## 1AC – Black Transhumanism – NUSO 2021

#### The dice are loaded---Silicon Valley giants have partnered with the state to monopolize and exploit transhumanism’s potential---pseudo-monopolies have already secured self-regulation of transhumanist technology to ensure the commodification of human life for capital through technocracy

Giesen, 20 - Klaus-Gerd Giesen, Professor of Political Science at Université Clermont Auvergne, France; 2020(“The Transhumanist Ideology and the International Political Economy of the Fourth Industrial Revolution,” Ideologies in World Politics, Springer, pp. 143-156, Available to Subscribing Institutions via SpringerLink, bam) \*\*NBIC = Nanotechnologies, Biotechnologies, Informatics and Cognitive Sciences

This is an enormous new market in the world economy, and therefore an additional commodification of human life: we will see the birth of the “body-market” (Lafontaine 2014). It will be the result of the fourth industrial revolution. Indeed, the NBIC technology convergence will undoubtedly introduce an important rupture in the evolution of world capitalism, just like the steam engine (1st industrial revolution), electricity (2nd), and electronics and computing (3rd) (Schwab 2015). Countless new products and services will appear on the market. Faced with the explosion of NBIC supply, the transhumanist discourse tries to convey the message that each new device corresponds to a specific need and demand. In other words, transhumanism serves as the ideology that justifies this expansion into the world capitalist market.

The more further commodification of the (post)human being becomes successful, the more state regulations will inevitably be disrupted, especially by the new inequalities that will soon appear between humans who will have remained “natural”—the “chimpanzees of the future” (as they have been called by transhumanist Kevin Warwick (2002, p. 4)—and the future, technologically enhanced posthuman species. Thus, transhumanism poses an immeasurable challenge to the welfare state insofar as the latter, deeply rooted in meritocracy, has been forged to erase the initial social inequalities as far as possible. Transhumanism is also a challenge for democracy and the rule of law, because of the increasing complexity of all issues related to technological hybridization and the intentional “accelerationism” (Mackay and Avanessian 2014) promoted precisely by the transhumanists: the classical advisors to the political decision-makers (bioethics committees and other technology assessment structures) can probably no longer effectively assist them in order to regulate in real time the new artefacts and their marketing. In other words, we cannot exclude the possibility that there will soon be technological limits to democracy.

In addition, with the human-machine fusion, new perspectives are opening up for capital-labour relations. In the near future the worker and the employee can be fully integrated into productive systems (e.g. through chips implanted under the skin or directly into the nervous system) and better monitored. Their productivity—which is the key to competitiveness between firms—could be boosted. A prevalence of the transhumanist ideology, even partial, will undoubtedly cause further dehumanization of work. This would lead to the total adaptability of the individual to the demands of capital, and the very concept of human resources may become obsolete, insofar as the employee will simply merge with technological resources to become merely a production tool. Another possible consequence of transhumanistic policies: the struggles between employers and trade unions could intensify, focusing more on the degree of autonomy that the worker can still maintain in the face of the new productive system technologies than on wages and working time. Due to the mass unemployment that Artificial Intelligence will soon generate, “Luddite” revolts may arise, but probably remain occasional. Clearly, there is a risk that over the next decades we will gradually turn to a posthuman capitalism that will profoundly transform not only the relationships between individuals, to work and to the state, but also the way we relate to humankind itself.

5 The Ideological Outreach

Transhumanism is above all a major political project for the benefit of those industries and economic sectors which are most heavily involved in the fourth industrial revolution which will probably lead to a complete redistribution of wealth in our societies, a large-scale reconfiguration of social classes, and above all a profound change in the way our societies and the entire world system function. We cannot ignore, however, that considerable parts of both the state apparatus and the private sector are promoting this project.

The same Mihail C. Roco and William Sims Bainbridge who had issued the now famous National Science Foundation’s NBIC report in 2003 raised the entire NBIC issue to the ideological level by publishing ten years later (with Bruce Tonn and Georges Whitesides) the voluminous Converging Knowledge, Technology, and Society (CKTS) report that aims to guide considerable social engineering efforts to contain within narrow margins any possible contestation of the NBIC technologies. The new concept of CKTS Meta-Convergence is part of a resolutely “solutionist” strategy, resulting from the transhumanist thinking of the “techno-progressive” branding which does not envisage the “progress” of technology without immediate benefit for society, or at least for a fraction of society. It expressly states that “the study identified barriers to progress; this report proposes a framework, methods and possible actions to overcome them” (Roco et al. 2013, p. 2). On several occasions, it points towards the urgent need for massive mobilization of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) in the targeted dissemination of transhumanist “solutionism”: “traditional institutions have[now] a reduced role, being bypassed by[new] social-media-enabled movements.” (Roco et al. 2013, p. 372). In their view, steering the debate in the desired direction is essential because “emerging technologies have the promise to bring higher than normal returns on public and private investment because of their transforming and disruptive nature. Such returns also depend on the general […] governance methods, and international context.” (Roco et al. 2013, p. 364).

If state agencies and international organizations—including the Council of Europe (Van Est 2014)—are heavily involved in most vectors of ideological diffusion, it is even less surprising that the elite of the big bosses of California’s Silicon Valley both adhere to and promote the transhumanist ideology. The same is true for many entrepreneurs of the countless start-up firms that revolve around them. The extraordinary financial investments made by, among others, billionaires Elon Musk (who has recently founded the Neuralink company for the creation of super-intelligent cyborgs inspired by Warwick’s experience), Peter Diamandis and Peter Thiel, and even more so by the famous GAFAM (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft), weigh heavily in this social debate, because their economic interests in the future of high tech are directly at stake. These firms have already invested heavily in the fourth industrial revolution, and are now also injecting huge sums into political lobbying and social engineering at the national and international level.

One example is the Partnership on AI, which brings together almost all the giants of Silicon Valley (except Elon Musk and Peter Thiel, who have launched their own structure, named OpenAI and funded by US$ 1 billion) to implement a kind of ethical self-regulation of artificial intelligence technologies. It does this however with the aim at spreading to the general public the message that the transhumanist big business is itself taking care of all possible risks incurred by, and limits to be imposed on, artificial intelligence, and this without any need for state regulation (Partnership on AI 2019). This is what may be called the ideological “valium for the people” function. The Partnership on AI is also well-funded and co-opts many academics, which underlines the extreme care with which the U.S. giants try to prevent any social contestation threatening their big business. And indeed, those who oppose the new NBIC convergence technologies, whatever they are and wherever they come from, simply do not have the same financial means to make their point of view known.

