart of the “political crisis” unleashed by the “spectacle” of police violence against black bodies.²²

In this light, the Obama presidency has again raised urgent questions about the persistence of Black radical politics of resistance in the context of a national American political discourse. His winning of the presidency has been variously celebrated as the culmination and final victory of the Black struggle against segregation and discrimination, and thus stands in the tradition of the Civil Rights Movement as well as more radical forms of resistance. As Joseph has observed,

Obama’s candidacy represented an idiosyncratic synthesis of civil rights and Black Power ideologies. While the former is readily apparent in Obama’s soaring appeals to racial inclusion, citizenship, and democracy, the latter may seem, at first blush, a bit of a stretch Obama’s willingness to seek the nation’s highest office after barely two years on the national political scene embodies the boldness and politics of self-determination that were a hallmark of Black Power-Era politics.²³

This precarious continuity between the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power era, and the Obama presidency is captured provocatively in Barry Blitt’s cover image for the *New Yorker* magazine for July 21, 2008, “The Politics of Fear.”²⁴ The drawing offers a satirical response to the outrage in right-wing media about Michelle and Barack Obama exchanging a fist bump during a campaign rally, which a commentator from Fox News understood to be a secret greeting exchange by Islamic terrorists. The cover shows Barack and Michelle Obama standing in the White House again

exchanging a fist bump, with Osama Bin Laden looking on from a painting in the background and the Stars and Stripes smoldering in the chimney. In the middle of these displays of “an anti-American sentiment,” Michelle Obama is presented as donning an Afro hairstyle, wearing camouflage trousers and an assault rifle over her back, echoing attempts to libel her as a militant adherent of Black Power politics. On the other side, her husband Barack is shown wearing Middle Eastern clothing. The drawing obviously references the attempt of his political opponents to undermine Obama’s legitimacy as candidate because of his alleged Muslim background. As the image suggests, the widespread conspiracy theory of birtherism, which was then readily embraced by Obama’s presidential successor, and allegations of Obama being a closeted Muslim need to be understood in the context of America’s “War against Terror.” In this sense, the image illustrates the limits and paranoid counterpoint to Obama’s more transnational and cosmopolitan political vision.

At the same time, the satirical depiction of Michelle Obama as a militant Black Panther activist raises the more intricate question about these kinds of connections drawn between the Obama years and the Black radicalism of the 1960s and 1970s. As Margo Natalie Crawford has suggested, the cover image frames the tradition of Black militant resistance as the figment of a paranoid, conservative “Politics of Fear” instead of a viable political option.²⁵ The “Politics of Fear” thus aims at eclipsing a substantial part of the history of Black radical resistance. However, the depiction of Michelle and Barack Obama as a conflation of a throwback to the Black Power Era and Barack as Osama bin Laden points back to the (transnational) alliances between Black people in the US and across the globe in the 1960s and 70s; for example, Black Muslim American Malcolm X, who later moved from being considered a singular threat as a Black agitator, to his global affiliation with Islam after his break with Nation of Islam and his pilgrimage to Mecca.

Another critical strand that (re)emerged in the Obama years is Black pessimism (or Afropessimism), particularly in the “Age of Ferguson.”²⁶ The cluster of essays in *American Literary History* in April 2016 represents, while not exclusively so, critical scholarly, writerly, and activist discussions on Black modes of expression today. It is interesting, therefore, to see this cluster included in an issue of the eminent journal dedicated to Security Studies and the representation of a “contemporary hyperbolic articulation of security” in literature.²⁷ In this context, Julius B. Fleming, Jr.’s reflections on the deaths of Freddie Gray, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, and the forty-nine victims of the Pulse Nightclub shooting, which accompanied the composition and publication process of the issue, is a bitter comment also on what David Watson identifies in his introductory remarks as “the withdrawal of care from parts of the population” in a society obsessed with security—more so, it becomes a state of absent or non-security that is awarded them; according to Houston A. Baker, a “national abjection.”²⁸

