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#### Our offense outweighs racism has become digital – Technohumanism and the unconscious of computational racial capitalism built our modern system of technology, and it is inseparable from racialization and genocide. Every aspect of our lives is intertwined with these systems, and only an analysis that accounts for these complexities can escape this computational subconscious.

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\*language struck through

I would like to conclude this foray into the unthought and the unconscious of computational racial capitalism with a few examples of technohumanist dehumanization, moments that were themselves building blocks of modern computing and ﬁnance. In 1889, Herman Hollerith patented the punch card system and the mechanical tabulator that was used in the 1890 censuses in Germany, England, Italy, Russia, Austria, Canada, France, Norway, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines. A national census, which normally took eight to ten years, now took a single year. The subsequent invention of the plugboard control panel in 1906 allowed for tabulators to perform multiple sorts in whatever sequence was selected without having to be rebuilt—an early form of programming. Hollerith’s Tabulating Machine Company merged with three other companies in 1911 to become the Computing Tabulating Recording Company, which renamed itself IBM in 1924. While the census opens a rich ﬁeld of inquiry that includes questions of statistics, computing, and state power that are increasingly relevant today (particularly taking into account the ever-presence of the NSA), for now I only want to extract two points: 1) humans became the fodder for statistical machines; and 2) as Vicente Rafael (2000) has shown regarding the Philippine census and as Edwin Black (2001) has shown with respect to the Holocaust, the development of this technology was inseparable from racialization and genocide. Rafael shows that, coupled to photographic techniques, the census at once “discerned” and imposed a racializing schema that welded a historical “progress” narrative to ever-whiter waves of colonization in the Philippines, from Malay migration to Spanish colonialism to U.S. imperialism. Racial fantasy meets white mythology meets Manifest Destiny meets world spirit. The census and photography are not only used to tell the story of the progressive whitening of the Philippines; this racist notion of uplift ﬁnds its expression in and as these technologies. Their expressive powers are not just evidence but the occasion for the performative self-evidencing of Philippine ascendance toward sovereign nationhood. The census was not just an exercise in early computing; it used the Philippine socius to encode colonial meaning and colonial aspiration on the bodies of Filipinos. For his part, Edwin Black writes: Only after Jews were identiﬁed—a massive and complex task that Hitler wanted done immediately—could they be targeted for efﬁcient asset conﬁscation, ghettoization, deportation, enslaved labor, and, ultimately, annihilation. It was a cross-tabulation and organizational challenge so monumental, it called for a computer. Of course, in the 1930s no computer existed. But IBM’s Hollerith punch card technology did exist. Aided by the company’s custom-designed and constantly updated Hollerith systems, Hitler was able to automate his persecution of the Jews. Historians have always been amazed at the speed and accuracy with which the Nazis were able to identify and locate European Jewry. Until now, the pieces of this puzzle have never been fully assembled. The fact is, IBM technology was used to organize nearly everything in Germany and then Nazi Europe, from the identiﬁcation of the Jews in censuses, registrations, and ancestral tracing programs to the running of railroads and organizing of concentration camp slave labor. IBM and its German subsidiary custom-designed complex solutions, one by one, anticipating the Reich’s needs. They did not merely sell the machines and walk away. Instead, IBM leased these machines for high fees and became the sole source of the billions of punch cards Hitler needed. (Black 2001). The sorting of populations and individuals—by forms of social difference including “race,” ability, and sexual preference (Jews, Roma, homosexuals, people deemed mentally or physically ~~handicapped~~) for the purposes of sending people who failed to meet Nazi eugenic criteria off to concentration camps to be dispossessed, humiliated, tortured, and killed—means that some aspects of computer technology (here, the search engine) emerged from this particular social necessity of segregation sometimes called Nazism (Black 2001). The Philippine-American War, in which Americans killed between 10 and 16 percent of the population of the Philippines, and the Nazi-administered Holocaust are but two world-historical events that are not just occasions for but part of the meaning of early computational automation. The socius was the substrate. These genocides were the concrete circumstances from which abstract ideas of communication gained form and substance. Humans watched and helped to encode the less-than humans. Computers bear this legacy of imperialism and fascism—it is inscribed in their operating systems. The mechanisms, as well as the social meaning, of computation were reﬁned in its concrete applications. The process of abstraction hid the violence of abstraction—what it took to make people into numbers—even as it integrated the result with economic and political protocols