6 Conclusion

Obviously, it is clear that the game is not equal. In the societal debate on the world level that has just begun, the dice are loaded: the transhumanist ideology is strongly driven by fractions of state apparatus and even more by those very powerful multinational companies that, objectively, have the greatest interest in ensuring that the NBIC convergence revolution runs smoothly. In this sense, transhumanism is already a dominant ideology, in that it overwhelms all other ideological positions in the face of rapid technological change—especially those of humanists from different backgrounds as well as those with a “deep ecology” stance—merely through the power of money.

#### That technocracy uses big data and automation to cement current oppressive structures through policy change and the introduction of technology as a bait and switch---that furthers surveillance and socially engineers the public towards codifying a bias towards whiteness

Butler, 19 – Philip Butler, Assistant Professor of Theology and Black Posthuman and Artificial Intelligence Systems at the Iliff School of Theology; 2019(“Black Transhuman Liberation Theology,” Bloomsbury Publishing, pp. 6-8, bam)

The potential for technology to be utilized as a form of governance can be seen through its roots. For instance, consumer products are often the most basic form of the actual technology used to create them. Many technological comforts taken for granted today, due to their widespread use, began as innovations of war. Global positioning systems were used by the military to track position; digital photography was used for surveillance; and the internet, especially the dark web, was used for communication by the government long before mass consumption. But the existence of these technologies as offshoots of government innovation alludes to the planned obsolescence of era-dependent forms of government. The nocuous and mesmerizing effect of consumer technology is evidenced in the ways in which systemically applied versions of these personal technologies very easily assert influence over human decision-making. Users frequently and willingly secede the luxuries of privacy, autonomy, and personal environmental awareness in order to adhere to technology’s hyper-engaging allure.

The technocracy itself runs on two major components—big data and automation. Big data is the process of collating large data sets composing of user activity within a particular technological medium. These sets necessitate realtime analysis. Real-time analysis allows for greater conceptual understanding of their practical application.10 The computational modeling of these sets can be utilized to determine behavioral trends, providing insightful information regarding user action/interaction in any given space/environment. Through computer modeling, big data can be applied as a means of surveillance, persuasion, and social engineering, geared toward steering mass consumption, public opinion, social norms, and social politics.11

Automation, as a governmental tool, creates avenues to complete tasks without direct observation or engagement through previously written code. It is the foundation of digitally mediated institutions (DMI) operating within the larger government apparatus. DMIs are government organizations characterized by their high degree of digital infrastructure and widespread use of digital applications and tools.12 They rely heavily on policy feedback and the inherent longitudinal dependence of government implementation (path dependence) to allow for the installation and ensuing codification of digitally automated policies in the form of electronic systems.13 It is important to note that the process of digitally reifying government policies is essentially the transformation of said policies into digital ontologies. As digital ontologies, added layers—in the form of technology via programming languages—create further separation between those who are governed and the actual technological components that work to automatically process governance. Meaning, the processing of government becomes a digital ontology, which adds extra layers between the laws being implemented and persons on the ground—increasing the difficulty of political action.14

DMIs utilize big data to streamline the governing process. The automation of computational modeling and of data sets bridges the benefits of big data with the seamlessness of automation. Since DMIs rely on path dependence to sustain their place within the e-governance model, those who initially created their infrastructure are now free to move on to something else entirely. The experts, who construct the automation of government, shrink the size of government solely for the purpose of maintaining current and past forms of order and not to make government smaller for the sake of the governed. The sinister side of automating DMIs is found in the fact that, like many other government officials, the code which runs them is simply doing its job. In this way, finding the person to blame after a policy or law is automated creates another deeply layered process.

Timing and sequence matter in the potential influence of DMIs on society. The endless automation of big data produces a compound analysis that increases the ability to decipher feedback provided by these large unrestricted data sets. This allows for more precise predictions as DMIs seek to effect “political interactions of organized interests and policy makers.” The goal of DMI’s is to influence public policies that affect the “beliefs, preferences, and actions of diffuse mass publics,” because “public policies affect the depth of democracy, the inclusiveness of citizenship, and the degree of societal solidarity.”15 Essentially, the technocracy, or technocratic e-government, works to embed measures of behavioral surveillance in order to track actions/interactions of citizens for the purpose of determining more efficient ways to socially engineer automated methods of control. This is not unlike governing structures of the past. Governmental policies, which maintained a specific position toward certain groups, will still hold those positions. Except this time, marginalized groups can only blame the machines for their predicament. The programmers responsible for reincarnating oppressive structures through digital ontologies only come back to work if there is a glitch in the system, and that is so they can fix the glitch, not the system.

The technocratic e-government is not a novel way to oppress Black folks. In fact it could oppress anyone. It is particularly sinister for that reason, because fundamentally it is no different than the governing system already in place. So, for the American contingent who have and continue to place their faith in the current form of American government as being grounded in fairness and nonbias, an automation of the current system will not be viewed as problematic.

In fact, it will be seen as useful and adding value to everyday life. However, the technocracy’s ability to simply automate the already oppressive structures of Americana (deemed normative) as outlined in Michelle Alexander’s The New Jim Crow, is particularly dangerous for Black folks.16 The added layers that automation creates further increases the distance between lawmakers, law enforcement, and citizens who become abstracted into statistics of criminality. Automated governance will make it harder to fight against the inherently oppressive nature of the American government, literally codifying its inherent bias for Whiteness—through computer language. Technocracy’s ability to render the human element of relationality between those who govern (lawmakers and law enforcement) and those who live under laws (citizens) as opaque creates a dangerous vulnerability for those under the law who already face disproportionate discrimination from its enactment. The state of vulnerability Black folks experience will then be delineated by the preset whims of disinterested machinery running lines of code so that it may simply do its job. This is a distinctly different level of volition than officers, judges, or lawmakers who currently say they are only doing their job. The most treacherous component of technocratic e-governance can be found in how it removes the direct weight of culpability from those who govern onto the technologically embedded layers, via the esoteric logic of computer language that underlies information systems, its software, the hardware that stores it, and the data science which augments its own capabilities. In essence, the promise of new technology distracts from the fact that when it is given the chance to govern it can only generate a snapshot of governmental structures that are dependent upon the temporality in which it was created. So, as society moves into the future, which often assumes a sentiment of social progress, the laws which govern society will more than likely remain in the digital ontology connected to the temporal existence from which they emanated.