The essays acknowledge that the end of the Obama presidency and the abrupt transition into a new administration has been characterized by the tension and simultaneous existence of optimist and pessimist artistic forms of expression. Fleming's question "[w]hat does it mean to 'write black' in the Age of Ferguson" then prompts answers that center, first and foremost, around the challenges of a return of "black pessimism."²⁹ Without directly referring to the school of Afropessimism, Harvey Young describes the impression of a rollback of a "sociopolitical progress" that is also "stalled" as a significant lens for contemporary Black drama, for example.³⁰ The "twoness," or simultaneity, of hopeful and pessimistic imaginaries is not only crucial for literary expression as a sense-making process (see Fleming), it is also the most important "challenge" for the "scholar-critic" today.³¹ Dana A. Williams is perhaps most critical when she considers "writing b(l)ack" as furthering "a new racial mythology," or a "fictioning of blackness," that cannot overcome the systematic racism as long as it does not liberate itself from the pitfalls of neoliberalism, an ideology which upholds the racist fiction that sees Black men as "ontologically criminal."³²

A powerful strategy to counter the traps and challenges for Black scholarly and creative writers seems to lie in the question of affect. Young proposes to focus on writing an "affective blackness" that recognizes the "continuum" between optimistic and pessimistic affective states.³³ For Fleming, the question of Black writing today is related to the recognition of its multiplicity and diversity, for one, and the "love" and care it deserves.³⁴ This constitutes an important overlap with Houston A. Baker's proposed reading list, from Ta-Nehisi Coates to Elizabeth Hinton, that for him gestures to "a more profoundly equitable and *caring* American future."³⁵ This remark harks back to the initial frame of literary security studies in which his and the other essays have been placed. We see here that these authors formulate a pushback against the withdrawal and absence of care, and propose a more effective, a more *affective*, approach to writing in the Age of Ferguson.

In light of this complex legacy of the Obama years, a core concern of the present *JTAS* Special Forum is to pay tribute to such care and the continued importance of diverse forms of Black political activism and resistance through time, particularly in the present moment of the first post-Obama administration, which Candice M. Jenkins has described as "a deeply conflicted and contradictory one, beset both by hope and nihilistic despair, the splintering and fracturing of community and that community's expansion, an increasing sense of repression as well as new and shifting avenues for resistance."³⁶ As we have witnessed the resurgence of and open support for populist, racist, and sexist discourses, as well as the strategic use of mis- and disinformation, it is important to focus on the enduring force of Black self-organization in countering such dynamics. This often bottom-up organization has by now translated into the age of digital and social media, as the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2013 and 2014 and its development into a remarkable "global network of more than 40 chapters" has shown.³⁷

The context of “local power” administered through BLM in communities on the ground can also serve as a frame in which to read the relaunch of Frederick Douglass’s *The North Star* in February 2019 by Shaun King and others.³⁸ It builds on international support by “nearly 25,000 founding members from all 50 states and countries all over the world” and a multimodal broadcasting strategy, including a podcast, news website, social media presences, and its own television studio.³⁹ The relaunch forcefully illustrates how this “modern media company for a new generation” builds on a genealogy of resistance whose core values, according to the paper’s mission statement, are valid for activists today: “Our mission and focus remain the same [as in the original *North Star*]: we are unapologetic freedom fighters committed to speaking truth to power. We cover a range of topics, including police brutality, mass incarceration, white supremacy, and immigration with the passion, context, nuance, and expertise they deserve.”⁴⁰

This JTAS forum brings into dialogue two scholarly symposia held at Georgia State University, Atlanta and the Obama Institute, Mainz, Germany in 2017 and 2018, respectively: “The Post-Obama Ethos: The Transnational U.S. in the Aftermath of Hope” and “From Abolition to Black Lives Matter: Past and Present Forms of Transnational Black Resistance.” Both conferences addressed the history and legacy of Black American political transnationalism in the face of a rollback of central Obama policies since the presidential election of 2016. This shift in the American political landscape also provoked a revival of Black activism that not only addresses social and economic grievances in the US but also continues transnational trajectories of Black resistance. This Forum explores the complex interrelation between (institutionalized, government) politics and (grassroots, cultural) resistance. How does the Obama presidency demarcate a watershed between previous and current forms of transnational Black resistance? What does the future of Black transnationalism look like in the aftermath of Obama’s presidency and a US constituency that seeks to overturn his influence and policies? In this light, the contributions highlight exemplary moments of challenges and transitions in the history of Black transnational politics and resistance, from the abolitionist movement of the long nineteenth century to the global impact of Obama in the twenty-first century. In doing so, they contribute to the critical debates around the entangled chronologies and settings of Black opposition.

