The Sociogeny of Social Death: Blackness, Modernity, and its Metaphors in Orlando Patterson

Sara-Maria Sorentino

> *White over black is slavery and slavery is death. Death is the end of forever. The end of forever is perfection and perfection, for us, seems divine, beyond the veil, beyond death; hence, the end of forever.*[1]

> *But before 'race,' something else has happened, both within the context of 'race' and alongside it.*[2]

[1] Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death*, a "global analysis of the institution of slavery," has become the elliptic center of the socio-historical scholarship on slavery.[3] A "landmark," a "cornerstone," generating a figural economy that telescopes debates about domination and resistance, retention and originality, and the methodologies that get us here or there, Patterson's conceptualization of "social death" has traversed disciplinary boundaries and is mobilized in radical black studies, comparative literature, psychoanalysis, sociology, cultural studies, political science, anthropology, archaeology, and history.[4] Indeed, Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death,* or more precisely, his titular concept-metaphor "social death," tellingly appears in those works pushing the pertinence of disciplinary boundaries to the breaking point. While the basic tenets of his thesis circulate widely, the historiographical origins, political stakes, and theoretical tensions internal to his intervention are less understood. Is Patterson read well? Save for the first few pages of the book's introduction, is he read at all? I contend that there is something symptomatic in the relative staying power of social death, of social death as a question on which to project one's own political and philosophical positions. Historical cipher, philosophical allegory, explanatory device or heuristic, political technology or regime, diffusive status of the marginalized, practice of exclusion, political ontology, effect and threat: social death's proliferating use or disuse is not incidental, but is the whisper, rather, of secrets harbored deep within, and on the surface of, the malign metaphysics of slavery, echoing everywhere as time and space. *Mysticism in the flesh*.[5] While texts are written to confirm or combat both the historical instance and political pertinence of social death, there are questions that go unasked. To start: What is social? What is death? Who decides their presumed relation, and how has this relation been indelibly seared and severed and sutured by the violence of slavery?

[2] These questions are less an attempt to "out" other scholars for their thin scholarship than an endeavor to raise a doubled query about the status of the mobility of a concept in our unethical and anti-black

world. If, at the fault lines of its historiographical ground and its horizon of problematization, social death screams (non)sense enough for a kind of theoretical traction, or intuitive access, how does it do so, and for whom, and why? More pressing still, what calls social death, as a concept tarrying with tendentious truths, into blinkered being? Is this impress thinkable, historicizable, representable? To engage with the ongoing de-sedimenting of the concept social death, to dig into the depths of its stratum and the instability of the ground it slips and scores, our inquiry is led into the following philosophical questions: How do concepts tarry with a socio-historical problematic? How do concepts point to the transcendental, the eternal? Or, more complexly still, how do concepts thematize certain orientations to the question of the historical and the transcendental? To this end, how do concepts contain and carry contradictions, theoretical or otherwise? Does the specificity of a concept delimit its utility, its reach?[6]

[3] At issue, in the generative yield of "social death" as a collation crossing both the practicality of everyday and explosive violence and the theorization of the genesis of what is metaphysically weighted in structural and historical stasis, is the question of its inheritance as (from and for) *black* thought, blackened thought, the blackening of thought. What Fred Moten identifies as a "new critical discourse on the relation between blackness and death"[7] has had a long genealogy, a "powerful, if somewhat submerged" tradition that Abdul JanMohamed traces in Equiano, Douglass, Jacobs, Morrison, Wright, Wideman, Tupac, and Biggie (and to which we could add a multitude of more names, going back to Du Bois and forward to Kendrick Lamar and Kiese Laymon), and that Karla Holloway finds ever folding as "black cultural sensibility."[8] If Patterson is not the first to theoretically draw slavery and death together, his work has, despite his adamant attempts to "unlink" race from slavery, become something of a shortcut—conversely opening to and closing on the problem and promise of blackness.[9] In a remarkable essay intervening on the supposed split that the concept of social death signposts, between two radical black interpretative itineraries—Afro-Pessimism and Afro-Optimism—Jared Sexton provocates: "There are problems in the formulation of the relation of power from which slavery arises and there are problems in the formulation of the relation of power to other relations of power."[10] The immediate political purchase of this insight—that slavery cannot, or certainly cannot easily, be analogized to other power formations—is robustly thematized by Frank Wilderson's critical proposition: the "ruse of analogy."[11] Signaling the political thrust behind why slavery, *especially* in the modern age, is a metaphorical thicket—the site of some of the densest analogical impulses—the "ruse of analogy" specifically targets how the people-of-color organizing framework draws from fundamental fissures in modernity such that a *comparative* analysis, in which black suffering is morally and politically leveraged in an attempt to transcend widely divergent structural positions (between slavery and immigration, say), might be retooled to a "*relational* analysis more adequate to the task."[12]

[4] Sexton's precise and doubled reading works not, in the first order, to explicate the geo-temporal generality of slavery; it instead radicalizes the strange rhythm of the *always already*, in which the quintessential slave appears to always have been black—making of this marking a mould, effecting all other relations *to* violence as a relation *of* blackness. If the relational problem immanent to *any* invocation of slavery is the shadowy substance of the concept social death—in the philosophical force-field that

Fred Moten probes as "the nonrelationality that structures all relationality"[13] — how does Patterson relate (and/or compare) the violence that collapses *racial* slavery and slavery *in general*? When Sexton writes "what is most stunning is the fact that the concept of social death cannot be generalized. It is indexed to slavery and it does not travel," he is theorizing social death tethered less to slavery *in general* than to what slavery's rending with blackness did to the generality of slavery, which, in its indispensability to globality, brings the problem of generality more clearly into view.[14] To seek an approach that can account for the splintered ubiquity of the concept social death—denounced (actively so) in the discipline of history, and celebrated (but amorphously so) in social science—is to be plagued by the gaps and elisions, within Patterson's work, concerning the question of an epochal break or epistemic rupture of slavery through raciality. I speculate about an imperative quickened by an immanent abyss: Patterson's unspoken elaborative possibility for his comparative frame is the rending of race out of the human; the ongoing project to fix blackness in a conceptually coherent schema, further, is the "condition of possibility" for the abstraction of slavery "as such" and, further still, for modern practices of abstraction "in general." An ontological overhaul, anti-blackness enables the elevation of slavery from the problem of social status to slavery at the global order of being. In other words, the concept "social death" is the epistemological realization of the abstraction of slavery through blackness.