#### This reprogramming culminates in cybernetic enslavement---maximally efficient policing that exploits every perceived protection to further the goals of the prison industrial complex

Butler, 19 – Philip Butler, Assistant Professor of Theology and Black Posthuman and Artificial Intelligence Systems at the Iliff School of Theology; 2019(“Black Transhuman Liberation Theology,” Bloomsbury Publishing, pp. 139-140, bam)

Black transhuman dystopia

Black transhuman liberation theology recognizes that, socially, the United States is on the cusp of another shift in oppressive structural stratification. In reality it is already happening. The impending technocracy, which is currently taking shape, is mostly white and mostly male. It has the ability to reify socially oppressive structures through automation. Automating oppression adds another level of distance, further separating the benefactors of oppressive privilege from the technological re-enforcement of oppressive hierarchies. These added levels of distance make it easier for the benefactors of oppression to defend their goodness. So, regardless of whether automation leads to a complete social collapse, or not, the gradual reduction of people in the workforce is most likely to have the greatest impact on those from historically marginalized communities. Greater technology will undoubtedly extend the reach of surveillance. Police units, which may evolve into a combination of people, robots, computerized weaponry, facial recognition, emotional and artificial intelligence, will have an even greater potential to fill the prison industrial complex. Those who have been economically displaced due to an automation of the law will never be seen for the vitality which makes them people worthy of compassion or consideration. The racism maintained through biased algorithms might have less chance to persist if Black folks are leading the teams that implement technocratically automated processes.28 Without Black biotechnology creating tech with Black folks in mind all context will be completely lost in the pursuit of a suspect (in the case of policing). Futuristic modes of law enforcement—automated or otherwise—will continue doing their “jobs” at rapid pace. Those who do not have the extended privileges of humanity, basic income, or basic assets will probably not see the leisure promised by the technocratic elite. So, while technocratic elites present an image of leisure and liberal pursuit (stemming from automation), the embodied remnants of the “Negro Problem” will probably be locked away in high security facilities, enslaved once again, but this time by robots. Although this section is filled with hypothetical dystopian postulation, the history between the United States government and Black biotech does not make this a far-fetched imagination.

Here is the most important thing to remember—**God is not coming to liberate.** Black transhuman liberation theology assumes that God is not coming to save Black folks from tyranny. **There are too many instances in history where God did not intervene on the side of the oppressed**—Egypt, Jewish conquest(s), Babylonian conquest(s), Rome, The Ottoman Empire, Persia, the Crusades, Colonialism, genocide (pick one), Antebellum Slavery, the Holocaust, Rwanda, Biko Haram, Libya, Sudan, etc. Now, there may be a significant contingent of Black folks that would attest to the demonstration of God’s power in their individual lives. I do not contest that. I too have had countless instances where God has shown up in my life. I would compare these individual instances of God’s demonstrable power to act in the world to events that occur at the quantum level (using physics terminology). On the quantum level, physical anomalies occur that are not easily demonstrable or replicable at the level of perception. Likewise, while God has demonstrated God’s ability on the individual level, the individual level is incommensurate to the level of whole societies, cultures, and the trajectory of history. God has not interrupted history on the larger levels that comprise societal relationality. One could argue that the Allied powers were an example of God showing up for a historicized group. Even if I were to go along with that, how many Jewish folks had to die before God could intervene? That still is not an instance of God saving Black folks from a regime. This is not to say God is not capable, or that God is unwilling. This is simply a rethinking of the way that God participates in the material world based on an honest assessment of history. And if that were the case, **God has not shown up for the entirety of Black folks. We just “celebrated” 400 years of shitty tyranny in the United States.** Anthony Pinn would suggest that the use of the term “God” is not even necessary in the conversation of liberation.29 Some folks who embody the spirit of revolt may not even believe in God. That is perfectly fine. Let us remember that this theistic transhumanist approach accepts multiple iterations of belief. It affirms other terms for the word “God.” The term “God,” “Spirit,” “Self,” that which is beyond the Self, etc., is useful in this proposition because although the action of people are responsible for cultivating the condition of people, something has to be the thrust for biotechnological action. Here we reinsert the vitalistic qualities of the body’s electrochemistry as the causal agent within human biotechnology. Theologically, there has to be a causal agent, or that which infuses action. Historically this causal agent has been understood through classical designations (God, Spirit, universe, community, vitality, etc.). For the sake of Black transhuman liberation theology, these blanket terms are classified as sacred entities. In this theistic transhumanism grounded in biology sacred entities, or the thrust behind embodied action, are defined as the electrochemical response of the body. Again, the electrochemical response of the body is the impetus for thought, action, intention, etc. In order for this vitalistic assertion to be maintained we must remember these entities are present through electrochemistry while enlivening biological systems. The panpsychic animism of this theistic transhumanism would still allow for these entities to manifest in other ways to maintain the integrity of nonbiological systems as they fight against entropy. Thus, as the bearer of various names which fall under the vitalist umbrella, sacred entities give space for bodies to be cultivated through social relationships and personal perception. So, even though the electrochemical response is a secondary action, it is entangled with vitality, previous personal responses, and experiences. The Spirit/God/that which is beyond the Self/any other sacred entity creates space for personally cultivated iterations of embodiment over time. This cultivation is based on an individual or community’s experience with the combination of their sacred entity and the world—even if the self is their sacred entity. This is in recognition of the material aspects of divinity in nature and in biology. They are inseparable because sacred entities are not someone else or somewhere else.30 They become incarnate within physical systems, and in this case Black biotechnological systems. Conceptualizing Black folks as biotechnology proposes that vitality (functioning as the body’s electrical impulse) situates heart rhythms, sets neurons and muscles into motion, and initiates the body’s biochemistry, while creating individual and communally transposed emotionality—the spiritual disposition. Black transhuman liberation theology claims that vitality is the indeterministic causal agent. Life is indeterminately vital. More plainly, Black life is vital. And for Black transhuman liberation theology, the origin of the vitalistic spring which creates space for the electrical pulse grounding Black biotechnological life is not a major concern. Because for this theology, **what someone does with their life is much more important than where that life originates.** However, some might argue that life’s origin matters because people may want to pay homage to the giver of life. To that I would say that due to concepts of relationality, it may be best to live in a way that brings honor to those who are directly responsible for your life—such as parents and grandparents. This would also speak to one’s identity (community, ethnicity, gender, etc.). Some might even suggest that a declaration of futility regarding the need to search for causality is problematic. However, I would suggest that the need for a declaration of causality is an attempt to assert control over questions whose answers are not readily available. More specifically, I would propose that whatever belief system someone chooses is constructed according to the parameters of satisfaction that coincide with their cognitive operators which situate reality for them. Essentially, belief systems represent the collection of internally cohesive intellectual systematics that help one selfidentify in the midst of a complex and often unintelligible/ineffable world.

