between shadows and noise

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In their own special ways,
Thomas, Carrie, and Ankur are the
architects of my luminous new life.
Thank you for the love and abundance.

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Introduction

Body Work

AGAINST THE WANING SUN, you can only see the blurred silhouettes of surrounding trees; in the foreground, a flamboyance of flamingos. They are pink elegance: long curving necks and legs ready to strut. With its saturated blacks and moody bursts of color, Ming Smith's 1988 photograph *Flamingo Fandango (West Berlin) (painted)* (plate 1) makes felt what lies between shadows and noise. The background darkness (the shadows)—enfolds multiple histories and temporalities: Cold War contours, Germany on the precipice—the Berlin Wall would fall in 1989—the eighteenth-century imperial impulse underlying all zoos, and the current moment's shifting climate, which endangers flamingos, especially in Europe.[1] Beyond grounding the image spatially and temporally, I locate these shadows in the different forms of capture lurking around the flamingos: in addition to photographic apparatus and zoological enclosure, one can sense the constructedness of leisure and the fetishization of species difference that underlie the idea of the zoo itself. These material and epistemological structures are critical elements of the viewer's perspective on these birds; they emphasize the flamingo's presence. That these differential layers of context recede into the background does not diminish the structures of meaning that they give the photograph. On the other hand,

the noise of the flamingos, their flamboyance—in relation to their number, their loud chatter, their color, their being—makes felt the different ways that pink tropical birds might be excessive in the context of West Berlin. They seem out of place—with their behavior, volume, and preference for warmer climates—and this unbelonging is externally marked by their pink feathers, which Smith has rendered even pinker through paint: "I wanted to add color [the way] someone would put a ribbon on a dress or a lacy collar or a big belt—to embellish and make it more exciting."[2] In this context, the painted pink, which I consider the noise of the photograph, signals the flamingos' affective and sensual milieu not their actual coloring; the pink, the noise, gestures toward uncontained excess within the photographic image.

A less idiosyncratic description of this photograph might register it as a representation of flamingos in a zoo. From this perspective, the flamingos emerge as objects of interest to the eye as well as the mind. One might ask, for example, what this photograph might teach us *about* flamingos? If, as Kandice Chuh argues, "aboutness functions as an assessment of relevance," the question of aboutness here reminds us of how evidence offered by the visual has served as the bedrock for producing hierarchies of knowledge.[3] In other words, this reading of the photograph would position *Flamingo Fandango (West Berlin) (painted)* as a continuation of colonial and racist projects of capture and categorization; it would augur its significance to what the photograph makes visible. In this way, the objectification of flamingos is a residue of what we, following Jacques Rancière, might call the production of a "common sense" that would conjoin approaches to works of art with projects of knowledge extraction, thereby flattening a wide swath of sensory orientations, intimacies, and histories.[4]

However, even as flamingos fill the frame, the photograph is also *not* about them; the knowledge we gain is not about birds nor Berlin, but is about discipline, sense, and situatedness. *Flamingo Fandango (West Berlin)(painted)* asks us to sit with questions of perception—what are the photograph's layers and what do they tell us about the visible and invisible aspects of the world? While Smith is best known as the sole female member of the Kamoinge collective, a 1960s group of Black photographers based in New York City, and as prolific photographer of New York nightlife, the technical elements of her work are where we see her breaking open the sutures of representation in order to reveal (and revel in) a greater unruliness.[5] I began by describing how shadows and noise in Smith's photograph structure affective and sensorial aspects of our perception, but that is only part of the story. Our ability to

attend to conditions of possibility and sense the cacophony of the flamingos are themselves indications of Smith's rejection of the subject-object binary that discipline expects. Instead of demarcating an object (or set of objects) to be look at, parsed, or investigated, Smith presents a blurred image whose fuzzy boundaries speak to the inseparability of flamingo from "background" and which tether the viewer affectively, historically, and geopolitically to the world of the image.[6] *Everything*, in other words, is revealed to be connected.

In an interview with Janet Hill Talbert, Smith describes her method of taking photographs as intuitive, saying, "I feel my way through things, and let the spirit guide me."[7] Later, she compares photography with dancing, saying, "You have to be in the moment, you have to be right there—it's like a form of meditation."[8] Smith's openness and commitment to a spiritual, sensual realm is evident in the moodiness of the photographs themselves—they make something present without necessarily making claims about representation. I read Smith's movement toward sense as reparative, as an intervention against the violent history of representation that has had pernicious effects for those who are not part of dominant groups. Namwali Serpell argues that Smith's aesthetics cannot be separated from the knowledge that Smith largely photographed Black people and communities. She writes, "What we might call Smith's luxuriant, deconstructive chiaroscuro also arises from her technical innovations in lighting, shutter speed, and the relative movements of camera and subject—all of which derive from immersion, an insistence on taking pictures of black people in black spaces."[9] Describing Smith's technique in conversation with Greg Tate, Arthur Jafa also focuses on her precise manipulation of shutter speed to create blur without sacrificing form: "What's unique about Ming is her ability to use this shutter thing to erase much of the distinction between the figure and the background, but at the same time, have it be very precise in its articulation of form."[10] Later, both Tate and Jafa agree that Smith's photographs enable what is depicted to escape capture, signaling what they describe as her interest in Black fugitivity:

> **Tate:** A fugitivity that's not bound up with escape but a kind of self-illumination.
>
> **Jafa:** Yeah, totally. Circular breathing. . . . The fugitivity of people willing to be free from being fucked with. You can't fuck with what you can't see.[11]

Just as important as the politics of emancipation are the corporeal techniques—circular breathing—summoned by Smith's swerve around

representation. It is in this landscape of sensation and affect that I locate the possibilities of shadows and noise.

The term *shadow* is used to separate "light" from "dark," offering language not only for an optic phenomenon, but a system of value that would prioritize light, equating it with transparency, rationality, and "enlightenment," leaving the concept of the shadow to signify something that is either deliberately hidden from view (usually in a malevolent fashion), disavowed, or repressed; think of shadow terms, governments, processes, archives. Jill Casid argues that shadows provide a contrast to organization and discipline and offers that their devaluation is a consequence of disavowing the importance of experiential knowledge. What is described as enlightened, Casid writes, is "a way of knowing . . . that offers the dream of dispelling the shadow of vulnerability to the disorganizing somatic and affective responses that hollow out the defended fortress ego to rational, disincarnate vision and its fantasy of sovereign agency over the tremulous body and its enmeshed, interdependent precarity."[12] Against the prioritization of visibility, enclosure, and sovereignty, shadows conjure irrationality, unclarity, vulnerability, and enmeshment. Orienting perception toward shadows, then, not only makes felt foreclosed entities and relations, but allows one to grapple with underlying processes of repression, disavowal, and denial and their embeddedness in ontological and epistemological systems of valuation. Alessandra Raengo provides an example of this type of analysis when she looks to shadows to displace the overdetermined (racist) sets of referents that attach to images of Black people. Shadows, she argues, confound the way that race is perceived because they highlight the importance of context and render representation weak—moving us toward other ways of making knowledge. She writes, "As a paradigm, the shadow has the ability to bring to the fore the idea that race most prominently inhabits the *state* and not the content of the image. . . . The shadow is an indication of the body's extension into its surroundings and, therefore, calls attention to the spaces and modes of interaction between bodies."[13] In other words, shadows move us away from assertions of aboutness toward relation. Shadows allow us to ask: What are the conditions of possibility at work and how might we imagine otherwise?

