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A Newer Humanism

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A NEWER HUMANISM

A thesis submitted to
the Graduate College of
Marshall University
In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
English
by

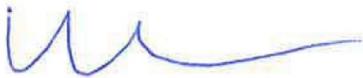
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APPROVAL OF THESIS

We, the faculty supervising the work of Andrew Kirkland Johnston, affirm that the thesis, *A Newer Humanism*, meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by the English Master of Arts program and the College of Liberal Arts. This work also conforms to the editorial standards of our discipline and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With our signatures, we approve the manuscript for publication.

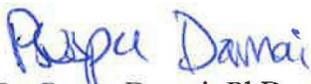


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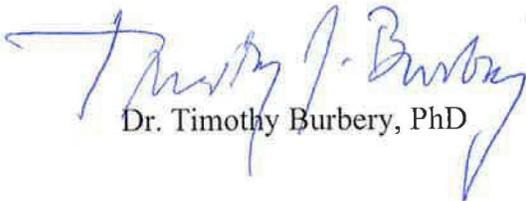


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ABSTRACT

New Humanism, a critical movement that can be traced back to the early 1900s and Mathew Arnold, is an aesthetic committed to reclaiming the defining moral agents of Western Europe and liberal humanism. This commitment to the past is still the focal point of academic discussions as scholars contemplate whether or not to move away from the humanist tradition. *A Newer Humanism* is my own attempt at inserting myself into the academic conversation as I hope to shed light on the current situation plaguing academics. While I argue for the overthrow of the liberal humanist subject, a commitment to the ideologies associated with androcentricism, I do consider liberal humanism's understanding concerning universal freedom to be something worth salvaging. By looking at the recent unconventional readings of Kant's cosmopolitanism and Hegel's master-slave dialectic, provided by Brian Milstein and Nick Nesbitt, respectively, I adopt an alternative reading of these German idealists in order to argue that contemporary Afrofuturists have reformulated Kant's and Hegel's philosophical practices to deconstruct the liberal humanist subject and bring about freedom to the black subject. In doing so, I use the postcolonial works of Frantz Fanon and Sylvia Wynter to bridge the works of Kant and Hegel to the works of Kodwo Eshun and Alexander Weheliye. In closing, I look at how the artists associated with Wondaland Records, or new age Afrofuturists, take the aforementioned reformulations, dating back to the early German tradition, to forever liberate the black subject from the constraints of a white androcentric system, providing the academy with the perfect vehicle for transporting us away from liberal humanism.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the process of writing this thesis, I have had the pleasure of tackling some of the most influential revolutionary theorists of the twentieth century, Frantz Fanon and Sylvia Wynter. Diving headfirst into some of the largest questions facing the academy today—How do we replace liberal humanism? And, if so, with what?—these theorists became the fabric of my argument as I sought to bridge the past (German idealism) and the future (Afrofuturism) in hopes of shedding new light on Hegel and Kant and understanding Kodwo Eshun and Alexander Weheliye. In an attempt to insert myself into current academic conversations, I adhere to the tradition of “countermemory” as I return to the past in hopes of developing an understanding I can “proleptically” project as a means of reconciling the discrepancies of the present (Wynter and Eshun).

With that said, I also turn to the works of Fanon and Weheliye to seek their inexhaustible knowledge in a desperate attempt to write this introduction. In mimicking Fanon and Weheliye, who eloquently and emphatically articulate crisp and clean declamatory writing, I was forced to come to terms with two obstacles: realizing, one, that I am a Master’s student in need of more time to develop my own thoughts and voice and, two, I am privileged, which robs my argument of urgency and ethos. Consequently, in no way do I wish to present myself as an expert on German idealism or Afrofuturism. Rather, I consider my work to barely scrape the surface. Similarly, I do not wish to suggest that I understand and can relate to the black lived experience. However, in returning to my privilege—as I share the same skin color as the colonizer I frequently confront in my paper—I continually question my intention as I step onto the anti-systematic-platforms of postcolonialism and Afrofuturism.

As I continued with my research, I eventually made my way into the discussion of Afrofuturists Janelle Monáe, Jidenna Mobisson, and Deep Cotton, who frequently refer to their musicological revolution as “black and white.” I became comfortable with my role in the new revolt addressing a topic which frequently goes unaddressed. With that said, I firmly believe my silence will only avoid the issue and lead to the perpetuation of the problem. However, I can use my insight and privilege and engage my audience—the hegemonic source itself—to take one step towards confronting the sins of the past and moving a step closer to developing a unified global revolution, as called for by Fanon, while simultaneously understanding I have a lot more to learn.

On one hand, my thesis, *A Newer Humanism* is concerned with the critical discussion of Afrofuturism. On the other hand, it also suggests—from the vantage point of postcolonial and critical race theories—alternate ways of reinterpreting the critical philosophies of Kant and Hegel. By focusing on the interconnectedness of Kant’s cosmopolitan subjectivity and Hegel’s dialectic through Afrofuturism’s reformulations, I contend that Afrofuturism breathes new life into the traditions of German philosophy, as these Afrofuturists evoke a new or “black humanism.” Although my work follows the intellectual framework laid out by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, it differs significantly, as I demonstrate later, in that Fanon becomes the integral link bridging German idealism to its Afrofuturist counterpart. With that said, my project is devoted to tracing the critical ideals of Kant and Hegel as they are reformulated by the postcolonial theories of Fanon and Wynter. The focus of the paper switches as I transition to arguing that Fanon and Wynter become the pioneers of Afrofuturism, thereby passing on their postcolonial formulations of the German tradition onto their time travelling successors of

Afrofuturism, Weheliye and Eshun, as well as those outside the academy, specifically Janelle Monáe, Jidenna, and Deep Cotton.

My use of “new” or “black humanism” is not unique; rather, it is a concept discussed and developed in both Fanon’s and Weheliye’s works, which I build upon. Fanon mentions the term briefly in both *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* as he contemplates decolonization and postcolonial theory as they move away from the liberal humanist subject, or colonizer. However, Weheliye is more explicit with the term as he uses it to further the ideas developed by Wynter. Weheliye states, “black humanist discourses emphasize the historicity and mutability of the ‘human’ itself, gesturing toward different, catachrestic, conceptualizations of this category...Black humanism disenchants ‘Man as Man,’ bringing ‘into being different modes of the human’ because it deploys the very formulation of ‘man’ as catachresis” (“‘Feenin’” 27). On one hand, I use the term—new or black humanism—to demonstrate the Post-human works as moving away from liberal humanism; on the other hand, I also use the term to reconsider Afrofuturism’s interconnected relationship with the early humanist works of Kant and Hegel.

Subsequently, my thesis unfolds in three chapters. The first chapter, “Autophobia, Self-Constitution, and the Cosmopolitan Problematic: Grounding Afrofuturism’s Black Subject in the Tradition of German Idealism,” is dedicated to developing my first task: connecting Fanon and Wynter to Kant. I specifically look at Kant’s “Perpetual Peace” in order to examine his teleological development of the human subject. To explain Kant’s metaphysical presence of nature as a natural machine that produces rationality among populations, I turn to the work of Brian Milstein: “Kantian Cosmopolitanism beyond ‘Perpetual Peace’: *Commercium*, Critique, and the Cosmopolitan Problematic.” By looking at the way Kant problematizes the relation between individuals as they compete for recognition and develop authority, Milstein suggests

Kant understands the concept of community to be too ambiguous; rather, community, for Kant, should be broken up into two components: *communio* and *commercium*. The first component of community, *communio*, is understanding the local facet of community that is composed of small individual components, or “the perception of commonality or shared existence, the more or less static condition of belonging together under some identifiable set of criteria that can demarcate that which belongs to the community from that which does not” (Milstein 122). *Commercium* becomes the facet of the global facet of community, or “the interaction community,” where these competing *communios* are forced to interact and work in relation to each other (Milstein 124). These components suggest that the cosmopolitan problematic, the dialectical tension between what is and what ought to be, helps us understand Kant’s “Perpetual Peace” as a manifesto describing how nature forces individual groupings of people to interact with other groups on the global scale and develops a way of understanding one another where they recognize others as human rather than objects to be used for selfish desires.

I use the works of Milstein to demonstrate how Kant foresees the dialectical tension that currently plagues the academy as it is forced to reconcile the injustices brought about through the development of liberal humanism. Based on Milstein’s study of Kant, we may extrapolate, or infer, how Kant would have understood Posthuman studies and liberal humanism as competing *communios* which must reconcile the tension. Even more, I look at the works of Fanon and Wynter as sources of critical reflection that bring about critique through their developments of the autophobic subject. To reconcile the finite lives of individual humans, Kant uses nature as a teleological tool to confront human finiteness and further develop human understanding beyond the means of each individual. Therefore, I argue, the black postcolonial subject of Wynter and Fanon becomes the next step in nature’s teleological development of human rationality.

Wynter's autophobic subject, which comes about through the means of self-constitution laid out by Fanon, rejects the temporally liminal existence brought about by old ways of understanding human relations and becomes the perfect vehicle for transporting the academy away from the hegemonic source associated with liberal humanism.

Likewise, my second chapter, "A Recurring Tension: Afrofuturism's Reformulation of Hegel's Dialectic," further develops my discussion of Afrofuturism as a "new or black humanism." The first part of this discussion focuses on the relationship shared between Hegel, Fanon, and Wynter. I turn to the work of Karen M. Gagne as she discusses how Fanon and Wynter have created a schism in the academy where the departments of science and the humanities are forced to reconcile their competing views. In doing so, I highlight how Wynter and Fanon bring about a new mode of revolt focused on the reformulation of Hegel's dialectic. I also incorporate the work of Nick Nesbitt to demonstrate how, contrary to popular belief, Hegel modeled the revolution brought about by the dialectic on the Haitian Revolution of 1804. Through the discussion of Hegel as sympathizer with slave rebellion, I look at how Fanon specifically reformulates the dialectic so that the colonized subject can overcome the denial of recognition as the slave is assimilated rather than acknowledged.

Moreover, my project turns to the reformulation of both Hegel and Fanon in the works of Wynter as a means of bridging the past with the future. This section of the chapter is specifically devoted to understanding how Wynter's "demonic ground" becomes the framework for the contemporary Afrofuturists Alexander Weheliye and Kodwo Eshun. I argue that Wynter's "demonic ground" becomes the early foundation of the Afrofuturist aesthetic as the critical theory looks to deconstruct N. Katherine Hayles's Post-human feedback loop. Furthermore, I associate the Posthuman feedback loop with Hegel's construction of the master-slave dialectic.

In doing so, I explain how the feedback loop functions to assimilate the experience of those othered by the system rather than acknowledging these subjects as human. In closing, I look at how Eshun uses the construction of Wynter's "demonic ground" and Weheliye's "demonic island" as early constructions of countermemory—the evocation of memory through the creation of anachronistic episodes which challenge society's current modalities of thought by forcing us to confront the sins of the past, which we have packed away rather than confronted.

This conversation is picked up in my third chapter, "The Musicological Turn: Reading Revolution through Wondaland Records." Here, I return to the work of Gagne to reiterate my overarching theme of Afrofuturism as a "new or black humanism." In doing so, I look at how the Afrofuturists, Weheliye and Eshun, have successfully brought about the "Fanonian Revolution" discussed by Gagne, as they allow artists like Janelle Monáe, Jidenna Mobisson, and Deep Cotton to take the theory outside the Westernized academy and educate the masses regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status. This chapter functions as an Afrofuturist reading of the works produced by the artists associated with Wondaland Records. Through this discussion, I study how these artists evoke the lineage I have traced outside the academy through popular music and music videos.

Although *A Newer Humanism* is not intended to be complete or exhaustive, it is an early formulation of my attempt to weigh in on the posthuman debate as I weave together the past traditions of German idealism and contemporary visions of Afrofuturism in hopes of better understanding both philosophies. With that said, through the revision process—and even rereading this stage of the project—I am aware there is room for further development. Again, I thoroughly believe I have barely touched on the surface of this argument and look forward to the

continuation of this project in my future as I continue to evaluate the works of Kant, Hegel, Fanon, Wynter, Weheliye, Eshun, and the artists of Wondaland Records.

Autophobia, Self-Constitution, and the Cosmopolitan Problematic:

Grounding Afrofuturism's Black Subject in the Tradition of German Idealism

Karl Marx once wrote, “A spectre is haunting Europe—the specter of Communism” (11). Likewise, a ghost is now haunting the world of the humanities—that of Afrofuturism. For Kodwo Eshun, this ghost manifests itself as a countermemory—situating Africa and the colonized subjects against that of the Enlightenment project—so that it may contest the colonial archive and reposition “the collective trauma of slavery as the founding moment of modernity” (287-88). This chapter is devoted to exploring the works of Sylvia Wynter and Frantz Fanon so that we can better understand how the traumatic experience of slavery produced a novel subject in possession of a newly-formed consciousness which contests the liberal humanist’s implicit patriarchy. Through this exploration, we will see how the countermemory (or the newly-constructed consciousness) of Afrofuturism’s black subject is a reformulation of Wynter’s and Fanon’s early conceptions of autophobia and self-recognition.

It is Wynter’s connection to Fanon that brings about my argument, which is to understand Afrofuturism as reformulating the theories of the German idealists Kant and Hegel as opposed to contesting the theorists. As we will see through the argument of Stefan Bird-Pollan, Fanon is firmly “situated in the tradition of German idealism” (377). Therefore the purpose of this study will be to demonstrate how Afrofuturism’s countermemory evokes the practices of the German idealism, thereby situating Afrofuturism in the philosophical categories of Kant and Hegel so that we can understand Afrofuturism as a new humanism, or to use Weheliye’s term, “black humanism” (“Feenin” 27).

The Rise of a Newer Humanism: Understanding Afrofuturism

Today, Posthuman theory is considered to be an aesthetic dedicated to discovering new modalities of being through a technological means that denies the reformulation of the Westernized liberal humanist subject. As an offshoot of Posthuman studies, Afrofuturism enters the age old academic debate—whether or not to do away with liberal humanism—by concerning itself with reconfiguring what has come to be recognized as Man as the liberal humanist subject. While Posthuman studies attempt to reconfigure the parameters of humanity by examining the human consciousness through a technological lens—consider, for instance, this newly-configured human consciousness manifesting as cyborg—Afrofuturists remain skeptical of the cyborg as they contend the technological application has failed to acknowledge the black subject.

Because Posthuman studies have largely ignored critical race theories when reconfiguring the parameters of human consciousness, Afrofuturists fear that these Posthuman configurations will ultimately resurrect the liberal humanist subject, thereby reestablishing the authority of white patriarchy by means of a limited linear trajectory. To clarify, the immediate risk of linearity can be better understood if we consider the Posthuman cyborg's evolution as the next phase of the white patriarchy's temporal existence: the cyborg rises, phoenix-like, from the smoldering ashes of the previous hegemonic source of liberal humanism. Moreover, Afrofuturists argue that these Posthuman conceptions of humanity have failed to create enough distance between themselves and the liberal humanist subject to accurately conceptualize new manifestations of consciousness in a Posthuman era. Rather, as Alexander Weheliye asserts, the “posthuman frequently appears as little more than the white liberal subject in techno-informational disguise” (“Feenin” 23).

Consequently, in order to battle this linearity, the Afrofuturists under discussion here, Alexander Weheliye and Kodwo Eshun, position the black subject in opposition to the liberal humanist subject in order to establish a countermemory. Countermemory, for Eshun, is a celebration of blackness that acts as an “ethical commitment to history, the dead, and the forgotten” (288). Through this celebration of blackness, countermemory acts as a practice extending the cultural tradition of heritage into the “proleptic as much as the retrospective” through the “reorienting [of] the intercultural vectors of Black Atlantic temporality” (289). Therefore, Afrofuturists use countermemory to situate the black subject outside the parameters of modern conceptions of human as man by presenting the trauma of slavery and colonialism as the founding moment of the development of a new consciousness. Through countermemory, the Afrofuturist is able to project the newly-conceptualized consciousness of the black subject into the future (the proleptic Eshun mentions), thereby creating enough space to allow new formulations of the human to emerge in the space between the two proto-subjects.

