TECHNIQUES
JOURNAL

Infrastructural Architectures: Land [Dis]Trust

Triton Mobley, University of Pittsburgh

To cite this article:
Mobley, Triton. 2024. "Infrastructural Architectures: Land [Dis]Trust." *Techniques Journal* 4.

To link to this article:
http://techniquesjournal.com/infrastructural_architectures

Journal homepage: techniquesjournal.com

Infrastructural Architectures: Land [Dis]Trust

Triton Mobley, University of Pittsburgh

The United States has always demonstrated a kind of knack for demarcating spaces and building infrastructures—the original thirteen colonies—with the intention of walling off resources from those most in need, particularly anyone rendered as Other against a reflected backdrop of settler colonialists establishing history. I (2021) have previously written on the subject of social conditioning and cultural education with respect to Black bodies, including their historic arrival and placement, functioning role, and all-purpose value to the foundational principles of this country and its contradictions. In this essay, I will further my analysis through a brief overview of some of the forms of dark infrastructure that haunt the United States. By "dark infrastructure," I refer to the invisible structures of power that enforce racial segregation and alienation. But "darkness" also refers to the ways in which such infrastructure is racially coded. My aim in this short essay is to demonstrate how past and present are in a continuity. Though technologies might shift, the darkness of the infrastructure utilized remains operative, weaving together legacies of slavery with contemporary modes of data gathering and digital policing.

From the early twentieth century onwards, the United States has been campaigning about the necessity to expand and connect cities via the US highway infrastructure projects. These projects—infrastructure as techne—have decimated hundreds of neighborhoods and the livelihood of thousands in working-class/working-poor communities. Bernard Tschumi (2001) articulates matter-of-factly the stakes associated with the potential for harm within architecture's various applications. I use his framing with an expansive understanding that includes municipal infrastructural projects and the challenges imposed on working-class/working-poor neighborhoods:

> Architecture's violence is fundamental and unavoidable, for architecture is linked to events in the same way that the guard is linked to events in the same way that the guard is linked to the prisoner, the police to the criminal, the doctor to the patient, order to chaos. This also suggests that actions qualify spaces as much as spaces qualify actions; that space and action are inseparable and that no proper interpretation of architecture, drawing, or notation can refuse to consider this fact. (Tschumi 2001, 122)

Therefore, it is inconceivable to have a meaningful discussion regarding current land use as it relates to housing, public education, quality nutrition, healthcare outcomes, water treatment requirements, equitable labor, and, most recently, high-speed internet if there isn't a transparent dialogue related to the history of land acquisition projects in working-poor communities (Tafuri 1976, 104). The United States government levied an aggressive campaign to remove hundreds of working-class/working-poor residents from lands where urban community centers across the country had been long established.

The wielding of media's technicity through image production and variations of hierarchical observations served to undermine the outsider existence that working-class/working-poor communities were already experiencing. The earliest observations of Black bodies being presented on the auction blocks in the Carolinas and the Virginias served as a paradigm for this kind of racialized surveillance (Browne 2015, 92). The bounty offered for the "return of property" (94) on the wanted posters was disseminated across East Coast cities and towns in search of a Black female runaway, forming a nexus between surveillance and property and image creation, circulation, and consumption for a white, property-owning audience. The production of the image as racial techne attempted to incorporate Black bodies through erasure. Collective sets of images of Black bodies—including wanted posters for runaway slaves, Black children slain at the hands of white Americans (Nelson 2003), the subservient Negro to on-screen masters, or the perpetual prowling Black savage that white Americans must subdue at all costs in the productions of early cinema—all served as imagistic infrastructure supporting racialized capitalism (witness, for instance, D.W. Griffith's 1915 film, *Birth of a Nation*). I believe too often many credible intellectuals and academic thinkers downplay and undervalue the role by which a century or more of media saturation has broadcasted a perennial acceptance and definition of other(ness)as nonwhite in America. As Marshall McLuhan's seminal work suggests: *the medium is the message* (1994, 7–21). Meaning, whiteness has not acted as mere content alone but rather has built up a media infrastructure through

which it encodes itself and in turn makes images of otherness intelligible within a hierarchy of racial privileges and exclusions.

