Demonic Grounds

Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle

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For Zilli

Introduction

Geographic Stories

I don't want no fucking country, here
or there and all the way back, I don't like it, none of it,
easy as that.

—DIONNE BRAND

When Dionne Brand writes, she writes the land. Her important collection of poetry *Land to Light On* is a map. But this map does not easily follow existing cartographic rules, borders, and lines. *Land to Light On* provides a different geographic story, one which allows pavement to answer questions, most of the world to be swallowed up by a woman's mouth, and Chatham, Buxton—Ontario sites haunted by the underground railroad—to be embedded with Uganda, Sri Lanka, slave castles, and the entries and exits of Sarah Vaughan's singing. And Brand gives up on land, too. She not only refuses a comfortable belonging to nation, or country, or a local street, she alters them by demonstrating that geography, the material world, is infused with sensations and distinct ways of knowing: rooms full of weeping, exhausted countries, a house that is only as safe as flesh. Brand's decision, to give up on land, to want no country, to disclose that geography is always human and that humanness is always geographic—blood, bones, hands, lips, wrists, this is your land, your planet, your road, your sea—suggests that her surroundings are speakable. And this speakability is not only communicated through the poet, allowing her to emphasize the alterability of space and place, to give up on land and imagine new geographic stories; in her work, geography holds in it the possibility to speak for itself. Brand's sense of place continually reminds me that human geography needs some philosophical attention; she reminds me that the earth is also skin and that a young girl can legitimately take possession of a street, or an entire city, albeit on different terms than we may be familiar with. So

this philosophical attention is not only needed because existing cartographic rules unjustly organize human hierarchies *in place* and reify uneven geographies in familiar, seemingly natural ways. This attention is also needed because, if we trust Brand's insights, these rules are alterable and there exists a terrain through which different geographic stories can be and are told.

Demonic Grounds is, in its broadest sense, an interdisciplinary analysis of black women's geographies in the black diaspora. It seeks to consider what kinds of possibilities emerge when black studies encounters human geography. Drawing on creative, conceptual, and material geographies from Canada, the United States, and the Caribbean, I explore the interplay between geographies of domination (such as transatlantic slavery and racial-sexual displacement) and black women's geographies (such as their knowledges, negotiations, and experiences). This interplay interests me because it enables a way to think about the place of black subjects in a diasporic context that takes up spatial histories as they constitute our present geographic organization. The relationship between black populations and geography—and here I am referring to geography as space, place, and location in their physical materiality and imaginative configurations—allows us to engage with a narrative that locates and draws on black histories and black subjects in order to make visible social lives which are often displaced, rendered ungeographic. Black histories where, for example, progress, voyaging, and rationality meet violence and enslavement are worked out in geography, in space and place, in the physical world. Geography's and geographers well-known history in the Americas, of white masculine European mappings, explorations, conquests, is interlaced with a different sense of place, those populations and their attendant geographies that are concealed by what might be called rational spatial colonization and domination: the profitable erasure and objectification of subaltern subjectivities, stories, and lands. Let me give a telling example to outline the ways in which progress and exploration are entwined with a different sense of (black) place. The ships of transatlantic slavery moving across the middle passage, transporting humans for free labor into "newer worlds" do not only site modern technological progression, which materially moves diasporic subjects through space, that is, on and across the ocean, and on and across landmasses such as Canada, the United States, the Caribbean; these vessels also expose a very meaningful struggle for freedom *in place*. Technologies of transportation, in this case the ship,

while materially and ideologically enclosing black subjects—economic objects inside and often bound to the ship's walls—also contribute to the formation of an oppositional geography: the ship as a location of black subjectivity and human terror, black resistance, and in some cases, black possession.

But the landscape, our surroundings and our everyday places, the vessels of human violence, so often disguise these important black geographies; they can hide what Sylvia Wynter calls "the imperative of a perspective of struggle."[1] Geography's discursive attachment to stasis and physicality, the idea that space "just is," and that space and place are merely containers for human complexities and social relations, is terribly seductive: that which "just is" not only anchors our selfhood and feet to the ground, it seemingly calibrates and normalizes where, and therefore who, we are. The slave ship, as a materiality, contains and regulates; it hides black humanity because it "just is" and because those inside, bound to the walls, are neither seeable nor liberated subjects. As Olaudah Equiano writes, the ship was a location of suppression upheld, in part, by black grief and death; it hid and suffocated human cargo and curtailed resistances. His memories of the slave ship suggest that its materiality—above and below the deck—in part disguised human terror.[2] The imperative perspective of black struggle is undermined by the social processes and material three dimensionalities that contribute to the workings of the geographies of slavery: the walls of the ship, the process of economic expansion, human objectification, laboring and ungeographic bodies, human-cargo. The "where" of black geographies and black subjectivity, then, is often aligned with spatial processes that *apparently* fall back on seemingly predetermined stabilities, such as boundaries, color-lines, "proper" places, fixed and settled infrastructures and streets, oceanic containers. If space and place *appear* to be safely secure and unwavering, then what space and place make possible, outside and beyond tangible stabilities, and from the perspective of struggle, can potentially fade away.

Geography is not, however, secure and unwavering; we produce space, we produce its meanings, and we work very hard to make geography what it is. *Demonic Grounds* reveals that the interplay between domination and black women's geographies is underscored by the social production of space. Concealment, marginalization, boundaries are important social processes. We make concealment happen; it is not natural but rather names

and organizes where racial-sexual differentiation occurs. To return to my earlier example, the slave ship is not stable and unchanging; it is a site of violent subjugation that reveals, rather than conceals, the racial-sexual location of black cultures in the face of unfreedoms. The physicality of the slave ship, then, contributes to the *process* of social concealment and dehumanization but, importantly, black subjectivity is not swallowed up by the ship itself. Rather, the ship, its crew, black subjects, the ocean and ports, make geography what it is, a location through which a moving technology can create differential and contextual histories. To return to Equiano, the slave ship is not simply a container hiding his displacement. It is a location through which he articulates hardship and human cruelty, in part mapping and giving new meaning to the vessel itself.

The connections, across the seeable and unseeable, the geographic and the seemingly ungeographic, and the struggles that indicate that the material world is assessed and produced by subaltern communities, these shape my discussions. Geographic domination is a powerful process. However, if we pursue the links between practices of domination and black women's experiences in place, we see that black women's geographies are lived, possible, and imaginable. Black women's geographies open up a meaningful way to approach both the power and possibilities of geographic inquiry. I am not suggesting that the connections between black women and geography are anything new—indeed, I assume a legacy of black women's geographies and geographic knowledges. Rather, I am suggesting that the relationship between black women and geography opens up a conceptual arena through which more humanly workable geographies can be and are imagined. I am therefore interested in the kinds of historical and contemporary geographies that interest and impact upon black women and how, for some, existing arrangements do not work at all, "easy as that."[3]

GEOGRAPHIES OF DOMINATION, TRANSATLANTIC SLAVERY, DIASPORA

Black matters are spatial matters. And while we all produce, know, and negotiate space—albeit on different terms—geographies in the diaspora are accentuated by racist paradigms of the past and their ongoing hierarchical patterns. I have turned to geography and black geographic subjects not to provide a corrective story, nor to "find" and "discover" lost geographies.

Rather, I want to suggest that space and place give black lives meaning in a world that has, for the most part, incorrectly deemed black populations and their attendant geographies as "ungeographic" and/or philosophically undeveloped. That black lives are necessarily geographic, but also struggle with discourses that erase and despatialize their sense of place, is where I begin to conceptualize geography. I therefore follow the insights of Kathleen Kirby, noting that the language and concreteness of geography—with its overlapping physical, metaphorical, theoretical, and experiential contours—must be conceptualized as always bringing into view material referents, external, three-dimensional spaces, and the actions taking place in space, as they overlap with subjectivities, imaginations, and stories.[4] I want to suggest that we take the language *and* the physicality of geography seriously, that is, as an "*imbrication* of material and metaphorical space,"[5] so that black lives and black histories can be conceptualized and talked about in new ways. And part of the work involved in thinking about black geographies is to recognize that the overlaps between materiality and language are long-standing in the diaspora, and that the legacy of racial displacement, or erasure, is in contradistinction to and therefore evidence of, an ongoing critique of both geography and the "ungeographic." Consequently, if there is a push to forge a conceptual connection between material or concrete spaces, language, and subjectivity, openings are made possible for envisioning an interpretive alterable world, rather than a transparent and knowable world.

Geography, then, materially and discursively extends to cover three-dimensional spaces and places, the physical landscape and infrastructures, geographic imaginations, the practice of mapping, exploring, and seeing, and social relations in and across space. Geography is also Geography, an academic discipline and a set of theoretical concerns developed by human geographers, such as the importance of the ways in which material spaces and places underpin shifting and uneven (racial, sexual, economic) social relations. In order to examine black women's relationship to these diverse geographic conceptualizations, I have employed the term "traditional geography," which points to formulations that assume we can view, assess, and ethically organize the world from a stable (white, patriarchal, Eurocentric, heterosexual, classed) vantage point. While these formulations—cartographic, positivist, imperialist—have been retained and resisted within and beyond the discipline of human geography, they also clarify that black

women are negotiating a geographic landscape that is upheld by a legacy of exploitation, exploration, and conquest.[6] If we imagine that traditional geographies are upheld by their three-dimensionality, as well as a corresponding language of insides and outsides, borders and belongings, and inclusions and exclusions, we can expose domination as a visible spatial project that organizes, names, and sees social differences (such as black femininity) and determines *where* social order happens.

The history of black subjects in the diaspora is a geographic story that is, at least in part, a story of material and conceptual placements and displacements, segregations and integrations, margins and centers, and migrations and settlements. These spatial binaries, while certainly not complete or fully accurate, also underscore the classificatory *where* of race. Practices and locations of racial domination (for example, slave ships, racial-sexual violences) and practices of resistance (for example, ship coups, escape routes, imaginary and real respatializations) also importantly locate what Saidya Hartman calls "a striking contradiction," wherein objectification is coupled with black humanity/personhood.[7] In terms of geography, this contradiction maps the ties and tensions between material and ideological dominations and oppositional spatial practices. Black geographies and black women's geographies, then, signal alternative patterns that work alongside and across traditional geographies.

Indeed, black matters are spatial matters. The displacement of difference, geographic domination, transatlantic slavery, and the black Atlantic Ocean differently contribute to mapping out the real and imaginative geographies of black women; they are understood here as social processes that *make* geography a racial-sexual terrain. Hence, black women's lives and experiences become especially visible through these concepts and moments because they clarify that blackness is integral to the production of space.[8] To put it another way, social practices create landscapes and contribute to how we organize, build, and imagine our surroundings. Black subjects are not indifferent to these practices and landscapes; rather, they are connected to them due to crude racial-sexual hierarchies *and* due to their (often unacknowledged) status as geographic beings who have a stake in the production of space. Black women's histories, lives, and spaces must be understood as enmeshing with traditional geographic arrangements in order to identify a different way of knowing and writing the social world and to expand how the production of space is achieved across terrains of domination.

The production of space is caught up in, but does not guarantee, long-standing geographic frameworks that materially and philosophically arrange the planet according to a seemingly stable white, heterosexual, classed vantage point. If prevailing geographic distributions and interactions are racially, sexually and economically hierarchical, these hierarchies are naturalized by repetitively spatializing "difference." That is, "*plac[ing]* the world within an ideological order," unevenly.[9] Practices of domination, sustained by a unitary vantage point, naturalize both identity and place, repetitively spatializing where nondominant groups "naturally" belong. This is, for the most part, accomplished through economic, ideological, social, and political processes that see and position the racial-sexual body within what seem like predetermined, or appropriate, places and assume that this arrangement is commonsensical. This naturalization of "difference" is, in part, bolstered by the ideological weight of transparent space, the idea that space "just is," and the illusion that the external world is readily knowable and not in need of evaluation, and that what we see is true. If *who* we see is tied up with *where* we see through truthful, commonsensical narratives, then the placement of subaltern bodies deceptively hardens spatial binaries, in turn suggesting that some bodies belong, some bodies do not belong, and some bodies are out of place. For black women, then, geographic domination is worked out through reading and managing their specific racial-sexual bodies. This management effectively, but not completely, displaces black geographic knowledge by assuming that black femininity is altogether knowable, unknowing, and expendable: she is seemingly in place by being out of place.

The simultaneous naturalization of bodies and places must be disclosed, and therefore called into question, if we want to think about alternative spatial practices and more humanly workable geographies. Borrowing from Ruth Wilson Gilmore, I want to suggest that geographies of domination be understood as "the displacement of difference," wherein "particular kinds of bodies, one by one, are materially (if not always visibly) configured by racism into a hierarchy of human and inhuman persons that in sum form the category of 'human being.'"[10] Gilmore highlights the ways in which human and spatial differentiations are connected to the process of making place. The displacement of difference does not *describe* human hierarchies but rather demonstrates the ways in which these hierarchies are critical categories of social and spatial struggle. Thus, practices of domination are necessarily caught up in a different way of knowing and writing

the social world, which foregrounds the "geographical imperatives," that lie "at the heart of every struggle for social justice."[11] This material spatialization of "difference"—for my purposes, the spatialization of the racial-sexual black subject—in various times and locations in turn makes visible new, or unacknowledged, strategies of social struggle. Geographic domination, then, is conceptually and materially bound up with racial-sexual displacement and the knowledge-power of a unitary vantage point. It is not a finished or immovable act, but it does signal unjust spatial practices; it is not a natural system, but rather a working system that manages the social world. It is meant to recognize the hierarchies of human and inhuman persons and reveal how this social categorization is also a contested geographic project.