To return to my argument, the newly-formed consciousness of the Afrofuturist’s subject is a contemporary formulation of Wynter’s autophobia and Fanon’s means of self-constitution through recognition. As we will see, autophobia and self-constitution both refer to the black subject’s rejection of a liminal existence residing within the temporality of the Western patriarchy. Both of these terms are used to describe the lived experience of the slave and colonized subject and the founding moment of their self-recognition where they understand themselves as existing outside modern formulations of Man and, therefore, develop a new mode of consciousness not accessible to the white colonizer. Thus, Western Man is deprived of patriarchal authority. Again, as we explore these developments of consciousness through the works of Sylvia Wynter and Frantz Fanon it is my ultimate goal to ground these processes in the

works of Kant, establishing Afrofuturism as an extension of these aforementioned German idealists.

By way of contrast, I am aware that Afrofuturists are on record displaying their rejection of Kant and Hegel in relation to the liberal humanist subject. Wynter, in “Beyond the Word of Man,” explains that “this uprising [the foreseen revolution of the Antillean subject] is directed not only at our present order of discourse and at its founding Word of Man...but also at the tradition of discourse to which its specific discourse of man belongs” (639). Here, the tradition of discourse which Man belongs to should be understood to be related to the German idealists as Wynter goes on to situate the tradition in Western Europe. The same concerns also manifest in the works of Eshun. Unlike Wynter and Weheliye, Eshun calls these theorists by name as he asserts the goals of Afrofuturism, which are “to establish the historical character of black culture, [and] to bring Africa and its subjects into history denied by Hegel et al.” (288). Because “et al.” is left open for interpretation, and for the sake of my argument, we will assume Eshun is directing his attack at Hegel and his contemporaries (Kant, Fichte, and Schelling).

Consequently, to address this counterargument I rely on recent unique critiques of these German idealists in order to distinguish Kant’s work as more liberal than initially recognized; thus, considering the recent developments in the readings of German idealism, I recognize these aforementioned apprehensions of Afrofuturism as ultimately lying in the conceptualized Western colonizer rather than the theory. To combat this issue, I argue that Afrofuturism positions itself in a place where it begins to formulate as “black humanism” or new humanism.

Autophobia: Wynter’s Construction of Black Identity and Revolution

If we look at Alexander Weheliye’s analysis of Wynter’s “massive intellectual project” we can see that Wynter’s “main objective is to disfigure their [liberal humanism’s] central

object, man, through the incorporation of colonial and racist histories of modern incantations of the human” (Weheliye, “After Man” 323). Like Eshun, Weheliye also agrees that the foundation for reconceptualizing the human conscience lies in the black subject’s early experiences with slavery and colonialism. Therefore, both Eshun and Weheliye rely heavily on the Afro-Caribbean postcolonial feminist works of Wynter. As pointed out by Weheliye, Wynter has concerned her intellectual works with “disentangl[ing] man from the human in order to use the space of those subjects placed beyond the grasp of this domain as a vital point from which to invent hitherto unavailable genres of the human” (“After Man” 323). Consequently, we will look at Wynter’s “Beyond the Word of Man” in order to see how the black subject becomes new point of origin to begin reformulating human consciousness.

In order to disfigure Westernized conceptions of humanity, Weheliye explains, Wynter relies heavily on the impact of slavery and colonialism thereby using her Antillean subject to demonstrate how liberal humanism’s Man used the “black subjects, the natives, the insane, the poor, [and] the disabled [to] serve as limit cases by which Man could define himself as the universal human” (“After Man” 323). Because the black subject was situated as “other” to the white colonizer, blackness is placed outside the realm of humanity. Black subjects must begin rationalizing the trauma of slavery in order to liberate themselves from this binary opposition. As the black subject reconciles his or her past, he or she is granted a newly-conceived consciousness that lies outside the realms of modern humanity as blackness is derived out of an existence that the colonizer has never experienced. Thus, this newly-formed consciousness, situated in the postcolonial era, becomes the foundation for Afrofuturism by creating space between the consciousness of the Enlightenment and blackness so newly-configured identities begin formulating within the parameters of humanity.

To better understand this phenomenon and its relation to countermemory, we must first understand the circumstances which gave way to this newly-formed consciousness. Wynter refers to this newly-formed consciousness as the Antillean subject, and, as we will see, this subject emerges out of her critical discussion of Edouard Glissant and his metaphor of *blocking*. Wynter understands this metaphor to be the lived experience of the Antillean subject—the black subjects of Martinique who were forced to succumb to French assimilation in the 1940’s at the hands of colonialism. For Wynter, this lived experience (being forced into a life of objectification either as slave or assimilated other) is described as double blockade. She understands the Antilleans’ existence as being confined by a “series of empirical obstacles impending the Antilles’ realization of full potential of... ‘Antilleanity’” (638). Ultimately, Wynter understands the Antillean’s agency lies in overcoming these hurdles that have barricaded the subject and prohibited the Antillean from reaching full Antilleanity, or the recognition of his or her own human essence which would place the subject in a position to contest the power of the white colonizer.

In identifying these “empirical obstacles” as they present themselves in Martinique, Wynter goes on to recognize these hurdles arise from “a specific mode of subordination” (638). Up to this point in history, Wynter recognizes that no other subject has been objectified or forced to experience the harshness of slavery or colonialism on as large of a scale as the black subject. Likewise, this specific mode of imprisonment comes with a different set of empirical obstacles to overcome. Therefore, Wynter understands that the Antillean’s “‘need to recapture but also transcend a vanished unrecorded history’ and the ‘struggle to preserve a sense of cultural identity in the face of metropolitan French policies that discourage and inhibit the flow of a specifically Caribbean tradition’” is unique to the Antillean’s existence (638). Moreover, because these two

unique forms of imprisonment, which form the double blockade, have yet to be experienced by any other subject, the Antillean—once he or she breaks through these empirical barriers—becomes a new framework by which we can begin to use as a foundation for formulating new modes of humanity.

In understanding these empirical obstacles, let's dissect Wynter's first empirical obstacle: the Antillean's need to "recapture and transcend [both a] vanished and unrecorded history" (638). Before we can understand what the Antillean must recapture and transcend, we must first understand what has vanished and been unrecorded. If we put ourselves in the present position of the Antillean, we would see ourselves situated between a past identity of a Maroon and a future identity of an assimilated object. This empirical hurdle is focused on the Antilleans' ancestral past as a Maroon. To explain this concept, I turn to the clear definition of Maroon provided by Wynter as a term "used throughout the Caribbean and the Americas to designate the runaway African slaves who took to the mountains in order to escape enslavement and to reestablish the ancestral cultures of Africa" (638). Wynter understands this identity to be representative of the Antillean's former self, which was "nondomesticated," "rebellious," and had direct lineage to Africa (638). Therefore, the first empirical obstacle the Antillean must overcome is to recapture and transcend this vanished and unrecorded Maroon identity situated in the past. What makes this past vanished is the Antillean's inability to return to the past; the Antillean can never return to a Maroon identity because of the Antillean's lived experience of traumatic objectification due to slavery and colonialism. Thus, the Antillean is forced to succumb. Thus, in transcending this first form of blockade, the Antillean must first accept the unique cultural existence as something other than Maroon. Through this recognition, the Antillean not only differentiates between cultural circumstances but recognizes the Maroon as part of past black experience, thereby

situating the memory as a means of establishing cultural heritage. This recognition of the past allows the Antillean to recapture blackness as an identity while simultaneously establishing cultural agency. By hurdling the first obstacle, the Antillean moves closer establishing a separate version of freedom outside that of the Maroon.

Moving outside of the Maroon identity, the Antillean is forced to tackle what Wynter recognizes as the second blockade: the “struggle to preserve a sense of cultural identity in the face of metropolitan French policies that discourage and inhibit the flow of a specifically Caribbean tradition” (638). As we can see, conquering the second obstacle is contingent upon the Antillean recognizing the Maroon identity as a cultural heritage situated in the past. Without having done so previously, the Antillean would lack any past cultural heritage to identify with; the only accessible heritage would lie in the Antillean’s objectification; thus, black existence would only be understood as a limited life where the subject serves to distinguish the colonizer as universal man. Moreover, once the Antillean has confronted the experience of slavery by recognizing the trauma as a schism that denies the Antillean a retreat into past identities, the Antillean can begin to move into future existence. So, Wynter’s second obstacle becomes representative of the Antillean’s struggle to move into the future. This struggle manifests itself as the Antillean approaches a fork in the road: one path leads to what Wynter calls a “nihilated identity” (a symbolic surrendering of the Antillean’s recently established cultural heritage), and the other path (rejecting a temporal existence within the constraints of white masculinity) allows the Antillean to hold onto his or her cultural values (643).

This junction becomes reality when the Antillean is forced to face French assimilation. By giving into French assimilation, the Antillean is promised access “to the middle-class model of desire, of being” (Wynter 643). If the Antillean accepts assimilation, the black subject would

be allowed limited access into the parameters of humanity. This acceptance would bring forth a cultural amnesia where the black subject would be forced to forget the trauma of slavery and accept existence as a colonized other. Thus, the key to overcoming this second blockade for the Antillean is to reject this offering, consequently placing oneself outside of the parameters of humanity. Sequentially, by doing so, Wynter understands that at this point of rejection the Antillean establishes an existence outside the framework provided by liberal humanism.

Wynter's double blockade, or empirical obstacles, should be understood as a metaphor representing the black subject's liminal existence constructed by Western authority. Thus, in order for Wynter's Antillean to establish recognized existence in the eyes of the colonizer, the Antillean must become "reflectively autophobic to its own physiognomic being" (Wynter 643). This autophobic quality, or autophobia, of the Antillean refers to the rejection of black liminality, a subjected existence in a temporal world constructed by the liberal humanist subject, and the establishment of an agency from blackness through the cultural heritage of both Marooned and enslaved identities. In doing so, the Antillean develops a new consciousness that contests the suffering brought about by the authority of the colonizer. This exact phenomenon becomes the foundation Eshun adopts to formulate his own countermemory.

To better understand autophobia and its relation to newly-formed consciousness, it is best we discuss Wynter's term in relation to contemporary Afrofuturism's countermemory. For Eshun, "the practice of countermemory define[s] itself as an ethical commitment to history, the dead, the forgotten, [and] the manufactur[ing] of conceptual tools that could analyze and assemble counterfutures" (288). Likewise, autophobia acts in much the same way. In clearing the first obstacle, Wynter's autophobic Antillean subject has differentiated his or her self from the Maroon identity by recognizing the uniqueness of an Antillean experience as slave and

assimilated other. By recognizing oneself as separate from the Maroon, the Antillean claims both the rebellious free Maroon and the experience of slavery as monumental points in establishing a black existence outside of the temporal existence provided by the liberal humanist subject. In doing so, I argue that the Antillean has reclaimed a vanished and unrecorded history as maroon and slave but also transcended these past lives by positioning himself or herself outside the liminal existence of the other.

Therefore, the development of a historical past (or memory) distinguishes the Antillean's own identity. In the article "Identity and Trauma," Gil Eyal understands this form of memory to be a "mechanism of *retention* responsible for the experience of being a selfsame individual moving through time" (7). Moreover, because the Antillean has claimed the identities of the Maroon and slave in an established Antillean heritage, the subject can begin moving forward by using cultural memories as proleptic safeguards to prevent the recurrence of past traumas. This idea brings us to Wynter's second obstacle, which is to create "counterfutures." Returning to Eyal, this newly-constructed identity will become an "embattled memory, [which] attack[s] and challenge[s] [modern constructions of humanity] from the outside by [creating] a competing version of the past" (7). Both autophobia and countermemory become the act of establishing a historical past outside the configurations of Man in order to contest this idea of universal Man in order to create a space so that we can begin reconfiguring the human conscious. Therefore, we can see how Afrofuturists like Wynter understand countermemory and autophobia as newly-discovered consciousnesses that gives way to a "new mode of revolt...against the very roots of our present mode of conventional reason" (Wynter 639).

When discussing the formulation of countermemory, we must also look further than Wynter's autophobia. Because countermemory functions to distinguish the collective trauma of

slavery and colonialism as the point of origin, we must also look at the postcolonial works of Fanon to understand the framework used to create Afrofuturism's formulation of countermemory. I include Fanon in this discussion because his works are praised by Wynter, Weheliye, and Eshun and also because his works provide a foundation for which these Afrofuturists use the celebration of blackness as a means of transporting the academy away from liberal humanism. Therefore, we will look at Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* as a means for discussing his concepts of self-recognition as it translates to Afrofuturism's countermemory.

Fanon's Self-Constitution: Understanding the Autophobic Quality of Triple Consciousness

Eshun asserts, "Afrofuturism's specificity lies in assembling conceptual approaches and counter memorial mediated practices in order to access triple consciousness, quadruple consciousness, [and] previously inaccessible alienations" (298). So far, I have discussed how Wynter's Antillean subject recaptures the identities of the Maroon and the enslaved in order to establish a countermemory, or consciousness, that contests the colonial archive. Likewise, in what follows, I argue that Wynter's autophobia lies in what Fanon recognizes as triple consciousness. To do so, I turn to the works of Stefan Bird-Pollan, not only to establish triple consciousness as autophobia, but to distinguish how Fanon's first two inaccessible alienations of triple consciousness resemble Wynter's double blockade.

Like Wynter and the Afrofuturists, Fanon recognizes the establishment of black agency lies in overcoming a pair of heuristic obstacles: that of fantasy and body. Bird-Pollan asserts that Fanon understands "the residue or trace of one's [the black subject's] previous firmness or subjectivity is now expressed in fantasy, in dreams and other liminal practices" (389). Likewise,

Bird-Pollan also understands Fanon sees “the lived experience of the black Man in the colonial context is one of contingency. Fanon argues this can be seen in the reification of the black body itself into inconsequentiality” (389). Therefore, I will use these two postulations to relate Fanon to Wynter and help establish both the double blockade and autophobia in Fanon’s triple consciousness.

Fanon describes this process, triple consciousness and the empirical obstacles, in *Black Skin, White Masks*. In relating his own experience Fanon explains, “the occasion rose when I had to meet the white man’s eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. The real world challenged my claims. In the white world the man of color encounters difficulty in the development of his bodily schema” (110). Here, Fanon relates his living within the temporality of a constructed white world prevents the black subject from establishing a consciousness as well as a physical embodiment. In this liminal existence Fanon goes on to explain his triple consciousness, stating, “consciousness of the body is a solely negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness. The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty” (111). Here we can begin to see the manifestation of autophobia and empirical obstacles. The third person consciousness, or autophobia, only becomes present once the black subject has rejected its atmosphere of uncertainty. This atmosphere should be recognized as the constructed blackness presented by the presence of the colonizer. As we will see, the liminality of blackness is completely contingent upon the constructed white world. Moreover, black existence at this time depends on the original thesis, the white patriarchy, to conceive of itself. Thus, the first heuristic hurdle for Fanon, fantasy, implies overcoming the psychological effects of living in a constructed white society by establishing a black identity unique to black existence.

Because Fanon also sides with the aforementioned scholars in that he understands the inflicted trauma of slavery and colonialism serve as the foundation for reconceptualizing humanity, his first obstacle of fantasy involves reconciling this trauma. Bird-Pollan suggests, “the advent of colonization actually deprive[d] them [the black subject] of their more advanced subjectivity, plunging them back, through the apparatus of colonial rule, into a state of proto-subjectivity” (387). Bird-Pollan recognizes this “proto-subjectivity” to be the reduction of the black subject’s consciousness into a natural state. In this state of natural consciousness the black subject is “undifferentiated”; he or she lacks any autonomy and “does not understand [the self] as separate from the world. Rather, [he or she] believes [himself or herself] to be the totality of the world” (Bird-Pollan 389). Likewise, this undifferentiated self becomes “coextensive with the world” thereby enabling the subject to experience the cultural world as opposing it. Thus, the advent of slavery and colonialism forces the black subject into a suffering he or she cannot understand because he or she cannot conceive of an existence outside that constructed by liberal humanism (Bird-Pollan 389). So, the point of origin for reconceptualizing humanity, for Fanon, emerges out of the transcendence of this proto-subjectivity or natural consciousness.