I would argue that the televised images of brutal crackdowns on the 1960s civil rights marchers over the Edmund Pettus Bridge did in fact serve as a wake-up for many white audiences about the cruelty against fellow Americans. However, with assassinations enacted on members of the organization, it seems correlative that these images may have also provided a kind of permission to some to commit further violence on Black communities, given that the violence appeared sanctioned by local governments and authorities. Let's clearly articulate what was being resisted in this historic moment: the free geographic movements of Black bodies in America. There is a kind of political schizophrenia in the cultural maneuvering in American history as related to the controlled movements of working-class/working-poor/Black communities. The country has toggled between poles from enforced containment to forcible evictions through eminent domain and back again, into increasingly sophisticated forms of technological containment through media techne. The latest iterations of this pattern have primarily been an economic, class-based containment related to public divestments in educational and technological infrastructures. The adaptation in rhetoric that effectively implies the linguistic replacement of the use of *white* as a prefix is met publicly with disapproval in certain corners of public life (Dyer 1997, 2), language perhaps being the most effective technical containment for the migrant "other" (Boyce-Davies 2015). For the addition of "white" to "American" disrupts the glow of an idealized American ethos of prosperity and individual freedom, revealing the American dream to be available predominantly to formerly ethnic-European citizens.

These latent linguistic maneuvers allow for the invocation of a new kind of whiteness as a counter-reflection of other(ness): a subset of white Americans can now distinguish themselves as "real" Americans by weaponizing the term "patriot." If one can't see the possibility of nonwhite Americans as equally American, then it is a small leap to how well-meaning Americans end up living in segregated neighborhoods and how working-poor communities might be zoned for highway development/expansion projects, all of which is promoted as "progress." Americans performing hierarchical observation from an economic perch exist within an entirely different sphere from those who are observed, creating a fundamental imbalance between who can and cannot be seen, who can and cannot be included within seemingly race-neutral categories such as "patriot." Despite assumptions by white Americans, equitable distribution of technological services, resources, and infrastructures does not mean the lessening of resources or services available to affluent communities (Nardi and O'Day 1999, 185). Infrastructures of disinformation maintain a certain level of paranoia, thus producing a war over resources that should be redistributed rather than hoarded by an elite, "patriotic" few who feel "under threat" from populations that, at the end of the day, are not *real* Americans anyway.

The logistics of dispossessed working-class/working-poor communities in America has evolved over time. Even in matters of a shared sense of equity between Americans, wealthier Americans have always had the autonomy to choose their economic interests, whereas the working class/working poor have always had to make the non-choice of life over livelihood (Goodwyn 1978). From its founding, the United States has had a consistent history of imposing settler colonialist policies on its own citizens. Because of this history, the razing of communities and neighborhoods in the name of economic progress has to be questioned. For instance, how might a six-lane highway infrastructure project benefit residents without vehicle ownership? The infrastructural barriers designed and set up to keep working-class/working-poor citizens from Black communities contained within designated urban interiors through the installation of concrete moats was only the beginning of federal and state policies and strategies implemented to openly and legally disenfranchise their own residents. This framework created a precedent for many decades for private businesses across the country to openly discriminate, all the while incentivized by government economic powers to do so. Perhaps the clearest example of government-sanctioned discrimination is the Levittown developments on Long Island, New York (Rothstein 2017, 67–70). The suburban development was created in the postwar period to provide returning GIs with the opportunity to establish themselves and their families squarely in the middle-class of a growing America. However, the clear guidelines for funding this venture were to ensure that none of these newly developed homes would ever be sold to Black or Brown buyers under any circumstances, not even returning Black and Brown American GIs. These programs were self-fulfilling legislative endeavors. If you take away the possibility for working-class/working-poor citizens to establish themselves in the suburbs, leaving them with the inner cities as the only option for housing, then overcrowding becomes an inevitable result in these very neighborhoods. These policies provided the framework and the justification for further actions against communities through the physical construction of publicly funded, racialized government projects that choked off economic and educational opportunity for generations of working-class/working-poor communities of color. The panoptic powers underlying these strikes against equity and

equality of infrastructural access endlessly create new ways to institute segregation and the deprivation of resources on an already resource-stricken socioeconomic and cultural class within American society. When the development of the US highway and freeway project was set into motion, it was by design that the physical effects would be economically and culturally devastating to the communities in its path. The resulting generational delays in wealth accumulation, as well as community health setbacks, educational deprivation, cultural decimation, and economic damage, were invisible at first yet devastating in the long run. This is because the basic humanity of these working-class/working-poor communities was never rendered visible by their elected governments.