and directly effected certain behaviors. It is well-known that Claude Shannon’s landmark paper, “A Mathematical Theory of Communication” (1948), proposed a general theory of communication that was content-indifferent. This seminal work created a statistical, mathematical model of communication while simultaneously consigning any and all speciﬁc content to irrelevance as regards the transmission method itself. Like use-value under the management of the commodity-form, the message became only a supplement to the exchange-value of the code. In Message I wrote about the fact that some of the statistical information Shannon derived about letter frequency in English used as its ur-text Jefferson The Virginian (1948), the ﬁrst volume of Dumas Malone’s monumental six-volume study of Jefferson. This work was famously interrogated by Annette Gordon-Reed in her Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy (1998) for its suppression of information regarding Jefferson’s relation to slavery (see also Beller 2016a, 2017b). My point here is that the rules for content indifference were themselves derived from a particular content, as well as a particular form of indifference, and that the language used as a standard referent was a culturally speciﬁc deployment of language. The representative linguistic sample did not represent the whole of language, but language that belongs to a particular mode of sociality and racialized enfranchisement—an “American grammar” (Spillers 1987). Shannon’s deprivileging of the referent of the logos as referent, and his attention only to signiﬁers, was an intensiﬁcation of the slippage of signiﬁer from signiﬁed (“We, the people …”) already noted in linguistics and functionally operative in the elision of slavery in Jefferson’s biography—to say nothing of the same text’s elision of slave narrative and African-American speech. Shannon brilliantly and successfully developed a reconceptualization of language as code (sign system) and now as mathematical code (numerical system) that no doubt found another of its logical (and material) conclusions (at least with respect to metaphysics) in poststructuralist theory and deconstruction, with the placing of the referent under erasure. This recession of the real (of being, the subject, and experience—in short, the signiﬁed) from codiﬁcation allowed Shannon’s mathematical abstraction of rules for the transmission of any message whatsoever to become the industry standard even as they also meant, quite literally, the dehumanization of communication—its severance from a people’s history. A people’s history haunts the mathematical theory of communication—another meaning of the computational unconscious. In a 1987 interview, Shannon was quoted as saying, “I can visualize a time in the future when we will be to robots as dogs are to humans.… I’m rooting for the machines!” (1987: 61). If humans are to be the robot’s companion species, they (or is it we?), like the dogs who went before us, need a manifesto. The difﬁculty is that the labor of our “being”—such that it is or was—is encrypted in their machine function. And “we” have never been “one.” But we see what readers of Haraway already know: that a companion species manifesto for whatever remains is necessarily a trans-cyborg manifesto. In the context of the machinic absorption of forms of human being and human exploitation, Tara McPherson (2012) has brilliantly argued that the modularity achieved in the development of UNIX has its analog in racial segregation. Modularity and encapsulation, necessary to the writing of the UNIX code that still underpins contemporary operating systems, were emergent, general sociotechnical forms, what we might call technologies, abstract machines, or real abstractions. “I am not arguing that programmers creating UNIX at Bell Labs and at Berkeley were consciously encoding new modes of racism and racial understanding into digital systems,” McPherson argues. “The emergence of covert racism and its rhetoric of colorblindness are not so much intentional as systemic. Computation is a primary delivery method of these new systems and it seems at best naïve to imagine that cultural and computational operating systems don’t mutually infect one another” (30–31). This is the computational unconscious at work—the dialectical inscription and reinscription of sociality and machine architecture that then becomes the substrate for the next generation of consciousness, ad inﬁnitum. In an unpublished paper entitled “The Lorem Ipsum Project,” Alana Ramjit (2014) examines industry standards for the now-digital imaging of speech and graphic images. These include Kodak’s “Shirley cards” for standard skin tone (white), the Harvard Sentences for standard audio (white), the “Indian Head Test Pattern” for standard broadcast image (white fetishism), and “Lenna,” an image of Lena Soderberg taken from Playboy magazine (white patriarchal unconscious) that has become the reference standard image for the development of graphics processing. Each of these examples testiﬁes to an absorption of the sociohistorical at every step of mediological and computational reﬁnement (Roth 2009). More recently, as Chris Vitale (2015) brought out in a powerful presentation on machine learning and neural networks given at Pratt Institute in 2015, Facebook’s machine has produced “DeepFace,” an image of the minimally recognizable human face. However, this ur-human face, purported to be the minimally recognizable form of the human face, unsurprisingly turns out to be a white guy. This is a case in point of the extension of colonial relations