#### The only way to actualize black liberation is through a spirituality of revolt, one that utilizes black biotechnology to imagine liberative possibilities both individually and communally to fight against the technocratic regime

Butler, 19 – Philip Butler, Assistant Professor of Theology and Black Posthuman and Artificial Intelligence Systems at the Iliff School of Theology; 2019(“Black Transhuman Liberation Theology,” Bloomsbury Publishing, pp. 129-130, bam)

Black Transhumanism as Revolt Spirituality

This entire project has led to this point. So far, we have engaged in four distinct explorations: (1) a trek into Black transhumanism; (2) a theoretical outline of panpsychic vitalism which is intended to ground Black bodies as biotechnology; (3) a reflection upon the potential effects of Black spiritual practices on Black biotechnology as a preemptive means to combat a racist white supremacist world; and (4) an exploration of the ways that Black folks are already transhuman, which imagines the potential for emergent technology to interact with Black biotechnology. This chapter will attempt to bring all of these together through the underlying idea that in order for Black folks to materialize liberating realities it is imperative that Black folks operate from a disposition that I call the spirituality of revolt. This chapter will begin with an exploration of the spirituality of revolt. Then it will imagine two futures: a Black transhuman dystopia and an illustration of Black transhuman liberation.

Revolt spirituality

The spirituality of revolt is embodied by nonconformity, rebellion to indoctrination of docility in all forms, and the insistence of absolute justice. It is dependent upon the action of transhumans for the liberation of transhumans. In the case of Blackness, it is dependent on the actions of Black biotech for the liberation of Black biotech. It does not look to God, or the hills, for help. The spirituality of revolt becomes a spiritual disposition originating from individual and communal remembrance. Biotechnology remembers. It combines a recollection of historical pain and ancestral histories. It assesses the limitations of historical actions as it imagines liberative possibilities. It knows that liberation will not come from a God who is somewhere else. God is us. We are . . . incarnate with life itself. Revolt spirituality results in a posthuman spawn that acknowledges the convergence of spiritualities, actions, and complexities toward the goal of freedom. It recognizes the potential for teaming up with others in the fight for freedom and acknowledges historical alliances demonstrated by Bacon’s Rebellion, the Populist Party, and the Poor People’s Campaign. However, based on the fragility of those alliances, it takes seriously the belief that the action of Black biotechnology is key to Black freedom. Realistically, it realizes the fragility of organizing actions that are intended to topple power structures (think COINTELPRO or the betrayal of Denmark Vesey). And so, it employs a mixture of skepticism, foresight, and strategy. It considers technological trends and imagines synchronistic and projective measures to work with while imagining unforeseen tech to fit its own needs. Imagine it as the merger of Black biotech, spirituality, and technology as a means to embody (through the totality of action and thought) the directed evolution of Black biotech, Black spirituality, and Black life, for the freedom of Black folks from organisms of oppression.

#### An era of tetration is coming, a period where the acceleration of technological development approaches the speed of thought itself---absent changing our relationship to technology, cybernetic enslavement is inevitable

Butler, 21 – Philip Butler, Assistant Professor of Theology and Black Posthuman and Artificial Intelligence Systems at the Iliff School of Theology; 2021(“A Black Tetratic Future: Blackness and the Age of Hyper-Exponentiation (Hyper-4),” in *Critical Black Futures: Speculative Theories and Explorations*, ed. Philip Butler, Palgrave Macmillan, EBook, pp. 56-57, bam)

Seeds

The era of tetration is characterized as a time where design meets imagination to the extent that it is supported by systems thinking, multiplied by technology that physically manifests at the speed of tetration . The difference between this age and any other is the rate of manifestation. Hence, hyper-4 technology is already partially present in any age. That is to say that people are already functioning tetratically. Black folks, specifically, are operating tetratically. Yet, even in the age of exponential growth (where access to information occurs exponentially, but access to resources does not) Black bodies continue to experience discrimination (Blanchett 2006), death, devaluation, and a lack of access (Pulido 2016) at disproportionate rates (Patterson 2018). Bottom line is Black folks are frustrated. The worlds they have imagined as liberative are different from the ones that they currently experience. There is a growing sentiment that these new worlds will take a considerably long time to materialize. But, the type of thinking that uses imagination to construct a new world is always in motion. So, there is a constant tension between what we can imagine and what we can materialize. In this era, there is potential for what once was a space of frustration to eventually be a space of solace. Once the means to instantaneously imagine, create/construct/deconstruct, and materialize one’s thoughts (fattened into one simultaneous and chronological movement) is placed at the hands of the thinker, nothing will be in the way of the thinker. This places a high level of responsibility upon the thinker. Presently, all thinkers are stuck behind the incrementally released rollout of time. Because the thinker does not have the means for tetration level materialization. Historically, this has placed levels of import, or genius, on the thinker who has had the time or means to create the world she has envisioned (Altshuller et al. 1996; Bell et al. 2019). However, the age of tetration would require people to reconfigure their relationship to technology, that is, the manner in which people exist with, within, embody, or are alongside technology. Because, in order to simultaneously imagine and materialize imaginations through hyper-4 technologies, people must reassert themselves into the physical environment in ways much different than what is available now. So, the era of tetration places the weight of systemic thinking on Black minds. But if Black minds are already thinking tetratically, then two things need to happen: (1) Black folks must begin to recognize that the telos of said system must be the actual and likely end of the systems they encounter and (2) that tetratic thinking must be bent toward the era of tetration itself. Thought that is bent toward the era of tetration must have tetration level fail safes. It must be conceptualized to bring the hyper-4 realities into existence. Black people must be the progenitors of this era, the designers of its manifestation, the architects of its technologies, and the minds behind its standards of existence. Imagination that utilizes the intricacies of design thinking through systematic framing lays the seeds of this era. One day those seeds will produce hyper-exponential growth that will not only be conceptualized, but made tangible as well.