What is telling about these historic policies is how they have essentially shaped many of the affected cities and the relationship between cities and their working-class/working-poor residents over the last sixty years. In the neighborhoods razed by eminent domain during this period, from Los Angeles to New York to Miami, the impact of economic disinvestment remains all too clear. The results are adverse health outcomes, lower home values, and less homeownership, all of which directly translate to reduced educational funding for neighborhood schools (Kozol 2006).

Disinvestment was then and continues today to be a primary driver for maintaining these discriminatory resource inequities. Private businesses construct marketing strategies employing smoke-and-mirror techniques that utilize plausible deniability to hide their complicity. New York City Planner Robert Moses “argued that new urban expressways ‘must go right through cities and not around them’” (Archer 2020, 1278), leading to “highways connect[ing] white people living in suburbia with economic opportunities in the city” (12680–1281) as the rationale used for building highways directly through working-class/working-poor/ Black American neighborhoods. The razing of long-established neighborhoods can thus be casually explained away in terms of efficiency. From financial institutions to internet service providers, a similar logic of plausible deniability appears foundational to the lack of infrastructural services. In response to concerns regarding lack of access to high-speed service in working-class/working-poor neighborhoods, a regional ISP manager bluntly stated: “we are a business that requires a return on investment and that isn’t viable in these communities” (Holmes et al. 2016) With limited deployment of digital infrastructure in working-class/working-poor neighborhoods, there is no conceivable path to educational, economic, or healthcare equity. During the COVID-19 pandemic, routine services and activities, from medical appointments to primary education, were all placed online—regardless of whether the necessary infrastructure was accessible to those most in need. The twenty-first century has illustrated a broadening of shared human experiences. However, for everyone to fully participate in this virtual space to create, develop, foster, and distribute digital content, the infrastructure for high-speed internet connections must be established across socioeconomic groups. Additionally, citizens must be made aware of the sociocultural hierarchies underlying unequal access so that they can struggle against such hierarchies in order to acquire and maintain access to these essential services—a paradoxical feat that requires one’s ability to connect to the internet in order to map relations of power.

There is no question that all forms of learning in the twenty-first century largely require access to the internet. This is required not only as a necessity to complete the work assigned within the school week but especially in terms of extracurricular learning needed in communities where the schools are underfunded due to the suppression of property value, which is a key factor in funding schools. Western nations, and specifically governments in the Americas, are all too well versed in land acquisition and redistribution to aid in the furthering of empire at the expense of marginalized or oppressed peoples. History is repeatedly unkind to these peoples and their communities that have been displaced for broad economic advancements and the cultural comforts and assurances of everyone else, especially the upper-caste economic tier of society. Land removal procedures serve only to create a demoralizing and endless generational cycle of racing to a socioeconomic and educational bottom. Regardless of the progressive aims or projected future benefits for rendering land reclamation projects using eminent domain, the adverse results have always been the same for the displaced. With the onus of reconciliation placed on the shoulders of an already beleaguered population, the spiral of plausible deniability continues. In some instances, the newly displaced working class/working poor were determined to stay geographically connected to their previous communities, occasionally able to acquire homes adjacent to white American communities only to endure subsequent verbal and physical attacks from their neighbors (Dottle, Bliss, and Robles 2021). Living among the economic and racial homogeneity of white American residents in gentrified areas resulted in histories of alienation and trauma for the working class/working poor who could not turn to government intervention to assist them. This process of removal or alienation through land reclamation is never conducted for the benefit of or in concert with the concerns and needs of working-class/working-poor communities and their residents. As it has always been with matters of government-enacted land removal, the decisions are top-down, with veiled rhetoric of “liberating” the poor from urban decay and slums when the historic