While shadows offer information about hierarchies of valuation, what counts as noise is heavily contested. Many scholars in sound studies argue, for example, that the distinction between music and noise is reliant on hierarchies that depend on raced, classed, and gendered norms.[14] Beyond its circulation in the sonic, noise is conceptually related to excess, abundance,

and the unruly. Notably, these are terms that correlate closely with racist attempts to demean and police the behavior (and, more often than not, mere existence) of people of color. As Jennifer Stoever argues, "the sonic color line invokes noise in direct connection to (or as a metonymic stand-in for) people of color, and particularly blackness."[15] Moreover, this conflation of being with noise highlights the particularly close tethering of processes of enfleshment with processes of disciplining and classification. In this way, understanding how and why something (or someone) has been designated as noisy gives us an affective and sensational vocabulary for grappling with how difference is (or is not) incorporated into a social body. Think, for example, of the so-called noisiest park in the world, People's Park in Chengdu, China. There, noise means loudness—sounds high in decibel that occur consistently—but noise is also an atmospheric designation linking noise with other forms of toxicity and excess associated with the megacity.[16] For sensing a different valence of noise, consider the 2012 murder of Jordan Davis, a seventeen-year-old Black teenager shot at a gas station in Jacksonville, Florida, for refusing to turn down the rap music in his car, or the group of Black women asked to leave a Napa Valley wine tasting tour for boisterous laughter, or Regina Bradley's comment: "as a black woman, the bulk of my threat is associated with my loudness."[17] This list illuminates the equation of Blackness with being out of place, such that the matter of Blackness is perceived as threatening, noisy, and dangerous.[18] In these instances, difference is met with nonrecognition, disorientation, and perhaps overwhelm. Noise, then, allows us to sense how questions of recognition, legibility, and comfort underlie reception. This version of noise is multisensory and attentive to the fabric of social relation.

Shadows and noise, then, give us two sensory modes to index the density of representation. They disrupt univocal meaning making, forcing us to navigate its edges. While these edges are often ignored, normalized, and rendered subordinate to the frame (aboutness), art critic Amanda Gluibizzi asks us to think about the specific types of affective and sensorial work that edges perform. An edge, she argues, may offer invitation, play, obstacle, utility, or signal vulnerability.[19] Here, the overarching question is *not* how to avoid the edge by shifting something out of the category of noise or shadow—there will always be noise and shadows—nor how to revalue the categories so that noise and shadow become desirable in their possibility to disrupt or subvert.[20] Instead, shadows and noise invite us into a riot of modes of being and thinking so that we might move away from asking how something might be represented "better" or more clearly and toward how we might make representation denser,

overrun with contradictory information, so that signification can be multiple and promiscuous.

Beyond Representation, Toward Sense

I work with shadows and noise because they are embodied relational categories. They tell us a doubled story: what are we meant to pay attention to *and* what is devalued or deemed excessive? As Katherine McKittrick offers in *Dear Science*, "discipline is empire."[21] By this she means imperialism produces, relies on, and consists of surveillance, categorization, and hierarchization. "Science" is but one of its designated disciplines and it unfurls fractally, compounding subdivisions, methods of investigation, and categorizations. We might especially discuss the privileging of visual evidence as part of this paradigm. By asking *about* the representation of flamingos, we are asking what knowledge we might extract from these birds, what can be made transparent or useful. As I have argued, however, there is always excess—otherwise, discipline (as noun and verb) would not be necessary. As Nasser Zakariya writes, these "genres of synthesis . . . structure an approach to the production of knowledge. But they also provide a kind of grammar of ignorance, delimiting what it means not to know, shaping what progress or its lack amounts to and further indicating what might be in principle unknowable: those parts of the representation that can never be resolved or will forever be open to further resolution."[22] Shadows and noise show how the senses have been trained ("synthesized," per Zakariya's parlance) into a "common sense" while also granting insight into what has not, and perhaps cannot, be incorporated. Accessing this otherness, the undisciplined that sits alongside discipline in many of its durations, scales, and forms, including what might be described as Man, colonialism, anti-Blackness, patriarchy, homophobia, capitalism, neoliberalism, and so forth, demands methods that I describe as "body work."[23]

Fleshy methods proliferate. Kandice Chuh describes the illiberal humanisms—that which might counter the centrifugal force of common sense—as offering "a fuller, embodied accounting of reason and rationality."[24] Britt Rusert uses Deleuze's reading of empiricism, "a method that depends on sense perception, continual observations, and a mobile, searching orientation toward the world," to connect fugitive modes of science- and subject-making.[25] She writes, "Empiricism finds us always in the middle, in a line of flight or a line of escape—at the level of praxis and ongoing experi-

ments—in the material realm of sensation and subjectivity rather than in the metaphysical plane of knowledge production."[26] As Ronak Kapadia demonstrates through his analysis of what he calls insurgent aesthetics, sensual methodologies can offer insight into covert (shadowy and noisy, perhaps?) forms of resistance and critique. He writes, "these insurgent aesthetics craft a queer calculus of US empire that makes intimate what is rendered distant, renders tactile what is made invisible, and unifies what is divided, thereby conjuring forms of embodied critique that can envision a collective world within and beyond the spaces of US empire's perverse logics of global carcerality, security, and war."[27] Here, Kapadia's use of *queer* alerts us not only to the disavowed aspects of sensual knowledge but also to the forms of attachment at work in activating sensuality as method. In a similar vein, I have previously argued that flesh summons its own ways of knowing, such that sensation acts as a critical analytic in mobilizing the world-making possibilities from the queerness of Black and Brown femininities.[28] Here, I see queerness hovering in these methods of sensory extension as well as in the communication of the particularities described.