#### Critical exploration through questioning core assumptions helps shift Black folk toward tetratic thought, an infinitely recursive process of exploring, undoing, and reverse engineering one’s epistemological formation in response to others in order to exponentially expand the horizons of our thought---that systematic thought creates the biotechnology, or hyper-4 technology, necessary to generate black transhuman liberation as reality

Butler, 21 – Philip Butler, Assistant Professor of Theology and Black Posthuman and Artificial Intelligence Systems at the Iliff School of Theology; 2021(“A Black Tetratic Future: Blackness and the Age of Hyper-Exponentiation (Hyper-4),” in *Critical Black Futures: Speculative Theories and Explorations*, ed. Philip Butler, Palgrave Macmillan, EBook, pp. 44-47, bam)

Tetratic Thinking/Thought

By itself, thought is the central component of the age of tetration. Everything hinges upon thought. In this era, technology can only be utilized to the extent that those who interact with it employ a systematic approach to their thinking. In conversation with Peter Checkland (1999), “At the core of systems thinking is a concept which clearly derives very directly from our intuitive or casual knowledge of organism: the concept of a whole entity which can adapt and survive, within limits, in a changing environment” (49). Thinking which forms self-replicating loops of existence/organization that are resistant to entropy and degradation from outside factors is key to the age of tetration. Systems, as conceptual organisms (produced by thought), provide the epistemic framework and necessary foundation to direct tetration era technology. Systematic thinking also operates as the glia/glue which maintains the integrity of hyper-4 technologically constructed reality(ies) that individual and communal epistemologies (points of emphasis, concepts/nodes of import, definitions, and contexts, etc.) take. I am intentional about the use of the word glia due to the role/responsibility that glial cells have in the brain. Glial stems from the Greek word glia (or glue), and, in the brain, are the white matter that hold the brain together and are argued to determine the strength of interregional connectivity (Hussaini and Jang 2018; LosadaPerez 2018). Their relation to epistemology can be understood through the parts of epistemological formations that are taken for granted. For some time, white matter regions were less studied due to an emphasis on neuronal activity that is more readily explored through neuron rich gray matter. The historical lack of appreciation regarding white matter speaks to the way that epistemologies include significant aspects that are often overlooked, and, whose existence often assumes comprehension. Something that often happens when terms are fuzzy due to unreflective use in everyday settings (Checkland 1999). Yet these overlooked and assumed concepts hold linchpin qualities within systems of thought that are vitally integral to the life of these systems of thought (epistemologies). Further, systems are important to tetration era-based thinking due to the ways that they primarily function on a two-dimensional spectrum: between open and closed (Von Bertalanfy 1950), and between self-replicating (autopoietic) and other replicating (allopoiesis) (Luhmann 1995). The coordinates that describe any given system (along this 2D existence) tend to operate according to the rules of their formation with very little outside influence. Too much outside influence would be seen as a threat to the stability of the system. So, the glia of any system are the rules that uphold it. Similarly, in the age of tetration, technology creates self-replicating realities that can only be maintained through the well distributed contingencies and fail-safes that are required in the formation of strong interdependently functioning systems. Here, one could argue that the strength of the glia might be found in the manner in which rules are situated that allow for a third dimension of relationality/existence. The third dimension would be rigidity and fluidity. Where rigidity might signify brittle fragility and fluidity would designate malleable resilience. So, in this regard, systems would exist between three dimensions: being open and closed, self-replicating and other generation, and rigidity and fluidity.

Still, not every system will be as thoroughly constructed/imagined as the next one. We could think of these limitations as holes in one’s epistemology. These holes would allude to the virtuality of epistemic systems in the era of tetration (DeLeuze 1997). In theory, these holes would provide views into a less virtual, more stable reality. The stability of this reality would be less dependent on being accepted by the viewer. To that extent, it would exist beyond the virtual epistemology (viewed as real). But there are a couple of issues here. First, this more stable/less virtual environment could not be some all-encompassing universal reality. It would merely be the virtuality/reality that is foundational to the present reality of the viewer/perceiver. Her holes would allude to the existence of a more solidly grounded version of the perceiver’s current epistemic structure. In this next layer are less holes, and, hopefully, more cohesion of thought. Similarly, this next layer (which, conceptually, is more stable than the previous) would be an incomplete construction as well. This then leads to an infinitely recursive process of exploring, undoing, and constructing one’s epistemological formation in order to find a more thorough and cohesive approach to thought—the primary currency in the tetratic era. Secondly, no matter which system is subscribed to (in a hyper-4 era) there is always something that exists beyond/behind the epistemology that makes a hyper-4 reality possible. This is different that burrowing further into any one framework. It has more to do with the interconnections inherent to the hyper-4 existence that do not allow for any one thing to stand alone as itself. All is interwoven. All is entangled. Similar to how quantum entanglement is understood in physics as shared proximal space, inseparability, interdependence and interconnection. Entanglement, in this sense, is the positional awareness of the ways one is inextricably interconnected with everything. However, one’s configuration of said entanglement is indicative of one’s epistemology, embodiment, and perceived reality. Each functions as a separate factor that must constantly be reimagined. Configuring reality is akin to “decod[ing] the matrix” (Hussle 2018). And, while it can be said that Galileo (1564–1642), Shirley Jackson (1946–), and Philip Emeagwali (1954–) each existed on earth, there were different technological and scientific manifestations associated with each figure. Some might suggest that earth was not the same in the span between thinkers (due to changes in atmosphere, extinction of species, technological advances, etc.), but if there were major differences it might be attributed to data. Now, decolonial thinkers would assert that data accrual is not necessarily a good thing given the means utilized to gather data (Mignolo 2006). We could even say that cultivation of data further takes people into realities that support the value attributed to data. Still, I wonder about the data, or information, that has been unearthed through asking questions. This has been the case whether through some empirical escapade or through the decolonial practice of undoing, delinking, and redoing (Mignolo 2011). This speaks to the relationship that questioning has to systematic or tetratic thought. Questioning becomes the device/tool of reverse engineering epistemologies/realities that allow for stronger thought/technology/reality to emerge. In addition, the strength of each reality rests on their ability to exist with the least amount of holes. This speaks to the three-pronged correlation thought has to technology and reality. Strong systems of thought lead to stronger technology, which ultimately lead to stronger realities. These strong realities are the most “advanced.” Here advanced suggests detailed, clarified, and mapped. Holes speak squarely to an epistemology’s virtual quality. This is to suggest that tetration era epistemologies that have the strongest systematic orientation will have the longest life span. It is not to say that systems which encompass the most answers always win out. Systems thinking accounts for entanglement. It does not deny it, or work to exist without it in an unmitigated fashion. More answers may seem like more stability. But depth of clarity amidst entanglement helps create fluid systems. Depth is understood as being the result of critical exploration. Length of response is not. This could be argued given that holes in one’s epistemology represent weakness in one’s epistemology. Lengthy unsubstantiated ideas/concepts are also considered holes/weaknesses. Weaknesses in any epistemology speak to the limitations of that epistemology. Good epistemologies acknowledge their weakness/limitations (Popper 2014). They do not try to exist as infallible. Even more so, limitations are also indicators of spaces/concepts/trajectories that are inadequately unaccounted for in a particular epistemological formation. Which could simply mean that there is room for further exploration— hence the movement to the less virtual reality/epistemology. But the measure to determine what might qualify as adequate accountability (determination of virtuality) is a matter of value and context as well. Regardless, systematic thinking, inclusive of critical questioning, is tetratic thinking. Subsequently, tetratic thinking, as systematic thinking, is the key to manipulating/harnessing tetration/hyper-4 technology.