Subsequently, it is important that we understand how this natural consciousness manifests itself in Fanon so that we can begin to recognize the first facet of Fanon’s double-consciousness: the psychological effect of Fanon’s fantasy. Returning to natural consciousness, Fanon believes “The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man” (*Black Skin* 110). What we must realize is that blackness was purely a construct of white culture. Blackness was created as a means of othering the black subject, thereby transferring power to the liberal humanist subject. Confirming blackness as ontological firmness becomes the psychological

obstacle Fanon recognizes at fantasy. This is the first particularity that enables the black subject to be recognized as human because their only existence lacks any ontological firmness.

To demonstrate the psychological stress of being black in relation to whiteness, Fanon recounts a personal experience with a white child to demonstrate how fantasy becomes the first instance of particularity the black subject must overcome to acquire their agency. As the child points out to his mother ““Look, a Negro!”” Fanon goes on to explore how this construction of blackness denies the subject any ontological firmness in the eyes of the liberal subject (*Black Skin* 112). In acknowledging what Fanon asserts as the “truth” he is amused by the boy’s remark, although as Fanon smiles and tries to laugh he explains that the emotional task is “impossible” (111-12). Here we can begin to see how the psychological trauma experienced at the hands of slavery, colonialism, and what follows has restricted the subject as the trauma has yet to be confronted, thereby presenting itself as a fantastical barrier—if the subject cannot come to terms with the trauma in one’s head he or she cannot begin to work these problems out in reality. The child continues, “Mama, see the Negro! I’m frightened! Frightened! Frightened!” (112). Because of the emotional trauma and the inability to smile or engage physically through interaction, the subject “subject[s] [himself] to an objectification examination” (112). Even though Fanon just wants to be recognized as human, he understands and accepts that he is “completely dislocated, unable to be abroad with the other, the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned [him]” because he has accepted the construction of blackness, or to put it another way, Fanon attests that he “took [him]self far off from [his] own presence, far indeed, mak[ing him]self an object” (112). Again, this inability to confront the trauma of slavery in reality outside the framework of fantasy becomes the first hurdle the subject must overcome for Fanon.

By accepting this constructed blackness or submitting to objectification, we may think of Wynter's Antillean's desire to return to a Marooned identity or a retreat into the past. Like the Antillean, Fanon and his subject retreat into past histories rather than acknowledging their current existence. By doing so, Fanon acknowledges his submission to the "legends, stories, history, and above all [the historicity]" that has been constructed and represented in the child's response to seeing Fanon (*Black Skin* 112). As the child begins to grow fearful, Fanon accepts his responsibility "for [his] body, for [his] race, and for [his] ancestors" (112). At this point, Fanon begins to recognize his blackness and becomes encumbered by the "tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave ships, and above all else... 'sho' good eatin'" (112). Again, the acceptance of these constructions forces Fanon to "reject all immunization of emotion," thereby tucking his existence away with his ancestors, who were enslaved and lynched (113). Thus, overcoming this construction of blackness, or the psychological effects of being labelled black in relation to whiteness becomes Fanon's first obstacle: fantasy. Here, the black subject must recognize his own existence as separate from those past experiences and begin to reconcile the trauma in reality rather than succumbing to more psychological damage. By realizing their own existence and reconciling the emotional trauma of slavery, the black subjects take one step by overcoming the obstacle of fantasy and asserting their own agency.

Thus the moment that signifies the advancement of the black subject as it overcomes fantasy is the moment he or she recognizes and confronts liminality. Here, the black subject severs his or her tie to a pre-slavery and colonial existence and asserts himself or herself as an existing present being and situates the self in opposition to the liberal subject. Fanon's second obstacle of accessing triple consciousness involves confronting their present liminality. This

hurdle represents the struggle of accepting one's body or blackness. Again, returning to Fanon's conception of multiple alienations, the black subject must be black in relation to whiteness because "the other [has] hesitated to recognize me [the black subject and so], there remain[s] only one solution: to make myself known" (115). Moreover, by making oneself known, the black subject must deny the existing liminality. The black subject must take the psychological struggle and manifest the struggle with blackness in the present and use blackness, thereby recognizing blackness as a means of decolonization.

Liminality is understood by Fanon to be the moment the colonial/colonized subject begins to develop a new self-consciousness; at this point the subject accepts his or her blackness and wears it proudly in opposition to the colonizer. Bird-Pollan describes this moment as when "the trauma of slavery is overcome and the sufferer becomes aware of his suffering. This permits the movement from fantasy or thought to practical reason or action and gives back to the black man both the need and ability to take the means to his own ends" (391). Moreover, Bird-Pollan suggests that the moment the black subject denies his or her natural consciousness, rejects the construction of blackness, and recognizes his or her own liminality, the black subject takes his or her authority back and asserts the self as a newly-constructed being; this phenomenon becomes the moment of self-constitution, where we witness the black subject rejecting a past enslavement and future assimilation, thereby situating the black subject outside the temporal existence of the liberal humanist subject.

Up to this point, Fanon asserts that this liminality has been brought about by a lack of conflict between the colonized subject and his master as he explains "there is not an open conflict between white and black. One day the white master, without conflict, recognized the Negro slave" (*Black Skin* 217). Furthermore, he also suggests the black subject's lack of

ontology or agency is also the product of “a good white master who had influence sa[ying] to his friends, ‘Let’s be kind to the niggers’” (220). Because of this sad unprovoked recognition, which lacked any conflict, Fanon asserts that the black subject was unable to create any cultural value to establish any firmness or agency. This problem thereby results from what Fanon refers to as the black subject transitioning “from one way of life to another, rather than from one life to another” (220). Thus, we must recognize that this sudden recognition simply assimilates the colonized subject from one objectified existence into other, rather than the subject moving into a recognized existence as human. This dilemma becomes representative of the subject liminality and what the subject must overcome to take back her body.

Once the subject reconciles the emotional trauma of slavery, Fanon believes the black subject is in the position to recognize his or her blackness as a mode of agency or embodiment. This new found recognition thereby positions the subject to be black in relation to white—the second phase of Fanon’s double-consciousness. Again, returning to Fanon’s personal account, we can see this recognition of blackness as a means of constructing agency in Fanon’s experience with the white child as the child continues to assault him, “Look at the nigger!...Mama, a Negro!...Hell, he’s getting mad” (*Black Skin* 113-14). Prior to this newly-understood self-recognition, Fanon would have likely avoided any conflict with the white family, as we saw earlier when he accepted his objectification and dealt with the issue within the constraints of his mind. Although now, after recognizing his blackness as what he calls becoming “aware of [his] uniform,” Fanon chooses to be black in relation to the whiteness by asserting his agency. As the mother attempts to alleviate the situation, she apologizes, saying, “Take no notice Sir, he [the child] does not know that you are as civilized as we” and continues to praise Fanon, telling her son to “look how handsome that Negro is” at which Fanon, who has accepted his

blackness, asserts “Kiss the handsome Negro’s ass, Madame!” thereby acknowledging his blackness in relation to whiteness and acting in opposition (*Black Skin* 114). Fanon understood that he was “expected to behave like a black man—or at least like a nigger” and by following through with the confrontation and fulfilling the stereotype Fanon has not only confirmed his existence but also contested the authority of whiteness (114).

At this point, Fanon’s personal experience has become representative of the black subject overcoming both the obstacles of fantasy and body. The subject has overcome the psychological despair of black liminality; his or her consciousness has reconciled the trauma of slavery and transcended the liminal existence of colonialism by asserting his own authority, finally overcoming both the rage and gratitude which was brought on by the falseness of freedom brought about by a free but assimilated existence. Thus, the black subject has taken off his white mask, thereby calling for revolution as he sports his black uniform proudly.

The sporting of one’s blackness as a uniform contesting the power/authority of the Western patriarchy should be understood in relation to Wynter’s autophobia. Both of these stages of self-recognition, where we see the subject asserting one’s agency, become reflexively the moment of self-constitution. After overcoming the trials of past and future objectification, the black subject has now placed his or her own existence outside the temporality of constructed whiteness and acted as countermemories reacting against the colonizers bastardized form of liberal humanism. Thus, we can recognize Wynter’s autophobia and double blockade as a reformulation of Fanon’s triple consciousness.

Kant’s Cosmopolitan Problematic: Understanding our Unsocial Sociability

Before moving on to Kant’s “cosmopolitical problem,” we must first recognize Wynter’s autophobia and Fanon’s self-constitution as being representative of the moment the Antillean and

black subject begins developing his or her own means to an end and an individual sense of freedom, thereby positioning, what Eshun calls the “collective trauma of slavery as the founding moment of modernity” where a newly-developed self-consciousness arises and provides us with the means of reconceptualizing humanity (“Further Considerations” 288). Like the Afrofuturists, Wynter and Fanon understand the black subject to be the new foundation for reconceptualizing the parameters of humanity because they recognize the black subject’s newly-constructed consciousness as working to contest the liberal humanist subject and the colonial archive by means of countermemory, although it is this concern with universal freedom, or the liberation of the human from the shackles of man, that situates not only Fanon and Wynter, but the whole of Afrofuturism as reformulation of Kant and Hegel’s philosophical tradition. Bird-Pollan asserts, “Fanon shares with the German idealist tradition, running from Kant through Hegel, a central concern for freedom articulated as a demand both on the subject itself and on society at large” (380). Thus, in order to extend this relationship so that we can also see the parallels to Wynter and Afrofuturism I turn to Brain Milstein’s “Kantian Cosmopolitanism beyond ‘Perpetual Peace’” to demonstrate that Kant himself foresaw the colonial struggle and the trauma of slavery as a founding moment in the development of humanity. Moreover, I discuss Kant’s opposition to European expansion, thus developing an overarching theme that Kant, as well as Hegel, was much more progressive than they are commonly believed to be interpreted.

To begin, Milstein asserts that “a number of leading contemporary theorists have weighed in on the continuing relevance of Kant’s classic essay [“Perpetual Peace”], and a few have tried to appropriate or reconstruct his ideas to fit the demand of present-day theory and twenty-first century world society” (118). Thus, I argue that not only does Kant anticipate a revolution like Afrofuturism, but that the black aesthetic movement is much more aligned with

Kant's philosophy than any other aesthetic reformulation thus far. To establish this claim, I will look at "Perpetual Peace" and Milstein's discussion to explain how both the Antillean subject and the black subject's newly-recognized existence represents the foundation for humanity which Kant sees as critical.

While looking at "Perpetual Peace," Milstein asserts that Kant was "among the first philosophers to recognize the globally interdependent nature of politics" (119). Consequently, Milstein asserts, Kant is able to identify the interrelatedness of "purportedly separated, 'bounded' societies" approximately two hundred years before globalization was introduced to the politics of everyday consciousness (119). Therefore, Kant's "Perpetual Peace" provides readers with a list of prescriptive principles that would terminate perpetuated states of war, conflict, and tyranny while simultaneously providing us with the framework for creating a cosmopolitical republic; however, I recognize war and conflict to be essential to the works of Fanon, Wynter and the Afrofuturists. To align these more Hegelian thinkers with Kant, I read "Perpetual Peace" as an ideal end game, one that is only achieved after the carnage is brought about by revolution. Bird-Pollan asserts that Kant's most essential claim is that "we constitute ourselves through our actions and that to constitute ourselves successfully we must act consistently. Consistency is made possible by following the law of reason" (338). Thus, Kant's cosmopolitical republic, produced in "Perpetual Peace," becomes representative of the universal moral code which all must follow because of our interconnectedness. Milstein reiterates that Kant believes that "a violation of right on one place of earth is felt in all" (119).

Conversely, it is not Kant's political solutions which warrant the attention of Milstein; rather, it is Kant's "particular and interesting way of framing the [universal] problem" (119). Milstein recognizes this framework to be the cosmopolitan problematic, which does not strive to

distinguish “universal principles” but provides readers with an “examination of the challenges” facing practical humans who populate the earth” (119). To understand the cosmopolitan problematic posed by Kant, Milstein first discusses Kant’s concepts of global community, or international interactions (*Wechselwirkung*). As pointed out by Milstein, community for Kant should be recognized as a “pure concept of understanding:” “it is first and foremost a relation of ‘reciprocal causality’ or interaction... [which is] derived somewhat paradoxically, from the disjunctive form of logical judgement—the exclusionary ‘or’” (121). This “disjunction” should, and must, be understood as the moment between the freedom of one and that of everyone else.

However, Milstein points out that Kant understands the term community (*Gemeinschaft*) to be too ambiguous; rather, community should be understood as “*communio*”—“the perception of commonality or shared existence... as the condition of belonging together under some identifiable set of criteria that can demarcate that which belongs to the community” (122). Yet, Kant also demonstrates, through his discussion of nature, that the world does not exist in prepacked objectifications, formations, and groups. Rather, as stated by Milstein, these “mode[s] of spatiotemporal comprehension is rather something we bring to the manifold of experience, as an exercise in judgement” (122). Thus, there must be some “objective ground” that permits this manifold of objectification as a “unified but not uniform spatiotemporal horizon” (122). This objective ground, which *communio* is contingent upon, becomes Kant’s second understanding of community, “*commercium*” (122). Moreover, *commercium* represents the dynamic disjunctive community that defines itself by thoroughgoing interaction and reciprocal influence (122).

To take a step back, we can best identify Kant’s *communio* (the community who shares commonalities and lives a shared existence) and *commercium* (the global interaction between these smaller groups) as the unfolding interaction between the liberal humanist subject and the

enslaved African or “other.” Both the colonizer and the colonized represent two modes of *communio*. Before the collective trauma of The Middle Passage the liberal humanist subject was a *communio* of Western European males like the enslaved were previously a *communio* of Central Africa regions. The advent of slavery and colonialism therefore becomes one instance of *commercium*, or global interaction amongst a conflicting *communio*. And lastly, the cosmopolitan problematic becomes the act of conflicting freedoms and the assertion of the liberal human subject’s power onto those they objectified. Although Kant foresees these types of interactions unfolding between nations, states, and peoples he does not condone it. By looking at Kant’s “Third Definitive Article for a Perpetual Peace,” we see that Kant recognizes, “hospitality there signifies solely the right every stranger has of not being treated as an enemy in the country in which he arrives” (24). Conversely, Kant follows, “one may refuse to receive him, if it can be done without endangering his existence...so long as he [the visitor] does not offend anyone” (24). Thus, we must recognize that Kant understands hospitality to be a universal right of all peoples. Everyone should always be treated with respect even if they are a stranger. Then, if someone is unkind or disrespectful, they lose that right and can be kindly asked to remove themselves from the situation. The key is that no matter what the circumstance we always respect other humans. Again, this hospitality should be understood as evidence proving Kant never sought to justify slavery or elitism in any circumstance.

Kant sees colonialism and slavery as the cosmopolitan problematic. The problem arises from our individual right of freedom. Milstein suggests, “it is precisely in the physical encounter of participant’s capacities for thought and action...that affect one another and even [provokes the] use of coercive force against one another” (125). Because we, as humans, share the earth’s surface and exist in disjunctive *communio*, and are thereby forced to coexist, our individual

rights to act (*Willkür*) are “unavoidably opposed” against each other (126). Returning to Bird-Pollan, who understands this principle as the “tension, experienced as choice, and, in its private mode suffering, which underlies all our actions” (381). Moreover, our individual freedoms become the dialectical tension between what we can do (*Willkür*) and what we ought to do. Thus, the cosmopolitan problem arises out of our need to interact with others (globalization) and our individual freedom to negotiate those terms of interaction.

Sequentially, Kant recognizes these continuous conflicting interactions as historical challenges which continually shape the parameters of humanity. He emphasizes this in his “First Supplement”: “The guarantee of this treaty [perpetual peace] is nothing less than the great and ingenious artist, nature. Her mechanical march evidently announces the grand aim of producing among men, against their intention, harmony from the very bosom of their discords” (27).

Because Kant is a metaphysical philosopher, he understands that the external abstract concept of nature as an influential power is the constructor of human rationality. He argues first nature created humans; then, nature provided humans with the means of shelter and food sustaining us; also, as we became more populated, nature forced humanity to spread across the vast globe even into the harshest regions; and lastly, through social interactions nature breeds rationality as we begin to understand the devastating effects of war and tyranny. It is this process of becoming more reasonable through natural interactions that becomes the “mechanical march.”