Let us consider *[Closer Captions]* (2020; plate 2), a short film by Christine Sun Kim. Kim, who is deaf, begins by lamenting the lack of nuance in most closed captioning before offering her own captions of images that narrate a day: a bright blue sky with a few wispy clouds [the sound of sun entering the bedroom]; the reflection of the sun on water [sweetness of orange sunlight]; and, finally, a darkened hallway where we see a door slightly ajar [the sound of hurt feelings scabbing over].[29] Kim highlights how the word *music* omits many possibilities for experience while also calling attention to the wide sensual world that her descriptions hail. Kim's captions emphasize the polymorphous possibilities of representation (Chuh's illiberal humanism) while explicitly foregrounding the extensions of being (Rusert's empiricism) that undergird these landscapes of affect and sensation and, in relation to her deafness, enacting a critique of the accessibility of film and television (Kapadia's resistance). Together, these different facets of corporeality point toward how Kim's situatedness produces its own specific forms of personal representation.[30]

Simone de Beauvoir argues that the body is a situation—a set of material givens whose value shifts depending on context. While some of Beauvoir's terminology encapsulates her antipathy toward physiology—especially the impositions of menstruation, childbirth, and nursing—this framing (despite its implicit idealization of one particular mode of embodiment) highlights the

ways that constraint emerges contextually. Although the social and the material are inextricable, theirs is not a deterministic relationship.[31] Writing from science studies, Donna Haraway dispenses with the universality and objectivity produced from an omniscient "God-like" view from nowhere and argues, instead, for the importance of partial perspectives that are founded on an awareness of specific privilege and oppression. Here, the body is the vantage point from which one makes sense of the world. These situated knowledges, the product of epistemological, ontological, political, and ethical positions, leads, in Haraway's words, to "a more adequate, richer, better account of a world, in order to live in it well and in critical, reflexive relation to our own as well as others' practices of domination and the unequal parts of privilege and oppression that make up all positions."[32] In Sara Ahmed's account of orientation, positionality is fused with opportunity and attachment, so "bodies take shape through tending toward objects that are reachable, that are available within the bodily horizon."[33] These forms of extension, aversion, and movement are, Ahmed argues, "how we reside in space."[34]

In addition to highlighting the imbrication of bodily knowledge with positionality and attachment, situatedness highlights the political importance of difference. Preserving this difference is how we maintain the polymorphousness within representation that emerges from these sensual methods. The importance of this difference is something we learn especially from women of color feminisms.[35] Referring to Audre Lorde and other women of color feminists, Grace Kyungwon Hong uses the term "to reference a cultural and epistemological practice that holds in suspension (without requiring resolution) contradictory, mutually exclusive, and negating impulses."[36] While Hong is particularly interested in how women of color feminists were able to preserve difference despite its disavowal within the framework of neoliberalism, I am interested in drawing continuities between women of color feminisms and the cultivation of strategies for sitting with difference as well as recognizing its infinite abundance. I see this work as complexifying our vocabularies for gender, race, and racialization, instantiating what Jasbir Puar describes as "a proliferation of race."[37]

We might also imagine this impulse alongside José Esteban Muñoz's description of the Brown commons as a "collectivity with and through the incommensurable."[38] In this way, I see sensuous methods, body work, as building the capacity for recognizing and living with difference by foregrounding ethical forms of being-with. Following Édouard Glissant, we might argue that this ethics emerges by acknowledging the primacy of opacity, the unknow-

ability of the self and others, in relation.[39] For example, consider Pope.L's *Skin Set Drawings* (1997–present), a series of drawings with words describing people, such as "WHITE PEOPLE ARE ANGLES ON FIRE," "GREEN PEOPLE ARE HOPE WITHOUT REASON," and "ORANGE PEOPLE SUCK AND GET SOMETHING OUT OF IT" (plate 3). In describing the effect of the plethora of descriptions, Darby English argues that the drawings "imply seeing but record, or index knowing. A full picture of their representational activity accounts for its meandering epistemology and for the thrilling and textual activities it comprises—that is, the drawings know that they lack synthetic ambition, harbor no synthetic vision of a single representational strategy to contain the social whole."[40] English is especially drawn to what I would call the noisiness of Pope.L's work and the way that his project as a whole illuminates the pleasures, what he calls, "an ecstasy," of difference.[41] In the context of shadows and noise, I am also compelled by the way that each drawing emerges from a specific situatedness, which, in turn, destabilizes common sense in its emphasis on the abundance and polymorphousness of difference.

While I have offered a brief description of situatedness as an analytic rooted in amplifying the politics of difference and corporeality, it is equally important to note that I understand situatedness as operating against multiple forms of consolidation—those that would insist on flattening processes of gendering or racialization into identity categories as well as those that understand situatedness to coalesce into an individual. Working with situatedness as a rubric allows the identification of ambivalences, forces, and histories in tension with each other that need not (and perhaps cannot) resolve into one particular narrative trajectory. Instead, situatedness allows us to understand the multitudes that reside within each of us.

A Brief History of My Situations

My investment in situatedness as offering resources for theory and criticism means that I am interested in seeing how and where the personal manifests in the world around me, how this situatedness facilitates an experience of art as an invitation into other ways of being, and how this situatedness impacts my perception of what constitutes shadows and noise. One of the personally appealing aspects of Smith's *Flamingo Fandango* (*West Berlin) (painted)* is finding a Caribbean resonance (flamingos are the national bird of The Bahamas) in an unexpected place. The work of unpacking this perceived disjunction is

part of my sensual attachment to the photograph and it informs the way that I identify the structures that comprise its shadows—constructions of leisure and colonialism are not that distant from tourism. Likewise, the noise of the pink resonates with my own experience of local Caribbean color palates. It is impossible for me to sever my investigations of Smith's photograph from my situatedness but there is knowledge in that space—knowledge about the feelings, sensations, geographies, and temporalities that comprise the densely layered now of empire as well as knowledge about the worlds that exceed it.

Here, then, are some of the complexities of my own enfleshment. I am writing this from the unceded territory of the Lenapehoking, the traditional land of the Wappinger, Canarsie, Munsee, and Lenni Lenape people of the Delaware Nation and Shinnecock Indian Nation in a time of ongoing state-sanctioned violence levied broadly at many nonwhite and gender nonconforming people with a specific murderous intensification of police violence toward Black and Indigenous people.[42] This statement is a version of one that I have encountered many times since the summer of 2020 and it offers a step toward a more collective reckoning with the foreclosures that Justin Leroy names as occurring when "slavery and settler colonialism vie for primacy as the violence most foundational to the modern social order."[43] Using the orbit of the sensual to feel for the simultaneity of these violences as well as their differences, Tiffany Lethabo King describes the unmooring she experienced as she began to come to grips with the deep entwinements of slavery and settler colonialism: "Genocide and slavery do not have an edge. While the force of their haunt has distinct feelings at the stress points and instantiations of Black fungibility and Native genocide, the violence moves as one."[44] These overlapping forms of violence are one of the durative spatio-temporalities to which I am attuned, but there are also others.