#### The only limit to hyper-4 technology is a lack of awareness---that connection between thought and technology eliminates barriers to access and makes imagination the only limit on technology

Butler, 21 – Philip Butler, Assistant Professor of Theology and Black Posthuman and Artificial Intelligence Systems at the Iliff School of Theology; 2021(“A Black Tetratic Future: Blackness and the Age of Hyper-Exponentiation (Hyper-4),” in *Critical Black Futures: Speculative Theories and Explorations*, ed. Philip Butler, Palgrave Macmillan, EBook, pp. 47-51, bam)

Hyper-4 Technology

Hyper-4 technology is both visible and invisible, material and immaterial. It exists and it doesn’t. It does because it is the tangible and the intangible elements that form to make existence. It doesn’t because it hasn’t been imagined yet—by a person with access to components of the age of tetration. It simultaneously exists in hyper real superposition (as existing and non-existent/yet-to-exist) because its evolution/upgrade/manifestation is always happening and about to happen. It just needs to be brought into awareness. Unless you’re reading this chapter in the age of tetration, hyper-4 technology might seem like magic. But every next era technology might seem like magic to its predecessors. Imaginations appearing out of thin air. Thoughts turning into matter. Anticipatory technology taking one’s wants/desires and manifesting them as perceptually concrete realities. So, anyone in this era becomes a master of the elements. They are socially accustomed to the direct relation of their thoughts to their world, and their experiences. They wouldn’t know anything different.

This mastery would equate to “ultimate entanglement.” As an extension of Schrödinger’s notion of proximal interdependence, ultimate entanglement depends on one’s inescapable and tetratically compounding thrust towards imminent actuality. Ultimate entanglement is collaboration with nature. This collaboration is the result of asking nature what does it want? Mastery in this sense is not domination, but awareness of the desire to be while holding space for that desire to take fruit. Because it not only recognizes that nature has its own cybernetic, nature has its own way of activating that cybernetic framework. So, hyper-4 technology is the culmination of that mastery as submission. The technology that was created to allow for this kind of existence was done in response to listening to the organic and inorganic compounds in the environment in order to give them the chance to move freely. People are the vessel for freedom—as it pertains to nature. The same goes in reverse. Nature is the vessel of freedom for people. People move in nature, and nature moves with people. Hyper-4 technology allows nature to speak for itself. And in so doing, opens the door for innovation at rates that are only describable as the speed of imagination. This level of simultaneity that results from this era is the result of hyper-4 technology being the extension of personal imagination. Further, it can be more readily conceived as a oneness/ wielding of nature through that very same imaginative extension. While this oneness/wielding dichotomy could easily lead one’s thoughts to a detection of a contradiction, it is merely describing the way being at one with nature is inescapably tied to the ability to wield nature. This happens in the same space and at the same time. Hyper-4 technology’s superpositions are base level components of the larger hyper-4 grounded system. But a larger question looms. What is underneath the hood of hyper-4 technology?

Technology undergirds reality in the age of tetration. To that point, technology is elemental to reality. But what undergirds technology? At this point, there are a few ways this can be understood: (1) thought undergirds technology, (2) technology undergirds technology, (3) nature undergirds technology, and/or (4) reality undergirds technology. In the first scenario, systematic thinking becomes the frame through which technology is upheld. Historically, examples of this scenario have been evidenced through art, literature, physics, the Iron Age, industrial revolution, expansion of information, and so on. Each are technologies of thought situated within expansive disciplines that have subsequently developed discourses of thought (compiling histories) that demonstrate an evolution of thinking within the bounds of each discipline. In this way thought becomes more complex and shifts over time. These respective evolutions of thought methodologically outline the connections, of these converging disciples, to the technologies that they have produced. Moving to the second example, science and technology scholarship has worked against what it marks as a common misconception: that technology is fundamentally grounded in scientific knowledge. Here, technology is thought to have a stronger connection to visual imagery conjured by the mind (Ferguson 1977). Thirdly, this idea posits that organized structures (as a whole, i.e. trees, people, bridges, buildings, airplanes, etc.) are a composite series of organized structures that relate to one another in a three-dimensional plane. Although mathematical principles may undergird those relationships, materializing the design becomes the most fundamental aspect of any technology. This is also the case for tetration era technology which is grounded in thought. Within this vein, the fourth example (reality undergirds technology), is demonstrated through the idea that thought/thinking (as epistemology) shapes perceptual reality which then influences, shapes, and undergirds the technologies that epistemic realities produce. Further, it appears that knowledge of design/ organization becomes the bridge between tetration era technology (that moves at the speed of imagination) and the thoughts that undergirds its manifestation into existence.

One could go the Adorno and Horkheimer route, and view technology as the fulfillment of knowledge manifesting as power. In Dialectic of Enlightenment (2002), Horkheimer and Adorno argue that knowledge is power. Their description of this equivalence is meant to illuminate the manner in which they see this correlation of power—to a knowledge of natural systems. Natural systems (be they the laws of physics, mathematics, biological systems, etc.) allow for technology to be created. For example, the steam engine relies heavily on thermodynamics and mechanical engineering or that computers are made possible through electrical engineering and computation (among other things). This does not suggest that knowledge of a system always precludes the formation of a technology. Regardless of whether one possesses the knowledge of how a system works leading to an intentional discovery of a technology, or not. The growth of knowledge about the system in question requires knowledge of previous modes of technology to do so. Just as Alfred North Whitehead would argue that an entity is both an event and an entity, each component of a system is a system unto itself. This is the crux of hyper-4 technology. It is an infinitely fast, infinitely recursive, system of systems/ complexity of complexities where thought, matter, and the immediate present meet/collide. Nothing exists apart from systemic overlaps which lead to more systematic struts which keep reality from folding onto itself.

Access in the Era of Tetration

The combination of imagination and technological manifestation suggests that technology in the era of tetration is ubiquitous to the experiences of people in this era. It is equitable in ways that have not been equitable in the past. Prior to the age of tetration, technological existence meant that there were barriers to accessing the best possible technologies. In the era of tetration, thought is technology. Thought is also attached to technology. So, the relationship between thought and technology can be visualized as a self-replicating system (spiraling and open). Thought precedes the activation of technology which then leads to the use of technology, and the production of thought which leads to new modes of technology. While one could argue this is the same process that has led to technological innovation and production, historically, in the era of tetration it happens instantaneously (and in real time). So, technology becomes active through thought, responding to the depth of thought that pulls technology into the matrix of existence to build and maintain a livable reality. In this way, technology is dependent upon the personal epistemology that underpins technological formations and reality construction. Since there is no crevice that the imagination cannot enter. Theoretically, no one has been abandoned by imagination. And, barring some imaginative regression, no one will be without the means to command tetration era technology. The only limitations will be that of those imagining.