Also, because Kant is a teleological thinker, each of these moments of social interaction become historical points when our conscious state is altered for the better. Milstein suggests that these moments of changed historical consciousness are categorized by our “human-made institutions... [which] are historically contingent by-products of our haphazard efforts to come to terms with living ‘side-by-side’” (128). Kant, according to Milstein, understands that these

institutions are contingent upon our existence as “moral and cultural subjects [because] we desire to live in a society where we are able to exercise our freedoms and our talents peacefully” while simultaneously having “heteronomous tendencies towards antagonism that stand in the way of achieving these goals” and represent our “unsocial sociability” (129). Therefore, the mechanical march of nature is aimed at overcoming this “unsocial sociability” by eliminating the manmade institutions which uphold unreasonable conditions.

Through contesting these historical institutions we, as humans, develop a more rational existence because we overcome what Milstein calls “the real relations of ‘thoroughgoing interaction’ that lie beneath the illusion that humanity is naturally divided” (129). So, we overcome the surface level perception of *communio* and begin to develop a deeper sense of *commercium*. Through this process we begin to fully understand the damaging effects of war, tyranny, and elitism and begin to comprehend the positive effects of sharing the earth as a global community (129). Kant thereby believes it is our roles as individual thinkers to not distinguish ourselves as passive beings, but as active agents combating hegemonic sources through the recognition/reflection of our own power in the antagonisms of others so that we can thereby begin to recognize our humanity in others. Milstein concurs, suggesting that Kant believes “our ability to meet the challenge of the cosmopolitan problematic rests with our ability to recognize the contingency behind our present situation. For only by recognizing how the inequalities and divisions among humanity are the result of human action may we be able to think how they can in turn be resolved by them” (135). Thus, it is this mechanical march of progress which historicizes contemporary injustices so that they become motivation for individuals to confront them.

Connecting Wynter, Fanon, and Kant

In closing, let me briefly summarize all these terms and overlaps so that we can begin to see how Afrofuturism could be situated as an extension of Kant and Hegel. If we return to Eshun's goal of Afrofuturism, to contest the colonial archive by situating the traumatic experience of slavery as the founding moment of newly-recognized consciousness, we can understand why Weheliye and Eshun have turned to the works of Wynter in hopes of creating a countermemory to combat the hegemonic humanist subject. Countermemory is therefore, as suggested by Eyal, the "guarantor of *identity* and maintains it through time—it is the mechanism of *retention* responsible for the experience of being a selfsame individual moving through time" (7). So for Afrofuturism, countermemory becomes the agent which acts as a reflection of the suffering back onto the liberal humanist subject. In doing so, it casts a light which not only prevents the liberal humanist subject from regaining power, but allows those beings which were "othered" by the patriarchal subject to be permeating into the boundaries of humanity. This process therefore allows our conception of human to be reformulated and unshackles the human from the grips of man.

To have a countermemory, we must have an antithetical subject to act as a mirror reflecting past traumas into the proleptic so those particular instances of suffering can contest hegemonic sources. As the Afrofuturists I have been discussing have chosen to contest the colonial archive, I argue that they simultaneously adopt Wynter as their pioneer of Afrofuturism by using her work surrounding the Antillean subject as the newly-formed human agent to create a countermemory. Wynter's Antillean becomes the perfect source of countermemory because of the subject's autophobia.

The Antillean becomes autophobic through the ability to deny a liminal existence within the temporal existence of liberal humanism. For Wynter, her subject's autophobia is the achievement of overcoming two imperial obstacles. The first obstacle is the denial of a retreat into the past. Wynter understands in the aftermath of slavery the Antillean subject only understood a truly free existence as being associated with Maroon identity—those natives who escaped enslavement. Thus the first obstacle involves overcoming this perception, transcending it, and claiming it as cultural lineage, thereby asserting blackness as an agency in the present. Therefore, the second obstacle for Wynter becomes reclaiming the future. In this stage the Antillean is faced with assimilation into an “allowed existence.” By submitting oneself to this category of human, the Antillean would therefore surrender a recently established cultural heritage and consequently surrender humanity all over again. Thus, the Antillean must become autophobic and reject an existence within liberal humanism. In doing so, the subject actively/consciously asserts an existence as outside the boundaries of “man as human” and contests the colonial archive as a countermemory.

Likewise, I turn to Fanon, not only because he is Wynter's contemporary and influences her work, but because he acknowledges that his concepts of self-recognition/constitution lie within the philosophical frame work of German idealism. In comparing Fanon to Wynter, we see the black subject overcoming the empirical obstacles of fantasy and body while simultaneously overcoming the trauma of slavery. We also witnessed how the black subject begins reconciling grief externally by accepting blackness, thereby situating it in opposition to whiteness. Again, acting in opposition, blackness becomes a countermemory which contests hegemonic authority. Although, we also understand how liberation is directly dependent on revolution or physical action against the original subject.

Thus, Fanon provides us with enough context not only to situate Afrofuturism in postcolonial theory, but to engage in a conversation where we begin to understand Afrofuturism as extending the tradition of German idealism. This conversation begins with the alignment of Afrofuturism with Kant. By turning to Kant's "Perpetual Peace" we are able to distinguish Afrofuturism as an extension of German idealism through understanding Kant's cosmopolitan problematic. Again, the cosmopolitan problematic arises out of competing freedoms of *communio* (individual groups made of up of beings which share existences based on genetic commonalities) and *commercium* (the global interactions and bonds shared between *communios*). This cosmopolitan problematic not only predicts the advent of slavery, but foresees the importance of countermemory as contesting cultural institutions which enable subjects to understand their global interconnectedness, *commercium*. Moreover, Afrofuturism does not become an extension of German idealism because it was implicitly expressed by Kant. Afrofuturism becomes an extension of Kant and Hegel because the aesthetic recognizes an external existence beyond the reach of white liberal humanism and thereby contests the authority of the Western subjectivity. In doing so, Afrofuturism becomes an agent that allows us to critically address cultural institutions that not only separate us globally but implicitly institutionalize racism, bigotry, and tyranny—all things Kant suggest produce irrationality.

A Recurring Tension:

Afrofuturism's Reformulation of Hegel's Dialectic

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Wynter and Fanon, and their concepts surrounding autophobia and triple consciousness, represent the newly-emerging consciousness of the black subject. This newly recognized existence also emerges as a countermemory, which as explained by Eshun, is the recapturing of past experiences and casting these particular instances of suffering proleptically so that the new subject can contest the patriarchy of the original thesis, or white masculinity. While adhering to my individual purpose—grounding Afrofuturism in the German tradition of Kant and Hegel—we have also discussed how the autophobic triple consciousness of the black subject has its roots in German idealism as the subject stems from Kant's cosmopolitan problematic. Moreover, we have discussed how both the black and white subject exist in their own *communio*, or individual communities isolated by their shared particular experiences and physiognomic make up. Likewise, both subjects' ontological firmness is established by overcoming the boundaries of their individual *communio* and interacting/competing with one another on the global scale where both subjects create a *commercium*. Thus, to overcome Kant's cosmopolitan problematic, the subjects must reconcile their shared commonalities and create a system where both subjects exist freely in relation with one another, which again brings us back to countermemory—the practice which creates a memory that prevents previously established authority to shift in favor of one particular *communio*.

In addressing this cosmopolitical problem, Karen M. Gagne critically discusses the means of revolt, or countermemory, established by Wynter and Fanon. Her article, "On the Obsolescence of the Disciplines" sets out to reconcile "the difficult but necessary task of letting

go of our current disciplinary boundaries in order to even begin to understand the *who, what, when, and how* in which human beings work *as human beings*” (251). Gagne addresses the task by examining the works of Fanon and Wynter as a foundation for understanding the revolt against liberal humanism. In establishing her argument, Gagne asserts, “Wynter argues that when Frantz Fanon made the little statement, ‘beside phylogeny and ontogeny stand sociogeny’ ...he effectively ruptured our present knowledge system that our academic disciplines serve to maintain, by calling into question ‘our present culture’s purely biological definition of what it is to *be*, and therefore of what it is *like to be*, human’” (251).

While adopting Gagne’s argument, I discuss here not only how Wynter’s and Fanon’s means of revolt, aimed at cultural institutions, manifest themselves in the work of Weheliye and Eshun, but how these means of revolt were instantiated by Hegel himself—further developing the overall theme that Afrofuturism itself becomes an extension of German idealism. This discussion unfolds in three sections: the discussion of Hegel’s response to Kant, Fanon’s and Wynter’s reaction to colonialism; and Afrofuturism’s response to liberal humanism (i.e. white patriarchy).

Hegel’s Response to Kant: The Emergence of Hegel’s Dialectic

For Gagne, “the shift out of our present conception of *Man*, out of our present ‘World System’—one that places people of African descent and the ever-expanding global, transracial category of homeless, jobless, and criminalized *damned* as the zero-most factor of *Other* to Western Man’s Self—has to be first and foremost a cultural shift, *not* an economic one” (252). Thus, in order to understand how we as humans begin to use our cognitive capabilities to resolve the social injustices brought about by our “World System,” we must formulate a revolt against the cultural institutions that have simultaneously institutionalized racism and discrimination on a

global scale. This mode of cultural revolt can be traced back to Hegel's reformulation of Kant's natural machine.

Returning to Kant's "Perpetual Peace," his first "Supplement" argues that nature's "mechanical march evidently announces the grand aim of producing among men, against their intention, harmony from the very bosom of their discords" (27). From this we can regard Kant as a metaphysical philosopher in that he believes that human experience is derived from the external presence of nature. Likewise, Kant also understands nature to be a natural machine—one that produces accessible consciousness in multiple layers simultaneously allowing us to better develop our conception of freedom.

These layers of accessible consciousness and understanding are categorized in different historical characters. Kant refers to this natural process of moving through different moments in history as *destiny*; "hence it is that we call it [nature] *destiny*, viewing it as a cause absolute in its effects" (27). Sequentially, understanding nature as this natural machine and its process as *destiny*, Kant also becomes a teleological and deterministic philosopher. Kant further states, "the regular order which we observe in the course of events of this world, make us call it [nature] *Providence*, inasmuch as we can discern in her the profound wisdom of a superior cause, which predetermines the course of fate, and makes it tend to the final purpose of human existence" (27). Kant's philosophy should be understood as teleological in that he understands nature's sole purpose to be developing the human consciousness, and deterministic, in that he understands the development of human consciousness to be a predetermined fate, where each historical event marks the perpetual movement towards complete freedom.

However, as Nick Nesbitt argues, "human rights are not natural, a phenomenon of the natural world but rather a man-made creation that can only exist in human society" (20). This

point of departure is where Nesbitt argues that Hegel begins to address and rework Kant's natural philosophy. This shift from Kant's natural phenomenon takes place in Hegel's *Phenomenology*. In his chapter "Self-Alienated Spirit: Culture," Hegel asserts human individuality "moulds itself by culture into what it intrinsically is, and only by doing so is it an intrinsic being that has an actual existence; the measure of its culture is the measure of its actuality and power" (298). Whereas Kant understands community and subjectivity as products of the "natural machine," Hegel understands community to be a cultural establishment; thus, subjectivity originates in one's cultural existence within a working community. In explaining this cultural subjectivity, Hegel states that individual subjectivity must confront its self-consciousness as "objective essence" (299). Before an individual is granted subjectivity culturally he or she must overcome the negating effects of an "alienated world" (299). Moreover, Hegel recognizes reality to be an already established social construct molded by culture. Hegel asserts that prior to established ontological firmness a subject must "gain power over it [the established social order] through culture which, looked at from this aspect, has the appearance of self-consciousness" (299). For a subject to assert his or her ontological firmness he or she must establish a cultural presence recognized and accepted by the original thesis, or previously established hierarchy. In this case, Hegel understands that in order for the black subject to establish black subjectivity the Hegelian former slave must assert his or her cultural heritage as contesting the prior cultural status of white masculinity.

In addressing this line of thought, Hegel describes this cultural power shift in his chapter "Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage." The opening line of the chapter reads, "Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged" (111). Again, here we can see

that subjectivity rests on being acknowledged by the original proto-subject. Bird-Pollan adds that Hegel's "master-slave dialectic is meant to model a way in which material relations between individuals are themselves constitutive of the self's fundamental structure" (382). Thus, for Bird-Pollan, the dialectic becomes a formula for demonstrating how the "self-determining subject" is an achievement, one that requires the "whole of human history to attain" (382). Returning to Kant, we can see Hegel has adopted and adapted Kant's teleological and deterministic philosophy. For Hegel, the dialectic becomes a historical struggle for recognition, a formula for contesting our individual desires. This dialectic replaces Kant's natural machine and attempts to bring about liberty and equality by providing a framework in which cultural institutions can be challenged and overthrown. Moreover, Kant's universalism is grounded on his notion of cosmopolitanism, whereas Hegel's dialectic is informed by history.

To describe Hegel's master-slave dialectic I rely heavily on Bird-Pollan's interpretation. Hegel's dialectic begins "when two proto-subjects encounter one another and understand vaguely the *Gestalt* they are encountering is in some ways different than the other subjects of the world" (Bird-Pollan 383). To understand the two proto-subjects they should be recognized as two competing *communios*. Upon meeting, these two groups recognize the *Gestalt*, or the recognizable differences between the two groups, and begin attempting to reconcile these differences in order to establish a working *commercium* thus entering an antithetical relationship. Importantly, Bird-Pollan notes that the experienced *Gestalt* is actually the recognition of one's self in the other, which is the selfish desire to "dominate the material world" (383). Thus, the dialectic begins with the competition for authority erupting between two *communios*. Sequentially, this conflict arises as both subjects attempt to assert their own individual authority rather than submit it. This relationship acts negatively by bringing about inequality.

Consequently, one subject must enter into the position of the master and the other as slave—or the positions of lordship and bondage.

Bird-Pollan recognizes this moment of submission as the “turning point in both the struggle and the history of humanity” which simultaneously occurs when one of the original proto-subjects recognizes that he cannot win and “gives up its claim to domination and submits to the other” (383). At this point the slave surrenders his authority to the master; however, Bird-Pollan notes that “relinquishing physical power turns out not to deny the slave’s existence, but merely sublimate it. Having forfeited his body, the slave now exists in his mind alone, wishing to be free and hence develop[s] a concept radically at odds with his servitude: the idea of universal freedom” (283). Again, we can see that Hegel is reformulating Kant’s work. At this point Hegel uses the dialectic to create a tension between what is and what ought to be, much like Kant’s naturally derived moral ethics. This tension allows the slave to begin constructing a means of revolting against the master’s individual power, which resides within a culturally recognized institution. This means of revolt, dictated by the desire for freedom, allows the slave to recognize his or her self-value and begin constructing a historical cultural character. Thus, the slave begins to develop him/herself as a subject which carries the weight of justice and freedom. At this point the slave begins to recognize his/her actions as his/her own and establish one’s means to an end.

Bird-Pollan understands that “full self-constitution, [or] human unity, can only occur when just social relations are achieved” (384). So, it is the slave who processes the newly-constructed consciousness which can recognize social injustices and bring about Kant’s *commercium*, or perpetuated peace, where all subjects co-exist freely without restricted freedom. Again, situating himself alongside Kant, Hegel adopts Kant’s teleological philosophy and uses his dialectic as a formula dedicated to understanding the historical process which perpetually

rationalizes man and brings about absolute freedom for all. Whereas Kant's natural machine brought about reason through continuous natural interactions, Hegel's master-slave relation replaces the natural phenomenon and provides a cyclical series of power relationships. Simply, the dialectic becomes a means of producing revolt because Hegel understands human desire will always bring about unjust relations that will need to be reconciled.