I draw on the history of transatlantic slavery to illustrate that black women are both shaped by, and challenge, traditional geographic arrangements. My discussions are underwritten by transatlantic slavery because this history heightens the meanings of traditional arrangements, which rest on a crucial geographic paradigm, human captivity. Transatlantic slavery profited from black enslavement by exacting material and philosophical black subordinations. A vast project, the practice of slavery differently impacted upon black diaspora populations in Africa, the Caribbean, South America, Canada, the United States, and various parts of Europe, between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Slavery differed markedly in different locations. For example, periods of institution and abolishment, the scale of the trade, and uses of slave labor all produce unique time-space differentiations. At the same time, the particularity of slaves' lives and selves—gender, age, labor tasks, phenotype, ethnicity, language, time, place—fracture the meanings of slavery even further. As histories, recollections, and narratives of slavery clearly demonstrate, different slaves negotiated bondage in very different ways.[12] While it is not within the scope of this introduction or project to particularize and spatialize all geographies of transatlantic slavery, I sketch out below the central ideas that have shaped my analysis.

What I feel is important to outline in terms of the geographies of transatlantic slavery and my larger discussion on black women's geographies is not so much the vast and differential processes of captivity. Instead, I turn to slavery, through memories, writings, theories, and geographies, to address the idea that locations of captivity initiate a different

sense of place through which black women can manipulate the categories and sites that constrain them. Of course the technologies and violences of slavery, as they are spatialized, do not disappear when black women assert their sense of place. But black women also *inhabited* what Jenny Sharpe calls "the crevices of power" necessary to enslavement, and from this location some were able to manipulate and recast the meanings of slavery's geographic terrain.[13] Their different practices of spatial manipulation make possible a way to analyze four interrelated processes that identify the social production of space: the naturalization of identity and place, discussed above; the ways in which geographic enslavement is developed through the constructs of black womanhood and femininity; the spatial practices black women employ across and beyond domination; and the ways in which geography, although seemingly static, is an alterable terrain.

I have drawn on the legacy of transatlantic slavery to advance a discussion of black women's geographic options as they are, often crudely, aligned with historically present racial-sexual categorizations. More specifically, transatlantic slavery incited meaningful geographic processes that were interconnected with the category of "black woman": this category not only visually and socially represented a particular kind of gendered servitude, it was embedded in the landscape. Geographically, the category of "black woman" evidenced human/inhuman and masculine/feminine racial organization. The classification of black femininity was therefore also a process of *placing* her within the broader system of servitude—as an inhuman racial-sexual worker, as an objectified body, as a site through which sex, violence, and reproduction can be imagined and enacted, and as a captive human. Her classificatory racial-sexual body, then, determined her whereabouts in relation to her humanity.

As some black feminists have suggested, the category of "black woman" during transatlantic slavery affects—but does not necessarily twin—our contemporary understandings of human normalcy.[14] Further, our present landscape is both haunted *and* developed by old and new hierarchies of humanness. If past human categorization was spatialized, in ships and on plantations, in homes, communities, nations, islands, and regions, it also evidences the ways in which some of the impressions of transatlantic slavery leak into the future, in essence recycling the displacement of difference. Of course, much has changed in the natural and social environment, but our historical geographies, and the ways in which we make and know

space now, are connected; they are held together by what Carole Boyce Davies and Monica Jardine describe as "a series of remapping exercises in which various land spaces are located within an orbit of control."[15] I am not suggesting that the violence of transatlantic slavery is an ongoing, unchanging, unopposed practice, but rather that it is a legacy that carries with it—for black and nonblack peoples—"living effects, seething and lingering, of what *seems* over and done with."[16]

I want to suggest that the category of black woman is intimately connected with past and present spatial organization and that black femininity and black women's humanness are bound up in an ongoing geographic struggle. While black womanhood is not static and ahistoric, the continuities, contexts, and ruptures that contribute to the construction of black femininity shed light on how black women have situated themselves in a world that profits from their specific displacements of difference. Identifying black women as viable contributors to an ongoing geographic struggle, rather than, for example, solely through the constructs of "race" or race/class/gender/sexuality is critical to my argument: I want to emphasize that contextual spatial analyses do not relegate black women to the margins or insist that the spatialization of black femininity "just was" and "just is." While I have suggested that geography—through and beyond practices of domination—is an alterable terrain through which black women can assert their sense of place, questions of "race," or race/class/gender/sexuality, are contributors to the where of blackness, rather than the sole indicators of identity/experience.

So, what philosophical work can geography actually do for us, as readers and occupiers of space and place, if it is recognizably alterable? What is at stake in the legacy of exploration, conquest, and stable vantage points if we insist that past and present geographies are connective sites of struggle, which have *always* called into question the very *appearance* of safely secure and unwavering locations? And what do black women's geographies make possible if they are not conceptualized as simply subordinate, or buried, or lost, but rather are indicative of an unresolved story?

I am emphasizing here that racism and sexism are not simply bodily or identity based; racism and sexism are also spatial acts and illustrate black women's geographic experiences and knowledges as they are made possible through domination. Thus, black women's geographies push up against the seemingly natural spaces and places of subjugation, disclosing, sometimes

radically, how geography is socially produced and therefore an available site through which various forms of blackness can be understood and asserted. I do not seek to devalue the ongoing unjustness of racism and sexism by privileging geography; rather I want to stress that if practices of subjugation are also spatial acts, then the ways in which black women think, write, and negotiate their surroundings are intermingled with place-based critiques, or, respatializations. I suggest, then, that one way to contend with unjust and uneven human/inhuman categorizations is to think about, and perhaps employ, the alternative geographic formulations that subaltern communities advance. Geographies of domination, from transatlantic slavery and beyond, hold in them both the marking and the contestation of old and new social hierarchies. If these hierarchies are spatial expressions of racism and sexism, the interrogations and remappings provided by black diaspora populations can incite new, or different, and perhaps more just, geographic stories. That is, the sites/citations of struggle indicate that traditional geographies, and their attendant hierarchical categories of humanness, cannot do the emancipatory work some subjects demand. And part of this work, in our historical present, is linked up with recognizing both "the where" of alterity *and* the geographical imperatives in the struggle for social justice.

Spatial acts can take on many forms and can be identified through expressions, resistances, and naturalizations. Importantly, these acts take place and have a place. One of the underlying geographic themes and "places" in this work is the black diaspora and the black Atlantic. Discussions draw on the work, ideas, and experiences advanced by theorists, writers, and poets from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Caribbean. I have not drawn on these diasporic locations to reify a monolithic "black space," but rather to examine how practices of and resistances to racial domination across different borders bring into focus black women's complex relationship with geography. I cite/site several diasporic texts in order to consider where geopolitical strategies take place in the face of racial dominations. This conceptual framing of black diaspora geographies is in part inspired by Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness.*

Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* has allowed me to think about black populations as part, but not completely, of geography. The text focuses on alternative geographies, countercultural positions, which are simultaneously deemed ungeographic yet hold in them long-standing spatial negotiations.

And this positionality—in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Caribbean—is inextricably linked to a discourse of modernity wherein questions of progress are underwritten by the terrors of slavery, the living memories of slavery, and diasporic migrations. Further, the idea of "belonging" in and to place—whether it be a particular nation, a specific community, real/imagined Africa, homelands—is incomplete, premised on a struggle toward some kind of sociospatial liberation. Importantly, this struggle can go several ways at once: it might be developed through the language of nation-purity, or desired reconciled belongings that reiterate hetero-patriarchal norms; it might be formulated as Pan-Africanism, or through "outernational" musical exchanges and cultural borrowings; it might draw on European thought, Afrocentric philosophies, or both; it might foresee black nations, in Liberia, Ethiopia; it might involve crossing borders or enforced, chosen, temporary, or permanent, exiles. Black Atlantic populations, then, inhabit place in a unique way, which is, in part, upheld by geographic yearnings and movements that demonstrate "various struggles toward emancipation, autonomy, and citizenship" and a reexamination of "the problems of nationality, location, identity and historical memory."[17] *The Black Atlantic* works to loosen the naturalization of (black) identities and place, arguing for the ways in which a different sense of place, and different geographic landmarks, might fit into our historically present spatial organization. And while his critique of transparent space is not explicit, Gilroy does provide some tools through which we might reconsider the terms of place, belonging, and unfulfilled liberties. That is, he sites black geographies through a terrain of struggle.

What I continue to like about Gilroy's text is the way he develops these ideas alongside geographic materialities. His work is not often examined for his invocation of three-dimensionalities, which correspond with how we can understand the space of the black subject.[18] Of course, *The Black Atlantic* is not a forthright spatial investigation; indeed, criticism includes Joan Dayan's discussion of what she describes as Gilroy's slave ship and middle passage metaphors, symbols which, she argues, produce a deterritorialized "cartography of celebratory journeys."[19] But I want to read *The Black Atlantic,* and the black Atlantic, differently: as an "imbrication of material and metaphorical space,"[20] in part because the text is so noticeably underscored by a very important black geography, the Atlantic Ocean, through which the production of space can be imagined on diasporic

terms. In fact, I would suggest that it is precisely because Gilroy draws on real, imagined, historical, and contemporary *geographies,* that Dayan can imagine and document the materialities, the landscapes, he elides in this work. That is, metaphors of the middle passage or the Atlantic Ocean are never simply symbolic renditions of placelessness and vanishing histories—this is too easy and, in my view, reinforces the idea that black scholars and writers are ungeographic, trapped in metaphors that seemingly have no physical resonance. Coupling Gilroy's insights into modernity and intellectual histories with his decision to position black cultures in relation to the Atlantic Ocean and other physical geographies helps to explicate where the terrain of political struggle fits into black cultural lives. I suggest that if *The Black Atlantic* is also read through the material sites that hold together and anchor the text—the middle passage, the Atlantic Ocean, black travelers in Europe, Canada, and elsewhere, the slave ship, the plantation, shared outernational musics, fictional and autobiographical geographies, nationalisms—it clarifies that there are genealogical connections between dispossession, transparent space, and black subjectivities. Historical and contemporary black geographies surface and centralize the notion that black diaspora populations have told and are telling how their surroundings have shaped their lives. These connections flag, for example, the middle passage, expressive cultures, and the plantation on historio-experiential terms, spatializing black histories and lives, which are underwritten by the displacement of difference. It is important, then, to recognize that black Atlantic cultures have always had an intimate relationship with geography, which arises out of diasporic populations existing "partly inside and not always against the grand narrative of Enlightenment and its organizing principles";[21] principles that include the naturalization of identity and place, the spatialization of racial hierarchies, the displacement of difference, ghettos, prisons, crossed borders, and sites of resistance and community.

THE POETICS OF LANDSCAPE

Édouard Glissant's "poetics of landscape" brings attention to geographic expression, specifically, saying, theorizing, feeling, knowing, writing, and imagining space and place. For Glissant, poetics are both written and unwritten, and neither process can be claimed as superior or more legitimate than the

other. The poetics of landscape, in Glissant's terms, "awakens" language, offering intelligible and visible black struggles. The spatial undertones are obvious, found both in Glissant's choice of terminology and in his deeper concerns with his immediate environment, the landscapes and topography of Martinique and the Caribbean: the Other America, perpetual concealment, somber greens, which the roads still do not penetrate, mahogany trees supported by blue beaches on a human scale, the salt of the sea, beaches up for grabs, "our landscape is our only monument: its meaning can only be traced on the underside."[22] Glissant's complex sense of place, his poetics of landscape, creates a way to enter into, and challenge, traditional geographic formulations without the familiar tools of maps, charts, official records, and figures; he enters, through his voice-language, a poetic-politics, and conceptualizes his surroundings as "uncharted," and inextricably connected to his selfhood and a local community history. The poetics of landscape discloses the underside, unapparent histories and stories that name the world and black personhood. Sylvia Wynter, in discussing Glissant specifically, describes his poetics as a "counterconcept," which contests, as she puts it, "Man," purveyor of "*universal généralisant*": unquestionable reason, value, and authority.[23]

I work with this counterconcept because it gives emphasis to the oppositional speaker/community vis-à-vis their inevitable—although sometimes vexed—connection to the outer world and, to continue with Wynter's terminology, "Man's" geographies. Poetics of landscape constitute narrative acts, delineating a "relationship with the land, one that is even more threatened because the community is alienated from the land. . . . Describing the landscape is not enough. The individual, the community, the land are inextricable in the process of creating history."[24] In discussing written and oral histories, Glissant remarks that the relationship between the writer/speaker and the landscape in fact makes history and brings the subject into being. In a way, Glissant reconciles the black subject to geography, arguing that expressive acts, particularly the naming of place—regardless of expressive method and technique—is also a process of self-assertion and humanization, a naming of inevitable black geographic presence. To put it another way, naming place is also an act of naming the self and self-histories. Insisting that different kinds of expression are multifariously even, that is, not hierarchically constituted as, for example, "written" over "oral," and that the landscape does not simply function as a decorative

background, opens up the possibility for thinking about the production of space as unfinished, a poetics of questioning.[25]

What is striking here, and very useful in terms of black women's geographies, is that the poetics of landscape are not derived from the desire for socioeconomic possession. Nor are they derived from a unitary vantage point. Indeed, Glissant suggests that there are different sets of geographic tools available, which are anchored, primarily, in nonlinearity, contradictory histories, dispossession, and an "infinite variety" of landscapes.[26] The claim to place should not be naturally followed by material ownership and black repossession but rather by a grammar of liberation, through which ethical *human*-geographies can be recognized and expressed. Arguably, then, while the displacement of difference outlines processes of human and inhuman classification, it also draws attention to subaltern spatial practices, which are written into and expressed through the poetics of landscape.