#### Harnessing hyper-4 technology through tetratic thought allows Black folks to overcome oppressive power structures by imagining a new reality---however, only an epistemological shift towards tetratic thought allows for the assymetric development of biotechnology that can overwhelm the technocratic regime

Butler, 21 – Philip Butler, Assistant Professor of Theology and Black Posthuman and Artificial Intelligence Systems at the Iliff School of Theology; 2021(“A Black Tetratic Future: Blackness and the Age of Hyper-Exponentiation (Hyper-4),” in *Critical Black Futures: Speculative Theories and Explorations*, ed. Philip Butler, Palgrave Macmillan, EBook, pp. 52-56, bam)

Blackness and The Era of Tetration

The era of tetration is an opportunity for Black people to level historically disproportionate power structures. As mentioned above, the strongest imaginations survive in this era. Given the rate of growth associated with this era, if an imagined world is not given to a strong systematic foundation it will experience the same rate of decay as it does growth. Thus, the things that do not work are discovered quickly—because they require strong systems to be maintained. Without strong design thinking and systems design, these imagined worlds deteriorate—although it looks more like disintegration. But how does that impact Black people? Is there an assumption that Black folks do not think systematically? Does this era project to reify the hierarchical inequalities common to previous eras? And, to what extent do Black people partake in the age of tetration?

In regards to the first question (How does this impact Black people?), the era of tetration places immediacy and imagination in the hands of Black people. Thus it is an opportunity to disrupt, dismantle and destroy historically disproportionate power structures. If capital, or assets, or access to resources were delimiting factors to shifting unfavorable sociopolitical power dynamics in the past, then the potential to turn imagination into reality make the era of tetration an opportune moment/ duration of time to instantiate the type of sociopolitical changes that would necessitate the desired shift.

To answer the second question (Is there an assumption that Black folks do not think systematically?), the answer is no. Black folks have a history of thinking in a systematic fashion. Whether referencing the geometric designs of Benin homes, the rules, and configuration of the East African version of mancala which predates all other iterations (Huylebrouck 2006), the library systems of Timbuktu (Kane 2016) or Alexandria (Phillips 2010), or even Hannibal’s march, Black people have been thinking systematically. Therefore, tetratic thinking is nothing new to Black people. The only thing missing from these historical examples is hyper-4 technology. This conceptualization of the future in relationship to Black people is meant to spark interest in this “coming age” along with a framing of the potential for Black people to thrive from a position of power while embedded here. It is mainly an invitation to begin thinking in systematic ways that allow for Black people to conceive of tetratic structures that are far ahead of their counterparts: being less penetrable, more stable against vulnerabilities from the outside, and self-replicating. This is different from shifts in systematic thinking by Black people in the past.

During the antebellum period (or any other colonial period in recent history) Black people had to rethink their systems. In America, being stripped from their land, their customs, and dignity, enslaved Africans formed new systems to help cope with the conditions of chattel slavery. Among those systems was religion. Religion is an important set of systems. It provides keen insights into Black experiences given its relationship between Black behavior, Black imaginations, and the transformation that African traditional religions underwent, preceding the formation of Black religion in the antebellum period. A focus on Black religion as a key system also highlights necessary components of tetratic formations.

Black Religion as Tetratic Formation

It should be noted that Black religion is not limited to Americana Christianity. Sherman Jackson (2005) highlights the manner in which Blackness—associated with religiosity—is committed to the destruction and dismantling of white supremacy. This is important in comparison to his description of African American religion, which centers around concepts such as integration, equality, and progress. Here, Black religiousity is unbridled. It is not one type of religiosity. It is more so a demeanor, or an approach, a spirit. The same can be said for African Americanness. It provides its own way of navigating the American Terrain. Gayraud Wilmore (1972) would suggest it is a spirituality of survival. Yet, one could argue that these notions of identity are not entirely separate. The model that Jay-Z employed in the climbing phase of his career seems to be one that exhibits his African Americanness. But as he approached and surpassed the billionaire threshold, he appeared to become more explicit about drawing on, and deploying measures, that could be more clearly representative of a Black methodology. This potentially hybrid approach still incurs the ire of certain segments of the Black community because he insists upon measures of “progress” via gentrifying one’s own hood. So, while he may be working toward undoing white supremacist socioeconomic gestures, he still engages the neoliberal capitalist ploys of the African American.

Nevertheless, the Formation of Black religion did not always work to dismantle white supremacy. In some ways, it often mimicked it. Wilmore mentions the role that the Black church played in alienating poor and working-class Black people at the turn of the twentieth century. Many Black religious scholars have made the connection between the desire to fit in with white society as a factor that helped to further this alienation of poor and working class Black folks (Wilmore 1972; Brown Douglas 2006). The result of the Black church’s social neglect spurned the formation of Islamizers (Nation of Islam), Black Zionists/Hebrew Israelites, Black Power Movement, Black Panthers, and Five Percenters (Chireau 1999; Jackson 2005). In doing so, it reiterated stratification as an acceptable social framework amidst the onslaught of racist social factors that remained: working against social equity, let alone working toward social disruption that might equate to Black freedom. But whether we analyze the dominant religious system among Black people in American history (Christianity), or one of the smaller Black religious sects, what we are going to find are systems interacting in a way that could be described as preserving, pushing, or dismantling (at various degrees) the white supremacist regime of their time. Deciding to alienate in response to alienation can be seen as an attempt to determine where groups fit into the already fractured and complex American hierarchy. However, as Jackson highlights, Black religions provided protective identity markers for their adherents in response to a society ever ready to predefine and constrict (dehumanize) Black identities to a subhuman/incapable/disvalued status.