However, because Hegel takes on the master and the slave as his recurring proto-subjects in *Phenomenology*, he is often criticized/recognized as justifying slavery. Douglass Kellner and Tyson Lewis point out that "arguably, Hegel's philosophy justified Prussian oppression as well as slavery and exploitation as necessary stages in historical development" (5). Conversely, Nick Nesbitt contests this charge in his article "Troping Toussaint, Reading Revolution." Here, Nesbitt argues, "the longstanding reputation of the *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* [The Elements of the Philosophy of Right] as a reactionary defense of the Prussian Monarchy" has allowed scholars to ignore "Hegel's infamous comments on Africa in his various (posthumously published) lectures on the *Philosophy of History*" resulting in Hegel's "explication and radical defense of the rights of slaves to revolt" largely unnoticed (23). Nesbitt goes on to quote Eric Neil and Joachim Ritter who state, "there is now a virtual consensus among knowledgeable scholars that the earlier images of Hegel, as philosopher of the reactionary Prussian restoration and forerunner of modern totalitarianism, are simply wrong" (qtd. in Nesbitt 24). In his defense of Hegel as "the most rigorous and probing of modern philosophers of freedom," Nesbitt examines Hegel's defense of the African slaves' right to freedom as Nesbitt argues that Hegel used the Haitian revolution (1791-1804) to construct his means of revolt outlined in *Philosophy of the Right*. It is here that Hegel, as noticed by Nesbitt, recognizes the "call for the *actualization* of human freedom" lies in a "universal emancipation from servitude." Thus the revolt cannot be

limited, like a “local event (maroon rebellion), devoid of relation to the universal (until all are free, none are)” (qtd. in Nesbitt 26).

With that said, we can begin to see why Hegel’s dialectic is so important to the postcolonial works of Fanon and Wynter. If we return to Gagne’s article, where she asserts “the shift out of our present conception of Man, out of our present ‘World System’ ...has to first and foremost be a cultural shift” (252), we can see that Gagne’s, Fanon’s, and Wynter’s revolutions begin with the dialectical tension laid out by Hegel in his master-slave formulation. It is here where Hegel first recognizes that individual modes of revolt will fail to usurp the power from a cultural institution; rather, as Hegel recognizes, it will take a universal revolt of enslaved subjects to overthrow the establishment.

Fanon’s and Wynter’s Reformulations of Hegel’s Dialectic: Violence and Demonic Ground

Nesbitt claims that Hegel’s thoughts and works “stand as a primary foundation (to be developed and critiqued and overcome) of any postcolonial theory” (24). Thus, we will explore the works of Fanon and Wynter to see how these two post-colonial theorists critique Hegel’s dialectic and form what Gagne recognizes as the third intellectual revolution, which has yet to be completed (253). Fanon, as we have seen, begins his critique of Hegel in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Here, Bird-Pollan concludes, “Fanon seems to share the fundamentally Hegelian premise of subjectivity being constituted through intersubjectivity, writing that ‘man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose himself on another man in order to be recognized by him’” (385). This is also the point where Fanon begins to further develop Hegel as well; in Fanon’s case, the black subject is recognized as being deprived of his or her individual right to revolt. Fanon recognizes that freedom for the colonized is brought about when “one day a good white master who had influence said to his friends, ‘let’s be nice to the niggers’” (*Black Skin* 220).

Therefore, the conflict between the white and black subject, which Hegel asserts as necessary, never transpires; rather, the slave is recognized without conflict. Bird-Pollan asserts by “not having risked his [the slave’s] life, as the slave in Hegel has, the black man is not existentially remade or unified by the experience of oppression (385). Consequently, this sudden shift from servitude to freedom results in the black subject being denied the right to constitute himself as a subject simply because he is assimilated rather than recognized. Thus the black subject is left out of the dialectical equation. This denial, for Fanon, disrupts Hegel’s original dialectic. Fanon, as pointed out by Bird-Pollan, recognizes that “Hegel presents an idealized account” of the historical movement towards reason, rationality, and freedom “which requires supplementation and updating” (390). Fanon provides this development by detailing the psychological struggles that the black subject must overcome to regain his or her subjectivity. We previously discussed these empirical psychological struggles as fantasy and the body. By overcoming these struggles, which manifest themselves in the psyche of the enslaved, the black subject gains access to what Fanon describes as triple consciousness, granting the slave subjectivity and simultaneously placing the newly-developed subject in a position to contest the master.

With that said, Fanon also returns to Hegel’s dialectic in *The Wretched of the Earth*, where he goes on to describe the conflict between the black and white subjects as already in progress. Bird-Pollan suggests, “the core idea in Fanon’s revision of German idealism and one that is implicit in Hegel’s own account of subjectivity, is that human subjectivity originates in violence” (391). Thus, as we continue our discussion, we will look at how Fanon explores the psychological effects brought about by colonialism in *Black Skin* and returns to a truer version of

the dialectic in *The Wretched*. Here, we will see the external conflict between the master and the slave rather than the internal conflict taking place solely in the mind of the enslaved.

Again, Bird-Pollan reminds us that “what is new then, in *The Wretched*, is that the idea of life itself appears as a value, forming the outside boundary to ideology and is hence in a position to reveal the black man’s suffering to him” (392). After the colonized has overcome the psychological trauma of slavery and colonialism the subject begins to recognize life as a concrete substance rather than as abstract. Therefore the subject begins to understand life as a means of connecting the master and slave, or shared quality of the colonizer and colonized—the competing *communio*. Fanon understands this new perception to be the moment “the colonized subject discovers his life, his breathing and his heartbeat are the same as the colonist’s. He discovers that the skin of a colonist is not worth more than the ‘native’s’. In other words, his world receives a fundamental jolt” (*The Wretched* 10). This jolt signifies the moment the black subject demands recognition; this jolt becomes symbolic of the black subject demanding recognition; this jolt becomes the moment the black subject reclaims possession of himself—a moment where the subjected, through negation, recognizes its own self as a subject and emerges from equation with a newly-formed consciousness. The novel subject no longer sees the two competing *communios* as different, but rather as the same. Thus the black subject contains the reason within himself or herself to bring about *commercium* and perpetuate peace.

As we have previously discussed, this jolt represents the triple consciousness, or autophobic identity, of the black subject, or the two similar stages where black subjectivity emerges in opposition to the cultural institutions formulated to uphold the patriarchy. Fanon sees this novel consciousness as the point where the black subject understands his “life is worth as much as the colonist’s” (10). Therefore the life of the master “can no longer strike fear into me”

(10). By reclaiming authority over one's self the black subject fully recognizes his social stratification and therefore understands the horrific events brought about by colonialism because these events have molded the black subject—they are part of its established cultural existence. Furthermore, this established culture is rectified by the experienced trauma, suffering, rage, and alienation and becomes a motivational proponent further pushing the black subject to bring about violence against the colonial system as the black subject demands to be recognized.

This demand for recognition is also explained by Fanon to be the “minimum demand...that the last become first” (10). This flip-flopping of the two proto-subjects is also a nod to Hegel's dialectic. The switch suggests the negation brought about by the dialectic. For Hegel the dialectic begins by recognizing and confronting differentiation between the two proto-subjects. As the two *communios* compete to establish authority over the other, one must submit and become sublated into the culture of the master. Through sublation the slave becomes accustomed to the harsh values and institutions of the master and therefore holds the key to unravelling the selfish desires of the master, furthermore becoming the champion of freedom; however, this only occurs once the slave has fully recognized himself in the master and goes about contesting the authority of the original thesis. Likewise, Fanon states that the process of the last becoming first, or “decolonization...is clearly an agenda for total disorder” (2). Fanon uses the ambiguity of total disorder to recognize that the flipping of the master and slave, or reordering, can only be brought about through violence, or total discord. Therefore the ideals of freedom can only be achieved through violence.

Fanon also further aligns himself with the German idealists in that he adopts their teleological philosophy by stating, “decolonization, we know, is an [sic] historical process: In other words it can only be understood, it can only find its significance and become self-coherent

insofar as we can discern the history making movement which gives it form and substance” (2). Thus, Fanon becomes teleological in that he understands history to be interpreted as schisms of human reason; each historical moment reflects a progressive movement towards realized freedom. Likewise, each one of these historical shifts is formed and substantiated by periods of violence, as violence becomes the demand for recognition. Consequently, Fanon describes “decolonization [as] reek[ing] of red-hot cannonballs and bloody knives. For the last can be first only after a murderous and decisive confrontation between two protagonists” (3).

Violence, for Fanon, becomes the only means for penetrating the compartmentalized world of colonialism. However, we should not understand this violence to be gratuitous; rather this violence delineates a new structure that brings about social justice. Violence for Fanon is symbolic of the negation brought about by the dialectic and produces reason in novel black subjects as they rise to combat the authority of the masters or colonizers.

Wynter, on the other hand, opposes the teleological thinking of Kant, Hegel, and Fanon. I argue that Wynter fears the dialectic, as expressed by Hegel and Fanon, could produce a feedback loop due to the dialectic’s teleological nature. To demonstrate why Wynter and other Afrofuturists feel it necessary to reformulate Hegel and Fanon’s dialectic, I will discuss how the dialectic can be read through the Posthuman feedback loop. In her book *How We Became Posthuman*, N. Katherine Hayles notes that the feedback loop has long been used by posthuman theorists to deconstruct the subject of liberal humanism (2). The adoption of the feedback loop lies in its ability to “flow not only *within* the subject but also *between* the subject and its environment,” according to Hayles (2). Therefore, the importance of the feedback loop lies in its ability to collect information from external sources and process the new information internally thereby actively acting as a counterbalance. Moreover, if the posthuman subject adopts the

feedback loop, in theory, the loop should enable the subject from repeating the past transgressions of the liberal humanist subject. However, Hayles also acknowledges “feedback loops ha[ve] long been exploited to increase the stability of mechanical systems” (8). Due to the feedback loop’s excessive use as a means of maintaining mechanical systems, I argue that Posthumanism’s feedback loop could also function to uphold the authority of liberal humanism and present us with the masculine subject in what Weheliye recognizes as “techno-informational disguise” (“After Man” 23). Thus, the feedback loop presents us with the possibility of granting subjectivity without recognition, as we see in the case of Hegel’s dialectic and colonialism. Moreover, Wynter reformulates the dialectic of Hegel and Fanon so that history stops replacing one hegemonic source with another and disrupts the teleological philosophy of Kant, Hegel, and Fanon; however, as we have seen, history is still critical in shaping black subjectivity in the works of Wynter, Weheliye, and Eshun.

By understanding history as a linear progression of past experiences, Wynter and the Afrofuturists fear we run the risk of running away from instances of oppression forced upon those objectified by the system. Therefore, Wynter and her Afrofuturist counterparts use history to evoke anachronistic episodes of past instances of suffering to force society to reconcile these traumas, much like Fanon explains the black subject must confront his fantasy. Fantasy, for us living today, becomes the moment we react to these anachronistic episodes and understand we have failed to recognize the black subject. Thus, history becomes a living tool for Wynter and her Afrofuturists as they use it to change cultural assumptions that have long been ignored.

Wynter’s reformulation of Hegel’s dialectic begins with her development of her “Antillean subject” as the antithetical subject contesting the colonial archive. As we have seen, the Antillean’s power/authority rises out of what Wynter calls “the situation of double blockade”

(638). This double blockade manifests itself as boxing the Antillean in the past history of slavery and its future assimilated association within middle class social structure. Thus, the subject was faced with two options: retreat into its “ancestral past as the nonassimilated Antillean” (643) or submit to “the new[ly] imposed and nihilated identity” brought about by the French model of colonization (“Beyond the Word of Man, 643). Therefore, either path taken would ultimately lead to the failure of the subject attaining any desired form of human status. The subject would either be forced back into its cultural association of “Other” as a “Maroon,” a fleeing slave, or to move forward with the assimilation and forfeit all of his or her cultural identity.

In direct correlation of this paradoxical positioning of the island native we see the birth of Wynter’s Antillean subject, where the native islander becomes, as Wynter explains, “reflexively autophobic to its own physiognomic being” (643). What Wynter demonstrates here is the Antillean subject’s ability to recognize himself or herself as outside of all possible configurations of the present modalities of being; however, this should not be understood as rejecting history. Rather, it should be understood as the black subject denying his or her subjectivity to be constructed by a hegemonic source. Removing one’s self from the temporality constructed by the patriarchy becomes the act of recognizing one’s authority through his or her own unique lived experience. The subject is conscious of the inability to return to the past because of what Weheliye would call his or her subjection to “particularistic suffering” (“After Man,” 325). To clarify, I am suggesting that the Antillean subject can no longer return to his or her ancestral past because of the experience and memories directly related to subjugation; nor can the subject be molded into the current parameters of man because that would also require the forgetting of the particularistic suffering imposed on the Antillean, which would ultimately lead to a feedback

loop where the subject is alienated as “Other” and subjected to further implications of particularistic suffering.

Because of the Antillean subject’s unique positioning outside of all conceivable parameters of the human status, Wynter’s subject becomes the perfect antithesis of the liberal humanist subject because of its reliance upon negations. Essentially, the Antillean subject becomes the perfect starting point because the subject understands what it means to be human, as well as what it feels like to suffer at the hands of the current mode of “humanity.” Because of this specific knowledge of suffering, the Antillean subject runs less risk of evoking the political constructions that regulate racism and exclusion. With that being said, Wynter relies heavily on Hegel’s dialectic to combat liberal humanism. As pointed out by Douglass Keller and Tyson Lewis, “Through negation, Hegel is able to state that the object that is not a subject is an object. Seemingly redundant, this dialectical formulation proposes that the subject is at its core mediated by the object, and the object, mediated by the subject” (406). Therefore, in this case, Wynter uses the same formula where she inserts the liberal humanist subject into the position of the thesis (or subject) and her Antillean subject into the position of the antithesis to show how the Antillean subject contains within itself the negating factor and that the liberal humanist subject contains within itself a negative movement towards the Antillean subject. Therefore the formula produces a conceptual space for critique to arise. For Wynter this space is termed the “space of Otherness” and later becomes recognized as “Demonic Ground” (“Beyond the Word of Man,” 642). “Demonic Ground” becomes the perfect formula for reconceptualizing humanity because Wynter’s synthesis allows new modalities of the human to move non-linearly out of subjection, as well as evoke a consciousness formed through the sublation of experienced violence and brutality in order to break the feedback loop.

With this consideration of the feedback loop and sublation, it is interesting to see how Wynter uses the humanist tradition she specifically links to Kant to develop her negations between both subjects; Wynter states, “This new mode of revolt is one against the very roots of our present mode of “conventional reason” (637). Conventional reason here is earlier explained by Wynter as “taking to a logical extreme of social Darwinism discourse of ‘race’ that had been put into place in the nineteenth century as the legitimating ‘magical thought’ of that centuries industrial mode of colonialism” (637). Here, Wynter is referencing Kant’s liberal humanism which led to the unfortunate rise of elitism, colonialism, and patriarchal ideologies—albeit unintentionally, I argue. Continuing her line of thinking, Wynter goes on to look at how Kant’s works, which synthesize religious morals and rationality, help define the parameters of the human (or man) along with its binary, the “Other.” To explain this, Wynter uses the works of Peter Winch to build upon; she explains, “Humans... never live merely animate lives. Rather we live our lives according to the regulatory representations of that which constitutes symbolic life, and its lack” (641). With that being said, when colonization began to spread outside of Europe the Christian doctrine was used to help distinguish those who lacked what these Europeans embodied as “Other” and created a binary between who Wynter labels “European and New World Peoples” (641). Although at the end of the 18th century and early 19th century the works of Darwin had circulated and we begin to see what Wynter calls “the lack of racial normalcy” (nonwhite) replacing the Christian binary that once separated the Europeans from those considered “Other.” It’s this positioning of Christianity outside the parameters of humanity which provides Wynter with the negation, or the linking agent, between the liberal humanist subject and her Antillean subject that produces a negative moment and allows Wynter’s *Demonic Ground* to manifest itself, leaving the door open for the new configurations of

humanity to be developed. More importantly, the adoption of the dialectic also relies on Hegel's concepts of sublation to prevent the feedback loop by preserving both the object and subject within the newly formed synthesis so that a collective memory will prevent the recurrence of a feedback loop.