The combination of material and imagined geographies is intended to unfix black women's geographies from their "natural" places and spaces by bringing into focus the "sayability" of geography. Acts of expressing and saying place are central to understanding what kinds of geographies are available to black women. Because black women's geographies are bound up with practices of spatial domination, saying space and place is understood as one of the more crucial ways geography can work for black women. The poetics of landscape, then, comprises theories, poems, dramatic plays, and historical narratives that disclose black women's spaces and places. They comprise an interdisciplinary and diasporic analytical opening, which advances creative acts that influence and undermine existing spatial arrangements. I take this inextricable combination of real-imagined geographies seriously throughout the project in order to argue that the poetics of landscape, whether expressed through theoretical, fictional, poetic, musical, or dramatic texts, can also be understood as real responses to real spatial inequalities. The poetics of landscape allow black women to critique the boundaries of transatlantic slavery, rewrite national narratives, respatialize feminism, and develop new pathways across traditional geographic arrangements; they also offer several reconceptualizations of space and place, positioning black women as geographic subjects who provide spatial clues as to how more humanly workable geographies might be imagined.

Produced alongside and through practices of domination, black women's

expressive acts spatialize the imperative of a perspective of struggle. Within this work, I attempt to locate black women's geographies in space without situating these geographies firmly inside an official story or history. Rather than attempting to complete black women's geographies by "finding" them or "discovering" them, I am emphasizing that geography and black women have *always* functioned together and that this interrelated process is a new way to "enter" into space (conceptually and materially), one that uncovers a geographic story predicated on an ongoing struggle (to assert humanness and more humanly workable geographies). In this way, the displacement of difference, geographies of domination, transatlantic slavery, the black diaspora, and the poetics of landscape, throughout the study, are used to indicate the ways in which unofficial or oppositional geographies—which are so often displaced, disguised, or relocated by practices of domination—are socially produced indicators of the imaginative and real work geography can do.

READING THE DEMONIC

Etymologically, demonic is defined as spirits—most likely the devil, demons, or deities—capable of possessing a human being. It is attributed to the human or the object through which the spirit makes itself known, rather than the demon itself, thus identifying unusual, frenzied, fierce, cruel human behaviors. While demons, devils, and deities, and the behavioral energies they pass on to others, are unquestionably wrapped up in religious hierarchies and the supernatural, the demonic has also been understood in terms that are less ecclesiastical. In mathematics, physics, and computer science, the demonic connotes a working system that cannot have a determined, or knowable, outcome. The demonic, then, is a nondeterministic schema; it is a process that is hinged on uncertainty and nonlinearity because the organizing principle cannot predict the future. This schema, this way of producing or desiring an outcome, calls into question "the always non-arbitrary pre-prescribed" parameters of sequential and classificatory linearity.[27] With this in mind, the demonic invites a slightly different conceptual pathway—while retaining its supernatural etymology—and acts to identify a system (social, geographic, technological) that can only unfold and produce an outcome if uncertainty, or (dis)organization, or something supernaturally demonic, is integral to the methodology.

In her essay, "Beyond Miranda's Meanings: Un/Silencing the 'Demonic Ground' of Caliban's 'Woman'," Sylvia Wynter develops the demonic in two ways. First, she works with the schema outlined above, specifically drawing on the theories forwarded by physicists, to suggest that a demonic model conceptualizes vantage points "outside the space-time orientation of the humunucular observer."[28] This vantage point makes possible her analysis of our historically present world-human organization, the "order-field" wherein "race" functions to distinguish Man from his human (black, native, female) others. Her analysis does not lead her to discuss Man verses other, however. Rather, her demonic model serves to locate what Wynter calls cognition *outside* "the always non-arbitrary pre-prescribed," which underscores the ways in which subaltern lives are not marginal/other to regulatory classificatory systems, but instead integral to them. This cognition, or demonic model, if we return to the nondeterministic schema described above, makes possible a different unfolding, one that does not *replace* or override or remain subordinate to the vantage point of "Man" but instead parallels his constitution and his master narratives of humanness. It is this conception of humanness that I read as Wynter's contribution to re-presenting the grounds from which we can imagine the world and more humanly workable geographies.

In developing a second, but related, use of demonic, Wynter describes "the grounds" as the absented presence of black womanhood. "Beyond Miranda's Meanings" is one of Wynter's more thorough and explicit analyses of black feminism.[29] For those familiar with William Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* the demonic here connotes a geographical, ontological, and historical lack, the missing racial-sexual character in the play: Caliban's potential mate through whom the reproduction of his race might occur, who Wynter suggests is absent, and demonic, precisely because she is outside the bounds of reason, "too alien to comprehend," as Audre Lorde wrote.[30] Wynter asks, then, what would happen to our understanding and conception of race and humanness if black women legitimately inhabited our world and made their needs known? And how does her silence, absence, and missing desired and desirable body, figure into the production of selfhood? What does her nondeterministic impossibility add to our conceptualization of humanness? Demonic grounds, then, is a very different geography; one which is genealogically wrapped up in the historical spatial unrepresentability of black femininity and, to return to the demonic

model above, one that thinks about the ways in which black women necessarily contribute to a re-presentation of human geography.[31]

I want to encourage reading *Demonic Grounds* in the spirit of Sylvia Wynter's writings because her philosophies aim to identify a transition *toward* a new epistemology. That is, the grounds of Wynter's project contribute to what David Scott describes as a "revisioned humanism," which is fashioned as a "direction, a *telos*."[32] Of course this present work, *Demonic Grounds,* does not pretend to twin Wynter's extraordinary and intricate contributions to metaphysics and humanism! However, I use her work to clarify what the tenets of geography make possible, not just in the areas of mapping domination and subordination, but also in the areas of working toward more just conceptualizations of space and place. Importantly, then, the demonic grounds outlined by Wynter in "Beyond Miranda's Meanings" are not simply identifying categories of difference, absence, and the places and voices of black women and/or black feminism; they also outline the ways in which this place is an unfinished and therefore transformative human geography story; thus, Wynter works toward "a new science of human discourse."[33]

I think, then, Wynter gives us a new place to go, a "direction," as David Scott puts it, in human geographic inquiry. In terms of reading *Demonic Grounds,* I hope that my discussions cite and site at least a small part, or "a piece of the way," in this debate.[34] My argument is not intended to be a corrective discussion—or a new map—but a contribution to the connections between justness and place, difference and geography, and new spatial possibilities. The chapters that follow are intended to raise questions about the ground beneath our feet, how we are all implicated in the production of space, and how geography—in its various formations—is integral to social struggles. *Demonic Grounds* is not meant to be read as a text that finds, discovers, and surveys the places black women inhabit; rather, it begins what I hope will be a discussion about what black women's historical-contextual locations bring to bear on our present geographic organization. *Demonic Grounds* seeks to consider the ways in which practices of domination are in close contact with alternative geographic perspectives and spatial matters that may not necessarily replicate what we think we know, or have been taught, about our surroundings. So the conceptual work of my discussions is quite simple: how do geography and blackness work together to advance a different way of knowing and imagining the world?

Can these different knowledges and imaginations perhaps call into question the limits of existing spatial paradigms and put forth more humanly workable geographies?

I use these questions as a thematic through which my discussions can be read. I begin with what I consider to be the key debates and problems in geographic inquiry. However, rather than building my argument around questions of absences (for example, who, what is missing from the discipline of human geography?), I consider what happens, conceptually and materially, when black studies encounters the discipline of geography, and blackness is imagined through specific geographic inquiries. I note that while there is a wide disciplinary gap between human geography, black experiences, and black studies, it is not indicative of a black sense of place. In chapter 1, then, I argue for what black geographies have always made possible—materially, theoretically, imaginatively. The geographic relationship between the past and the present and racial geographies is crucial here, as it works to examine the ways in which understanding blackness has been twinned by the practice of *placing* blackness *and* rendering body-space integral to the production of space. Equally important are the ways in which the material and conceptual possibilities geography offers also raise a new set of concerns for black subjects, beyond and through what is considered the given, knowable, and profitable perimeters of space and place. This paradox underscores my interdisciplinary methodological approach, which is to combine different conceptualizations of space and place and demonstrate that while traditional spatial formulations are powerful, geography is also a terrain through which blackness makes itself known. Drawing on Toni Morrison, W. E. B. Du Bois, Neil Smith, Édouard Glissant, Frantz Fanon, and Dionne Brand, I explore traditional geographies, bodily-spatial struggles, and a "different sense of place." I argue that a close examination of black geographies simultaneously points to cycles of racial-sexual domination and oppositional geographic practices, which in turn offer what Marlene Nourbese Philip calls "a *public* genealogy of resistance": histories, names and places of black pain, language, and opposition, which are "spoken with the whole body" and present to the world, to our geography, other rhythms, other times, other spaces.[35]

What kind of philosophical and spatial work can a public genealogy of resistance do if it sites blackness, black femininity, and the body as speaking

to and across the world? In chapter 2 I think about this question in relation to bodily captivity, enslavement, and emancipation, which I believe heighten the paradox of black women's geographies. Specifically, as noted above, I am interested in the ways in which black women inhabited "the crevices of power" necessary to enslavement, and through which some were able to manipulate and recast the meanings of slavery's geographic terrain. I therefore read a moment in Harriet Jacobs's slave narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,* in order to examine the ways in which a black sense of place communicates the terms of captivity. In her narrative, Jacobs (as Linda Brent) describes the seven years she spent in her grandmother's tiny garret, a retreat she was forced to take in order to save her life and her children's lives. The garret highlights how geography is transformed by Jacobs/Brent into a usable and paradoxical space. More than this, the garret is situated in and amongst the violent geographies of slavery; Jacobs's/Brent's position in the garret allows her to witness and say these geographies "from the last place they thought of," not on the margins, or from a publicly subordinated position, but from the disabling confines of a different slave space, what she describes as her "loophole of retreat."

What interests me, in addition to geographic possibilities of the garret that Jacobs/Brent discloses, are the ways in which her racial-sexual body, and the naming of her (unprotected) body, underwrite other diasporic feminisms. That is, Jacobs/Brent names the body as a location of struggle. Throughout the narrative, skin, hair, arms, legs, feet, eyes, hands, muscles, corporeal sexual differences—these physical attributes, of Jacobs/Brent, her family, and her lovers, contribute to the possibilities and limitations of space. I follow my discussion of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by analyzing the conceptual threads between black women's enslaved bodies, the garret, and Marlene Nourbese Philip's poetics. I make these connections not to present an ahistorical reading of black femininity, but rather to address the ways in which the contributions of second-wave black feminism are diasporic precisely because the body, and the legacy of racial-sexual discrimination, have forced a respatialization of white Euro-American feminisms. I then discuss the geographic underpinnings of black feminism because this politics can also be understood as a struggle over space and place, within the academy, in theory and activism, and across women's literatures. In what ways are these body-identity politics showing the alterability of space and black women's long-standing geographic contributions,

but also perhaps reifying the margin and "garreting" black femininity? Is the garret a continuous assertion of black politics, conceptually and experientially reframed as the margin? What kinds of metaphoric and material demands does the margin make on how we politicize difference? Or, can the margin be recast in less geographically constrictive terms, perhaps evidencing a part of an enlarged story field?

I add to these queries through a different study when I consider the slave auction block. In a sense, the slave auction block reorients how space and place are communicated through the category of black femininity. This historical-contextual site not only adds to the complexities of paradoxical space, but also delineates how intimate physical attributes—skin, hair, arms, legs, feet, eyes, hands, muscles, corporeal sexual differences—can also shape external geographies, those scales that exist outside the body proper. By focusing on "the moment of sale," a concept borrowed from historian Walter Johnson, chapter 3 looks at three interconnected ways the slave auction block simultaneously marks the unfree body and the spaces outside of it: through displaying and exhibiting difference and the seeable body in terms of human/inhuman; through marking the differences between *kinds* of places (such as the body, the auction block, the plantation, the region, the nation); and through demonstrating how differences between kinds of places are not enclosed but rather entwined, and arguably sustained, by the moment of sale (the body for sale on the auction block, for example, bolsters the local economy and expresses racial differences in place).

These connections and differences suggest, however, that the slave auction block is not an unalterable materiality. Instead, the slave auction block is part of a social process that situates and localizes the moment of human sale, and in turn enables the objectification of black women and the repetitive naturalization of race-sex. But because the slave auction block is wrapped up in the "striking contradiction" of black objectification-humanity, it follows that it is necessarily a location of unresolved struggle. Building on the displacement of difference, I also suggest that the auction block opens up the possibility of human and bodily contestation: it creates a space through which black women can sometimes radically disrupt an otherwise rigid site of racialization and sexualization. I then read an excerpt from Robbie McCauley's play *Sally's Rape* as evidence of the historically present meaning of the auction block. Through the poetics of

landscape, McCauley considers the auction block as a viable site of dramatic re-visitation and re-presentation: in *Sally's Rape,* the auction block is evidence of our pasts, and of a historically specific geography that exacted subordinations; but it is also a way for McCauley to question how this legacy puts demands on our contemporary geographic arrangements.

An important aspect of my argument is the illumination of the seeable and unseeable—black subjects hidden and on display. Black Canada offers a different way to think through the seeable and the unseeable. In chapter 4, I study the ways in which the absented presences of black peoples in the nation assert a different, less familiar national story. I introduce the concepts of "surprise" and "wonder" in order to conceptualize Canada as a feasible site of blackness. That is, while existing debates in Black Canadian Studies about the past and present places of black Canadians focus on absences, absented presences, and black Canadian marginality, they also embed these subjects within the nation-space. Specifically, these debates are also a way to insist that black Canadian populations are bound up in how we understand Canada-nation. It is suggested, then, that blackness is an unexpected but long-standing presence within Canada. I then position Canadian slave Marie-Joseph Angélique as a historical figure whose contestable presence makes black Canada believable. Angélique was accused of and executed for burning down most of Montreal, New France, in 1734. I suggest that Angélique's geographies—the difference she made to the nation and Montreal spatially and philosophically—have created other spaces through which black Canada can be articulated. That is, her alleged arson is a geographic opposition that needs to be (but is not necessarily) believable in order to help verify the presence of black Canada.