realities document a vastly different image and rationale (Evans 2021). The results of this abuse of power by state and local governments has walled off thriving communities—predominantly comprising working-class/working-poor peoples of color using "public progress" and "infrastructural utilitarianism" to justify the twentieth century's publicly funded infrastructural moats (Archer 2020, 1281). Keeping the have-nots away from the kinds of educational and economic access that were once available to these communities in a previously unobstructed city or township is part of the implicit logic of such plans. It is a challenge for one not to see the comparisons and parallels of modern-day strategies enacted by elected officials—legitimate members of governments—concerning the digital divides between communities along class and race lines and their colonial ancestors. The methodologies have shifted, as has the sophistication of their media manipulations and legal forms of plausible deniability, but the results are shockingly consistent with colonialist strategies. The unfortunate reality is that the worst elements of our past and present are collapsing in on themselves, producing a sociopolitical singularity. We are witnessing reenactments of settler colonialism carried out by the very elected government charged with preserving the liberties of all of its citizens—and yet it has conducted itself throughout the twentieth century more akin to an occupying force seizing the lands and communities of working-class/working-poor and underrepresented groups around the United States through sophisticated tactics of coercion, bribery, and outright barbarism (Said 1994, 3–14), all for the sole purpose of redistributing these seized lands in partnership with local, state, and federal agencies for general-purpose infrastructure projects or simply because of white American demands for land and resources for their businesses (Nakamura 2008, 176).

In this technologically sophisticated age, so much of our material and immaterial existence is predetermined before many working-class/working-poor communities get an opportunity to participate in debates and decisions regarding issues of access and distribution. From the moment children from working-class/working-poor communities are born, so much of their future experiences will have already been fixed, including the quality of care they will receive through various educational and medical institutions. The most mundane of human experiences, such as taking a first breath, can be vastly altered depending on the zip code of one's hospital, which is, in turn, determined by the type of insurance coverage a child's parent(s) have, which is predetermined by the kind of employment they have and whether healthcare coverage is an option. Within the relevant discussions on the matter of techno-hybridity, a new form of posthuman, digital technicity that enables more multifaceted human connection is often championed. This promised posthuman reality of cyborgs captures the utopian imagination with images of limitless mobility, immortality, and mutability of self. We should temper our expectations for this unreality precisely because it overstates the technological successes of digitally assembled pro-democracy movements around the world. From the promise of the Arab Spring's deposing of failed leaders to Hong Kongers' demands for sustained autonomy to the racial justice campaigns in the aftermath of George Floyd's death—these have all either collapsed or stalled indefinitely. I am not arguing against the fact that these movements have effectively managed to successfully communicate their respective political plights to an outside world via digital tactics. What I do question is the influence of capital markets seamlessly beta testing integrated marketing tools to be monetized for the latest upcycled technologic gadgetry, which is always lurking behind or in the shadows of social movements (Appadurai 1986, 73). It is worth noting the existence of digitally documented injustice within the media archives prior to the death of George Floyd. Digital content consumers should be reminded of *Rodney King's* inhumane treatment at the hands of the LA police in 1992. Captured on videotape, the Rodney King beating did not alter police brutality. Indeed, digital technologies once again had to be present at the death of George Floyd in order for white citizens to believe what Black citizens have known for centuries. Are these technologies helping change society, or are they merely ameliorative measures resulting in more policing and less social justice?

One cannot have a meaningful conversation about land use in the United States without contextualizing it within the sordid history of settler colonialism (Tuck and Habtom 2019). These historic acts of brutality on Native communities across the country have been preserved, and the irreparable reverberations are still very much in existence in the present. In addition to this genocidal project for the expansion of the settler colonial powers through expulsion of Native communities from their land, existing value systems linking human communities to land were ruptured. The American project has been in the business of industrializing land seizures, land degradation through government oversight of monocultures, and the production of a revisionist history education—through a massaged media culture—with a disregard for the realities as experienced by those contending with intergenerational colonialist legacies. While Indigenous communities were separated from their lands, so too African communities were displaced through slavery and genocide. The fundamental justification for the inclusion of Black Americans to the Americas (Effland 2021), and

specifically the United States, concerns economic labor and the establishment of what I see as a permanent lower-tier class that exists to this day, especially in relation to the prison-industrial complex, which is predicated on the incarceration of Black bodies (Davis 2003). As it stands, the infrastructural obstacles preventing universal access to the means of resource equity will be further hampered as we begin transitioning the remaining functions of our material society to the immaterial presence of a Web 3.0 future. This immaterial circulation of ideas, images, and identities does not always produce real freedom of movement but instead produces illusions of freedom for some, while others remain literally constrained. The limitations on social and economic mobility for the overwhelming majority of a specific class is by design; this is achieved over time through the consistency of power brokers to self-regulate, police, and control resource platforms. A key example of this is the criminalization of poverty. Starting with Jim Crow, criminalization was instituted by making any number of incidental infractions illegal. For instance, not being employed, not being in school, not being at home at a certain hour, or being in the wrong neighborhood at the wrong time of day have all been "crimes" throughout American history. Indeed, the mere existence of poor people of color has always been a criminal matter for whites. Both juridical law and social law enforced punishments for these purported crimes, creating an enduring legal tradition out of Jim Crow–era policies that can be seen just as much in unprosecuted lynchings as in economic redlining.