into machine function. Given the racialization of poverty in the system of global apartheid (Federici 2012), we have on our hands (or rather, in our machines) a new modality of automated genocide. Fascism and genocide have new mediations and have not just adapted to new media but have merged. Of course, the terms and names of genocidal regimes change, but the consequences persist. Just yesterday it was called neoliberal democracy. Today it’s called the end of neoliberalism. The current worldwide crisis in migration is one of the symptoms of the genocidal tendencies of the most recent coalescence of the “practically” automated logistics of race, nation, and class. Today racism is at once a symptom of the computational unconscious, an operation of nonconscious cognition, and still just the garden variety self-serving murderous willed ~~stupidity~~ that is the legacy of slavery, settler colonialism, and colonialism. Thus we may observe that the statistical methods utilized by IBM to ﬁnd Jews, [Romani] Gypsies, and queers in the shtetl are operative in Wiener’s antiaircraft cybernetics as well as in Israel’s Iron Dome missile defense system. The prevailing view, even if it is not one of pure mathematical abstraction, in which computational process has its essence without reference to any concrete whatever, can be found in what follows. As an article entitled “Traces of Israel’s Iron Dome Can Be Found in Tech Startups” for Bloomberg News almost giddily reports: “The Israeli-engineered Iron Dome is a complex tapestry of machinery, software and computer algorithms capable of intercepting and destroying rockets midair. An offshoot of the missile-defense technology can also be used to sell you furniture” (Coppola, 2013). Not only, it seems, is war good computer business, it’s good for computerized business. It is ironic that the Iron Dome is likened to a tapestry and now used to sell textiles—almost as if it were haunted by Lisa Nakamura’s (2014) recent ﬁndings regarding the (forgotten) role played by Navajo women weavers in the making of early transistors for Fairchild, the eerily named company of Silicon Valley legend and founding father—as well as infamous eugenicist—William Shockley. The article goes on to confess that the latest consumer spin-offs, which facilitate the real-time imaging of couches in your living room and drive sales on the domestic front, exist thanks to the U.S. ﬁnancial support for Zionism and its militarized settler colonialism in Palestine. “We have American-backed apartheid and genocide to thank for being able to visualize a green moderne couch in our very own living room before we click ‘Buy now.’ ” (Okay, this is not really a quotation, but it expresses the essence of the article.) Census, statistics, informatics, cryptography, war machines, industry standards, markets—all are management techniques for the organization of otherwise unruly humans, subhumans, posthumans, and nonhumans by capitalist society. The ethos of content indifference, along with the encryption of social difference as both mode and means of systemic functionality, is sustainable only so long as derivative human beings are themselves rendered as content providers, body and soul. But it is not only tech spin-offs from the racist war dividends that we should be tracking. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun (2004) has shown in utterly convincing ways that the gendered history of the development of computer programming at ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer), in which male mathematicians instructed female “computers” to physically make the electronic connections (and remove any bugs), echoes into the present experiences of sovereignty enjoyed by users who have, in many respects, become programmers (even if most of us have little or no idea how programming works, or even that we are programming). Chun notes that “during World War II almost all computers were young women with some background in mathematics. Not only were women available for work then, they were also considered to be better, more conscientious computers, presumably because they were better at repetitious, clerical tasks”(2004: 33). One could say that programming became programming and software became software when commands shifted from commanding a “girl” to commanding a machine. Clearly this puts the gender not just of the machine but of the commander in question. Chun suggests that the augmentation of our power through the command-control functions of computation is a result of what she calls the “Yes sir” of the feminized operator—that is, of servile labor. Indeed, in the ENIAC and other early machines, the execution of the operator’s order was to be carried out by the “wren” or the “slave.” For the desensitized, this information may seem incidental, a mere development or advance beyond the instrumentum vocale (the speaking tool, i.e., the Roman term for slave) in which even the communicative capacities of the slave are totally subordinated to the master. Here we pose the larger question: What are the implications for this gendered and racialized form of power exercised in the interface? What is its relation to gender oppression, to slavery? Is this mode of command-control over bodies and extended to the machine a universal form of empowerment, one to which all (posthuman) bodies might aspire, or is it a mode of subjectiﬁcation built in the footprint of domination in such a way that it replicates the beliefs, practices, and consequences of “prior” orders of whiteness and masculinity—that is, of male and female and of master and slave—in