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, the garret, Marlene Nourbese Philip's poetics, the slave auction block, *Sally's Rape,* Marie-Joseph Angélique, absented presences and black Canada, differently challenge how we have come to know geography; these texts, memories, women, and locations are just some of the ways to imagine and talk about black geographic struggles in the material, theoretical, and imaginative landscapes we occupy and express. Chapter 5 develops ways to present these spatialities through the work of Sylvia Wynter. I present Sylvia Wynter's ideas in relation to black geographies, showing that her unique understanding of space and place can perhaps direct us toward more humanly workable geographies. This chapter speaks to earlier chapters, arguing for a less descriptive

presentation of black geographies and a turn to an interhuman reading of the production of space. Wynter makes possible a different approach to geography, one that is not marginal or subordinate or even developed across existing spatial patterns; her enlarged understanding of race, racism, geography, and displacement tells the story of interhuman geographies as evidence of struggles that put new demands on our historically present planet.

Demonic Grounds is a study of connections. It connects black studies, human geography, and black feminism. The textual sources connect literature, theory, poetry, drama, remembrances, images, and maps. These connections and expressions are not intended to name what/who is missing—from black studies, human geography, black feminism, or our historically present geographic landscapes. They are, instead, intended to illustrate the ways in which human geographies are, as a result of connections, made alterable. The combination of diverse theories, literatures, and material geographies works to displace "disciplinary" motives and demonstrate that the varying places of black women are connected to multiple material and textual landscapes and ways of knowing. These discussions are also about geographic stories. Places and spaces of blackness and black femininity are employed to uncover otherwise concealed or expendable human geographies. Because these geographic stories are predicated on struggle, and examine the interplay between geographies of domination and black women's geographies, they are not conclusive or finished. I hope to make clear that the ongoing geographic struggle of and by black women is not simply indicative of the adverse effects of geographic domination, but that geography is entwined with strategic and meaningful languages, acts, expressions, and experiences. What I am trying to illustrate are the powerful connections among race, sex, gender, and displacement, and the oppositional implications of saying, thinking, living, and writing black geographies. These connections, I think, make clear how the livability of the world is bound up with a human geography story that is not presently just, yet geography discloses a workable terrain through which respatialization can be and is imagined and achieved.

chapter 1

I Lost an Arm on My Last Trip Home: Black Geographies

And suddenly, there was an avalanche of pain, red impossible agony! And I screamed and screamed.

—OCTAVIA E. BUTLER

But a scream is an act of excessiveness. Our land is excessive.

—ÉDOUARD GLISSANT

In the final moments of Octavia Butler's *Kindred,* the protagonist, Dana Franklin, returns from the past. Dismembered, bloody, screaming, Dana has violently come through a wall into the present, having endured repeated supernatural returns to antebellum Maryland. Octavia Butler's novel offers an interesting introduction to black geographies: Dana's predicament, as a contemporary subject forced into a time-space compression and a time-space reversal, allows her to confront and produce several landscapes. Present and past geographies, while distinguishable and particular, are also enmeshed vis-à-vis Dana's bodily and psychic experiences. Her supernatural status, as a time-traveling present-past subject, fractures rational time-space progression by allowing her to be experientially tied to urban California in 1976 and a Maryland slave plantation roughly 200 years earlier. By stacking time and place on top of one another, and allowing a black woman to ensure that the connections between past and present are, at once, contextually specific and bound, Butler effectively deepens black geographies. Dana, by stepping into what might be considered unknown or inaccessible spaces and places (the past, underacknowledged black geographies, time-space reversal), respatializes the potential of black femininity and black subjectivity in general. Blackness becomes a site of radical possibility, supernatural travels, and difficult epistemological returns to

the past and the present. Butler presents us with landscapes shaped by selves and experiences that are extraordinary in that they are not comfortably situated in the past, present, or future. The landscape is neither complete nor fully intelligible. Physical geographies—the walls and rooms of Dana's 1976 apartment and the perimeters and buildings of an antebellum plantation—are not static. Instead, they are permeable and material indications of the uncertainty of place. Rational, linear, and knowable spatial patterns are not possible in Butler's narrative, and this leads us to consider that our engagement with place, and three-dimensionality, can inspire a different spatial story, one that is unresolved but also caught up in the flexible, sometimes disturbing, demands of geography, which some people "wouldn't think was so sane."[1]

Octavia Butler's hooking together of past and present locations, through time-travel, memory, knowledge, and literary production, allows us to imagine that black geographies, while certainly material and contextual, can be lived in unusual, unexpected, ways. Being materially situated *in place* is an inconclusive process; being materially situated *in place* holds in it possibilities that do not neatly replicate or privilege traditional geographic patterns of geometry, progress, cartography, and conquest. Indeed, the geographies of *Kindred* indicate the ways in which the built environment and the material landscape are sites that are intensely experiential and uneven, and deeply dependant on psychic, imaginary work. These spaces are entered and exited on terms that require an engagement with "something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes."[2] Octavia Butler's novel and characters suggest that material geographies are sites of possibility, which are discerned and unraveled by what Kathleen Kirby calls "the space of the subject."[3] That is, the racialized, gendered, sexed, classed, and imaginative body-self necessarily interprets space and place—in its limitations and its possibilities. Dana's production of, and interaction with, topographical, geopolitical, corporeal, psychic, and discursive spaces matter, greatly, because she and her geographies reveal the uncertainty of traditional spatial patterns.

Édouard Glissant suggests that geographies produced in conjunction with, and often because of, white European practices of domination expose "various kinds of madness."[4] These forms of sociogeographic madness are, for Glissant, tied to transatlantic slavery and colonialism: the landless black subject is, importantly, anchored to a new world grid that is economically,

racially, and sexually normative, or, seemingly nonblack; this grid suppresses the possibility of black geographies by invalidating the subject's cartographic needs, expressions, and knowledges. Toni Morrison, additionally, explains that racialized geographies are pathologies, indications of the ways in which space and place contribute to the dehumanization, fragmentation, and madness of both free and unfree peoples and their lands.[5]

What kinds of spatial restraints, values, and possibilities would incite these three divergent black theorists and authors to claim that the land, and land experiences, provoke various kinds of madness and fantastic time-travels? What is it about space, place, and blackness—the uneven sites of physical and experiential "difference"—that derange the landscape and its inhabitants? In order to begin thinking about these questions, it is important to highlight first the understanding that racial domination and human injustices are spatially propped up by racial-sexual codes, particularly bodily codes, such as phenotype and sex. That is, racism and sexism produce attendant geographies that are bound up in human disempowerment and dispossession. This can be seen, most disturbingly, in locations of racial and sexual violence—dragged bodies, historical and contemporary lynchings, rape—wherein the body is not only marked as different, but this difference, precisely because it is entwined with domination, inscribes the multiple scales outside of the punished body itself. Bodily violence spatializes other locations of dehumanization and restraint, rendering bodily self-possession and other forms of spatial ownership virtually unavailable to the violated subject. One of the many ways violence operates across gender, sexuality, and race is through multiscalar discourses of ownership: having "things," owning lands, invading territories, possessing someone, are, in part, narratives of displacement that reward and value particular forms of conquest.[6] And, at least for my purposes, this reward system repetitively returns us to the body, black subjecthood, and the where of blackness, not just as it is owned, but as black subjects participate in ownership. Black diasporic struggles can also be read, then, as geographic contests over discourses of ownership. Ownership of the body, individual and community voices, bus seats, women, "Africa," feminism, history, homes, record labels, money, cars, these are recurring positionalities, written and articulated through protest, musics, feminist theory, fiction, the everyday.[7] These positionalities and struggles over the meaning of place add a geographic dimension to practices of black reclamation. Yet they also illustrate

the ways in which the legacy of racial dispossession underwrites how we have come to know space and place, and that the connections between what are considered "real" or valuable forms of ownership are buttressed through racial codes that mark the black body as ungeographic.

Often, but not always, the only recognized geographic relevancy permitted to black subjects in the diaspora is that of dispossession and social segregation. Recall the essays in Toni Morrison's edited collection *Race-ing Justice, En-Gendering Power,* wherein black men and women—including, but not limited to Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill—are continually read vis-à-vis a historical-racial landscape that expresses the impossibility of black self-possession. Black self-possession and self-entitlement cannot quite be read as feasible geographic processes in the terms laid out by traditional geographies because the close ties between the body and the landscape around these bodies (the traces of history) refuse such a reading, and arguably translate black geographies as homogenous sites of dispossession. And here, affluence, professionalism, class, dress, and education sometimes slip away: stereotype, often racial-bodily stereotype, becomes the primary medium of exchange.[8] This exchange is displayed, misconstruing and spatializing our imaginations because it is so tightly bound to the idea that dispossessed black bodies are naturally in place.

It is telling, then, that Morrison begins her introduction to the collection by reading another important geographic story, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe,* a tale of a shipwreck and Crusoe's colonial relationship with "barbarous" Friday.[9] Friday's geographies are so intimately tied to his perceptible savage body that he must *willingly* give up on his understanding of land in order to fulfill Defoe's representational narrative of subaltern subjugation. That is, due to his complex relationship with Crusoe, Friday is positioned as a subject whose *own* geographies, whose *own* sense of place, are unrecognizable and valueless. And Morrison suggests that Friday's predicament is an ongoing dilemma, writ large in contemporary U.S. lives. I add the dimension of geography to her example in order to call attention to the ways in which the black body often determines the ways in which the landscape around the black body is read.[10] This is not meant to suggest that black people do not own land, that stereotypes do not have lived repercussions, that geographic reclamations are irrelevant, or that blackness easily corresponds with poverty. Instead, it reveals that the question of ownership is often wrapped up in a legacy of race/racism

bolstered by compelling hierarchical categories, stereotypes of dispossession (captivity, lost homelands, evictions, joblessness, criminality, incarceration, welfare queens). So, the ways in which blackness has been translated as ungeographic is my central interest here, because it cites/sites how dispossession is an important racial narrative, which socially and economically rates ownership, domination, and human/life value. This also, particularly if we keep in mind Friday's ongoing spatial dilemma, allows us to consider that the ungeographic is a colonial fiction, sometimes cast in real life, thus functioning to determine how we only seem to see black geographies in hierarchical, stereotypical, human/inhuman terms, and therefore as ostensible impossibilities.

Yet those without formal, or sanctioned, land-possession point to the limitations of existing geographic patterns and, consequently, reveal alternative spatial strategies and desires. Butler, Glissant, and Morrison each bring into focus geographic patterns that are underwritten by black alienation from the land, but their analyses do not end here. Instead, they ask what this alienation brings to bear on processes of marginalization and how we might imagine black geographies in new ways. The material landscape itself, as it is produced by the black subject and mapped as unimaginably black, must be rewritten into black, and arguably human, existence on different terms. The various kinds of madness, the pathological geographies, the dismembered and displaced bodies, the impossible black places, the present-past time-space cartographers, and topographies of "something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there"—these material and metaphoric places begin to take us there. First, by recognizing the ways in which the social production of space is inextricably tied up with the differential placement of racial bodies. And second, through signaling a different sense of place, one which does not exactly duplicate the traditional features of geographic ownership that we seem to value so much.

The writings of Butler, Glissant, and Morrison are critical of, and therefore also an indication of, the discursive and material power of transparent space. Transparent space assumes that geography—specifically, physical and material geographies—is readily knowable, bound up with ideologies and activities that work to maintain a safe socioeconomic clarity: the walls of Dana's apartment are not permeable, Friday's lack of a sense of place is natural rather than enforced and socially produced, the landscape is not open to various kinds of madness. This transparency "goes hand in hand

with a view of space as innocent, as free of traps or secret places."[11] While transparent space is a view, or perspective (what we *see* is knowable, readily decipherable), governing social desires continually bolster its seemingly self-evident characteristics: particular local and global mappings, infrastructures, regional boundaries, and transportation routes are examples of how transparent space, seemingly innocent, is materialized in the geographic environment.[12] Prevailing spatial organization gives a coherency and rationality to uneven geographic processes and arrangements: a city plan, for example, can (and often does) reiterate social class distinctions, race and gender segregation, and (in)accessibility to and from specific districts; the flows of money, spaces, infrastructure, and people are uneven, in that the built environment privileges, and therefore mirrors, white, heterosexual, capitalist, and patriarchal geopolitical needs.[13] This upholds processes of naturalization where "inequality [is] blazoned into the geographical landscape . . . for certain socially determined ends."[14] Such conceptions of natural, transparent geographies, are discursively and materially built up and mapped; the outer-world is organized according to systems of power-domination, systems that have a stake in the continued objectification of social spaces, social beings, and social systems.

The linkages between transparent space and the space of the subject begin to clarify the ways in which black geographies can be conceptualized. While the power of transparent space works to hierarchically position individuals, communities, regions, and nations, it is also contestable—the subject interprets, and ruptures, the knowability of our surroundings. What this contestation makes possible are "black geographies," which I want to identify as "*the terrain* of political struggle itself," or, *where* the imperative of a perspective of struggle takes place.[15] Here, the locations of black history, selfhood, imagination, and resistance are not only attached to the production of space through their marginality, but also through the ways in which they bring into focus responses to geographic domination. That is, black geographies cannot be fully understood if they are primarily conceptualized through utterances such as "invisible" or "peripheral." Indeed, following Neil Smith and Cindi Katz, this language can take away from the grounded everyday meanings metaphors impart by emptying out the material contours implicit in spatial articulations.[16] It is important to also think about the ways in which black geographies demonstrate both the limitations and possibilities of traditional spatial arrangements through

the ways the black subject is produced by, and is producing, geographic knowledges. That is, invisible geographies, marginality, indicate a struggle, and ways of knowing the world, which can also illustrate wider conceptual and material spaces for consideration: real, lived dispossessions and reclamations, for example. The margins and invisibility, then, are also lived and right in the middle of our historically present landscape.