Obenewaa Oduro-Opuni’s reading of *Die Negersklaven* (*The Negro Slaves*; 1796) by German playwright August von Kotzebue in “German Abolitionism: Kotzebue and the Transnational Debate on Slavery” aims at revising the common perception that Germans did not participate in the culture of transatlantic abolitionism. Her contribution, which brings together approaches from the field of Transatlantic Slavery Studies and Black Studies, brings to the fore how Kotzebue’s play takes up and participates in transatlantic abolitionist discourses of the late eighteenth century.

In “Restructuring Respectability, Gender, and Power: Aida Overton Walker Performs a Black Feminist Resistance” **Veronica Jackson** discusses vaudeville performer and entertainer Aida Overton Walker’s embodiment of Black racial uplift

around the turn of the twentieth century. Jackson focuses on Overton Walker's feminist politics of affirmative representations of Black Americans, particularly through the performance of the cakewalk, bridging divides along the lines of class, race, and gender. Overton Walker's transformative performances offer a transnational form of Black resistance by means of her indirect and imagined connections with the African continent, Great Britain, and America in the context of an emerging modernity.

In the next essay, "A Transatlantic Slavery Narrative," **Rafael Ocasio** reads Barack Obama's internationally televised 2016 Havana speech against impressions of Cuba conveyed in works by little-known nineteenth-century American sugarcane merchant George Howe. Ocasio underscores their similar message of paradoxical denial on the part of both the US and Cuba that their collaborative economic interests in the sugarcane industry fostered almost seamless borders that were connected through the exploitation of enslaved Africans—who built the wealth for this transnational empire.

Gabriele Linke's "Radical Resistance: Constructions of a Transnational Self in Angela Davis's and Cynthia McKinney's Memoirs" takes on political activist memoirs and invites readers to consider the value of a transnational angle in reviewing such twentieth-century activist lives, particularly in their discussions of internationalism, foreign policy, and the constructions of their autobiographical selves, "resistant," "public," and "political."

The final essay, "Visualizing Protest: African (Diasporic) Art and Contemporary Mediterranean Crossings" by **Cheryl Finley, Leigh Raiford, and Heike Raphael-Hernandez**, examines the photography and installations of contemporary diasporic Black artists as a transnational and collaborative form of resistance to Western political discourses. Building on Paul Gilroy's notion of the Black Atlantic, the contributors explore the chronotope of the ship as an important visual marker for conveying the "long memory" of previous migrations as well as for contesting current nativist responses in Europe (and beyond) to transcontinental migrations that give rise to new diasporic identities.⁴¹

Notes

¹ David A. Price, *Love and Hate in Jamestown: John Smith, Pocahontas, and the Heart of a New Nation* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 194–99; Engel Sluiter, "New Light on the '20. and Odd Negroes' Arriving in Virginia, August 1619," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 2, (April 1997): 395–98; John Thornton, "The African Experience of the '20. and Odd Negroes' Arriving in Virginia in 1619," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (July 1998): 421–34. The ship had been en route to Vera Cruz in Mexico, transporting three hundred and fifty African captives taken on board in Luanda, Angola. These Africans most likely were prisoners of war from an armed conflict between the Portuguese and their African allies and the kingdom of Ndongo.

² Price, *Love and Hate in Jamestown*, 195.

³ While one hundred forty-seven captives arrived in Vera Cruz on board the *São João Bautista*, one hundred forty captives remain unaccounted for in the historical records, which suggests that these individuals had probably perished during the ordeal of the Middle Passage across the Atlantic. See Price, *Love*, 195.

⁴ Barack Obama, “Keynote Speech to Democratic National Convention,” 2004, accessed May 25, 2019, <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/07/dnc-2016-obama-prepared-remarks-226345>.

⁵ Barack Obama, “A More Perfect Union,” *The New York Times*, 18 March 2008, accessed May 25, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/18/us/politics/18text-obama.html>.

⁶ Obama, “A More Perfect Union.”

⁷ Barack Obama, Inaugural Address, 2008, accessed May 25, 2019, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address>.

⁸ Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2007), xv.

⁹ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, ed. Henry Louis Gates and Terri Hume Oliver (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 10, 11; Obama, *Dreams from My Father*, xv.

¹⁰ Obama, *Dreams*, xv.

¹¹ Obama, *Dreams*, xv.

¹² Obama, *Dreams*, xv.