Black religious dispositions are important to the relationship between Blackness and the era of tetration because of the role Black religions play in mediating Black imagination. The manner in which Black religious affiliation is closely tied to Black identity formation suggests it is the linchpin for not only how Black folks see themselves, but what Black folks see as an acceptable course of action. Given the variable proclivity of religious spaces, the limitations of each space are taken into consideration when accounting for versions of Black freedom. This is to say that the systems in each religion (clergy, laity, institution, sacrament, traditions, scripture, epistemologies, etc.) have been unleashed on society, and more often than not the outcome has not been very Black (disruptive or dismantling of white supremacy in its physical manifestations). In Habeas Viscus, Alexander Weheliye has something else to say about Blackness. He begins with drawing upon Maurice Merleau-Ponty:

[who] describes the general provenance of the flesh, which is not “a color or a thing, therefore, [but] a difference between things and colors, a momentary crystallization of colored being or of visibility. Between the alleged colors and visibles, we would find anew the tissue that lines them, sustains them, nourishes them, and which for its part is not a thing, but a possibility, a latency, and a flesh of things.” (Weheliye 2014, 52)

Further, Weheliye draws upon Giorgio Agamben, when suggesting that “potentiality and freedom are intimately related: ‘The root of freedom is to be found in the abyss of potentiality. To be free is not to simply have the power to do this or that thing, nor is it simply the power to refuse to do this or that thing. To be free is … to be capable of one’s own impotentiality, to be in relation to one’s own privation’” (Weheliye 2014, 130). Through a composite look at Blackness as defined by Jackson, coupled with Blackness as framed through the lens of Weheliye—a thing with open potential—one might suggest that Blackness could actually be anything in the effort to dismantle and disrupt white supremacy. However, the idea is that the world would be moving toward that end. However, critics such as Michelle Alexander (2020), Ruha Benjamin (2019), or Safya Umoja Noble (2018) would argue that racist systems are changing shape. They are not actually going away. And while each analysis provided is another gift of systems thought, they are more evidence that Black people are more than capable of critical and constructive analysis. What I am offering through this chapter is an opportunity for Black folks to use this ability to: create systems of thought that hold tetratic worlds (hyper-4 technology) in place; systems capable of exerting themselves against other tetratic imaginations that insist on modes of co-existing while maintaining disproportionality; and systems that sustain themselves against outside attacks/thoughts through dynamic/organic fluidity.

#### We might not know our final strategy, but we know that we must be ourselves, no matter how indignant we have to be---that is our spirit of revolt, the way to overcome the oppressive structures of the future by utilizing the resistances of the past

Butler, 19 – Philip Butler, Assistant Professor of Theology and Black Posthuman and Artificial Intelligence Systems at the Iliff School of Theology; 2019(“Black Transhuman Liberation Theology,” Bloomsbury Publishing, pp. 137-139, bam)

Let’s circle back to revolt spirituality. Given the variable nature of life one cannot determine for others which route to take. The apparatuses of nonviolent love/peace, potentially anti-white supremacist assimilation, or active violence each become wildly acceptable means of engagement. So, I’ll reaffirm what was said in Chapter 2. Vitality justifies biotechnology, even meta-biotechnology and its use. Revolt spirituality is an opportunity to live from radical modes of being one’s self. Revolt spirituality is a switch in biotechnology, preoutfitted with existing overlays (programming) that make being one’s self the most generative option, regardless of the outcome. This is not being yourself as in just randomly doing what you want. This is a call to demand the most of what makes you you while engaging in the absolute violence that dismantles the system. Since being one’s self is a mode of violence it becomes an epistemological affront to proto-normative modes of existence. Colonial frameworks work in the binary. Revolt spirituality works in the multivariate. It is an everyday way of pushing against the grain as a way to combat harmful modes of existence that maintain white supremacy. It is a commitment to the expansion of one’s self into the very essence of their Blackness (potentiality). It affirms oppression as a viable means to establish and reassert dominance in the social sphere. So, be you in the most indignant way. Engage in the violence of being yourself. I think the late Neighborhood Nipsey Hustle (Nip tha Great) might have described Revolt Spirituality the best. Revolt Spirituality is being “disrespectful and arrogant, but who gon’ stop us.”23 It signifies a violently antagonistic approach to organisms which seek to subjugate. It’s engages in the violent tactics of oppression for the sake of liberation. And its paradox is a statement to its complexity. But that should not discourage from its embodiment.

Historically embodied revolt spirituality

Revolt spirituality requires a consideration of what may be thought as its former embodiments. Nat Turner can be seen as an example of historical revolt spirituality. His vision of fighting spirits that represented what he perceived as an impending apocalypse ignited his plan which culminated in his all-out attempt to overthrow slavery on August 21, 1831. Harriet Tubman’s clandestine network was an example of revolt spirituality, as a communal practice. The boldness of Ida B. Wells to risk life and limb through her journalism and through her systematic documentation of the lynchings of Black folks across the United States was another example, too. W. E. B. DuBois’s scholarship provided a strategic vision of self-determination which became part of the foundation of decolonial discourse.24 Bishop Henry McNeal Turner embodied revolt spirituality through his insistence on self-consciousness, which he urged was key to revolution. The legendary punch thrown by Stormé DeLarverie that sparked the Stonewall Riots was another example. So are Octavia Butler’s speculative visions, and Assata Shakur’s willingness to participate in self-defense. It is important to note that these are not the only examples of revolt spirituality in history. It is also important to note that the Black spirit of revolt requires a “hundred year plan,” that simultaneously carries the weight of more than 250 slave revolts (conspired or materialized) during the antebellum period, the cunning wisdom of the Marooners, the defiant fortitude of the Deacons for Defense and Justice, the economic strategy of Robert F. Smith, along with the strategic fire of the Black Panther Party.25 The necessary coupling of patience and intensity that an intergeneration plan like revolt spirituality requires can be considered an upward apocalypse; accumulating positions of power and physically dismantling systems of inequity. Because before Black revolt spirituality can make itself known, the moving variables need to be accounted for. The wisdom provided by a hindsight view of the civil rights movement informs Black revolt spirituality. Its manifestation cannot afford the loss of its leaders. It also cannot afford to have just any leaders. Most importantly, it cannot wait and act in reply to acts of injustice. Black revolt spirituality must materialize as an intentionally relentless holistically calculated strategic plan that culminates in a spiritual disposition that will accept nothing less than freedom—nothing less than justice.

I think complete and utter freedom has not been attained because the line of freedom is elusive and continues to move. So, while tremendous organizers like Angela Y. Davis, Fannie Lou Hamer, Shaun King, W. E. B. DuBois, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, and Marcus Garvey have been able to rile the people, garnering strong support not only from the Black community but also from people all around the globe, Dick Gregory so rightfully stated, “Civil rights [are] what black folks are given in the U.S. on the installment plan, [of] civil-rights bills. [They are] not to be confused with human rights, which are the dignity, stature, [personhood], respect, and freedom belonging to all people by right of their birth.”26 The stark reality is that dialogue has not brought freedom. Marching has not brought freedom. Speeches have not brought freedom. Legislation has not brought freedom. Riots have not brought freedom. Slave revolts have not brought freedom. Advocating for the humanity of Black folks has not brought freedom.27 Black folks have historically found themselves contentiously staring at a gaping ravine. Freedom is on the other side, but there is a constant struggle to define what we see and decide on the right action that will get us there.