Black geographies comprise philosophical, material, imaginary, and representational trajectories; each of these trajectories, while interlocking, is also indicative of multiscalar processes, which impact upon and organize the everyday. Black geographies are located within and outside the boundaries of traditional spaces and places; they expose the limitations of transparent space through black social particularities and knowledges; they locate and speak back to the geographies of modernity, transatlantic slavery, and colonialism; they illustrate the ways in which the raced, classed, gendered, and sexual body is often an indicator of spatial options and the ways in which geography can indicate racialized habitation patterns; they are places and spaces of social, economic, and political denial and resistance; they are fragmented, subjective, connective, invisible, visible, unacknowledged, and conspicuously positioned; they have been described as, among other things, rhizomorphic, a piece of the way, diasporic, blues terrains, spiritual, and Manichaean.[17] The complexity of these geographies is found in the ways they reveal how ideas—black and nonblack—get turned into lived and imaginary spaces that are tied to geographic organization.

These tensions, between black and nonblack, transparent space and particular knowledges, real and imagined geographies, put forward some initial ideas about black geographies. I explore these tensions in order to propose how we might integrate a rich and complex geographic story into our present geographic imaginations and lives. I discuss black studies and human geography together, integrating some key points that help disclose the complexities of black geographies. Drawing on literature, literary criticism, geographic studies, geographic theories, and black social theories, I illustrate that interdisciplinary investigations make possible the category of "black geographies": subaltern or alternative geographic patterns that work alongside and beyond traditional geographies and site a terrain of struggle.

For the remainder of this discussion, I draw on black studies and

human geography to outline how the production of space is bound up with racial ideologies and experiences. Specifically, I address the theoretical and geographic possibilities that are opened up when certain instances and ideas relevant to black studies encounter or come into conversation with human geography theories. While my discussion does not explore all of the debates, tenets, and possibilities within black studies and geography, I do hope this framework illustrates where further investigations might go. This interdisciplinary approach has allowed me to think about how black geographies are produced in an environment that rewards transparent space and practitioners of social and geographic domination and eschews black spatial struggles. I outline some of the ways the production of space, particularly within the discipline of geography and traditional spatial conceptualizations, fosters discourses that equate blackness with subordination, the ungeographic, and metaphor. And I suggest that, while this discursive marginalization is certainly powerful, it does not prevent the making of black geographies if we seek out other interdisciplinary analytical tools to enlarge how we understand uneven social processes. I follow this with a discussion of the work of Neil Smith and Édouard Glissant to begin to "fill in the conceptual abyss between metaphorical and material space," but also to take seriously the ways in which Glissant's poetics-politics put forward new geographic demands.[18] There is some urgency here, if we want to make sense of, and recognize, the ways in which black struggles—evident in language, poetics, politics, musics, and the built environment—are real responses to real inequalities. Black geographies are often unimaginable because we assume they do not really have any valuable material referents, that they are words rather than places, or that their materiality is always already fraught with discourses of dispossession. So, what happens if these places, spaces, words, and experiences are imaginable and complex geographies, which have always existed before our very eyes? Can they lead to a different spatialized politics?

EN ROUTE TO DEEP SPACE AND A POETICS OF LANDSCAPE

Finding and recognizing black geographies is difficult, not only because sociospatial denial, objectification, and capitalist value systems render them invisible, but also because the places and spaces of blackness are

adversely shaped by the basic rules of traditional geographies. Prevailing geographic rules have a stake in the ghettoization of difference and/or the systemic concealment of physical locations that map this difference. Transatlantic slavery, which will be expanded upon in the following chapters, provides a striking example of how the physical landscape and geographic knowledges, together, suppressed, imprisoned, and spatialized the black population. Thus, the production of black spaces in the diaspora is tied to locations that were and are explicitly produced in conjunction with race, racism, captivity, and economic profit. Traditional geographies did, and arguably still do, *require* black displacement, black placelessness, black labor, and a black population that submissively stays "in place."[19] Enforcing black placelessness/captivity was central to processes of enslavement and the physical geographies of the slave system. Slavery concealed a black sense of place and the possibility of "black geographers" through punishment, dehumanization, and racist discourses, which undermined (but did not prevent) black knowledges. This means, of course, that while black people certainly occupied, experienced, and constructed place, black geographies were (and sometimes still are) rendered unintelligible: racial captivity assumes geographic confinement; geographic confinement assumes a despatialized sense of place; a despatialized sense of place assumes geographic inferiority; geographic inferiority warrants racial captivity. Or, unruly deviant bodies do not have the capacity to produce space and effectively participate in geographic progress; unruly deviant bodies should be kept "in place." Black geographies, ostensibly, do not make sense in a world that validates spatial processes and progress through domination and social disavowal. I therefore think it is important to begin to address some of the key ways black geographies can be recognized, and are produced, in landscapes of domination. This will demonstrate, consequently, that black imaginations and mappings are evidence of the struggle over social space.

I am interested in working across black studies and human geography because these philosophical, conceptual, and empirical approaches to race and geography remain somewhat oppositional: these knowledges are rarely described as overlapping, despite the axiomatic connections between traditional geopolitical objectives of inclusion, exclusion, land-possession, and imperialism. The black subject and black communities are rarely given any formal academic geographic relevancy, whether in terms of a black way of interpreting the world, analyses of black places, a black politics of

location, or black senses of place as *mutual to* other forms of understanding, politicizing, and mapping the world. The disciplinary distances between black studies and human geography often crudely repeat archaic geographic aims, valuing white, patriarchal, and European understandings of space over the work of nonwhite geographers and geographies. Connecting black studies and human geography opens up three meaningful points: first, as mentioned, are the ways in which disciplinary and epistemological desires privilege traditional geographic options; second, are the ways in which traditional geographic aims in fact illustrate how blackness and black subjectivity are implicit to the production of space; and finally, are the ways in which alternative imaginary and real formulations of space and place disrupt and augment existing geographic narratives and maps.

It has been argued that the reasons for the disconnection between black studies/black lives and academic geographic investigations are located within the discipline of human geography. In the special issue of *The Professional Geographer,* which is subtitled "Race, Racism and Geography," several authors explicitly or implicitly suggest that race is "marginalized and fragmented within geography."[20] What each of the essays makes clear is that race is not completely absent from geographic investigations—in recent years in particular, "race" has been a critical analytical category for some geographers. Rather, the critique these human geography theorists impart is that race is not integrated into wide-ranging understandings of spatial power and geographers' commitment to social justice: "no aspect of the discipline, and no spatiality, has escaped racialization" yet racist practices, discourses, colonialist heritages, and whiteness "permeate the epistemological foundations of geography and the institutional structures and practices that shape [its] work environment."[21] And while several of the authors contributing to "Race, Racism and Geography" do not focus on black lives specifically, they do outline how race/racism is segregated or underacknowledged due to disciplinary practices. In this way, they provide a glimpse into where black geographies fit, or do not fit, within spatial analyses: the long commitment of geography and its practitioners to patriarchal and imperialist projects, such as mapping, exploration, conquest, and domination; the ease with which nonwhite women, men, and children are excluded from canonical geographic investigations and/or limited to *objects* of study (oddities in the seamless white landscape), rather than

relevant geographic *subjects* (producing, critiquing, and writing human geographies); the paucity of nonwhite women and men within geography departments; sexual and racial epistemological and physical segregations; and, the lingering positivism implicit in geographic investigations, which tends to document racial inequality without analyzing other genealogical and heterogeneous processes of racialization, race, and difference.[22]

What is both troubling and telling about the disconnection between human geography and black studies are the ways in which this gap perceptibly augments traditional spatial patterns that strategically arrange and define the planet from a unitary vantage point: if black people and communities are left out of, or are simply objects in, geographic studies, they are inevitably cast as unavailable or unreliable geographers and geographic subjects; black knowledges, experiences, and maps remain subordinate to and outside other traditional geographic investigations. Thus, the few critical geographers who are committed to analyzing and dismantling the geographies of race and racism suggest that while the world is fundamentally racialized, "race" is rarely incorporated into research projects, the classroom, institutions, or the everyday conceptualizations (and consequently the real production) of space and place.[23] This omission produces a cycle in which knowledges seem to bifurcate: traditional geographic patterns and practitioners organize the outer world and subordinate difference and non-dominant communities; knowledges and experiences are spatialized accordingly, as present-white/absent-black or dominant-white/subordinate-black; blackness is perceived as inevitably, or naturally, ungeographic and/or ghettoized. The "natural" center (of knowledge, of place, of ethical geographies, for example) is reified as "naturally" *central to* geographic explorations, while difference/blackness is either absent, or only understood as outside of, rather than mutual to, the production of space.[24]

Geographic needs—patriarchal, economic, imperial, academic, and sexual needs—therefore repetitively enact racism (not simply "race") and other discriminatory practices, enforcing what Ruth Wilson Gilmore describes as "a death-dealing displacement of difference into hierarchies that organize relations within and between the planet's sovereign political territories."[25] Gilmore's call to racialize geographic patterns is useful in that she clarifies that race and racism are *serious* geographic projects and processes—despite the disciplinary disconnection. The philosophical and analytical disconnection between "black" and "geography" undermines the very real,

and very meaningful, ways in which the world is organized. This is crucial because the ways in which geographic knowledges are produced and materialized in the built environment in fact synthesizes the ostensibly bifurcated geographic paths. Gilmore, then, offers one way to reframe race, racism, geography, and the discipline of human geography by illustrating how academic, ontological, representational, and material locations are meaningfully connective because blackness "is a spatially and temporally differentiated produced, and *real,* condition of existence and category of analysis."[26]

The connection between geography and blackness is crucial to identifying some of the conditions under which race/racism are necessary to the production of space. The interplay between black experiences in the diaspora, past and present, and spatial organization, are tightly bound in two interconnected ways: black historical and contemporary subjects have not only contributed to the strenuous physical production of space and place in the diaspora (through slave labor, indentured labor, and racially and sexually differentiated labor economies), they also have an investment in the meanings and makings of place due to racial displacement, forced exile, homelessness, rented and owned dwellings, poverty, integration, segregation, political sites, professionalization, community gatherings and locales, nationalism(s), activism, and globalization.

The material physicality of the diaspora—I am thinking of plantations, houses, churches, streets, fields, factories, shops, museums, offices, and so forth—and the negotiation of racialized spaces within the diaspora advance the key ways black subjects have contributed to physical and imaginary geographic projects. Black women, men, and children have been, forcefully and not, implicated in the uneven development of space because overarching traditional geographic projects require that they be placed and displaced. That is, black subjects have to "go" and inhabit somewhere. Empirical analyses in particular illuminate the ways in which racial differences are reflected through material conditions and the impact of this upon geographic opportunities in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.[27] Empirical studies, while differing in subject matter and method, show how patterns of racial domination are fundamentally geographic. Race becomes attached to place in detrimental ways because local conditions reify and naturalize identity-difference: black women live in "bad"/black neighborhoods, have unhealthy children, restricted

employment opportunities and resources, longer work days, and so on. Or: polluted + inexpensive regions = unhealthy/black dwellings = sub-human/sub-woman/bad-mother.[28] Indeed, some (not all) empirical geographic studies tend to environmentally determine particular "races" in particular "places." As critical geographer Don Mitchell notes, environmental determinism was one of the key ways some European and U.S. human geographers "scientifically" documented human differences and justified imperialist ambitions in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.[29] And some current empirical studies, at least to me, evince and endorse this ongoing imperial project—albeit on subtler, sometimes less obvious "imperial" terms—by nodding to and reifying the overwhelming power of the naturalization of identity and place, the knowability of "different" bodies and their "different" attendant geographies.

Importantly, how we know, write, and document space and place can contribute to processes of discriminatory, class-based racialization—again, ideas are turned into spaces: phenotype *can* reflect place and place *can* reflect phenotype. Or, why *are* all the black people living in that particular neighborhood? The socioeconomic mapping of blackness, the unjust and economically driven naturalization of difference, shows the material base of race/racism, the conditions under which many subaltern populations live and have lived, and the spatial constitution of socially produced categories. As mentioned, this mapping of blackness is also limiting and deterministic, in that it de-emphasizes other spatial experiences and imaginations that intersect with geographic materiality, affordability, and geometry. Black geographic togetherness and community ties also identify, for example, the sociocultural pull *away from* what bell hooks describes as terrifying and deathly representations of whiteness, or, the sociocultural pull *into* black spaces, such as familial-based migrations, cultural commitments, safe spaces, and the locations of churches, entertainment venues, and community and political organizations.[30] But where "they" are, as indicative of who "they" are, continues to be powerfully connected to practices of subjugation.

If systems of domination keep transparency operative and conceal other nontransparent activities (such as sites of resistance, geographies of human pain or love, locations of subversion, the place of the black everyday, or diasporic geographies), black subjects are bound up in the patterns that relegate and naturalize difference. The racialized and gendered subject—particularly those who occupy what Sylvia Wynter calls "poverty archipelagos"

(the underdeveloped, the jobless, the homeless, the throwaways), those who laboriously build, work, maintain, clean, protect, re-imagine, and resist landscapes of racial differentiation and denial—are also those who are at stake in the production of space and who have paradoxically been missing from several geographic analyses.[31] A strong disciplinary synthesis asks that we think across and beyond the mapping of "man's inhumanity to man" by noting the geographic outcome of expressing, living, and representing, together, "black geographies"—as they are intimately tied to geographic domination and as they are re-presenting space.[32]

DEEP SPACE AND THE POETICS OF LANDSCAPE

Recognizing that black subjects and communities are openly and complexly geographic, but distanced from sanctioned geographic knowledges, problematizes how we know the world and organize our knowing. Black geographies produce unsettling questions about how knowledge and ideas about race and difference are incorporated into social, political, and economic patterns. I have so far suggested that some geographic analyses tend to conceal the meaningful relationship black subjects have had with space and place and that this has resulted in reifying the ideological assumption that blackness is equated with the ungeographic and a legacy of dispossession. Even important empirical discussions that map black populations, dwellings, and representations, such as those mentioned above, often fail to attend to the ways in which black subjects articulate their positionality through selfhood. That is, those few studies which do show an interest in black geographies do not really emphasize that space is socially produced and alterable, but rather that racial difference is measurable, knowable, and indicative of dispossession. In noting these two analytical traditions within geographic investigations—overlooking and measuring blackness—it is important to return to my earlier assertion: that while these analyses are limiting, they also suggest that geographic knowledge is racialized and can tell us something about the ways in which black geographies are a response to existing spatial paradigms. Traditional geographic practices have suggested to me that we might look elsewhere, within and beyond the discipline of geography, in order to illuminate new spatial practices. That is, overlooking and measuring blackness in fact begins to reveal that there are other ways race makes itself known in the landscape. But we first

have to enter into the material landscape from a different location, perhaps using varied conceptual tools, and trust not only that all knowledges are partial, but that all knowledges are geographic.