¹³ Robert L. Allen, “Barack Obama and the Children of Globalization,” *The Black Scholar* 38, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 34.

¹⁴ Peniel E. Joseph, *Dark Days, Bright Nights: From Black Power to Barack Obama* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2010), 196.

¹⁵ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 19.

¹⁶ Touré, *Who’s Afraid of Post-Blackness? What It Means to Be Black Now* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 12.

¹⁷ Touré, *Who’s Afraid*, 12. It is important, however, to acknowledge that “postrace” as a concept is not new among African Americans. Arguably, Zora Neale Hurston is exploring a “postblackness” ideology in “How It Feels to be Colored Me” (1928) where she announces that blackness is not a sustained condition of misery and discontent. See Zora Neale Hurston, “How It Feels to Be Colored Me,” in *Norton Anthology of American*

Literature 1914–1945, 9th ed., ed. Mary Loeffelholz (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2017), 533–36. It is also what Langston Hughes critiques in “When the Negro Was in Vogue,” in *The Big Sea: An Autobiography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 223–32. There are historical and social moments—especially when white Americans are doing well economically—in which Black people are extended opportunities typically not extended to them in political, economic, or social policies. In these moments, when “the Negro is in vogue” as it were, Blacks flirt with the idea that they are free of the constraints of blackness.

¹⁸ See also *The South in the Age of Obama*, ed. Alfred Hornung, Special Issue of *American Studies Journal*, no. 56 (2012), and the recent *Obama and Transnational American Studies*, ed. Alfred Hornung (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016). That a “celebration” of postblackness was ever a social reality is questionable. On the ground, debates on benefits of the Obama presidency persisted in and outside black communities. This is what fueled in great part the eventual criticisms from Cornel West.

¹⁹ Ta-Nehisi Coates, *We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy* (New York: One World, 2017), 299.

²⁰ Coates, *We Were Eight Years in Power*, 299, 324.

²¹ Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance! An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

²² Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016), 4.

²³ Joseph, *Dark Days*, 200–01.

²⁴ Blitt, Barry. “The Politics of Fear.” Cover image. *The New Yorker*, 21 July 2008. Accessed May 25, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2017/10/20/558777025/im-just-trying-to-make-myself-laugh-new-yorker-artist-shares-his-cover-stories>.

²⁵ Margo Natalie Crawford, *Black Post-Blackness: The Black Arts Movement and Twenty-First-Century Aesthetics* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 9.

²⁶ Julius B. Fleming, Jr., “Shattering Black Flesh: Black Intellectual Writing in the Age of Ferguson,” *American Literary History* 28, no. 4 (Winter 2016): 828–34.

²⁷ David Watson, “Introduction: Security Studies and American Literary History,” *American Literary History* 28, no. 4 (Winter 2016): 673.

²⁸ Fleming, Jr., “Shattering,” 834; Watson, “Introduction,” 673; and Houston A. Baker, Jr., “The Black Bottom Line: Reflections on Ferguson, Black Lives Matter, and White Male Violence in America,” *American Literary History* 28, no. 4 (Winter 2016): 848.

²⁹ Fleming, Jr., "Shattering," 830; Harvey Young, "Pessimism and the Age of Obama," *American Literary History* 28, no. 4 (Winter 2016): 855.

³⁰ Young, "Pessimism," 856.

³¹ Young, "Pessimism," 857.

³² Dana A. Williams, "Racial Mythologies, Neoliberal Seductions, and the Fictioning of Blackness: An SOS from 'Old Lem,'" *American Literary History* 28, no. 4 (Winter 2016): 836.

³³ Young, "Pessimism," 857.

³⁴ Fleming, "Shattering," 833.

³⁵ Baker, "Black Bottom Line," 853, emphasis added.

³⁶ Candice M. Jenkins, "Black Refusal, Black Magic: Reading African American Literature Now," *American Literary History* 29, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 779–80.

³⁷ "Herstory," accessed May 25, 2019, <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/herstory/>.

³⁸ "Herstory," <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/herstory/>.

³⁹ Shaun King, "Relaunching *The North Star*," *Black America Web*, accessed May 25, 2019, <https://blackamericaweb.com/2019/02/12/shaun-king-relaunching-the-north-star/>.

⁴⁰ "About The North Star," accessed May 25, 2019, <https://thenorthstar.com/about>.

⁴¹ Du Bois qtd. in Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 126.

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