unconscious but nonetheless murderous ways?12 The question is complex. Recall here that when speaking of automated “mechanical labor,” Wiener said that “any labor that accepts the conditions of competition with slave labor accepts the conditions of slave labor, and is essentially slave labor (1961: 26–27). Is the computer the realization of the power of a transcendental subject? Or of the subject whose transcendence was built upon and is still built upon a historically developed version of racial masculinity based upon slavery and gender violence that was then automated? The computational unconscious also implicates the unconscious processes at the interface. Andrew Norman Wilson’s scandalizing ﬁlm Workers Leaving the Googleplex (2011), the making of which got him ﬁred from Google, depicts poor workers, mostly people of color, leaving Google’s Mountain View campus during off-hours. These workers are the book scanners, and they shared neither the spaces nor the perks of white-collar workers, had different parking lots and entrances, and drove a different class of vehicles. They were the repressed and indeed the unconscious of the digital scan. Wilson has also curated and developed a set of images that show the condom-clad ﬁngers (black, brown, female) of workers next to partially scanned book pages. He considers these mis-scans a new form of documentary evidence. While digitization and computation may seem to have transcended certain humanistic questions, it is imperative that we understand that its posthumanism is also radically untranscendent, grounded as it is on the living legacies of oppression and, in the last instance, on the radical dispossession of billions. These billions are disappeared, literally utilized as a surface of inscription for everyday transmissions. The dispossessed are in fact the disavowed substrate of the codiﬁcation process by the sovereign operators commanding their screens and waging their data visualizations. The digitized, rewritable screen pixels are just the visible top side (virtualized surface) of bodies dispossessed by capital’s digital algorithms on the bottom side, where, arguably, other metaphysics still pertain. Not Hegel’s world spirit—whether in the form of Ray Kurzweil’s singularity or Tegmark’s computronium—but, rather, Marx’s imperative toward a ruthless critique of everything existing can begin to explain how and why the current computational ecosystem is cofunctional with the unprecedented dispossession wrought by racial computational capitalism and its system of global apartheid. Racial capitalism’s programs continue to function on the backs of those consigned to servitude. Data visualization, whether in the form of selﬁe, global map, digitized classic, or downloadable sound of the Big Bang, is powered by this elision. It is, shall we say, inescapably local to planet Earth, fundamentally historical in relation to species emergence, inexorably complicit with the deferral of justice. The Global South, with its now worldwide distribution, is endemic to the geopolitics of computational racial capital—it is one of the extraordinary products of the world computer. The computronics that organize the ﬂow of capital through planetary materials and signs also organize the consciousness of capital and with it the cosmological erasure of the Global South. Computers organize the whips and chains while humans watch and help. Thus the computational unconscious names a vast aspect of global function that requires analysis, protest, activism, and revolution. Here we sneak up on the two principle meanings of the concept of the computational unconscious. On the one hand, we have the problematic residue of amortized consciousness (and the praxis thereof/remaindered life) that has gone into the making of contemporary infrastructure—the structural repression and forgetting that is endemic to the very essence of our technological build-out as stolen, dead labor. On the other hand, we have the organization of everyday life taking place on the basis of this amortization, that is, on the basis of a dehistoricized, deracinated abstract relation to machines that function by virtue of the fact that intelligible history has been shorn off of them and the legibility of stolen, dead labor purged from their operating systems. Put simply, we have the forgetting—the radical disappearance and expunging from memory—of the historical and technical conditions of possibility of what is. As a consequence, we have the organization of social practice and futurity (or lack thereof) on the basis of this materially encoded, functionalized absence. The capture of the general intellect by such machines means also the management of the general antagonism and the general rendering unconscious of the lived price of complicity with computation. Never has it been truer that memory requires forgetting—the exponential growth in memory storage means also an exponential growth in systematic forgetting—and the withering away of the analog, of history, of tradition, of feeling. As a thought experiment, one might imagine a vast and empty vestibule, a James Ingo Freed global Holocaust memorial of unprecedented scale, containing all the oceans and lands, real and virtual, and dedicated to all the forgotten names of the colonized, the enslaved, the encamped, the statisticized, the read, written, and rendered in the history of computational calculus—of computer memory. These too, and the Anthropocene itself (the “billion Black Anthropocenes”), are the sedimented traces that remain among the constituents of the computational unconscious.