The appropriation of culture—similar to the processes of data gathering—requires a basic understanding of the cultural subject being appropriated for the purpose of constructing a buffering of plausible deniability. Location data, for example, are valuable through very specific and siloed spaces within composite data economies. Your given mobile device location provides potential values primarily through associations to specific geolocation. This information becomes infinitely more valuable if it happens that you either live or work within a shared proximity to car dealerships, chain pharmacies, or restaurants, shopping malls, grocery stores, or big-box retailers. Because these establishments are zoned for specific areas, as a business strategy the common brand retailer rarely builds or operates near working-class/working-poor communities, once again resulting in the denial of basic services.

Infrastructures of Capital

> As long as the Black man is among his own, he will have no occasion, except in minor internal conflicts, to experience his being through others.
>
> —Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

Settler colonialists have been more than willing to appropriate culture and labor from dispossessed peoples, all the while denying these very same peoples equal rights. Indeed, settler colonialists had no desire to know about the people they abducted and couldn't even imagine having a moment of shared humanity with such "savages." Yet agency cannot be easily denied, and resistance was (and remains) an inevitable result of threats against physical but also cultural genocide. Such resistance concerns preserving and growing community wealth but is also about who owns the geography of the New World and how it is distributed in terms of culture, education, and commerce. Early settler colonialists never imagined that the people they were transporting in the holds of their ships would ever be in a position to demand the equitable distribution of rights provided to their captors. From the sixteenth-century arrival of European merchant vessels washing up on the shores of West and Southern Africa's coastlines and continuing for the following two centuries, Black bodies and their ability to generate capital were rendered an object of mediated experiences to be commandeered, a racial analog to contemporary data collecting. Black bodies were appropriated and refashioned in the New World, both as object(s) of fear as well as object(s) of capital (Day 2016, 24). They became alien bodies in sight and site. Despite an indomitable will to be alive, the presence of Black bodies in the Americas eventually brought about a hastened death, either through the relentless process of labor-power extraction, a determined will—due to personal loss—to take their own lives, or death at the hands of slave mobs marauding the perimeters of plantations. The collection of terrorized lived experiences, and the solution to elect death, ultimately served as means of resistance to the reduction of the Black body to the site of capital production and reproduction. It's inconceivable that the Black bodies arriving from the western shores of the African continent would not have been what Iyko Day articulated as spatially alienated after disembarking from the hellish transportation process that was the transatlantic slave trade. Blackness became a seemingly endless potential for production of not only machinic labor but also for reproducing laboring bodies across generations (in the form of the Black female body's fertility). The Black body—

specifically the Black female body—was not only an object of capital but also an object for liminal sexual desires and an untapped reserve for the expansion of human capital. Throughout the history of the Black body in the Americas, Black diasporic peoples have defiantly resisted the limits imposed on their freedom. These acts of protest by necessity involved violent insurrections, which was unavoidable, given the violent circumstances by which they were brought to this new world via the transatlantic slave trade. During the Middle Passage itself, Black captives resisted, even if such resistance resulted in violence against themselves in the form of suicide: "always present throwing and jumping overboard, and the fish fed and feed on those bodies in the wake of the ships" (Sharpe 2016, 26).

The second act of resistance enacted by the Black body in defiance of objectification was to dissolve the object of capital through self-imposed starvation. Because of the ties between the Black body and the land in the colonies, capitalist growth had to face limitations because of the spread of disease but also because of defiant acts of self-inflicted harm. The Black body is a place, a site, that is always in excess of the forces and powers that objectify it, even in the most brutal acts of abduction. To not identify a person with any of the common traits reflected in one's own humanity not only denies them of personhood but also an existential place to belong within a society (Cesaire 1972, 58). But far from pessimistic, this reality has generated acts of freedom within—yet against—dark infrastructures of expropriation.