Thinking with my simultaneous past and present, I also feel the distentions of British imperialism. Here, I am speaking directly about St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the small hilly set of islands in the southern Caribbean where my mother was born. When the British attempted to impose colonial rule—setting off wars that would last throughout the eighteenth century—the islands were populated by a multiethnic coalition of so-called Caribs, maroons, and a small group of (slave holding) French settlers.[45] In this context, the use of the word *Carib* to designate an Indigenous ethnicity is fraught since the term originates not with a particular group, but in the Spanish colonists' label for the Indigenous people hostile to them, a term that, in St. Vincent, was also enlarged to account for Indigenous people who fled their settlements to avoid

colonialism and ended up on these islands. The mountainous geography also played an important part in the growth of St. Vincent's African population, many of whom arrived by boat having fled sugar plantations on nearby Barbados, although there are also rumors that some Africans may have arrived before any European settlers on their own vessels from Benin.[46] This anticolonial struggle, however, is not oft-repeated, an omission that Julie Kim ascribes to the historiographic myth of Indigenous disappearance combined with British anti-Blackness that renamed the Caribs the "Black Caribs," suggesting that Africans had killed off the "original Caribs," and that they therefore had no claim to the islands or sovereignty.[47] After their defeat, the British exiled the Caribs, now known as the Garifuna, to Honduras and established widespread plantation slavery on St. Vincent. Enslavement lasted until 1838; colonialism, until 1979; and St. Vincent's status as a commonwealth nation persists.

My grandmother was from one of the Grenadines—Union Island—where they hold an annual festival for the maroons. My grandfather's mother's name was Eglantine and his father, a planter with a Scottish name, had hair that "lay down flat." As a member of the commonwealth, my mother moved to the United Kingdom at nineteen to study institutional cooking and catering at the University of Leicester. In a series of migrations that abut the Windrush generation (1948–1970) and are shaped by colonialism's condensation of respectability, economic mobility, and educational opportunity with movement to the metropole, her two older brothers (Chesley and Keith) moved to New York and a younger brother (Ronnie) went to Toronto. Her youngest brother, Adrian, however, stayed in the Caribbean, studied law at the University of the West Indies, and now lives in Trinidad where he serves as chief justice of the Caribbean Court of Justice, an intra-Caribbean court whose aim is to sever judicial ties from Britain and the Commonwealth. My mother, now living in Massachusetts, paints portraits of Joseph Chatoyer, who led the charge against the British, and, in a nod to theories that the Caribs and Taínos are actually the same people, deities such as Atabey, Supreme Goddess of fresh water and fertility, as a way to work through this legacy of colonial violence.[48] These familial negotiations with and against British imperialism testify to M. Jacqui Alexander's assessment of its temporal, affective, and regulatory legacies: "Perhaps empire never ended, psychic and material will to conquer and appropriate, twentieth century movements for decolonization notwithstanding. What we can say for sure is that empire makes all innocence impossible."[49]

These histories and relations to colonialism mediate my own more direct interactions with colonialism, which are themselves multiple. First, there are

the circumstances of my being, which rely on various economic and geopolitical currents to have my parents meet in Norway and then eventually (with several peregrinations in between) move to Ecuador where I was born. While I have sketched my mother's trajectory, my father's travels have more to do with a desire to explore life and living elsewhere—a privilege attached to education, class, and whiteness. His father, a World War II veteran who was stationed in Trinidad, went to college on the GI Bill, which kept the family in the echelons of the middle class and which, in turn, provided forms of stability that enabled my father to work abroad during and after college. In this formation as a child of empire, I find resonance with Hazel Carby's *Imperial Intimacies*, which investigates the multiple entwinements of family lines through histories of colonialism and enslavement.[50] Carby, the daughter of a Welsh woman and Jamaican immigrant who grew up in Britain, is unflinching as she contextualizes racialized formations of desire, kinship, and contagion. In her narrative, racialization is a colonial texture that shapes the conditions of quotidian, not just monumental, historical life. My narrative is different from Carby's, but both involve the West Indies, the British Empire, and the United States and both also deal with the complexity of empire when one has both European and Caribbean heritage. This racialization as white, Black, in-between, or neither demands its own further contemplation, but here I will say that my own specific combination—Black mother from the colony, white father from the empire—has felt overdetermined and obvious. This is, after all, a formation that overlaps (negatively) with histories of enslavement and (positively) with aspirations toward the colorblind, post-*Loving* era of my birth.[51] The shadows of both interracial arcs haunt and inflect differently but combine to produce me as a product of these historical desires and complicities even as the specifics of my parents' narratives, relationship, and erotic autonomy exceeds this framing.

By the time I was born, my parents' accumulated wanderlust had led my father to take a job with Dole, whose founding in 1901 as the Hawaiian Pineapple Company played a large part in the colonization of Hawaii and the suppression of Indigenous sovereignty—a suturing of imperialism and corporate interest that would follow in its global expansion.[52] This job produced assignments in Guayaquil, Bogotá, Paris, Brussels, Boca Raton, and San José (Costa Rica), rendering me, for most of my youth, an "expatriate," another version of placelessness. This label, however, is also fundamentally relational—it centers a nation in a way that designates, in my case, desires for affiliation and belonging from a distance. I can best describe the shape of these feelings, directed, in

this case, toward the imperial and neoliberal United States, as a form of normativity. In *Why Karen Carpenter Matters*, Karen Tongson describes moving to California from the Philippines as a girl, the fantasies of "normal" that Karen Carpenter represented, and the difference from her parents' way of living: "All I wanted, desperately, was to be 'normal'—to fit in with our new surroundings. . . . In my mind, cleanliness was the mark of prosperity. And so, like Richard and Karen, I too endeavored toward perfection, albeit perfectionism of a different kind, on behalf of my parents and the dreams I thought we shared, in the suburbs that were supposed to furnish them for us."[53] While my own specifics differ from those that Tongson offers, the imagined embrace of "the normal" can be strong for those living outside "the metropole" as well as those who have moved there in an attempt to make it their home. Even though this attachment manifests culturally, it also resonates with Ann Laura Stoler's argument that Dutch pedagogy in colonial Indonesia expanded beyond the linguistic to implicitly train for particular forms of attention, value, and behavior.[54] Some of my negotiations with respectability and authenticity, then, have do with this striving to belong to the normative, the difficulty of actually doing so, and the recognition of the complicities that produce this compulsion.