The Developments of Hegel's Dialectic in Weheliye and Eshun

Like Wynter, Alexander Weheliye also evokes the dialectic and creates his own "Demonic Ground." Using the framework provided by Wynter, Weheliye uses the dialectic and "Demonic Ground" to deconstruct the liberal humanist subject which arises in the works of Hayles's Posthuman cyborg. In doing so, Weheliye points out that "humanistic inquiry has functioned as a central topos of modernity since the Renaissance" ("After Man," 321). Here Weheliye alludes to the possible misinterpretation of German idealism in regards to the liberal humanist subject. Moving forward, Weheliye explains that Hayles and other Posthumanists' inquiries have largely ignored race as a "constitutive category" when postulating the defining features of the human. Subsequently, this leads Weheliye to question, "What different modalities of the human come to light if we do not take the liberal humanist figure of 'man' as the master-subject but focus on how humanity has been imagined and lived by those subjects excluded from this domain?" (321). Thus, in answering his own question, Weheliye builds on the foundation laid out by Wynter and evokes the dialectic to create space for a new synthesis to evolve.

In evoking the dialectic, Weheliye begins by asserting that we must first use African-American studies to create an antithesis by looking at African diaspora as an "object of knowledge" (321). By doing this, using "the histories of slavery, colonialism, segregation, and lynching" as an object of knowledge, we place the subjected black identity outside the realm of current human status (322). So, like Wynter, Weheliye has used these historical moments of

mass suffering to disrupt the linear trajectory of the human subject, which would have moved from the humanist tradition to the posthuman subject, forcing scholars to consider race by creating an antithesis, or the black “Other.” Crediting Wynter, Weheliye explains that this evocation of the dialectic, or “Demonic Ground,” creates a space in which a synthesis can evolve. Weheliye defines this space, or undiscovered synthesis, as “a ceaselessly shifting ground that voyages in and out of the human.” (322). Therefore, as we venture in and out of the configurations of human and non-human we will be able to construct a new governing system that enables an unshackled version of the human to emerge. Again, we see Weheliye relying on the constructs of a more true German idealism; when referring to governing functions, Weheliye is referring to the natural moral laws Kant explains as a system which evolves with the rational being, and brings us closer to the *summum bonum*, or a state of ultimate happiness which is experienced by all inhabitants.

In what follows, I will explain how Weheliye’s construction of the antithesis differs from Wynter’s. Thus far, Weheliye believes that the use of African diaspora to construct the antithesis has been unsuccessful, and this includes Wynter’s Antillean subject. He explains that simply using the “particularities of national diasporatic groupings” as a tool for comparing the black subject with white masculinity is ineffective (324). Ultimately, what he suggests is that so far Demonic Ground has only limited new inventions of black humanity because of its focus on selected black subjects rather than the political structures which govern the “racialization” (328). Weheliye suggests that the “empirical existence of national boundaries...become the ultimate indicators of differentiation and are in danger of entering the discursive records as transcendental truths, rather than as structures and institutions that have served repeatedly to regulate black subjects to the status of Western modernity’s non-human other” (324). Thus, in reconfiguring the

black subject as an antithesis with the construction of Demonic Ground, Weheliye turns his attention to the “suffering [which] has long functioned alternatively as the hallmark of human(e) sentience and of inhumane brutality” in order to invite change into the racializing assemblages which have implemented and kept the liberal humanist subject in a position of power (324).

By refocusing his attention to the suffering experience at the hands of political brutalization, Weheliye recreates both the thesis and antithesis in Wynter’s former equation of “Demonic Ground”; rather than rely on a white and black subject, Weheliye implies we look at the thesis as the traditional humanist version of suffering, which is all “men” suffer, and contrast it with the particularistic suffering, or suffering experienced through infliction. So, Weheliye’s new “Demonic Ground” looks at the traditional modes of suffering while juxtaposing them with the particularistic suffering that is brought about by the liberal humanist subject. What this does is allow Weheliye to explore the “specific manifestations of [black] suffering at the hands of political brutalization” as a means of understanding how current modes of humanity function (325). To explore these areas of suffering, Weheliye chooses to focus on the *Muselmann*, a derogatory name given to Muslim concentration camp detainees by the Germans, as well as the suffering experience by CLR James while being imprisoned on Ellis Island waiting on deportation. By exploring the “suffering voices” of the *Muselmann* and James, Weheliye explains that they should not be “understood as fountains of authenticity [as demonstrated by Wynter], but as instantiations of a radically different political imagery that steers clear of reducing the subjectivity of the oppressed” (331). This is where Weheliye intentionally departs from Wynter. For Weheliye, Wynter’s development of the Antillean subject becomes problematic. Because the Antillean is derived so much from particular individual postcolonial suffering the subject differentiates itself from all those others who are also experiencing their

own particular suffering. Consequently, Wynter's Antillean's differentiation proves to be too particular to act as an all-inclusive model for black liberation—one that successfully deconstructs the liberal humanist subject and the racializing assemblages which function to restore patriarchal authority.

Therefore, Weheliye's specific approach hopes to eliminate the boundaries which are used to differentiate black subjects in hopes of refocusing attention on the political manifestations which impose the conditions of suffering on all black subjects. By looking at black suffering historically, rather than in small confined instances, Weheliye evokes a new dialectic he terms the "Demonic Island." This island has no differentiated boundaries and allows scholars to construct a new emancipated human by understanding the racial constructs of the past, present, and future suffering.

To restate, I argue that Afrofuturism has relevance in terms of German idealism. First, the German idealists always contrast the contemporary and the eternal, as the name implies. What I mean by this is the idealist looks at the relationship between human and society in order to construct new realities and ideal futures. Kant and Hegel both look at the construction of "man" in relation to society and question what moral code will drive society toward a "perpetual peace," or *summum bonum*. Like the idealists, again, who believe in a continuous evolution of society, Fanon, Wynter, and Weheliye all evoke some formulation of the dialectic in hopes of creating a more moral system to replace the outdated liberal humanist subject and redefine the parameters of humanity.

Eshun, on the other hand, works specifically to further the development of counter-memory, which I argue represents the negation specific to the dialect, rather than critiquing the formulation itself, like Wynter and Weheliye. Eshun begins with the assertion that

“imperial racism has denied black subjects the right to belong to the enlightenment project, thus creating an urgent need to demonstrate a substantive historical presence” (287). Therefore it becomes essential that critical theorists begin to “establish the historical character of black culture...[by] assembl[ing] countermemories that contest the colonial archive, thereby situating the collective trauma of slavery as the founding moment of modernity” (288).

As we have seen, Kant and Hegel assert a similar premise by stating that the establishment of a historical cultural character is essential in establishing subjectivity which leads to the subject being recognized as a participant in a global *commercium*. Similarly, we have also seen how the black subject has been denied this recognition in the works of Fanon, Wynter, and Weheliye. Therefore, Eshun takes it upon himself to explain how the works of these aforementioned theorists successfully create a subject with a countermemory that contests the white masculinity associated with liberal humanism. Likewise, Eshun states that Afrofuturism “aims to extend that tradition [of countermemory] by reorienting the intercultural vectors of Black Atlantic temporality towards the proleptic as much as the retrospective” (289). This tradition should be understood as the autophobic subject of Wynter or Fanon’s subject’s triple consciousness. These subjects become the perfect vehicles for establishing countermemory because of their sublation. Both Fanon and Wynter’s subject’s identity have been molded by the lived experience of suffering, as they were forced to succumb to the harsh cultural practices of colonialism and slavery. Thus, both black subjects have permeated the cultural boundaries and ideologies posed by white masculinity and can successfully dismantle the racialized institution which put white masculinity at the top of the social stratosphere. Because of this knowledge, brought about by the sublation of Hegel, these black subjects emerge with a new consciousness capable of enacting social justice and bringing about absolute freedom to all. The key to

countermemory for Eshun is then to take these lived experiences and project them proleptically so that they act as counteragents denying a regression to the selfish desires which brought about the institution of colonialism and slavery. Eshun describes this process as the “Afrofuturist art project” which exposes and reframes the future so that they may forecast and fix the dystopia that has plagued the black subject’s entire existence (293).

Because Eshun recognizes the aesthetic of Afrofuturism to be aimed at the “intervention within the dimension of the predictive, the projected, the proleptic, the envisioned, the virtual, the anticipatory and the future conditional,” I argue that Afrofuturism in itself acts as Hegel’s means of negation (293). By this I mean that Afrofuturism counteractively works to deconstruct the power of the liberal humanist subject by providing society with a negative reflection of liberal humanism’s current situation—where all those othered by the authority of the patriarchy are allowed access into the parameters of humanity. By reflecting the black subjects lived experience in opposition to liberal humanism, Afrofuturism proleptically battles future instances of subordination and enslavement occurring at the hands of white establishment. By embracing the embodiment of suffering as a cultural identity, the black subject present society with a new mode of consciousness that has survived the trauma of slavery and colonialism. Moreover, Afrofuturism has provided us with a future freedom that was once hard to conceive. Consequently, this new future was brought about by what Eshun describes as Afrofuturism’s “specificity,” which “lies in the assembling [of] conceptual approaches and countermemorial mediated practices” developed by the black subjects “triple consciousness, quadruple consciousness, [and] previously inaccessible alienations” (298).

Thus, to conclude, I return to Gagne’s article. After review, we can see that Afrofuturism successfully allows us to reach “another landscape,” which has previously been inaccessible,

where we can begin to “exoticize” Western Man (Gagne 252). Likewise, Afrofuturism has accomplished this feat by using the postcolonial work of Fanon and Wynter to successfully create a subject with counter-memory—one that contests the colonial archive. Consequently, I argue, by adopting these postcolonial works, Afrofuturism has critically adopted a sublation which allows the aesthetic to successfully “disentangle man from the human,” to quote Weheliye (“After Man” 323). By adopting sublation, I postulate that Afrofuturism has developed itself as an extension of German idealism so that the movement can critically understand and reformulate the enlightened thought which unintentionally fueled the authority of Western Man. By adopting Kant’s theory on subjection and recognition, along with Hegel’s use of the dialectic, Afrofuturism has reformulated German thought so that Afrofuturism creates a new historical subject which possesses the ideal facets of reason to bring about absolute freedom to all and successfully create a cultural shift which Hegel and Kant believed the French and American revolution would have.

The Musicological Turn: Reading Revolution through Wondaland Records

Up to this point, I have devoted my time to grounding contemporary Afrofuturism in the tradition of German idealism by tracing Afrofuturism's lineage back to the postcolonial works of Sylvia Wynter and Frantz Fanon, where we see the overlaps in all three philosophies' aesthetics—they focus on recognized subjectivity as well as how to bring about recognition. Thus, at this point, we should be able to recognize how Afrofuturism's black subject clearly fits into Kant's teleological historical development of human rationality. As we have seen, the black subject, through particular instances of suffering, has emerged historically as a novel subject with the faculties to bring about a cultural existence where freedom is afforded to all through the displacement of liberal humanism.

However, we should also recognize that Afrofuturism does not wish to forget and leave liberal humanism in the past; rather, Afrofuturism seeks to bring about a new humanism, or black humanism, which allows Afrofuturism to re-inscribe liberal humanism as a counter-memory that denies a retreat to a past society where the white masculine subject emerges as a source of authority. Likewise, Afrofuturism's ability to re-inscribe liberal humanism as counter-memory further suggests the aesthetic's reliance on German idealism. As we saw with Hegel, the re-inscription process becomes a reworking of the dialectic. Through the act of sublation, the process of a smaller group being assimilated into a larger one, the black subject has been forced to succumb to the authority of the colonizer, who has used liberal humanism to sublimate and enslave all those who lie outside the parameters of the identified patriarchy. Because of this sublation, the black subject develops a unique and different understanding of liberal humanism through particular instances of suffering. Therefore, through negation, the process where the black subject recognizes his or her self as in a position of authority shared with the

colonizer, the colonized is able to sublimate liberal humanism, thus preventing a return to a hegemonic state.

Admittedly, while all this theoretical mapping where I demonstrate the intertextuality between Afrofuturism, postcolonialism, and German idealism may look plausible on paper, however, I hope my discussion also contributes to the practical purposes of reflecting, critiquing, and advancing society's conception of humanity or the way in which we, as humans, interact. Otherwise, as Kant would argue, my ideas are merely "chimerical" and can never be "prejudicial to a state" (Kant 65). This theoretical crisis becomes the focus of Karen Gagne's article "On the Obsolescence of the Disciplines." Here, Gagne explains that Wynter and Fanon have successfully "ruptured 'our present knowledge system that our academic disciplines serve to maintain'" (251). Furthering this sentiment, Gagne argues that our current academic institutions continue to emulate the construction of the "*Western Bourgeois Man*," which arose during the second intellectual revolution brought about by Darwin, through the academic division between the disciplines of the sciences and the humanities (255). Moreover, Gagne concludes through her analysis of Wynter that this division "keeps every one of us from making any real sense of how humans actually work" (257). Therefore, the "Fanonian" revolution seeks to eliminate this division between the two competing schools.

Gagne goes on to explain that the "Fanonian" revolution, the third intellectual revolution, will be brought through intellectuals, like Fanon and Wynter, Eshun, and Weheliye and will usher in a "new 'science of human systems,'" one representative of a "transdisciplinary operation," which is grounded both in the sciences and humanities (259). However, I postulate this inevitable transdisciplinary shift described by Gagne as already in progress. With that said, this chapter explores Janelle Monáe and other artists associated with Wondaland records as

Afrofuturism's newly configured black subjects leading the Fanonian revolution outside the academic division, where these artists use music to blur the lines between the sciences and the humanities. I argue that these Afrofuturist rebels hijack radio waves and other electromagnetic frequencies in order to deliver anachronistic episodes packaged as songs to an audience unrestricted by race, age, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic standings, thereby creating a wide scale counter-memory devoted to rescuing and liberating the human from the grips of Man. The following discussion looks at how Monáe and other artists adopt the tenets of Afrofuturism, or the reformulations of German idealism, in order to successfully disrupt the historical feedback loop that continually threatens the recognition of the black subject as human.

To reiterate, I interpret N. Katherine Hayles's feedback loop to be a faulty reformulation of Hegel's dialectic. Unlike Afrofuturism's demonic ground/island that disrupts the linear temporality constructed by the colonizer, Hayles's feedback loop's linear trajectory, despite its alleged circularity, fails to create any space between itself and the hegemonic source of authority that emerges out of liberal humanism. Because the feedback loop uses system output, that is, information that flows outside the original source into the source's environment to modify and deconstruct hegemonic behavior, the loop assimilates those experiences outside the original system rather than recognizing them. This flaw was anticipated by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* where he observes that the black subject continually lives a liminal existence within constructed white temporality due to the subject's inability to be recognized (220). Thus, this chapter is devoted to analyzing the works of Wondaland's artists in order to see how these Afrofuturists bring critical theory to the masses without the intellectual jargon and hierarchy of the academy. Because these theorists, who overcome the binaries of the academy by blending the division of the humanities and sciences, are "radically *re-educated*," to use Gagne's term, they

disrupt the feedback loop the academic posthuman threatens to enact, as knowledge flows back into the hegemonic system, thereby assimilating the experience of those refused access into the academy.

In her 2013 music video “Q.U.E.E.N.,” Monáe’s audience is introduced to her “time travelling rebels,” specifically as they are “frozen in time.” The video begins as a representative from the Ministry of Droids Museum addresses the audience, explaining, “It’s hard to stop rebels that time travel, but we at the time council pride ourselves on doing just that.” As the audience enters the museum, the representative, addressing the audience, appears on television situated in front of Janelle Monáe frozen behind a desk and Jidenna Mobisson, also frozen, to Monáe’s right. As the representative welcomes us to the “living museum,” the audience is introduced to two women sporting casual black and white clothing. As the women make their way around the museum, they also stumble across Nate Wonder and Chuck Lightning—the duo Deep Cotton—who are frozen in a glass box. As the women wander, the museum representative informs the audience that the aforementioned individuals are “legendary rebels from history,” specifically addressed as “members of Wondaland and their infamous leader, Janelle Monáe.” At this point we are also introduced to “Badulla Oblongata,” or Erykah Badu, Monáe’s “dangerous accomplice.”