#### Centering critiques of settler colonialism on land and conquest mystifies and exacerbates the semiotic and digital means in which imperialism is sustained

Patricia Ventura 3, associate professor of English at Spelman College, PhD in English from the University of Florida, 2003, “Cultural Logic of the United States in the Globalization Era,” <http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0000816/ventura_p.pdf>

What makes this opposition to modern sovereignty so difficult to understand is that the US, the global hegemon, also has largely rejected imperialism. This rejection does not deny that the US is the exploiter nation extraordinaire. However, “globalization” is not just a fancy name for twenty-first century imperialism enforced by American missiles instead of the British fleet. Exploitation today is very different than it was in the past though the two bear a family resemblance as evidenced in the obvious (and confusing) similarity between “Empire” and “imperialism” and in the confounding similarity between the adjectival forms “imperial” and “imperialist(ic).” However, the differences between the concepts arise from the different registers in which the two operate. The older regime colonized and subjugated completely; Empire does not depend on occupation of the land and conquest of the people; certainly the military power of the likes of the US, NATO, and Russia and, in a different way, China are all quite visible and menacing. But what is more visible is capitalism’s culture of consumption and the meagerness of a wage system that cannot accommodate the needs of those who want to consume imperial culture. More metaphorically visible than Queen Victoria’s warships or today’s fighter planes are the literally invisible digital and virtual elements of the information economy. The movements of currency, the traffic on the Internet, aren’t really there in a physical sense. Thus, the language of imperialism, of land grabs and slavery, is not adequate for capturing the dynamics of a system that encompasses imperialistic tendencies while adding many wholly unprecedented features. In Hardt and Negri’s terms, the system rests on a foundation of “the bomb,” “money,” and “ether” (Empire 137). The bomb represents the limiting of sovereignty of most of the countries of the world. The bomb represents the absolute capacity for destruction and is the ultimate form of biopower. Money too reduces sovereignty and represents the deconstruction of national markets. Ether represents the management and construction of communication, culture, and education systems. It is Empire and its supports and scaffolding, not imperialism, that is today’s enemy of progressive politics. Yet postcolonial theory still functions in the mode of anti-imperialism. “Its tendency to see globalization as little more than a form of intensified neoimperialism headquartered in the United States is one reason why it has been possible to see postcolonialism as the study of globalization avant la lettre” (O’Brien and Szeman 607). However, seeing globalization within these parameters constitutes the precise problem. For one of the crucial lessons of Empire is that globalization is not propelled from a center point which radiates out colonizing the periphery as in imperialism. Globalization develops from a type of capitalist expansion that works to overcome (not destroy) both the nation and imperialism in order to incessantly expand markets by destroying barriers between inside and outside. Indeed, Hardt and Negri, citing Rosa Luxemburg in arguing that “imperialism would have been the death of capital had it not been overcome. The full realization of the world market is necessarily the end of imperialism” (333). But this realization of the world market came as a response to the multitude’s rejection of their meta-ghettoization into First, Second and Third Worlds— not simply as a way to resolve the contradictions of capital itself. Indeed, Empire claims: The real heroes of the liberation of the Third World today may really have been the emigrants and the flows of population that have destroyed old and new boundaries. . . .The Third World, which was constructed by the colonialism and imperialism of nation-states and trapped in the cold war, is destroyed when the old rules of the political discipline of the modern state are smashed. It is destroyed when throughout the ontological terrain of globalization the most wretched of the earth becomes the most powerful being because its new nomad singularity is the most creative force and the omnilateral movement of its desire is itself the coming liberation. (363) What we see then is a process by which imperialism was destroyed by the movement of the multitude. Empire is born of those movements but develops as a response to them. It is only the multitude then that wields the power of creativity. This is the power that resulted in that flowering of political potential that we now call the 1960s.