The auction blocks at the ports displayed humiliated and brutalized Black bodies upon their arrival to the colonies. The dark infrastructure of the auction block ensured that settler colonialists could retain their place in the caste hierarchy through stripping the Black bodies of their subjective presence. The process of branding Blackness with the markers and initials of purchasers—for easy identification and collection upon arrival from the shipping ports—was part of the violent practices of the period that linked ownership of people with the possession of livestock and property (Cesaire 1972, 98). This is the beginning of the intermingling of ownership of lands, ownership of objects of capital attached to that land, and ownership of slaves who were identified and surveilled not as human subjects but as out-of-place or missing property. At both ends of the transatlantic movement from the West African shores to the European and American colonies, this process was used to identify and maintain surveillance of Black bodies (98). Yet this process only led to additional modes of resistance by the appropriated Black bodies and their commodified abilities for manual labor, breeding, and caretaking. Given the circumstances, Black slaves would attempt nighttime escapes on foot, despite knowing that the consequences could very well lead to death if found or captured. Black people were originally rendered as object(s) of capital through a process of dehumanization that immediately severed tribal ties from individuals while physically removing familial bonds from the social network. Generations were irrevocably dispersed across a land whose geography and topography would prove to be alien—new flora and fauna with new smells and tastes, all of which was over-coded by an incomprehensible language. This forced immersion could only produce trauma—both physical and mental—in the form of spatial alienation. The appropriation of Blackness, both as object of capital and a creation for upper-caste mythologies for safeguarding settler colonialists' positionality, was thus secured as a techne of capitalist, settler colonialism and its dark infrastructure of appropriation, extraction, and dehumanization. Dehumanization was coupled with forced assimilation into an alien system of value in which Black subjectivity was equal parts property and labor-power (but also potentially criminal). Fanon states: "every colonized people—in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality—finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation" (1967, 18).

Throughout much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Black-bodies-as-objects slowly becomes identifiable as Black-bodies-as-other. This process is one that develops through years of conflict, mass death, and what Frantz Fanon would later describe as the *denegrification* (1967, 18) of the Black body. If you cannot be identified as a human with a shared experience, then it stands to reason that you are incapable of establishing an independent identity—outside of the site for labor, investment, and extraction. Here, we can recall the plight of Blackness seeking existential definition through what Sylvia Wynter refers to as "creolization," which was the byproduct of house slaves' attempts at mimicry by fusing various dialects to the European-ness of their captors (Boyce-Davies 2015). The attempts at *denegrification* proved very successful in the distribution of early forms of media in the form of auction fliers and wanted posters for runaway slaves. What was evident from these rudimentary productions was the ease with which the ruling population assembled together the most base level of information regarding the Black people they were in search of. Despite the simplicity of missing-property fliers, these fliers relied upon exacting visual data of the missing slave, thereby functioning as instruments for furthering the miseducation of the majority white settler colonialist populations.

It is also worth briefly discussing the history of this form of fundamental exclusion and the outright removal from American society in relation to other nonwhite American groups. The legal process and justification for much of these practices didn't necessarily require the use of physical barriers to keep specific groups under surveillance and/or contained. Through means of malleable legislative language wielded through various targeted and outright discriminatory immigration policies—not unlike the kinds of legislative smoke-and-mirror schemes enacted today—immigration policies were unfavorably applied when the racial makeup of the incoming migrant group disrupted entitlement narratives regarding the socioeconomic status of white Americans. The established locations of two of the most prominent Chinatowns in the United States—New York and San Francisco—were not sites necessarily chosen by the early Chinese migrant groups that were seeking to build community outside the reach of post-gold rush violence and the legal barriers constructed by the Chinese Exclusion Act. These locations were the least desirable and, in the case of New York's Chinatown, its geographic location was formerly an ethnically heterogeneous neighborhood where many sought refuge, including those not yet homogenized within the construct of white Americanness, newly freed slaves, stigmatized religious groups, and the white poor. Poverty was also an instrument of infrastructural demarcation for those groups that civil society had deemed not worthy or incapable of being useful to the productions of capital in its many forms. Later, with the legal weight of the United States government to exclude Chinese migrants—specifically targeting Chinese women over racist fears of Chinese population increases—there was the creation and implementation of the Japanese internment camps, where the American government once again used its legal ability to weaponize bigotry to physically round up Japanese Americans after the start of World War II, moving them into fenced-in communities over basely racialized fears questioning this community's allegiances. However, it was also made apparent that, once again, the real motivations behind Japanese internment were more to do with the potential for white American businessmen to benefit from the forced abandonment of Japanese livelihoods and the void of economic competition left in the wake of these discriminatory infrastructures (Day 2016, 120). During a similar time period in the west, as American farmers expanded in California, they were also using the laws set in place by local, state, and federal governments regarding the paying and housing of migrant farm workers from Mexico. Government policies were again put in place to "protect" the suppressed "domestic farm wages," and a commission was given the task of "drying out the wetbacks" (Martin 2020)—subsequently removing several hundred thousand migrant workers and their US-born children to Mexico.