I want to turn to Neil Smith's discussion of deep space in order to open up some of these concerns, specifically with reference to black studies and the poetics of landscape, but also as a way to think about how geography, as a discipline and a means of social organization, might be reoriented toward more humanly workable frameworks. In the afterword to the 1990 edition of *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space,* Smith conceptualizes deep space in two interconnected ways. First, he notes that social, economic, and political shifts of the 1980s created a series of multiscalar respatializations. The stock market crash of 1987 and the democratization of Eastern Europe/reunification of Germany (symbolized by the destruction of the Berlin Wall in 1989) are geographic moments that underline "the relativity of terrestrial space, the space of everyday life in all its scales from the global to the local and the architectural in which, to use Doreen Massey's metaphor, different layers of life and social landscape are sedimented onto and into each other."[33] Deep space is the *production* of space intensified and writ large, ideological and political shifts that impact upon and organize the everyday in multiple contexts and scales—within and across homes, factories, streets, local and world banks, social services, military invasions, developing and overdeveloped nations, resistance tactics, gentrification projects. In this sense, deep space identifies the immediacy, materiality, and power of Smith's larger concerns, specifically, uneven geographic development as it is perpetuated by, and lived according to, unjust social systems. Deep space and its production, he writes, are "crushingly real."[34]

Second, and related, deep space is imbued with sociospatial theories produced outside the discipline of geography. The writings of Frederick Jameson and Michel Foucault, for example, are underwritten by geographic concerns: the epoch of space, cognitive mappings, and so forth. And Smith goes on to suggest that these geographic concerns—which are of great interest to some within the discipline of geography—connect the materiality of deep space with a struggle over theorizing its crushing realness. That is, the late-twentieth century "speeding up" of time-space, the simultaneity of an expanding and shrinking world, the lives which were lost and the lives which profited, created new analytical and political

spaces. Deep space, in its crushing realness, has also led to "subject positions," "conceptual space," "theoretical space," "contested spaces," "spaces of negotiation," [and] "spaces of signification."[35] This reassertion of space in social theory—Smith gives the excellent example of how "mapping seems to cover virtually every kind of plausible translation from one text to another"—has in part rendered the material contours of deep space metaphoric. Yet Smith's critique of social theory is not simply a condemnation. Rather, he suggests that we seek out the connections between material and metaphoric space:

> . . . it makes sense to conceive of deep spaces as combining the inherently social processes and produced structures of space together with the most superficial refractions from space in any given fixed form. Metaphorical and material are this inseparable in deep space yet remain distinct. To the extent that metaphor dominates our conceptions of space it is the latter refraction of fixed form that informs us; metaphorical appropriations of space are "real" enough but they conceal the life of deep space . . .[36]

What kind of theoretical work can deep space do for black geographies? Before I turn to how material space, metaphoric space, and social theory might be reimagined through black studies and human geography, I want to suggest that investigations of deep space might also examine the political, ideological, and economic ruptures pertinent to historical and contemporary subaltern lives. Specifically, if we trust that the important economic and political occurrences in the 1980s intensified and corresponded with important shifts, on the ground and in social theory, we can also look to key geographic moments played out across the black diaspora as bringing into focus the material workings of deep space. I am thinking specifically about the importance of 1492 and new world expansion but also about the civil and human rights movements of the 1960s.[37] The former, which ushered in exploration, conquest, and transatlantic slavery, and the latter, which sought to desegregate, decolonize, and liberate, exposed the limits of transparent space and reoriented the meaning of human social theories. And these moments were markedly geographic: new maps were developed; bigger, better, slave ships were produced; European subjects expanded into, exploited, and made cartographically intelligible, "newer" worlds; lands and resources were lost and claimed; aboriginal communities were destroyed and colonized; escapes were plotted and charted; slave labor built roads, plantations, houses; material places were boycotted; marches were organized; nationalisms were heightened; women and men were incarcerated; women and men demanded new forms of citizenship; colonial political systems were challenged. I am suggesting, then, that it is important to consider the ways in which deep space is also recognizable in these diasporic ruptures. Here, the contestations over space, place, and race are heightened, worked out across the soil and within and across nations and communities.

With these sociogeographic shifts in mind, Smith's concerns also provide a useful entry point into how black geographies might be differently theorized—inside and outside the discipline of geography. Space cannot be simply metaphorical, cognitive, or imaginary, as this risks undermining those underlying experiences that are unrealized, very real, and critical of real spatial inequalities. Deep space, then, offers black geographies exciting spatial possibilities—possibilities that parallel Édouard Glissant's poetics and politicization of landscape discussed in my introductory remarks: a serious engagement with the ways in which the production of space is connected to expression and difficult material conditions and the development of a spatial grammar that unhinges space from the limiting demands of colonialism, practices of domination, and human objectification.[38] Glissant's poetics of landscape attaches the imaginative to the social; it demands a gathering of sociospatial processes that reposition the black subject in and amongst that which has been "wiped out" and signs "in the everyday world."[39] Glissant's poetics engage a geographic struggle that brings together the everyday, the invisible, and the discursive/metaphorical—a political articulation of three-dimensionality and expressive cultures.

Deep space and a poetics of landscape *reposition* black geographies through taking notice of the ways in which space and place are fundamentally tied to the material landscape and daily social processes. Black geographies, imaginative and material, are critical of spatial inequalities, evidence of geopolitical struggles, and demonstrative of real and possible geographic alternatives. Here we can note ideas, places, and concepts such as: "the middle passage," "the underground," Ralph Ellison's "invisible man," Houstan A. Baker Jr. and Marlene Nourbese Philip's black (w)hole(s), the slave ship, Dionne Brand's "a map to the door of no return," bell hooks's "margin" and "homeplace," Carole Boyce Davies's "politics of location,"

and Paul Gilroy's "the black Atlantic."[40] These black geographies, while often cited as conceptual tools, are also political and material in that they draw on, and require an engagement with, everyday spaces of blackness. The interconnections between the metaphorical and the material (for example real and symbolic underground[s]) bring into focus the terrain of struggle inside and outside social theory.

Let me discuss some examples. A key historical example of the complexities black geographies illuminate is the Underground Railroad. Both a material and psychic map, the Underground Railroad contained and signified secret knowledge and secret knowledge sharing. These black geographies and travels remained secreted because disclosing the routes to the public would "close the slightest avenue" to black freedoms.[41] The Underground Railroad was an emancipatory lifeline if untold/unwritten, and site of violence/death if told/written. A covert operation, which was developed through human networks rather than scientific/cartographic writings, the Underground Railroad illustrates how historical black geographies are developed alongside clandestine geographic-knowledge practices. These practices signaled that spaces of black liberation were invisibly mapped across the United States and Canada and that this invisibility is, in fact, a real and meaningful geography. The life and death of black subjects was dependent on the unmapped knowledges, while the routes gave fugitives, Frederick Douglass wrote, "invisible agency."[42] Continuing in a different direction, the middle passage is, obviously, not simply a theoretical concept: it is a body of water and time on a body of water, which is interconnected to black imaginative work and different forms of black politics and black travels and exiles. The meanings of the middle passage are simultaneously multiscalar and contextual. It is a geography that matters because it carries with it (and on it) all sorts of historically painful social encounters and all sorts of contemporary social negotiations.[43]

Additionally, what is considered the invisibility of black spaces and places is spatialized through deep space and a poetics of landscape. That is, the politics of black geographies expose racial disavowal on spatial terms: what is seemingly not there, is; what is geographically missing for some is geographically relevant to others. Invisibility, alone, will not do the work of black geographies. Ralph Ellison's invisible man is *not really* invisible; rather he is an "imperceptible" social, political, and geographic subject who is rendered invisible due to his highly visible bodily context

as a black U.S. man: he is "*un*visible," inside and outside the novel.[44] His geographies are both impossible (because he is invisible, an incomplete citizen, black) and possible (because he is an invisibly present subject). This unvisiblity became markedly apparent, a lived geography, during the sanitation strike in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968, when the workers—under armed police surveillance—carried and wore signs that read "I *AM* A MAN."[45] The workers spatially constituted the meaning of black masculinity, and labor, on terms that articulated possession, repossession, and dispossession. Racial disavowal is seeable, recognizable, and ontological. The invisible, the unspoken, the unremembered, the impossible, to be sure, spatially evidence blackness.

Deep space and the poetics of landscape are also relevant to understanding the places of blackness because these geographies are all too often positioned as an invisible, metaphorical, and/or conceptual tool that relationally advances academic geographic analyses. For example, several geographic engagements with identity/difference, in responding to recurring racial and sexual crises within the discipline of human geography, position the black subject, and her/his politics of location, as symbolic (rather than real) interruptions in the landscape. Black social theorists such as Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, bell hooks, and Frantz Fanon advance several investigations into the production of racialized and gendered social spaces, especially vis-à-vis the scale of the nonwhite body/subject. The discussion of the margin, homeplace, whiteness, and oppositional politics by hooks is particularly popular, as is hooks herself (as geography and as a body scale). And I have argued elsewhere that several of these geographic investigations of blackness and black culture stop at bell hooks: this conceptual endgame is detrimental to geographic investigations in that it reduces black geographies, black feminist geographies, and arguably hooks herself, to a transparent visual illusion—the black female body, knowable and knowing, and unaccompanied, answers the question to difference while allowing theorists to disregard heterogeneous ways of being black.[46]

Through symbolic-conceptual positioning, the black subject (often, but not always, a black woman) is theorized as a concept (rather than a human or geographic subject) and is consequently cast as momentary evidence of the violence of abstract space, an interruption in transparent space, a different (all-body) answer to otherwise undifferentiated geographies. Spatially and conceptually, the black female subject is briefly granted

one or two sentences to support "arguments about difference and diversity" and raise some "painful questions" about traditional geographic patterns.[47] This, of course, points to broader feminist debates around social differences and politics and the ways in which women of color are included to bolster arguments (and therefore fulfill a particular inclusive antiracist agenda) but remain, in the end, "too alien to comprehend."[48] Black subjects are rarely, then, critically analyzed for the ways in which they are mapped and cited in order to "flesh out" specific disciplinary, and interdisciplinary, knowledges. These practices, which locate and say race, for example, without thinking about black geographic subjects who are committed to dismantling geographies of privilege and pain, evidence intellectual practices of conceptual ghettoization. Indeed, the margin becomes a real, and really conceptual, place. That this work, of locating/citing blackness, is not also identified as territoriality—adding a bit of blackness, raising some momentary painful questions, saying and marking gender alongside race and class—is simultaneously problematic and unsurprising.

Although the academic engagement with blackness (and social differences in general) in human geography is relatively new and potentially progressive, the resistance to a serious engagement with black histories, black subjectivities, black conditions of existence, and black geographies on, inside, *and* outside of the body, continues. The displacement of difference is perpetuated because when and if blackness and black people are taken up, they are employed as metaphorical annexes—often a unitary black body that is detached from the legacy of sexism and racism and other diasporic conditions. Michael Keith and Steve Pile thus write that the work of Paul Gilroy in *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack,* is, most *usefully,* imaginative work; the black diaspora is a third space, which is produced vis-à-vis discursive geographies. While they are certainly correct in identifying Gilroy's supranational mappings as "cultural fusions" and black dialogue connections, their *phrasing* gives way to a reading of black geographies that insists that a black sense of place, and a black theory of space, is not only devoid of an intellectual history, but that the very materiality of black political geographies are only representable vis-à-vis "expressive cultures" (musics, literatures, poetry, etc.). Of course black political geographies are expressive, but the authors fail to see (or cite) expressive cultures and fail to imagine how expressive cultures might also connect to the material landscape. What is troubling is not that Keith and Pile misread

Gilroy—I do not think they do—but that they spatialize his intellectual work as unaccompanied by other black theorists and suggest that black geographies are primarily *un*representable in the everyday; they cannot seem to imagine black imaginations or expressions as spatially representable. The "imagined spatiality of diaspora politics," in their reading, takes precedence over daily forms of black existence that connect the material and the imaginary and the past and the present.[49] This reading, I suggest, de-spatializes black expressive cultures, because it refuses to see or site where this expression is taking place and how it comes to take place/space. In *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack,* in fact, Gilroy places and spaces out black geopolitics through the site of London: in courtrooms, in newspapers, in family units, in political parties, on football teams, in dance halls and music contests, in music-making, in protests.[50] The Union Jack is real and discursive; its meanings and materiality, together, intersect with black sociogeographic patterns. Importantly, Gilroy considers the ways in which the spaces and places of London are reconfigured, and therefore point to significant political concerns, because the city—its soil, its buildings, its institutions and transportation routes—is inhabited by black subjects.