In the midst of all of this, there is also my own relationship to the Caribbean, a place I spent months at a time growing up, but where I also lived for a year as a teenager when my father took a job at WIBDECO, the Windward Island Banana Development Company, a company whose aim was to bring control of the banana business back to Caribbean countries. We lived in St. Lucia and I attended a convent school run by nuns. In lieu of the feeling of home my mother hoped for, I primarily experienced alienation. It was difficult to live with the clash between visiting and the realities of living somewhere grappling with the poverty, poor infrastructure, and reliance on tourism that marked the "aftermath" of British imperialism. In *A Small Place* Jamaica Kincaid captures these tensions well:

> What a beautiful island Antigua is—more beautiful than any of the other islands you have seen, and they were very beautiful, in their way, but they were much too green, much too lush with vegetation, which indicated to you, the tourist, that they got quite a bit of rainfall, and rain is the very thing that you, just now, do not want, for you are thinking of the hard and cold and dark and long days you spent working in North America (or, worse, Europe), earning some money so that you could stay in this place

(Antigua) where the sun always shines and where the climate is deliciously hot and dry for the four to ten days you are going to be staying there; and since you are on your holiday, since you are a tourist, the thought of what it might be like for someone who had to live day in, day out in a place that suffers constantly from drought, and so has to watch carefully every drop of fresh water used (while at the same time surrounded by a sea and an ocean—the Caribbean Sea on the one side, the Atlantic Ocean on the other), must never cross your mind.[55]

This life between tourist and resident is born from an enormous amount of economic privilege, which, as Mimi Sheller argues, should be critiqued, since these movements impact those with less access to mobility differently: "It is *our* mobilities that cause the destruction of Caribbean environments, the exploitation of Caribbean workers, and the undermining of social welfare and human rights."[56] There are also additional frictions produced by my queerness, which as Alexander notes, disrupts the implicit heterosexuality of the state and its reliance on specific norms of respectability for Black middle-class women. Of the erotic autonomy afforded by queerness, she writes, "Erotic autonomy signals danger to the heterosexual family and to the nation. And because loyalty to the nation as citizen is perennially colonized within reproduction and heterosexuality, erotic autonomy brings with it the potential of undoing the nation entirely, a possible charge of irresponsible citizenship, or no responsibility at all."[57] Through Alexander's formulation, I can see how my queerness—especially in this particular class formation—has produced its own estrangement in claiming the Caribbean: queerness complicates the familial forms of belonging to which I have access while middle-class respectability and mobility has produced its own distancing effect from contemporary Caribbean queer communities. Placelessness and colonialism, again.

Sensual Cartographies: Or, How Not to Write an Autobiography

Between Shadows and Noise, however, is not a memoir; it is a book of theory and criticism. Even as its impulse, via the work of emplacement, is reparative and its archive is composed of art that I understand through my own attachment to the Caribbean, the book does not solely tell a story about colonialisms, the Caribbean, or me. Instead, it offers strategies for thinking

and being otherwise. Each chapter is anchored by an analysis of one or two works of performance, film, or fine art. I found these artworks fascinating; they provoked in me questions about race and gender and their relationships to agency, liberation, and the transmission of knowledge. This is art that made me look and feel and look again, undoing straightforward connections between looking and thinking in their revelation of representation's density and unruliness. As works of criticism, these analyses show the interpretive possibilities offered by sensual forms of knowing, complexifying how we have thought about representation and offering an argument for critical situatedness.

Moreover, it is this very same situatedness that unfolds into the sensual cartographies of shadows and noise. While their contours are formed by the personal, shadows and noise make felt the multifaceted terrain of the uncanny, the diasporic tensions between insider and outsider knowledge, the contagion of rage, the projection of approximation, and the aesthetics of metabolism. Each of these analyses, in turn, unfurl into meditations on desire, spirituality, myth, multiplicity, and rest. Shadow and noise circulate throughout as methods of feeling and sensing into difference. It is important that this polymorphousness is routed through the personal because it enables a robust understanding of situatedness in relation to the politics of difference that animate body work. Additionally, sitting and thinking with difference *now* is imperative because it offers a bulwark against the narrowing of perspectives that underlies our global shrinkage of political and representational fields. If, as McKittrick does, we link discipline to empire, this turn toward situatedness and representational density offers methods of surviving the ongoing aftermaths of empire by feeling through what is in plain sight.

The book begins by exploring two different signs of Blackness—the figures of the Black woman and girl and Afro-diasporic syncretic religious rituals—in order to sense what escapes these overdetermined representations. The first chapter focuses on figures of Black women and girls as they circulate through *Us*, Jordan Peele's 2019 film (plates 5–7). The uncanniness that Peele invokes by mobilizing the horror of the doppelgänger enables a closer examination of Black women's fraught and multiple relations to desire, privacy, and agency. However, the fungibility and illegibility—what I am calling noise—that emanate from the Black girl in Peele's mirror offer possibilities for sensing alternate frameworks and ways of being. Here, theorizing the Black girl anchors the book in autobiographical reflexivity to make an argument for a critical deployment of the uncanny in order to sense what lies beneath representation

and to highlight what attachments—personal and critical—emerge through this sensual expansiveness. The second chapter grapples with the tensions between authenticity and spectacle in *Shango* (1945), a dance choreographed for Broadway and performed in repertoire by Katherine Dunham and her dancers (plates 8–10). Dunham's ethnographically informed invocation of Vodou makes felt the tensions between exoticization and the possibility of decolonization while also preserving something of the unrepresentability—the noise—of Vodou itself. *Shango*'s movement through and distance from African diasporic spirituality complicates questions of agency, representation, and legibility. Dunham's anthropological gaze, I argue, provides a particular vantage point from which to think about the desires and tensions of diasporic belonging. In relating to Dunham's curiosity about and attachment to Vodou, I focus my analysis especially on the yanvalou, a dance of devotion that requires spinal fluidity, to ponder the appeal and enactment of liberated movement in relation to Black vernacular dance and culture. The main tension that undergirds the chapter is the friction between insider and outsider knowledge and how that friction guides interpretation. These first two chapters draw on the sense-based autobiographical to illuminate the complicated politics of recognition and legibility that surround these overdetermined signifiers in order to draw attention to how these figurations of Vodou and the Black girl and woman have circulated and to sense other ways of being and knowing that reside within these representational categories.

The third chapter delves into the work of attunement as critical corporeal method. The chapter analyzes *This ember state* (2018; plate 11), a performance by sound artist Samita Sinha that reworks the myth of Sati, the self-immolating Hindu goddess, to highlight rage and its entanglements with combustion in relation to colonialism, racism, and heteropatriarchy. Employing an aesthetics of deconstruction, Sinha uses breath and sound to attune (and to invite audience members to attune) to inner and outer landscapes of infinity. Attunement, here, is not just an analytic suggestion but a practice of giving attention to how and where sensations, feelings, and sounds aggregate internally. Working with and through Sinha's methods of body work, in turn, fuels attention to the sensational realm of critical reflexivity stimulated by the performance. Here, it is the sensual, felt details that matter.