How ought we critically research and examine a defined set of pressing social concerns within the United States with regards to the wielding of state power to hem in, bar from, and systematically remove the visually identifiable other(s) from spaces desirable to a majority white American class through the forms of dark infrastructure—either physically manifested or legislatively enacted through social policy—that I have outlined here? The production of public and private data collection generated largely by legislative processes imposed on working-class/working-poor communities that are socioeconomically restricted to specified zones within our states and cities is very much emblematic of the surveillance and self-fulfilling prophecies—particularly for local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies—that have a long history in the United States. It is no accident that the neighborhoods and communities that today have low socioeconomic status, declining healthcare and education outcomes, and little access to reliable and affordable high-speed internet are the same working-class/working-poor communities that were targeted specifically by their governments for the construction of roadways and highways through their social and economic sites—shattering families and socioeconomic gains nearly seventy years ago with federal highway projects. Whether composite data from working-class/working-poor populations affected by existing strategies or, more explicitly, the delays to redress persisting issues from the already erected infrastructural moats, there is clear bifurcation taking place between data collecting and inaction. The obvious fallout from this holding pattern from private-sector and government agencies is that already vulnerable communities remain separated from basic resources and waiting for permanent solutions. Flint, Michigan is still contending with extremely high lead levels in their water supplies and in their ground soil. Working-class/working-poor neighborhoods in Los Angeles County are still several degrees hotter than average due to their proximity to concrete barriers and lack of vegetation. The ongoing gun violence in Chicago neighborhoods continues to be a problem for residents, and all the while, the city continues to collect data deploying extremely intrusive technologies (Greene et al. 2019) but doing little to actually implement solutions. There is no shying away from the fact that in each of these situations, socioeconomic failings directly impede the lives of working-class/working-poor communities in the United States. There is now an enormous amount of data related to the untenable conditions faced by these groups, and yet it is only met with governmental inadequacy.

The gaze of the settler colonialist cannibalized cultures of the colonized. Fanon frames his observations in these terms: "In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity" (1967, 110). Thus, cultural appropriations, coupled with discriminatory practices, produce difficulties in how colonized peoples can exist in space. Their motorial skills are not allowed to develop familiar and connective relationships with infrastructures implicitly oriented toward white bodies, creating alienated states of being. Perhaps the path forward in resisting discriminatory practices from the blunt wielding of technological and policy-based infrastructures is through the creative repurposing and reconstruction of those very systems assisting the data-gathering processes. Thus, I call for a new, militant practice of jamming the internet—a transgressive refutation of new media power-users and their government partners, forcing them to forfeit the data identities of the lower-tier classes that have historically had their subjectivities commandeered, bartered for, concealed, and reimagined primarily for the benefit of a ruling upper class. Wendy Chun argues that "understanding race and/as technology enables us to frame the discussion around ethics rather than around ontology, on modes of recognition and relation, rather than on being" (2009, 9). My clarion call is thus an ethical call to do something different with technologies, thus breaking with the inheritance of surveillance, policing, and separation/exclusion outlined above.

In her analysis of the novel *Sapphira and the Negro Girl* by Willa Cather, Toni Morrison (1993) describes the protagonist as wrapped up in the identity of the slave women whose responsibility is to take care of and look after the white mistress. Due to the mistress's physical limitations and medical condition, household management becomes the responsibility of the Black body to serve as the white American extension of physical possibilities and desires. The Black body must fill in the gap within the white-body schema, thus losing its own autonomy to move in the world. The Black body literally becomes the dark infrastructure for supporting its own alienation under settler colonial ideology. Sharecropping is the epitome of learning and having to exist and subsist while operating through someone else's agency (Leder 1990). To break with this inheritance of dark infrastructure, we have to hack into the codes of whiteness embedded in technologies of separation in order to produce common image(s) and a common language. Once this has been achieved, resources, land, and technologies can finally be viewed by nonwhite, predominantly Black and Brown bodies as their own.