As the representative continues to address the audience, we learn that Monáe, Badu, Jidenna, Deep Cotton, and others came together to launch a dangerous “musical weapons program in the 21st century.” We are told that researchers are still trying to “decipher the nature of the program,” which Wondaland used to disguise various “freedom movements” in “song, emotion pictures, and works of art.” This is the last bit of information relayed to the audience by the representative. Before she can continue, the two ladies infiltrate the museum and begin

playing a record, Q.U.E.E.N. As the music begins flooding the airways, with the riffs of a guitar, the bass line drops, unfreezing the time travelling rebels.

With that said, by playing the role of the researcher devoted to deciphering Wondaland's message, I analyze Wondaland's artist's personae and music to better understand Afrofuturism as the aesthetic transports us out of Western thought. This paper is broken into sections following the development of the black subject, which becomes recognized through the deployment of countermemory, a personified memory devoted to disrupting the temporality of the white feedback loop. I begin by looking at how the Wondaland artists introduce the masses to the temporal and liminal existence of the black subject. Moving on, I address how these "time travelling rebels" develop and introduce the concept of autophobia, where the black subjects reject their liminal existence and wear their black skin as a uniform, representing the new age revolutionary. Finally, I look at how the Wondaland artists develop a countermemory contesting the power of the patriarchy, successfully transcending the academic circle through educating the masses.

Temporality and Liminality in the Works of Jidenna and Monáe

In the video "Wondaland: Welcome to the Future," Jidenna introduces himself as "The Swankiest Master of Ceremony." He goes on to define "swank" as the newest evolution of hip-hop; to define swank music, which embraces the melodies of traditional African tribal music, I turn to Monáe's tweet which explains swank as music which is meant to give the audience something to "JAM. DANCE. [and] FUNK OUT" to while simultaneously giving the audience something to talk about later. As we will see, swank music is devoted to fostering critical discussions outside the academy while being packaged in something everyone at the club can sweat to.

Jidenna's "Some Kind of Way" clearly fits the definition of swank, as the song begins with Jidenna harmonizing with a drum and synthesized beat, transporting his audience to the tribal ceremonies of Africa. This assertion is defended as Jidenna specifically uses a thicker Nigerian accent to invite the audience to sing along with him. However, as the audience harmonizes and sings along with Jidenna, he quiets the crowd as the music shifts to a new-age synthesizer looped over the African drum line. As the beat drops, Jidenna sings:

No matter what you say or where you go, what you do, or how you pray
Somebody's gonna feel some kind of way
Somebody's gonna feel some kind of way about you
You can hide your face
Waiting for you to come out and play
Somebody's gonna feel some kind of way
Somebody's gonna feel some kind of way about you.

Here, Jidenna, explains the lived experience of the black subject, suggesting the subject's temporal and liminal existence. As black subjects are forced to live in the constructed temporality of the white subject, Fanon suggests, they are often expected by their white counterparts to "act black" in relation to their white counterparts, suggesting their liminal existence. This interpretation is clearly emphasized when Jidenna explains that the black subject is always under the microscope: "No matter what you say or where you go, what you do, or how you pray." The liminality emerges as Jidenna explains that the subject must always be black in relation to white, as their white counterparts have constructed black existence. This is further implied through him saying, "You can hide your face"; however, "Somebody's gonna feel some

kind of way.” Here, he explains that even if the black subject acts rationally and embodies perceived whiteness, the subject can never escape the Otherness of his or her black skin.

These lyrics explain the premises laid out by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*. If we return to Fanon’s personal account with the young child on the bus, we can see that Jidenna takes the theoretical/critical works of Fanon outside the academy. As Fanon discusses the black subject’s liminal and temporal existence in relation to multiple levels of consciousness, he explains, “I could no longer laugh, [as the boy calls Fanon a Negro], because I already knew that there were legends, stories, history, and above all *historicity*” associated with the subject’s black construction (112). Fanon states, “I was expected to behave like a black man—or at least like a nigger” (114). Again, I restate this information to provide further evidence of the liminal existence brought about by constructed blackness, as Fanon’s critical discussion emerges in Jidenna’s swanky song “Some Kind of Way.” By evoking Fanon’s critical discussion through swanky music, Jidenna successfully transports his audience not only to the black subject’s tribal existence in Africa, but also into the academy as he clearly relates Fanon’s critical theory to a group of individuals unrestrained by age, class, race, gender, or socioeconomic status. Not only does this song explain the temporal and liminal existence of the black subject, but Jidenna’s song also constructs an apparatus for creating multiple levels of consciousness and delivering them to his audience, further suggesting his role as a revolutionary time traveler disrupting the feedback loop.

However, Jidenna is not alone in his efforts. Janelle Monáe, the founder of Wondaland Records, also tackles the issue of demonstrating the multiple levels of consciousness as a result of a liminal and temporal existence in her song “Tightrope.” As the name suggests, Monáe’s song expresses the lived experience of the black subject moving along a temporally liminal

existence constructed by white authority. As previously discussed in the work of Jidenna, Monáe demonstrates liminality by explaining,

Some people talk about you
Like they know all about you
When you get down they doubt you
And when you tipping on the scene
Yeah they talkin' about it
'Cause they can't tip all on the scene with you.

Monáe's use of "some people" and "they" should be recognized here as the presence of white authority. Again, like in Fanon and Jidenna, Monáe suggests that white authority currently constructs blackness. Therefore, the black subject is always being placed on the examination table, or walking a tightrope, as the subject attempts to live up to and exceed white expectations. This is further suggested by Monáe's use of "tipping." I argue that by using the word "tipping," Monáe acknowledges what Fanon and Wynter recognize as the black subject realizing one's own multiple layers of consciousness. By "tipping" the black subject is forced to walk in between constructed blackness and one's unique blackness. The subject is tip toeing between two worlds: the fantastical where blackness is celebrated and reality where blackness is constructed.

As we can see, the presence of white authority always manifests itself as a burden, critiquing each move the black subject makes.

In both "Tightrope" and "Some Kind of Way" Monáe and Jidenna imply that the black subject, or his or her audience, must cast away their constructed blackness and deny his or her temporally liminal existence. In "Tightrope" Monáe goes on to state,

They love it or they hate it

You dance up on them haters
Keep getting funky on the scene
While they jumpin' round you
They trying to take all your dreams
But you can't allow it.

Here, Monáe explains that despite being loved or hated, the black subject must “dance on them haters.” In *The Wretched*, Fanon explains the colonizer uses dancing to subdue the colonized. Fanon explains, “the colonized’s way of relaxing is precisely this muscular orgy during which the most brutal aggressiveness and impulsive violence are channeled, transformed, and spirited away” (19). Furthermore, during the colonized’s time of dance, the black subjects would bring about “symbolic killings, figurative cavalcades, and imagined multiple murders” (20). By looking at how dance was used to assimilate and conform the black subject by the colonizer as a means of “spiriting away” the ruthless aggression of the black subject, we can see that dance could be ultimately used as a source of power if the black subjects came together under their own accord and “danced” against the patriarchy. I argue that Monáe recognizes this and calls on her revolutionaries to “Keep getting funky on the scene” as they dance and revolt against the patriarchal system and bring about discord and upheaval. By evoking Fanon’s concept of dance, we can see again how Monáe herself transports her audience as well as the academy back to Africa—the source of colonization on which I chose to focus—and explains how their “dreams,” or freedoms, are being persecuted and lifted by the system brought about by the colonizer.

On a similar note, returning to “Some Kind of Way,” Jidenna also calls for his audience to vacate a liminal and temporal existence. After the chorus, which is discussed above, the African drums and brass sounds are dubbed over with a contemporary dubstep beat—where

syncopated drum patterns and bass rhythms are layered on top of the traditional African sounds—one would commonly come across in any recent hip-hop song. I argue that this shift in sounds signals another voyage through time. Whereas the traditional tribal drums symbolize a historic past, the new age synthesis implies that the time travelers have returned to the present. After this return to the cultural present, I argue that Jidenna’s first verse demands his audience to access their previous experience, or layer of consciousness, to cast away their shackles and demand recognition from the hegemonic source:

Now they wanna live like you

Up in the club getting lit like you

Want to talk shit like you

When they can't spit like you

Now they wanna live like you

First thing they ain't even wanna sit by you

Man I remember when I would entertain them all like you.

The first two lines of the verse explain the cultural present as well as the hegemonic feedback loop. When Jidenna states, “Now they wanna live like you / up in the club getting lit like you / Want to talk shit like you / When they can’t spit like you,” I argue that he refers to the age-old struggle against the appropriation of black culture. Today, white artists including Miley Cyrus, Iggy Azalea, and Macklemore—the 2015 Grammy award winner for best rap album—are often charged by the black community for cultural appropriation. This phenomenon, however, is nothing new. Rather, it suggests and upholds my reading of the feedback loop. If we look back at history, notable white artists are often recognized over their black counterparts, take for example the “King of Rock-n-Roll,” Elvis Presley. Jidenna nods to this through stating, “Now they [white

authority] want to be like you.” Therefore, Jidenna’s call to his audience to recognize their temporal and liminal existence follows this line as he states, “First thing they ain't even wanna sit by you / Man I remember when I would entertain them all like you.” At this point, in what works as an evocation of Hegel, Jidenna suggests that the black subject has come full circle and is ready to demand recognition now that the black subject can recognize himself or herself in white culture as a source of authority.

I argue that this recognition of black authority in white culture, suggested by Jidenna and Monáe as they call upon their audience to recognize their temporal and liminal existence, also evokes Wynter’s discussion of overcoming empirical obstacles. In “Beyond the Word of Man,” Wynter explains that the black subject’s liminal and temporal existence is the product of living a life of metaphorical double blockade: the black subject is blocked off from future recognition as the subject is forced into assimilation. Likewise, the black subject is also denied access to ancestral life in Africa as he or she has been forced to succumb to enslavement. Therefore, the key to overcoming these empirical obstacles for Wynter becomes the black subject’s “need to recapture but also transcend a vanished unrecorded history” and preserving this sense of reclaimed “cultural identity in the face” of assimilation (638). Wynter’s critical discussion of overcoming empirical blockades is clearly emphasized through time travelling capabilities of the Wondaland artists.

Following the definition of swank music, Jidenna uses his hit single “Classic Man” to demonstrate to his audience what the black subject looks like after the subject has reclaimed a vanished past and asserts a novel identity in the face of hegemonic assimilation, which falls in line with Wynter’s critical discussion. The music video opens with a zoomed in frame focusing on a black man tightening his tie. As the camera zooms out, the audience is introduced to

Jidenna, who is sporting a tie, vest, slacks, club collared shirt, and numerous rings.

Simultaneously, an African drum line drops, and Jidenna immediately begins singing, “My name calling all night / I can pull the wool while I'm being polite / Like, darling calling all night / I can be a bull while I'm being polite.” The lyrics indicate Jidenna’s need to be recognized through the use of his calling, where his attention is solicited. All night, women and men alike are requesting his attention; however, these moments of recognition are offset by two idioms: “I can pull the wool” and “I can be a bull.” I argue that these lyrics represent the black subject’s duality or multi-faceted consciousness. The lyrics suggest that Jidenna, or the black subject, can be both the assimilated subject “pulling the wool” over the eyes of his audience and “can be a bull” representing the pent up aggression of the colonized black subject. The music video also supports this analysis. During the first frame, where Jidenna is shown putting on his three piece suit, the assimilated construction of the black subject is demonstrated to the audience. During this time the frame switches to him dancing in the club where the physical dance evokes the same image provided by Monáe in “Tightrope” where, like a bull, Jidenna dances against the patriarchy. This duality becomes symbolic of the double blockade suggested by Wynter.

Thus, to overcome the blockade, Jidenna becomes a “classic man.” This transition into a classic man happens through action rather than lyrics, suggesting the importance of action over words. Therefore, the first step in overcoming the blockade and becoming classic is to reclaim the black subject’s vanished and unrecorded history, and Jidenna accomplishes this through fashion. On multiple occasions, Jidenna says that his three-piece-suits, cane, and jewelry serve anachronistic purposes as they reflect the Jim Crow Era. By reclaiming the historical past, Jidenna uses his fashion to address the failed recognition of the contemporary black subject. Even more, Jidenna asserts, in an interview with the radio station KMEL, we still live in a “New

Jim Crow Era” where the brutal hangings and enslavement have been replaced by cop killings, incarceration and socioeconomic disparity. Thus, we can see how Wynter’s second empirical obstacle has been overcome: the need to preserve a cultural identity in the face of future assimilation. Because Jidenna chooses to live the life of a “classic man,” he uses the historical fashion to reclaim an unrecorded history and relies on those historical instances of suffering to combat future injustices.

With that said, the video works alongside Jidenna’s lyrics to further demonstrate this indebtedness to history. After the audience witnesses Jidenna sporting his suit, the frame switches back to the club where Jidenna sings the song’s hook: “I’m a classic man / You can be mean when you look this clean, I’m a classic man / Calling on me like a young OG, I’m a classic man / Your needs get met by the street, elegant old fashioned man / Yeah baby I’m a classic man.” Because we have already addressed what it means to be a classic man, I want to move onto the second line of the hook. Here, Jidenna explains, “you can be mean when you look this clean.” Again, we should read this as Afrofuturism’s swanky call to arms. It is not enough for Jidenna to reclaim his past; rather, society as a whole has to recognize and acknowledge its past before we can understand and address social grievances in the future which discontinue the alienation of the black subject. Jidenna best explains this during the interview as he discusses the difference between retro and vintage: “I think retro you’re just going back to recreate the past. Vintage you’re taking the past and making it current. So I think the way we [Wondaland artists] dress, our whole crew, our culture, but also our sound is both timeless and timely.” Therefore becoming retrospective is to just acknowledge or reclaim a past tradition, Wynter’s first obstacle; however, in order for the black subject to emerge with recognition the subject must adhere to the rules of vintage, making the past current—Wynter’s second obstacle. Moreover, Jidenna’s

“classic man style” not only reclaims the past, but the style becomes current as it forces society to recognize there are “actually more murders by vigilantes and police officers than there were lynchings. That there is more people in the correctional facility on parole, probation, [and] locked up than there were slaves in 1850 at the height of slavery in America” as explained by Jidenna.

Consequently, I argue that Jidenna’s awareness of vintage inspires the following lyrics, “Calling on me like a young OG... / Your needs get met by the street, elegant old fashioned man.” By acting as a real “OG,” or Original Gangster, Jidenna is understood to possess a knowledge previously inaccessible to a young man like himself, specifically referencing Wynter’s reformulation of the dialectic. This represents the newly developed consciousness of the black subject that emerges out of Hegel’s dialectic as the black subject is sublated into white culture. This assertion is supported as Jidenna asserts, “Your needs get met by the streets.” Here, it should be understood that by submitting one’s self to the culture of another and experiencing the particular instances of suffering, that the black subject emerges out of the dialectical tension understanding how the opposing culture works and can successfully undermine it through the black subject’s novel rationality.

Understanding Jidenna’s “Knickers” as Autophobia

As the black subject emerges out of the dialectical struggle, overcoming the empirical obstacles of Wynter, the subject rejects the liminal and temporal existence afforded by white culture, simultaneously becoming autophobic. Wynter defines this autophobia of the black subject as becoming “reflexively aversive to the specificity of [one’s] concrete being now made into the embodiment of the non-autonomous Nigger-Other” (644). Therefore, the black subject must reject his or her constructed blackness—understood by Fanon to be the subject’s “ethnic

characteristics” described as the “tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships...and above all [the] ‘Sho’ good eatin’” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 112).

Through the denial of one’s constructed blackness, the black subject removes oneself from the sources of alienation used to deny the black subject recognition and, in doing so, negates the black subject from an objectified past into a recognized position of subjectivity. The black subject’s autophobia is described by Fanon as becoming aware of one’s uniform (114).

Moreover, in becoming autophobic, the black subject denies being an object locked away in the past. Rather, the subject emerges from the liminality of a white temporality and confronts the colonizer, wearing one’s blackness as a uniform as he/she demands recognition.

Again, through their genre of swank, Wondaland Records is able to take critical theory outside the walls of the academy, further developing their anachronistic mercenaries with their musicological weapon “Knickers.” As the video begins, we see three black men dressed up wearing knee high socks, knickers, button-up dress shirts, suspenders, bow-ties, and hats. The three black men look like they just walked out of history book—this is specific.