The next set of chapters mark another shift in the book, one that moves away from the embodied negotiations that racialized people undertake, in which shadows and noise function as a preservative of multidimensionality, toward sensing the workings of racialization when people are not the focal

point. In these chapters, I critique the disciplining actions of multiculturalism, diversity, and colorblindness and I use attunement to attend to what is felt and what can be mobilized when race is not personified. The apocalyptic is the theme that holds together the fourth chapter: beginning with an analysis of Teresita Fernández's *Puerto Rico (Burned) 6* (2018; plate 12), which offers burnt paper as a representation of palm fronds, the chapter probes the conditions that enable approximation, from the use of "like" to the invocation of surrealism and Aimé Césaire in Allora & Calzadilla's gallery installation *Cadastre* (2019; plates 13–14). Approximation, I argue, mobilizes sense memory to suture different things together while also preserving the noise of this difference and the political possibilities posed by frictional engagement. The fifth and final chapter examines representations of different regimes of racialized labor through an analytic of metabolism. Using Titus Kaphar's *A Pillow for Fragile Fictions* (2016; plates 15–16), a sculpture that deconstructs the myth of George Washington by positioning his bust on its side and filling it with rum, tamarind, molasses, and lime, I argue that the presence of Tom, an enslaved man whom Washington exchanged for the aforementioned West Indian products, can be found in the condensation on the glass—a visibilization of his labor. Looking to tamarind, however, a tree crop unaffiliated with sugar's economy of extraction, enables us to sense a shadow economy of rest, a balm, I argue for neoliberalism's own efforts to invisibilize racialized labor with deadly consequences. These last chapters move us toward political orientations that become available when one engages critically through attunement and its sensualities.

Originally, I wanted to conclude with a meditation on the beach—to mark a Caribbean arrival, if you will. From the veranda on my grandparents' house in Cane Garden, we could look south at the horizon and see a series of small islands—Young Island, Fort Duvernette, and Bequia, followed imperceptibly by rest of the Grenadines—including Union Island. We could also look up and see the vast sky, but my mind's eye remains trained on the sea. I remember spending hours looking at the outlines of mountains that arose from stretches of vast blue. Our house in St. Lucia also provided a vista of another island—Martinique this time. It was a more distant view, but from our perch on a mountain we could see unmistakable specks of silvery gray even if we could never not see the surrounding parched earth. Neither of those houses was technically far from the water's edge, but it still took us at least a half hour to get to a beach. As a result, it became a (maybe) weekly trip to play in the sand, take walks, swim, visit with friends or family. We were never there for

more than an hour or two. We weren't people who brought food (other than soft drinks) with us; the beach was a break. Now, my closest beach (Riis) is best for swimming during July and August and most of what happens there is lounging and eating—because it is a whole day effort to get there and the water is too cold for me to swim for long. These beach days are their own scenes—I go to marvel at fantastic swimwear (or the lack thereof), listen to other people's music, and graze on varieties of food and drink brought by me, others, or bought on site. I appreciate the spontaneity, fun, and extended chill of those outings.

Each of these moments, however, offers insight into different valences of queer sociality. Convening at Riis is in some ways more overtly queer, as that part of the beach brings together people of multiple orientations and genders to form an informal community already attached to the sign of queerness. My childhood beach days, meanwhile, offer queerness as a rejection of mandates for productivity and orient us toward the abundant possibilities of beach activities. Neither the beach nor time there is scarce; instead, the beach functions as a resource for renewal. There are many ways, however, that my association of the beach and queerness is fraught, haunted by overdetermination. As Lyndon Gill notes, the beach and its abundant vegetation functions as a way to understand how the Caribbean has been produced as a "postlapsarian sexual paradise . . . one of the primary global locations for both heterosexual and homosexual sex tourism" with the lush landscape serving "metonymically for the wild, abundant, and available sexuality of Caribbean 'natives,'" which governments play up in order to boost tourism.[58] However, in *Erotic Islands*, the beach still functions as a pulsing heart for Gill's exploration of eros as "the confidence that political, social, and cultural exclusions can (and must) be confronted through community building, through touch, and through faith."[59] Much happens against the backdrop of the beach—"We are preparing for today's barbecue on the beach . . . a benefit and a fashion show"—as the gay and lesbian artists and activists he follows create their own cultural institutions and fellowship while also negotiating various forms of violence.[60] Likewise, Vanessa Agard-Jones describes a response by an interlocutor named Karine to her query about a night at Anse Moustique, an isolated beach that serves as one of Martinique's cruising spots: "'*Seigneur* (God), I woke up this afternoon with sand in my ass and all I could think about was that hot little *chabine* that I had on the beach.' Powerfully mediated through her experience of sand lodged in an uncomfortable place, Karine's corporeal association of the beach with her lovemaking made me wonder anew what the

sand might offer us as a repository for queer memory."[61] Sand, Agard-Jones argues, offers a way to grapple with the complex and overlapping temporalities, emplacements, and presences of queerness at work in the Caribbean: "Ever in motion, yet connected to particular places, sand both holds geological memories in its elemental structure and calls forth referential memories through its color, feel between the fingers, and quality of grain. Today's sands are yesterday's mountains, coral reefs, and outcroppings of stone."[62]

In both Gill's and Agard-Jones's descriptions we see the beach as queer in ways that resonate with my own beach descriptions—through sex, community, leisure—but also as relations with place that rebuff a fixed idea of queerness and of Blackness. I see this as part of the work of complexification that results in *a proliferation of races*, though also more Black queerness and more queerness too. Gill himself writes, "If it is that blackness and queerness are articulated differently depending on the meaning systems within which they appear, then might it not follow that each contributes its internal dynamism to the conjunction of black queerness?"[63] In this conceptual expansion of Blackness, queerness, and their overlaps, both Gill and Agard-Jones build on the provocations of Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley's "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic," which asks "What would it mean for both queer and African diaspora studies to take seriously the possibility that, as forcefully as the Atlantic and the Caribbean flow together, so too do the turbulent fluidities of blackness and queerness?"[64] Tinsley uses the oceanic to develop a version of queerness as Black resistance to their fungibility: "They are one way that fluid black bodies refused to accept that the liquidation of their social selves—the colonization of oceanic and body waters—meant the liquidation of their sentient selves."[65] *Queer*, in Tinsley's parlance, "mark[s] disruption to the violence of normative order and powerfully so: connecting in ways that commodified flesh was never supposed to, loving your own kind when your kind was supposed to cease to exist, forging interpersonal connections that counteract imperial desires for Africans' living deaths."[66] It is important, I think, that Tinsley insists on the difficulty of deciphering these formations given that they are themselves resistances to various violent colonial and racist mandates for transparency. In the essay, she writes that "The subaltern *can* speak in submarine space, but it is hard to hear her or his underwater voice, whispering . . . a thousand secrets that at once wash closer and remain opaque, resisting closure."[67] As you might guess, I see this task of interpretation as that of attuning to shadows and noise.