REFERENCES

Appadurai, Arjun. 1986. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Archer, Deborah N. 2020. "'White Men's Roads through Black Men's Homes': Advancing Racial Equity through Highway Reconstruction." *Vanderbilt Law Review* 73, no. 5 (October): 1260–1281.

Boyce-Davies, Carole. 2015. "From Masquerade to Maskarade: Caribbean Cultural Resistance and the Rehumanizing Project." In *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*, edited by Katherine McKittrick, 211–221. Durham: Duke University Press.

Browne, Simone. 2015. *Dark Matters: On Surveillance of Blackness*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Cesaire, Aime. 1972. *Discourse on Colonialism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Chun, Wendy Hui Kyong. 2009. "Introduction: Race and/as Technology; or, How to Do Things to Race." *Camera Obscura* 70, Vol. 24, no. 1: 6–35.

Davis, Angela. 2003. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press.

Day, Iyko. 2016. *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logic of Settler Colonial Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Dottle, Rachael, Laura Bliss, and Pablo Robles. 2021. "What It Looks Like to Reconnect Black Communities Torn Apart by Highways." Bloomberg, July 28. https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2021-urban-highways-infrastructure-racism/.

Dyer, Richard. 1997. *White*. New York: Routledge.

Effland, Anne. 2021. "Small Farms/Family Farms: Tracing a History of Definitions and Meaning." *Agricultural History* 95, no. 2: 313–330.

Evans, Farrell. 2021. "How Interstate Highways Gutted Communities—and Reinforced Segregation America's Interstate Highway System Cut Through the Heart of Dozens of Urban Neighborhoods." History, October 20. https://www.history.com/news/interstate-highway-system-infrastructure-construction-segregation.

Fanon, Frantz. 1967. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by C.L. Markmann. New York: Grove Press, Inc.

Goodwyn, Lawrence. 1978. *The Populist Moment: A Short Story of the Agrarian Revolt in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Greene, Solomon, Graham MacDonald, Olivia Arena, Tanaya Srini, Ruth Gourevitch, Richard Ezike, and Alena Stern. 2019. "Technology and Equity in Cities." Urban Institute, November 21. https://www.urban.org/research/publication/technology-and-equity-cities.

Holmes, Allan, Eleanor Bell Fox, Ben Wieder, and Chris Zubak-Skees. 2016. "Rich People Have Access to High-Speed Internet; Many Poor People Still Don't." Center for Public Integrity, May 12. https://publicintegrity.org/inequality-poverty-opportunity/rich-people-have-access-to-high-speed-internet-many-poor-people-still-dont/.

Kozol, Jonathan. 2006. *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. New York: Crown.

Leder, Drew. 1990. *The Absent Body*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Martin, Philip. 2020. "Mexican Braceros and US Farm Workers." Wilson Center, July 10. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/mexican-braceros-and-us-farm-workers.

McLuhan, Marshall. 1994. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Mobley, Triton. 2021. "Through the Colonial Savage: Reclaiming Embodied Histories of Marginality." Paper presented at the Architecture Media Politics Society: Urban Assemblages conference, Hatfield, UK. June 25, 2021. https://architecturemps.com/abstracts-london-hatfield/.

Morrison, Toni. 1993. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. New York: Vintage Books.

Nakamura, Lisa. 2008. *Digitizing Race: Visual Cultures of the Internet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Nardi, Bonnie A., and Vicki L. O'Day. 1999. *Information Ecologies: Using Technology with Heart*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Nelson, Stanley, prod. *American Experience*. 2003. "The Murder of Emmett Till: Interview with Mamie Till Mobley, Mother of Emmett Till." WGBH Archives. http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/V_8D43D41573E54D0692413250CF6FD6B7.

Rothstein, Richard. 2017. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation.

Said, Edward W. 1994. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Sharpe, Christina. 2016. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Tafuri, Manfredo. 1976. *Architecture and Utopia Design and Capitalist Development*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Tschumi, Bernard. 2001. *Architecture and Disjunction*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Tuck, Eve, and Sefanit Habtom. 2019. "Unforgetting Place, in Urban Education through Creative Participatory Visual Methods." *Educational Theory* 69, no. 2: 241–256.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Triton Mobley (he/him): Assistant Professor of Computation and New Media Art at the University of Pittsburgh (https://www.tritonmobley.com/)