In an interview with *Fader* magazine, Jidenna explains that he has spent a lot of time studying “the Jim Crow era and the postbellum South” as he worked in the Martin Luther King Institute (Mobisson). With that said, Jidenna states that his fashion is a form of “resistance” as his clothing resembles that worn by freed black men who escaped the South and began starting “settlements” (Mobisson). Therefore, returning to the video, the three black men seen walking up to a night club, as the American flag flies high in the background, should be understood as anachronisms. These black men dressed in clothing evoking the style of Jim Crow is specific as it forces the audience to realize, returning to Fanon, that the black man’s surroundings have changed, but his treatment and recognition have not.

As the black men arrive at the door, the audience, in the position of the black men, is confronted by a large white bouncer, wearing contemporary clothing and standing in front of a row of black Escalades, who looks at the camera stating, “You see the sign fellas...” as the camera focuses on neon sign with the word “KNICKERS” crossed out. The camera instantly switches focus to the black men as they exclaim, “What? No knickers,” as the camera drops down focusing on the black men’s pants. Upon further discussion, the group decides to go to a place where they can get in as the sounds of jazz trumpets cue up.

I argue that the opening scenes of this video clearly demonstrate the process of the black subject becoming autophobic. First, their anachronistic fashion implies their constructed blackness. By wearing Jim Crow inspired fashion, the black subjects in the video represent a history of racial stereotypes brought about by the white construction of blackness. This is further implied as they walk up to a contemporary white bouncer who denies them access to the club because of their attire. With that said, the white bouncer and club represent the lack of recognition. Therefore, the black subjects are denied access into the parameters of humanity because of their historical stereotypes. However, rather than accepting refusal, the group of black men heads to a 1920’s inspired jazz club where they begin to dance, again reformulating the art of dance expressed by Fanon.

As the audience enters the club, the camera quickly shifts through shots as it focuses in on individual band members. Before the audience is introduced to the lead singer Jidenna, the camera pans out and shows the crowd at the club as they proceed to dance a version of the Charleston. The camera then focuses on Jidenna as he grabs the microphone and sings, “Bought a new pair of pants, my knickers / Papa got a brand new dance, my knickers / Wanna cuff, wanna hem my knickers.” From the lyrics, we can clearly distinguish that Jidenna is using “knickers”

not only as a cultural reference, but also as a homophone for “niggas.” Therefore, many of the verses read as a sub-textual call to his audience and fellow black subjects. With that said, when Jidenna states, “bought a new pair of pants,” he implies that he has rejected his constructed blackness and purchased a new pair, or a blackness demanding recognition. Jidenna, as the master of ceremonies, also commonly refers to himself as “chief”; thus, in the next line, “Papa got a brand new dance,” Jidenna explains to his audience that he, Papa, has a new means of revolt and asserts himself as the leader of the revolution confronting a white culture that “cuffs” and “hems” his knickers, or black identity. The cuffing and hemming of the knickers becomes a reference to the black subject’s liminal existence and need to reject their position in white temporality, as Jidenna understands we have yet to move out of Jim Crow. Therefore, the cuffing and hemming of the black subject is a modern reference to the currently high incarceration rates of black teens and the senseless killings of black teens in the streets by figures of authority, all of which suggests the urgency for the masses to become autophobic of the system in which we live.

This call to become autophobic is more explicitly stated later in the song. As the camera angles continue to shift between close ups of the dancers and band members, Jidenna sings his pre-hook: “Show up, I show up / All my knickers show up / It's show time, knicker, show up / Showbiz come to the knickers showin' up.” Again, we see Jidenna calling out to his revolutionaries as he demands they show up for the revolution. Showing up suggests the violence implied by Fanon, as the black subject must fight, or participate in a new type of dance, for his or her recognition. Therefore, “Showbiz come to the knickers showin' up” expresses the urgency to band together to fight collectively for black subjectivity. Unless what Fanon recognizes as slave revolt happens locally rather than globally, black recognition will always be denied. Jidenna expresses this more directly as he states, “But I just gotta live my lie / I just gotta live my lie /

'Til I Put my knickers on.' Thus, until the black subject becomes aware of his blackness as a uniform he will be forced to continue living a lie, or a white construction of blackness, again further suggesting Wynter and Fanon's critical theory surrounding autophobia.

Wondaland Records as Explicit Countermemory

Until this point, autophobia has been discussed as an individual phase in confronting the white colonizer; however, autophobia is, in fact, the combination of all these steps in the development of the black subject that come together to combat the liberal humanist subject and the feedback loop. Eshun terms this combined final effort as countermemory. Countermemory, for Eshun, is a celebration of blackness that acts as an "ethical commitment to history, the dead, and the forgotten" (288). Through this celebration of blackness, countermemory acts as a practice extending the cultural tradition of heritage into the "proleptic as much as the retrospective" through the "reorienting [of] the intercultural vectors of Black Atlantic temporality" (289). Therefore, Afrofuturists use countermemory to situate the black subject outside the parameters of modern conceptions of human as Man by using, what Eshun calls, "the trauma of slavery" and colonialism as the "founding moment" of the development of a new consciousness (288). Through countermemory, the Afrofuturist is able to project the newly conceptualized consciousness of the black subject into the future (the proleptic Eshun mentions), thereby creating enough space to allow new formulations of the human to emerge in the area between the two proto-subjects.

As we have seen on multiple occasions, Wondaland's various artists are all committed to the historical development of the black subject and on every occasion celebrate their blackness. However, I want to look specifically at the duo Deep Cotton—Chuck Lightning and Nate Wonder—to further develop Wondaland's commitment to countermemory. Countermemory acts

as a liberating agent for the black subject as it creates a space between the ancestral black subject and the colonizer so that the newly developed consciousness of the black subject can emerge and liberate all those subjects who have been othered under the authority of the colonizer. I argue that Deep Cotton specifically embodies countermemory, as their name is committed to the liberation of the black subject. In an interview with *The Breakfast Club*, Nate Wonder explains that the duo's name, Deep Cotton, is a play on the antebellum phrase "high cotton." According to Wonder, the term "high cotton" was used by slaves in the antebellum South to describe a point in time when the slave had to make a choice: whether or not the slave would attempt to escape. Therefore, as discussed by Wonder, the name Deep cotton becomes symbolic of the same choice—"it's [Deep Cotton] about remembering that it is time to make that move." The duo's name itself becomes a personification of the choice to escape from slavery. The choice to swap out "deep" for "high" arguably functions the same as Jidenna's use of the New Jim Crow; "deep" evokes a past commitment to "high" while simultaneously expressing the urgency of the need to escape in the historical present.

This idea is further developed in their new falsetto-funk jam "Let's Get Caught." Their new single's video begins like the other swank music of *Wondaland*, with a quick nod to the past where the audience is welcomed with an African beat. As the music continues, the sound of an electric guitar begins to resonate as it strums in the first verse. During this time the audience is greeted with a black screen with a smiling emoji. Quickly, the shot switches focus to a black woman kissing what appears to be the posthuman faceless sparkling subject in a suit, an embodied suit that lacks any signifiers of gender, race, or age. As the shot zooms out, we see that the couple is posing for a group of painters constructing the album cover for *Wondaland*'s new record *The Eephus*. However, the shot soon fades and directs the viewer's attention to a wall

with a picture of what looks to be Marilyn Monroe holding a cigarette, which reads “Freedom Torches: / The Sweet, Sweet / Taste of Liberation.” As the camera continues to pan, the audience’s focus is directed to Nate Wonder who is lying on a bed strumming the guitar. As a woman eating a pineapple slowly comes into view, the first verse drops “Ah, baby make me new / maybe I should pray to you.”

Thus far, not counting the symbolism of Deep Cotton, we have witnessed two references to countermemory. First the picture of the smoker with freedom torches. Because the picture is in the focus for only a short amount of time, by the time the viewer’s brain registers what’s being read, the viewer is already looking at Nate Wonder. I argue that the unique transition from picture to the band member and the plurality of the phrasing positions Nate Wonder, and, by proxy, Chuck Lightning, as the revolutionary time traveling heroes leading another facet of this rebellion. Whereas Jidenna leads a contemporary audience as his music embodies contemporary rap vibes and beats, Deep Cotton appeals to recruit a slightly different revolutionary, one who chooses to recall the sound of Prince in the 80s, 90s, and now. But returning to countermemory, the first verse of the song also implies this liberating agent who the group calls out for emancipation with “baby, make me new.” However, the second verse of the song, “maybe I should pray to you,” adopts the new black subject as a Christ-like figure sent from the future to save one’s fellow black subjects; although, in order to do so, we have to understand the first instance of “baby” to be the re-envisioned black subject.

As the chorus continues to unfold, the audience is shown more of the room where Nate Wonder is lying. By acknowledging Deep Cotton’s first hit song, “We’re Far Enough From Heaven Now We Can Freak Out,” I argue that Deep Cotton’s “Let’s Get Caught” successfully brings about the “Fanonian Revolution” by disrupting the “Darwinian Revolution.” The

“Darwinian Revolution” is discussed both by Gagne and Wynter, who both align the second revolution with the combination of Darwin’s “origin of the species” and “natural selection” with the spreading “orthodox feudal-Christian identity” (Wynter 641). In discussing this combination, Wynter argues that the early ideas of “original sin,” which she associates with the “Adamic enslavement,” are mixed with Darwin’s natural order to create a “hybridly religio-secular construct of Sensory Nature” where the “Black/Africoid population... took the place of the pre-baptismal Laity as conceptual Other” (642).

I contend that Deep Cotton uses their song and music video to disrupt this hybrid thought and place blackness within the religious setting the black subject was denied. To do so, I look at the overtly Christian symbolism depicted in the song; however, I should note, “Let’s Get Caught” is overtly sexual. On multiple occasions listeners hear “And now you want me / to make you wetter than the sea,” along with other sexualized words like “bang,” “making love,” “moan,” and “show your ass while you touch your knees.” With that said, I argue that by using this language Deep Cotton is also referencing Fanon, who states, “Today I believe in the possibility of love; that is why I endeavor to trace its imperfections, its perversions,” although I will save this development for a later project (*Black Skin* 28).

To return to the religious overtones in “Let’s Get Caught,” I begin by looking at the opening lines, “Ah, baby make me kneel / Maybe I should pray to you.” As these lines are sung by Nate Wonder, he is seen lying in a bed playing his guitar. The bed and the room itself are saturated in whiteness—bedding, walls, and clothes are all white. If we consider the lyrics with the setting of the room, we can see that the black rebel has infiltrated the construction of the white world. Nate Wonder, by singing “make me kneel” and “pray to you,” suggests that we

celebrate blackness, which has long been denied recognition due to the black subject's association with Adam's original sin, according to Wynter ("Beyond the Word of Man 641).

This idea is even further developed as the video progresses. As Nate Wonder brings in the second verse, he is seen playing his white electric guitar in a pool full of water. Again, I argue this scene evokes religious symbolism. If we return to Wynter's argument where she aligns the black subject with pre-baptismal laity, we now see the symbolic baptism of Nate Wonder who creates his own construction of heaven where he is surrounded by black goddesses, ultimately denying the white construction of Christianity. Moreover, this symbolic baptism is further suggested by Jidenna, as he is featured in the song singing, "We were Adam and Eve / In the darkness of a river." By aligning themselves with the original man and woman, Deep Cotton successfully infiltrates the white constructs of society and perverts these original constructions so that the black subject can begin to be recognized, which brings us to the discussion of the hook that explicitly suggests the entirety of the song as countermemory.

In moving forward, I want to consider the hook of the song. At this point, the video is focused on Nate Wonder playing guitar on a platform in the middle of a decadent chamber. As the hook comes in, the camera shoots to Chuck Lightning, who is laying in a cast iron claw foot tub with books piled on top of him. These images of Chuck Lightning lying in a tub filled with books and Nate Wonder, who was depicted earlier in the video as lying in bed playing guitar, while both men are being fed fruit like ancient gods could be read as the fantasy or desire for recognition, which is promised through countermemory. This analysis is further supported by the hook: "Baby let's get caught / Let's get caught uptown / Upside down, downtown." Fanon, in *The Wretched*, explains that during colonization the black subject was forced into the "colonized sector," which is described as "the shanty town, the Medina, the reservation, a disreputable place

inhabited by disreputable people” (4). I argue that Deep Cotton evokes a similar message. Thus far the black subject has been forced to withdraw into urban slum areas due to the socioeconomic status afforded to them by the capitalist system. However, through countermemory, the black subject has the chance to “get caught uptown / Upside down, downtown.” These lines imply that the black subject, through countermemory, casts away his or her constructed blackness and uses their new identity to pervade into “uptown” the parameters of life which he or she has been denied because of the hegemonic source. Here, we see another reformulation of Hegel’s dialectic; whereas, before, the black subject was sublated into white culture and forced into the slums or downtown areas, now the black subject has emerged recognizing itself as the subject thereby creating space for a new subject to emerge and reclaim uptown as an area unrestricted by race.

In conclusion, because the Afrofuturists at Wondaland Records have successfully brought the critical theory and discussions surrounding Fanon, Wynter, and Eshun outside of the academy to the masses, they become the answer to Gagne. By becoming time travelling black cyborgs embodying the black rebel intellectuals of the academy, Monáe, Jidenna, Nate Wonder, and Chuck Lightning have successfully bridged the divide between the sciences and the humanities, which Gagne identifies was created by Wynter and Fanon. By filling the gap between the “‘Two Culture’ divide between the ‘literary intellectuals’ and the ‘natural scientists’”—to quote Gagne—the Artists of Wondaland Records have created a “science of human systems” (259). These artists become the new face of the academy as they use the musicological weaponry to revolutionize the masses and insight a revolution which will finally bring about the decolonization and liberation of the black subject envisioned by Fanon and Wynter. Because these artists successfully recapture their unrecorded and vanished histories and

use these particular instances of suffering to develop a new identity in the face of assimilation as they cast away their constructed blackness, Monáe, Jidenna, Nate Wonder, and Chuck Lightning become the perfect visions of the countermemory adopted by Afrofuturism used to deconstruct white supremacy.

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APPENDIX



Office of Research Integrity

April 5, 2016

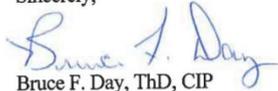
Andrew Johnston
2920 4th Avenue, Apt 1
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Dear Mr. Johnston:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract entitled "*New Humanism*". After assessing the abstract it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45CFR46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study does not involve human subjects as defined in the above referenced instruction it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,



Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP
Director

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2015 “English Capstone Panels.” Moderator. Marshall University, Huntington, WV, 6

May 2015.

- 2015 “Posthuman/Afrofuturism Critical Theory Discussion.” ENGL 341: Literary Types. Prof. Karl Wallhausser. Union College, Barbourville, KY, 18 March 2015.
- 2015 “Marx’s ‘Estranged Labour.’” ENG 355: Intro to Critical Theory. Dr. Puspa Damai. Marshall University, Huntington, WV, 9 Feb. 2015.
- 2015 “Writing a Conference Abstract.” Interdisciplinary presentation with Dr. Kristen Lillvis. Marshall University, Huntington, WV, 24 Sept. 2014.
- 2014 “English Capstone Panels.” Moderator. Marshall University, Huntington, WV, 10 Dec. 2014.
- 2014 “Milton’s *Paradise Lost*: ‘Book IX’ Milton’s Construction of Eve” ENG 102: Freshmen Composition and Literature. Dr. Shayne Confer. Union College, Barbourville, KY, 22 April 2014.

Teaching Experience

Composition

English 101: Beginning Composition, Marshall University, Spring 2016, Fall 2015

Writing Center Tutoring

Tutor at Marshall University Writing Center, 2014 – 2016

Faculty Development

- 2016 – Present Write It Out: English Department Faculty and Student Writing Group
- 16 Mar. 2016 Finding and Applying for Jobs Outside of Academia, Marshall University
- 18 Aug. 2015 iPed Conference on Teaching and Learning, Marshall University Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)
- 20-21 Aug. 2014 Composition Instructor Workshop
- 19 Aug. 2014 iPed Conference on Teaching and Learning, Marshall University CTL

Department Service

- 20 Aug. 2014 Proctored Placement Exam for Marshall University English Department