But the beach really shows up for Tinsley in *Ezili's Mirrors*, which was written after "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic." The book includes Madame

Laveau's infamous beach party, but the beach takes a more central place in the book as backdrop for the facility (Crossroads Centre in St. John's Antigua) that Whitney Houston chooses for rehabilitation.[68] Tinsley takes pains to narrate Houston's relationship to this place: "When Whitney told Oprah that she once contemplated 'going to an island and having a fruit stand . . . me and my daughter, living on a little beach on a little island,' was Antigua the island she imagined?"[69] Tinsley also connects the beach to her description of Houston as an iteration of Lasiren, the Ezili deity often described as a mermaid: "Was this where she fantasized she and daughter Bobbi Kristina—herself an avid swimmer—could live the peaceful life of mermaids? *My fantasy, I'm your baby tonight.*"[70] Neither time at the beach nor being a good swimmer could save Houston, but through the lens of Lasiren, we see the beach as orientation. In this particular case, it offers Tinsley a way to describe narratives of addiction and fantasy, formations of attachment, pleasure, and want.

In these multiple beach scenes what jumps out at me is the plethora of verbs—swimming, having sex, gathering, eating, drinking, walking—that the beach enables, each of these verbs, in turn, producing different formations of selfhood—plural, communal, familial, and so forth. That the beach solicits verbs offers its own insight into Hortense Spillers's famous description of Black women as the "beached whale of the sexual universe, unvoiced, unseen, not doing, awaiting their *verb*" (emphasis mine).[71] What Spillers means, of course, is that the beached whale is outside of its natural habitat—it cannot breathe on land. We might even think with Alexis Gumbs's invocation of the endangered North Atlantic right whale who is wounded and killed by commercial fishing vessels. Thinking with Spillers, Gumbs's statement, "Maybe you know something about what it means to bear the constant wounding of a system that says it's about something else entirely," offers an affective connection to the vast repertoire of violences that Black women must bear.[72] But, given Black attentiveness to the politics of refusal and imagination, the beach might offer something else. Specifically, I see this beach, this beaching, as offering a way to think into the densities of representation, which I see as profoundly connected to the reorientations made possible when thinking with shadows and noise. Then I received a diagnosis of acute myeloid leukemia (AML), and I could not travel, could barely imagine the beach, and so turned my thinking on shadows and noise toward cancer in order to attend again, but differently, to the importance of one's situation—especially as a theorist without the triangulation of art object (plate 4).

Notes

Introduction. Body Work

1. Ozkan, "Thousands of Flamingos Die."

2. Greenberger, "Ming Smith Shook Up Photography in the '70s."

3. Chuh, "It's Not About Anything," 127.

4. See Rancière, *Ignorant Schoolmaster*, for more on the production of this common sense. My use is also indebted to Kandice Chuh's reading of Rancière in Chuh, *Difference Aesthetics Makes*.

5. Nicola Vassell has been instrumental in bringing attention to Ming Smith's post-Kamoinge photography work through hosting an exhibition at the Nicola Vassell Gallery in May 2021 and working to put together *Ming Smith: An Aperture Monograph*, among other efforts. See also, Vassell, "On Ming Smith." For more on Ming Smith and her relationship to the Kamoinge collective, see Brooks, "Vision & Justice Online."

6. The blurriness of the image, like Fred Moten's blur, refuses individuation and argues for an embrace of multiplicity and enmeshment. Flamingos and background appear to bounce between perspectives, dismissing a prioritization of a singular view, which is expected to emerge from the bounded individual. Rebecca Wanzo situates Moten's blur as existing between the racialized objectification experienced by Black people and the possibility that this invisibility enables, writing that "The 'blur' shaped by this intersubjectivity between the subject and the object might also dissolve that binary and create conditions of intimacy and dissolution of individualism for different political and social ends." Thinking with Wanzo and Moten, then, allows us to grapple with the onto-epistemological implications of Smith's subversion of racialized representational norms. Moten, *Black and Blur*, 246; Wanzo, "Moten's Magical Meditations"; Greg Tate and Arthur Jafa also make this connection between Moten's blur and Smith's photographs in "Sound She Saw," 217–26.

7. Talbert and Smith, "Portrait of the Artist," 15.

8. Talbert and Smith, "Portrait of the Artist," 15.

9. Serpell, "Shimmering Go-Between," 58.

10. Tate and Jafa, "Sound She Saw," 221.

11. Tate and Jafa, "Sound She Saw," 225.

12. Casid, *Scenes of Projection*, 7.

13. Raengo, *On the Sleeve of the Visual*, 166.

14. See Stoever, *Sonic Color Line*; Chion, *Sound*; Hainge, *Noise Matters*; Attali, *Noise*.

15. Stoever, *Sonic Color Line*, 13.

16. The claims of toxicity stem from environmental discourses, which frame these cities as out of sync with the present. Though begrudgingly acknowledged as modern, the timing and speed of urbanization and industrialization is deemed suspect. They are "late" entries into industrialization—an orientalist assignation of backwardness (Buckley and Wu, "In China, the 'Noisiest Park in the World'").

In *Animacies*, Mel Chen traces this sneering tone through a panic about lead paint, which Chen argues is "a highly selective [narrative] dependent on a resiliently exceptionalist victimization of the United States" (165). The United States (and "the environment"/ "the west") becomes the targets of Chinese toxicity and backwardness—thereby ignoring the environmental changes that urbanization and industrialization have already wrought and blaming the Chinese factory workers, while ignoring the fact that the vast majority of Chinese residents are more impacted by these toxins than those abroad. This narrative also forgets the ways in which much of this impulse toward modernization is driven by particular histories of international intervention through warfare and capitalism, which David Harvey identifies as a "race to the bottom" in which governments overlook unjust labor practices in order to participate in the global economy (Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*). What we see in the analysis that Chen provides is that the individual bodies of consumers (those with capital) are privileged over those of the workers in factories, rendering them faceless masses vulnerable to exploitation, but, most importantly, imagined in the aggregate. We can also consider (thinking with Anne Cheng and Rachel Lee) how this orientalist discourse coheres with those of Asian inhumanity and automaticity, which renders the city more visible than the people.

17. Bradley, "SANDRA BLAND."

18. As William Cheng writes, "Altogether, stereotypes of black physical excess and black sonic excess implicate the threatening physicalities of black sound and, in turn, the threatening sounds of black physicality" (119). What we see in all these examples, but especially in Davis's murder, is the conflation of noise with the Black body. Davis is perceived to be the source of noise, to embody all of its unwanted excesses.

19. In the dossier that Gluibizzi compiles, artist Laura Libson argues that edges are about "negotiations and divisions between internal and external edges (to and from the world)." This is to say that they demarcate concepts of interior and exterior through questioning "the limits of the social, political, and personal." Edges are how

we "recognize where objects and subjects intersect, begin and end, separate and join." Gluibizzi, "On Edge(s)"; Libson, "Edges/Limits. Edges/Tableau."

20. Jacques Attali's treatise on noise is most famous for his embrace of noise, but a narrative of full embrace negates some of the deadly consequences of being designated noise, which we see in the Jordan Davis case. We might also consider that noise has been designated a pollutant by the Environmental Protection Agency as part of their Clean Air Act since 1972. In *Sound, Space, and City*, Marina Peterson argues that noise's effects are also physiological in that excessive noise can lead to physiological stress, loss of productivity, and diminished hearing capacity. This tendency toward idealization, however, is a staple in academia. We can locate it in narratives of queer theory, for example, as traced by Kadji Amin in *Disturbing Attachments*, who argues for de-idealization. Here, I am arguing for a similar approach to noise.