I suggest that the spatial strengths and the spatial imaginary in black narratives and theory return the reader to important questions about the production of space: why are space and place so significant to black theorists and authors? And in what ways do black subjects critically respond to spatial constraints and ideologies? Geographies of the everyday that are normally undermined or prohibited by transparent space and traditional racial and sexual geographic inequalities are re-expressed in a medium that can bear to take on difference: black fiction, black theory, black musics, black geographies, black imaginations. The writing up of black geographies presents new, and old, patterns, which shed light on real social conditions and identities that are otherwise deemed irrelevant to traditional human geographies: the site of memory, exodus, highway chile, going to the territory, submarine unity, migrations of the subject, tough geography, rhythm nation, fear of a black planet, the wretched of the earth, a very small place, paradise, daughters of the dust, dust tracks on the road, the color-line.[51] So what might be thought of as merely the black-symbolic or black-talk is in fact unmistakably geographic, and imaginatively real, in multiple ways. These black geographies are deep spaces and poetic landscapes, which not only gesture to the difficulties of existing geographies

and analyses, but also reveal the kinds of tools that are frequently useful to black social critics: books, ideas, maps, places, musics, and geographic ideas, spaces and places that can mark and release the self from what Dorothy Allison calls processes of "public silence and private terror."[52] These alternative geographic analyses are evident, most obviously, in geographically rigorous texts such as the fictional and theoretical work of Dionne Brand and Toni Morrison, but also in spatially driven analyses, such as C. L. R. James's *Beyond a Boundary,* Melvin Dixon's *Ride Out the Wilderness,* and Audre Lorde's "master's tools–master's house" black feminist critique.[53]

Deep space and a poetics of landscape reframes a conceptual space, such as W. E. B. Du Bois's influential "color-line," as produced (and therefore lived) with and beyond metaphor. This color-line is, among other things, material evidence of double consciousness, a black sociological interruption in U.S. sociological imaginations, a study on black positionality and white-black contact (including Du Bois's *own* politics of location), a commentary on the spatial and economic legacy of slavery and North-South U.S. regionalism, a geographic tool with which several black critics continue to engage in order to open, and reevaluate, philosophical debates.[54] The color-line is material, philosophical, and an analysis of what it means to know and re-imagine "place": it draws lines, separates, criminalizes, wavers, and disappears.[55] In *The Souls of Black Folk,* Du Bois continually reminds us that the color-line is also manifested by and produced in relation to the physical environment, particular and thematic racial materialities. Buried things, spiritual worlds, the Veil (which separates and racializes), wooden schoolhouses, great fireplaces, Africa, America, universities, plantations, slave-quarters, are documented in the text as the materiality of the color-line and social divisions.[56] The text is a journey through different regions of the United States, wherein the author makes a series of "stops" in order to map his surroundings, account for his conceptual concerns through the landscape, and extend the immediate geography beyond transparency. Du Bois therefore provides a kind of geographic genealogy, which couples black geographies with black knowledges in order to expose how U.S. democracy was laboriously built up, and the ways in which the production of this particular nation-space is uneven. The color-line is an intellectual and material geography, a line that separates, yet connects, what Du Bois calls "two worlds," in the United States:

> Four and six bob-tailed thoroughbreds rolled [the plantation owner's] coaches to town . . . parks and groves were laid out, rich with flower and vine, and in the midst stood the low wide-halled "big-house," with its porch and columns and great fire-places. And yet with all this there was something sordid . . . for was not all this show and tinsel built upon a groan? "This land was a little Hell," said a ragged, brown, and grave-faced man to me. We were seated near a roadside blacksmith-shop, and behind was the bare ruin of some master's home. "I've seen niggers drop dead in the furrow, but they were kicked aside, and the plough never stopped. And down in the guard-house, there's where the blood ran."[57]

Here two worlds—the big house and the guard house—are understood together. They were both built upon "groan," spatially produced by black slave labor. And they are inflected with black blood and death. The color-line is sordid; it delineates a land of hell, where social and racial divisions are marked in the landscape. If, as Du Bois noted, "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line," was he not also suggesting that the problem of the twentieth century is necessarily connected to geography?[58] Is the color-line an urgent geographic expression of the displacement of difference, a poetics-politics which sites/sights "physical extent fused through with social intent"?[59]

TERRAINS OF STRUGGLE: FANON, MORRISON, HALL, AND BRAND

The writings of W. E. B. Du Bois demonstrate how ideas—specifically ideas about racial-sexual difference—get turned into space. Importantly, *The Souls of Black Folk* combines classificatory racial geographies with Du Bois's philosophical commentary. He therefore provides a response to the ungeographic, invisibility, and marginality, but links them to ways in which race and dispossession are inevitably part of early-twentieth-century U.S. landscapes. Deep space and the poetics of landscape add new contours to geographic inquiries such as this, asking us to take seriously the ways in which spatial expressions are wrapped up in everyday struggles and critiques. I want to delve a little deeper into the interdisciplinary philosophical openings Smith, Glissant, and others make possible by turning to the work of Frantz Fanon, Stuart Hall, Dionne Brand, and Toni Morrison.

I turn to these writers not because they are the only way to develop deep space and the poetics of landscape, but because they have inspired my own understanding of black geographies. And I hope they motivate other geographic stories through the ways in which they show how alterable, and vexed, geography is. These thinkers insist on an alternative vantage point and therefore a different sense of how geography is, and might be, lived out. While the self-evident workings of transparent space have normalized uneven geographies, it is important to remember that they are also experienced, and mapped, vis-à-vis different (in this case black) vantage points. It follows, then, that new or different geographic demands are always *taking place.* These demands not only document how displacement is differently lived out by black subjects on the ground, they also reify how the production of space, and the project of geographic exclusion, while unjust, can inspire a different kind of spatial politics.

Before I turn to a discussion of Frantz Fanon, it is important to recall that his relationship with and understanding of colonial spaces—particularly in *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*—are underwritten by colonial attempts to "fix the geography of social power . . . and constricting the compass of human self-knowledge."[60] That is, geography for Fanon is not simply bodily, or "black skin"; geography is unquestionably human geography. And in Fanon's work the crushingly real intensities of deep space are evident. He is concerned with national black liberation movements and anticolonial strategies of the mid-twentieth century—the diasporic ruptures I mentioned earlier—and the ways in which these political contestations are also structured by psychic and physical geographies. That is, soil, nation, and race matter greatly to Fanon; human liberation is understood in tandem with a radical remaking of human geographies. The racial geographies in Fanon's texts—the oppositional, segregated, white/black, uneven, absolutely *different* spatialities—are, as Ato Sekyi-Otu notes, palpitating "with life, human, all-too-human life."[61] I signal this geographic humanism and Sekyi-Otu because below I only touch on a small section of Fanon's discussion, specifically what the Fanonian black body brings to bear on sociospatial organization. However, I keep in mind that the body is necessarily part of a human struggle, identifiable unattained liberties, and therefore signals that black geographies are human geographies, not simply skin. To put it another way, nonwhite

phenotype imparts traditional geographic organization; it is a seeable justification for apartheid and unfreedom, which is underscored by humanness and ontological knowledge.

Of central importance to black geographies are what Frantz Fanon describes as the historio-racial schema and the bodily (or corporeal) schema. These two concepts advance how space, place, identification, and history collapse to inscribe the black body as racial Other; they also illustrate Fanon's human desires—for and beyond his body. The bodily schema identifies a "composition of [the] *self* as a body in the middle of the spatial and temporal world."[62] The bodily schema is not, according to Fanon, imposed on the subject; "it is, rather, a definitive structuring of the self and of the world—definitive because it creates a real dialectic between [the] body and the world."[63] This ontology is described by Sylvia Wynter as an implicit knowledge, a pre-given schema, one "specific to what it is like *physically* to be human."[64] What Fanon offers to black geographies through his introduction of the bodily schema is the mutuality of identity, self, and place. This mutuality brings into focus the alterability of space and place from the *perspective* of a terrain of struggle because the black body, as Fanon reminds us, repeatedly encounters the white world—his bodily schema is threatened, his physically human sense of place is reoriented on strikingly racial terms.

The historio-racial schema is described by Fanon as the ideologies and forces of racism that "imprison" his body. He writes that his blackness and his ethnic characteristics dislocate his humanity, forcing him to recognize his black "place" in the world.[65] The deep spaces of black geographies, cited by Fanon as sites of his potentiality and existence, are recast by dominant culture as transparently invisible, or unvisible, through the racial and racist cultural texts that attach themselves to black bodies and psyches. Fanon writes, then: "I was told to stay within bounds, to go back where I belonged."[66] Identity, place, and existence thus risk being violently produced by a historio-racial schema. When he is seen and named, his body and his skin impart an intelligible, racialized, subjugated history: "Look," "Mama, see the Negro!," "I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency," and so forth.[67] His body is consequently "sprawled out, distorted, recolored."[68] The idea of a black place and a black sense of place are reduced to distortion, hypervisibility, and placelessness;

race signs, metaphors for blackness, absolutely define his location; Fanon becomes visibly ungeographic. The self—and therefore black human geographies—are defined by an unwelcoming white world determined to imprison and objectify. More specifically, the sprawled out and distorted body, and the Fanonian self, is "hemmed in . . . learns to stay in his place, and not to go beyond certain limits."[69] At the same time, the colonial body-self continually encounters the material landscape itself: "a world divided into compartments, a motionless Manicheistic world, a world of statues: the statue of the general who carried out the conquest, the statue of the engineer who built the bridge; a world which is sure of itself, which crushes with its stones the backs flayed out by whips: this is the colonial world."[70] To return to Sekyi-Otu, "the body is at once sequestered and forcefully given space."[71]

These dual schemas, working simultaneously to mark/imprison and undo black human geographies, shape how Fanon comes to describe the physical world. Importantly, black geographies become principally apparent through the historio-racial schema: the captive, the dispossessed, the ungeographic; segregation, death, dehumanization, public punishment; lynching, Negroes whipped in the streets, strikers cut down by machine guns.[72] Geographically, the "multiplicity of the spaces assigned to the black body is at once belied by, and yet is a function of, the "totalitarian character" of colonial coercion and racial segregation."[73] What do we do with the repetitive colonial reassertion of absolute—historio-racial—space? How do we reinvent and imagine black geographies as real physical human geographies? If we, and Fanon, have come to know, understand, and map the world according to disavowal and violence, *where* does this take us? How do we spatialize Fanon's perspective of struggle and his experiential (racial-geographic) knowledges?

There are several ways to begin answering these big questions. But I want to focus on one specific possibility: by noting the ways in which Fanon presents the mutuality of place, identity, and humanness. To begin, Fanon's attention to the material landscape is telling as he identifies sites of subjugation and loss, dispossession, and violence as implicit, rather than marginal, to sociospatial order. That is, the three-dimensional, racialized world is named, mapped, and peopled, not solely for its profitable imperialist reach and transparency, but for what these discourses communicate to the body, the soul, and the world: whippings, machine guns, nausea, corporeal

malediction, the train, blood, Africa, industrialized big buildings, the shadow of your native country, "he is afraid of the fear that the world would feel if the world knew."[74] Fanon inhabits and populates the world on new terms, drawing on his immediate experiences and the poetic and dramatic writings of his colleagues; he discloses the violence of the human landscape. As I have argued elsewhere, Fanon's geographies are particularly meaningful in *The Wretched of the Earth,* as he describes in explicit detail the ways in which inhabiting colonial spaces—and ethically understanding place—can and cannot correspond with politicized emancipatory strategies.[75] Indeed, Fanon gives us an important clue to moving toward a new humanism in *The Wretched of the Earth,* which is dependent on rethinking the material landscape through what Neil Smith calls "the abrogation of boundaries."[76]

In *Black Skin, White Masks,* each site Fanon encounters gives rise to a different sense of identity, a different kind of self, and a different sense of place.[77] His positionality and status shift from moment to moment, comprising some, or all, of his identities and identifications as a black man, an intellectual, a writer, a psychiatrist, a black object, a black subject, an activist, a poet: "In the world through which I travel I am endlessly creating myself."[78] The flexibility of identity, self, and place returns us to the dialectic between Fanon's physical body and his world(s). The dialectic, while flexible, also reveals how the imprisoning workings of colonialism and race are detrimental to the "relation of coexistence" between the self, the body, and the world.[79]

This mutual construction of identity, self, and place is crucial because for Fanon it requires not only that black subjects be recognized as already human (my black consciousness is not a lack, it *is*), but that their sense of place is different due to the ways this humanity is required, under racism, to be lived as objectification.[80] This invites respatialization because he argues that "black" is not simply bodily or object, but that the black body comprises a self who desires equality on several geographic scales, from the body and beyond. To return to Édouard Glissant, forging a relationship with and writing geography, in part, brings the subject into being; body liberation coincides with dismantling how and where specific bodies are hemmed in. Fanon thus writes a future poetics-politics, his soul "as immense as the world . . . deep as the deepest rivers."[81] A black sense of place, then, is produced by and through long processes of racialization; it is not

necessarily a bound or unintelligible place for the black subject, but a condition of "all-too-human" existence, which is understood through the displacement of difference and future possibilities.

I have spent some time outlining the tensions between Frantz Fanon's two schemas because I think that his intellectual work poses two important geographic questions: What happens to the cartography and understanding of the world when it is continually re-imagined through and beyond the legacy of race and racism? What are the implications of acknowledging this different (black human) worldview, and how do black subjects contribute to its meaning(s)? These questions add another layer to a poetics of landscape by respatializing and recoding what is considered the natural order of social space and the natural order of human hierarchy. More specifically, the ideas Fanon is concerned with not only locate black geographies in and amongst a tight racial grid (historio-racial schemas, landscapes of whiteness), they also depend on the flexibility of identity and place. These ideas, coupled with Fanon's assertion of his humanity, rupture traditional geographies by insinuating a different geographic language into the landscape, a language not always predicated on ownership and conquest. This re-ordering of geographic knowledges, peoples, and landscapes opens up new and radical spaces for discovery and different sites of being. Thus, geographic struggles transform—philosophically and materially—blackness and black humanity in the world; they map subaltern subjects with and through existing spaces and also call into question obligatory geographic rules that perpetuate injustice.

Stuart Hall's discussion of "new ethnicities" adds to Fanon's discussion by emphasizing more recent shifts in cultural studies and cultural politics. Indeed, Hall's discussion of black identities hints at the incompleteness of the historio-racial schema, exposing it as a changing discursive fiction that is called into question by black writers, filmmakers, and theorists.[82] The essay "New Ethnicities," which takes up black identity and representation, signals what Hall describes as "the struggle around positionalities": "the end of the essential black subject . . . a recognition that the central issues of race always appear historically in articulation, in a formation, with other categories and divisions and are constantly crossed and re-crossed by the categories of class, of gender and ethnicity."[83] Hall's attention to positionality is important in that it is not only gesturing to ongoing debates in critical social theory (within feminism, cultural studies, black studies, queer studies) but also because he insists that selfhood and biography create and politicize this positionality. The historio-racial schema is relocated by Hall, undone and respatialized when there is

> a recognition that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular culture, without being contained by that position as "ethnic artists" or film-makers. We are all, in that sense, ethnically located and our ethnic identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are. But this is also a recognition that this is not an ethnicity that is doomed to survive . . . only by marginalizing, displacing and forgetting other ethnicities.[84]

Hall's "the end of the essential black subject" underscores the complexities of black subjectivities, or more specifically their particularities. The politicization and representation of "difference" involves a complication of the category of "race" and the category of "black." For Hall, new ethnicities are produced in conjunction with location—historical, geographic, cultural, economic, and so on—as this location is understood vis-à-vis an alternative *sense* of place, one predicated on difference and diversity. That is, a decoupling of ethnicity "as it functions in the dominant discourse, from its equivalence with nationalism, imperialism, racism and the state."[85] Detaching the category of "black" from natural or essentialist ideologies and places reveals the nuances of sociospatial processes; it puts categories such as place, ethnicity, difference, and blackness in motion rather than repeating colonial displacements, historio-racial schemas, crude social classifications, and geographic stasis.

Hall's argument pivots on black representational politics, which I would suggest are also underwritten by the poetics of landscape: how black communities represent themselves, how black cinema represents black social differences, how political representation is connected to those static misrepresentations Frantz Fanon finds so restrictive. I would add to these forms of representation: how black people represent the world around them, how they represent "place" in a world that has profited from black displacement, and how black geographic representation is recast through a struggle, rather than a complacency, with space and place. New ethnicities bring into play a different sense of place not only through exposing how axes of difference—race, sex, sexuality, age, gender, ability, class—inform

and reorder transparent space but also through denaturalizing space and place. New ethnicities negotiate existing geographic patterns and also undo the seemingly natural connections between blackness and class-based spatialization: for example, the (black) workplace, as transparently knowable, will not do as a geopolitical site; the workplace and the workers are not only shifting, sexual, gendered, classed, and raced, they are critical sites through which the black self is both racially and experientially produced and called into question.

Note the denaturalization of space and place, as well as the ways in which a different sense of place advances Dionne Brand's geographic concerns in her essay "Job":

> It was that tiny office in the back of a building on Keele Street. I had called the morning before, looking for a job, and the man answering remarked on that strong Scottish name of my putative father and told me to come right in and the job would be mine. Yes, it was that tiny office in the back of a building on Keele when I was turning eighteen, and I dressed up in my best suit outfit with high heels and lipstick and ninety-seven pounds of trying hard desperate feminine heterosexuality, wanting to look like the man on the phone's imagination so I could get the job. When I went to the tiny office and saw the smile of the man on the phone fade and disappear because all of a sudden it needed experience or was just given to somebody else . . . Yes, it was that man on the phone, that office on Keele Street, the man's imagination for a Scottish girl he could molest as she filed papers in the tiny office, it was that wanting to cry in my best suit and high heels I could barely walk in and the lipstick my sister helped me to put on straight and plucked my eyebrows and made me wear foundation cream in order, I suppose, to dull the impact of my blackness so that man in the tiny office would give me that job. . . . That I could ever think of getting such a job, even so small and mean a job, that some white man could forget himself and at least see me as someone he could exploit . . . My sister worked in the kitchens of hospitals and that is where I did find a job the next week, and that is where we waited out the ebb and flow of favour and need in this white place.[86]

I have quoted Brand's concerns at length because, like most of her work, "Job" maps a critique and reversal of transparent space. If we begin reading

the quotation vis-à-vis Stuart Hall's "new ethnicities," that is, with Brand/the speaker as a complex black subject who is *in articulation with* essentialist modern categories, black geographies take shape according to her position-particularities: she is named and historicized; she is on the telephone as a presumed white/Scottish girl; she is performing lipsticked, high-heeled heteronormativity; she is imagining white desire; she is exploitable; she is eighteen; she has a working sister; she is, upon entering the office, no longer racially and sexually desirable; she is reflecting on north Toronto, Ontario, marking Keele Street; she charts the size and meaning of the office; she gains "proper" black employment in a "proper" black place. These position-particularities inform "that tiny office" and "this white place," by citing/sighting the violence of transparent space and unearthing what might be considered the hidden spaces of blackness: the office/Canada/Keele Street is undemocratic, sexually violent, and maintained by sociogeographic conformity; that tiny office is, explicitly, a materialization of seeming spatial transparency, which requires that the body, identity, and place neatly replicate white, heterosexual, patriarchal expectations.

But what happens to this transparent "tiny office"? It is wrapped up with a legacy of racism and sexism, marked with a mean, hurtful, confining, tiny-ness, and unraveled by the speaker. A different sense of place is employed as both critique and geographic disgust. The correspondences between black femininity, the tiny office, and "this white place" are not, according to Brand, natural correspondences: she must "put on" her (hetero)sexuality, she must dull her blackness, and she must follow the rules of capitalism and the displacement of difference, only to be thrown out of place and put back in place. Moreover, "Job" is, at least to me, a terrifying and instructive political geography of race. The rules of transparent space and traditional geographic patterns are interrupted by a sense of place that distorts and bends these very rules and patterns. The production of space is not only denaturalized because a "new ethnicity" is legitimately occupying space, but also because Brand is impacting upon how we know traditional and alternative geographic paradigms. She is both complicit to and critical of the production of space; the text marks and questions the ways in which race, sexuality, gender, class, and identity are mutually constructed.

"Job" is suffocating. It is a reminder of how powerful Fanonian historio-racial schemas are. But clearly something else is going on in Brand's work—the schema has changed. The schema has a new place, different historical

markers, a different body through which race makes itself known. How do we commingle this new place with a different set of historical questions? How do new ethnicities grapple with historical geographies in new ways? "Job" *is* suffocating, but is the history of the tiny office simply Manichaean, wrapped up in ahistorical Fanonian struggles? Are Fanon's geographies not also alterable? What else do diasporic subjects bring to the past, now? Can the geographic disgust, the moment of rupture when Brand legitimately occupies and writes place, also turn us toward a different past? If Stuart Hall was right—that positionality invites particularity, and a particularized history—then Dionne Brand's different sense of place is also inscribed with what Toni Morrison calls "the site of memory." Morrison's question for black geographies, as I see it, asks how places and spaces of blackness can be recovered when they were formerly identified as irrelevant and/or nonexistent. Her question for the tiny office might be, in what ways does Brand's use of the "man's imagination" and the geographies of black Canada reinvent the past?

Toni Morrison's important essay "The Site of Memory" discusses the representation of black subjects in a world that has dehumanized and erased the possibility of black interior lives. Her work seeks to reconstruct these interior lives through the "remains" she is given: geographic narratives and images, such as the outer world, sounds, musics, colors, behaviors, dialects, fragrances, stories.[87] This is imaginative work that provides a "route to the reconstruction of the world," through the exploration of "two worlds—the actual and the possible."[88] The site of memory thus works in tandem with deep space and a poetics of landscape: two worlds, the actual and the possible, chart a way into the imagination, the past, and a different sense of place. The site of memory begins to re-imagine a different worldview, wherein black lives are validated through black intellectual histories and the physical landscape. Morrison calls upon, for example, Frederick Douglass's childhood home, the dark caverns of the hell of slavery, the Middle Passage, Zora Neale Hurston's dead-seeming old rocks with memories within, that veil, James Baldwin's empty bottles waiting to hold meaning, the collards, the okra, the Mississippi River flooding and "remembering where it used to be."[89] The site of memory has to be real, and it has to be trusted as real, in order to recast the ways in which remembering and writing three-dimensionality—the physicality of the office, the bodies hemmed in, the problem of the twentieth century, ethnic locations—

is underscored by political reimaginations. Indeed, I am suggesting that the site of memory be used to rethink historical geographies, including interior lives, but also as a way to reaffirm contemporary geopolitical possibilities of black poetics. That is, there are new histories, and new memories, and new historical geographies we can engage with, now.

But this geographic work—acknowledging the real and the possible, mapping the deep poetics of black landscapes—is also painful work. The site of memory is also the *sight* of memory—imagination requires a return to and engagement with painful places, worlds where black people were and are denied humanity, belonging, and formal citizenship; this means a writing of where and how black people occupy space through different forms of violence and disavowal. Geographically, the site/sight of memory illustrates the ways in which Morrison contributes to the physical landscapes of the United States, and therefore the physical landscapes of black domination. Reconstructing what has been erased, or what is being erased, requires confronting the rationalization of human and spatial domination; reconstruction requires "seeing" and "sighting" that which is both expunged and "rightfully" erasable. What you cannot see, and cannot remember, is part of a broader geographic project that thrives on forgetting and displacing blackness.

The spatial dilemma—between memory and forgetfulness—produces what has been called a black absented presence. Absented presence is evident in several black and black feminist narratives that outline how processes of displacement erase histories and geographies, which are, in fact, present, legitimate, and experiential. [90] The site of memory, then, suggests that erasure is lived and livable through the past and the present. The site of memory displays and utters new sites of being, and a different sense of place, as they are embedded with forgetfulness. Morrison's *Beloved,* Dionne Brand's *At the Full and Change of Moon,* Octavia Butler's *Kindred,* black Canadian engagements with the demolition and remembering of Africville in Nova Scotia, artist Kara Walker's cut paper and adhesive recollections of slavery, the development and debate over "black studies," "black feminism," and the black Atlantic: these sites/sights of memory populate the landscape with new ethnicities; we are inhabiting new places and new histories. And when reading black diaspora fiction, theory, film, and art, this spatialization of displacement, the placing of placelessness, is difficult—because we know that black writers and artists are re-placing that which

was/is too subhuman, or too irrelevant, or too terrible, to be formally geographic or charted in any way.

The site of memory is a powerful black geography because employing it assumes that the story of blackness in the diaspora is actual and possible, and that the discursive erasure of black peoples does not eliminate how they have been implicated in the production of space. Reconstructing past interior lives of black people in the diaspora is an important geographic act, which brings to life new ethnicities and different senses of place; by humanizing black subjects who are otherwise bound to the historio-racial schema, it situates the geographies of the black diaspora in a time when this was considered impossible; it allows past and present black geographies to be believable. In addition to this, though, are the ways in which memory and forgetfulness are advanced by Morrison as she sites, sights, and cites memory: her reliance on geographic signals—images that construct the worlds black people *inhabit*—harnesses the erased and forgotten to "memories within," now, thus delivering that which is too terrible, or beyond recollection, or unintelligible, into the everyday black existences.

This is the work involved in Smith's deep space and Glissant's poetics of landscape, and black geographies in general: retellings that *place* the dilemma of black placelessness as it is contingent to, but expressing beyond, traditional geographies. Dislocation and displacement, the historio-racial schema and the mapping of man's inhumanity to man have all "placed" and bound blackness through the discourses of race, racism, and essentialism. Many black responses to this spatialization of difference radically oppose geographies that objectify their sense of self and humanity. A different sense of place, then, is mapped—materially and imaginatively—through heterogeneous representational texts and geographies. The spatial terms of new ethnicities, as I see them, require that identity and place be understood as mutually constructed and changeable; this reveals a different sense of place, which "crosses those frontiers between gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class."[91] With this—these new places, new ethnicities, and new historical geographies—the very logic of geographic exclusion, as it is spatialized through practices of racial, economic, and sexual subordination, is called into question. Geographic solutions to difference and political crises (such as segregation, imprisonment, ghettoization, genocide, the sexual-racial division of labor, surveillance, as well as social theories that "add on" a subaltern body) are undermined when difference

is taken seriously, when a sense of place does not neatly correspond with traditional geographies, when transparent, stable political categories are disrupted by places unbound, and all sorts of humans open up different, less familiar, alterable geographic stories.

WHERE IS DANA'S ARM?

The first line in Octavia Butler's *Kindred,* "I lost an arm on my last trip home. My left arm," is also the end of the protagonist's narrative.[92] Dana has lost her arm as a result of unnatural time-space physics. Her painful supernatural returns to the Maryland plantation tore her apart. Her body is partly elsewhere, historically and geographically. The moment Butler offers is both fantastic and horrific: Dana's arm, Dana's body, and Dana's memory are past-elsewhere and present-incomplete. Her arm, also no longer visible in her immediate present, is both hauntingly reminiscent of Sojourner Truth's working arms, through which Truth claimed her black femininity to white slave abolitionists and Toni Morrison's Baby Suggs, preaching on the top of a huge flat-sided rock, insisting, "they do not love your hands. Those they only use, tie, bind, chop off, and leave empty. Love your hands! Love them."[93] But Dana's present dismembered body also invokes a new sense of place, and a new kind of historical present, which others "wouldn't think was so sane"; it highlights her complex relationship with history, black femininity, place, and her dismembered body.[94] The geographies of *Kindred* inspire a spatial story that is unresolved and caught up in the uncertain, sometimes disturbing, demands of geography. I am going to follow alongside this story with a discussion of garrets, bodies, auction blocks, fires, and demonic grounds.