21. McKittrick, *Dear Science*, 36.

22. Zakariya, *A Final Story*, 5.

23. Here, we might turn to Sylvia Wynter, Kandice Chuh, Roderick Ferguson, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, and others for elaborations on this list of disciplining forces.

24. Chuh, *Difference Aesthetics Makes*, 5.

25. Rusert, *Fugitive Science*, 20.

26. Rusert, *Fugitive Science*, 20.

27. Kapadia, *Insurgent Aesthetics*, 10.

28. Musser, *Sensual Excess*.

29. Kim, dir., *[Closer Captions].* For more on the history and politics and ideas of audio captioning and "deaf gain" see Holmes, "Expert Listening"; Mills, "Do Signals Have Politics?"

30. In *To Describe a Life*, Darby English works through several objects of art that utilize description as a way to pierce representational schemas that might presume subjective transparency. In this project, English follows Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who argues that "the commitment to description that is not in a predetermined relationship to theoretical questions, even though it would ideally be open to them at every point, is a really important practice." Sedgwick shows that although description is not neutral, when practiced with curiosity, it may endeavor to present complications and nuance without preconceived judgment. Sedgwick in conversation with Gavin Butt, "Art, Writing, Performativity," 129.

31. Simone de Beauvoir, *Second Sex*, Toril Moi, *What Is a Woman?* and Judith Butler, "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir," have elaborated on this aspect of Beauvoir's philosophy.

32. Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 579.

33. Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 2.

34. Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 1.

35. Mecca Jamilah Sullivan, for example, describes various strategies of embodying difference through poetics as a particular strategy of Black queer femininity in Sullivan, *Poetics of Difference*.

36. Hong, *Death beyond Disawoval*, 7.

37. Puar, *Right to Maim*, 60. Such specificity takes seriously Michael Gillespie's argument in *Film Blackness* that "the discursivity of *black* demands greater rigor than speculations of universal blackness" (6).

38. Muñoz, "Brown Commons," 7.

39. Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*.

40. English, *To Describe a Life*, 5.

41. English, *To Describe a Life*, 5.

42. I first heard this fused land acknowledgment through the *Brooklyn Rail*'s "New Social Environment," a daily virtual lecture series that started in March 2020 when New York City began its lockdown. Throughout the year, their statement would add the names of specific individuals killed by state and state-sanctioned violence. Their land acknowledgment, in turn, is publicly indebted to the Indigenous Kinship Collective, https://indigenouskinshipcollective.com/take-action.

43. Leroy, "Black History in Occupied Territory."

44. King, *Black Shoals*, x.

45. Kim, "Caribs of St. Vincent."

46. Kim, "Caribs of St. Vincent"; rumors are reported by my mother.

47. Kim, "Caribs of St. Vincent," 119, 120.

48. This theory might be bolstered by David Reich's discovery of an abundance of Taíno DNA in contemporary Caribbean populations, which suggested much travel and relatedness between island populations. Patterson and Reich, "Ancient DNA."

49. Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 3–4.

50. Carby, *Imperial Intimacies: A Tale of Two Islands*.

51. Nadia Owusu writes movingly of these sets of contradictions of growing up in a "biracial" family in *Aftershocks*. She specifically describes being seen a symbol of multicultural integration as well as being seen as someone who should not be. I put "biracial" in quotation marks because I think the use of this term perpetuates the idea that Blackness is unassimilable and that race is straightforward.

52. Although there is more scholarship on United Fruit Company, which became Chiquita in 1984, because of its extractive labor practices and collusion with the US government to overthrow governments in Central America, Standard Fruit Company is not above reproach in these matters. Standard Fruit Company was founded by the Vaccaro brothers, who began importing bananas from Honduras to New Orleans in 1924; it was acquired by Castle and Cooke corporation in the 1960s, at the same time as the Hawaiian Pineapple Company, which was started by James Dole. In 1991, Castle and Cooke changed its name to Dole Food Company. For a brief timeline, see https://www.unitedfruit.org/chron.htm.

53. Tongson, *Why Karen Carpenter Matters*, 22, 23.

54. See Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*.

55. Kincaid, *Small Place*, 3–4.

56. Now, my parents, brother, and I live in northeastern cities in the United States, but the entanglement continues. My father now has his own company (working with

my sister-in-law, Ashley) importing organic fair-trade produce, including mangoes from Haiti; my mother runs an arts organization in St. Vincent (Youlou) and spends several months a year there. I, however, am an occasional visitor. Sheller, *Island Futures*, 42. See also, Sheller, *Mobility Justice*.

57. Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 22–23.

58. Gill, *Erotic Islands*, xxvii. Gill, in turn, cites Mimi Sheller and M. Jacqui Alexander.

59. Gill, *Erotic Islands*, 11.

60. Gill, *Erotic Islands*, 28.

61. Agard-Jones, "What the Sands Remember," 339.

62. Agard-Jones, "What the Sands Remember," 326.

63. Gill, *Erotic Islands*, 209.

64. Tinsley, "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic," 193.

65. Tinsley, "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic," 199.

66. Tinsley, "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic," 199.

67. Tinsley, "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic, 194.

68. Tinsley, "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic," 194.

69. Tinsley, *Ezili's Mirrors*, 144.

70. Tinsley, *Ezili's Mirrors*, 144.

71. Spillers, "Interstices," 153.

72. Gumbs, "End Capitalism."

Chapter One. *Us*, the Uncanny, and the Threat of Black Femininity

1. Freud, "Uncanny."

2. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 102.

3. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 103.

4. Owens, "Yes Means Yes."

5. Those without access to subjectivity and desire are, in turn, designated as other, a framework that Denise Ferreira da Silva reminds us occupies the space of projection and opacity. While the subject is assumed to occupy "the stage of interiority, where universal reason plays its sovereign role as *universal poesis*," the other is assigned to the realm of the external as an "affectable I." This means that the properties of the other are determined from the outside and are therefore deeply constrained. This also means that recognition and desire are impossible in this framework; they are blocked by the workings of projection and the omission of interiority. Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, 31.

6. Redmond, "*Us* Liner Notes."

7. Bradley, "How *Men in Black*."

8. Bradley, "How *Men in Black*."

9. In the ballet, the Sugar Plum Fairy welcomes the children into the land of sweets and provides delightful (though possible deadly) entertainment. Her solo consists of small, precise movements that build into larger more expansive motions, by way of leg-extending arabesques and stage-crossing pirouettes. Dance historian Roland John Wiley describes the dance as having "a sense of dynamic build up: from delicate