[5] By pairing an understanding of the conditions of possibility for blackness (in an epochal sense) with the conditions of enunciation for Patterson's concept social death, slavery's centrality to modernity undergoes an exfoliation, and modernity's theoretical, social, and historical account of itself starts to tremble.[15] In his influential study, Valentin Y. Mudimbe invokes "conditions of possibility," straddling the historical and the transcendent in the Foucaultian tradition not entirely opposed to Kant, to indicate how "discourses have not only sociohistorical origins but also epistemological contexts. It is the latter which make them possible and which can also account for them in an essential way."[16] But what is Patterson's epistemological context grappling with, and how, given the convoluted conjunction of "social" and "death," does it presuppose questions and answers? Denise Ferreira da Silva, in pursuing a "critique of 'the metaphysics of race,'" writes the Kantian undertones of "condition of possibility" as specifically relevant for racial knowledge on two grounds: "(a) because there is an expectation that when one uses the word 'race', the addressee knows what the referent is, and (b) most importantly, because no critique of racial subjugation can afford not to investigate that which renders this 'common' knowing possible."[17] If Silva speaks in a Foucaultian style, searching for "not only the principles and conditions but also the consequences of knowledge, its political (productive) effects,"[18] Foucault's famous pronouncement of man, "only a recent invention," "a rift in the order of things," (underlying his engagement with Kant, Hegel and Marx) can only take us so far. [19] Silva's work pushes further, deeper, haunted by a moment disavowed by Foucaultian-flavored biopolitics, genealogy or archaeology: "That moment...between the release of the trigger and the fall of another black body, of another brown body, and another"[20] That moment, the almost certainly already consummated inverse of Zeno's paradoxical delay, requires us to consider critically racial violence as a *theme* for theorizing the political, a thematization of which social death has, in its own way, opened a path.[21] The question of blackness and the modern world requires a

method of excavating what goes under the heading of "first principles": the first principles not of an already formed essence or phenomenon, but of the conditions that make any analysis of "race," and all that it undergirds, possible.[22] Lindon Barrett accentuates the stakes, in his posthumous challenge: "Racial blackness forms the historical and enabling point of 'dis/integration' for the paradigms of Western modernity."[23] These first principles, these dis/integrating enablers, can be repeatedly renamed—grammar/impression points (Spillers), cognitive schema (Brand), governing codes (Wynter)—to ask what the violence of raciality makes of the world.

[6] Patterson has spent his career working his way into an intellectual inhabitation of the problem of slavery. From his book's first line, "There is nothing notably peculiar about the institution of slavery," we can begin to gauge how Patterson situates himself in a long historiographical debate, a debate only obliquely attentive to the old/new critical discourse on blackness and death.[24] Invoking Kenneth Stampp's 1956 *The Peculiar Institution,* itself an intervention on Ulrich Phillips' antebellum romance, Patterson argues contrapuntally that chattel slavery in the United States, although distinct, is not the only existing configuration of slavery, and still less should it be conceived as a norm.[25] For Patterson, "slavery" is instead ubiquitous—at some distance from our theme of racial violence—and "genuine" slave societies (Moses Finley's phrasing) span time and place, from Ancient Greece to late Old English society through the European Middle Ages, the Renaissance, across to the Islamic World and regions of precolonial Africa.[26] From the heights of a global and general perspective (inauspiciously correlated with the objective purview of mastery), slavery is defined by way of distinctive features, or "constituent elements"—gratuitous violence, natal alienation, and general dishonor.[27] Each is triangulated with facets of power: the "social" threat of physical violence; the "cultural" or "symbolic" capacity to transform "force into right, and obedience into duty," as Rousseau would have it; and its "psychological" reach to rework the interiority of the enslaved.[28] "Weberian in scope and method, Durkheimian in boldness and clarity, and vintage Patterson for its ruthless disregard for the sacred cows of specialists of all stripes (in the words of Lois Wacquant), *Slavery and Social Death* angles to problematize any ready presupposition of a spectrum of power.[29] Slavery, argues Patterson, is different in degree (of power) and kind (of coercion), and thus, "distinctive as a relation of domination."[30]

[7] Patterson's "preliminary definition of slavery on the level of personal relations"—"slavery is the permanent violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons"[31] —is a general definition of a complex sort, meant to capture different registers of constitutive and continuous violence.[32] These guiding principles are reflected in the book's organizational schema: the distilled overview of the constituent elements in the "Introduction;" the first section's extrapolation of "The Internal Relations of Slavery;" the next's, "Slavery as an Institutional Process," tracking of the phases of "enslavement, slavery, and manumission" on individual and institutional scales; and the third, "The Dialectics of Slavery," in which limit cases, in a pseudo-Hegelian fashion, are meant to clarify the true definition of slavery. Patterson anticipates the standard historian's critique of social death as dangerously ahistorical, cautioning against what he elsewhere calls the whirlwind of "social vacuums"[33]: "Even at this most

elementary level of personal relations it should be clear that we are dealing not with a static entity but with a complex interactional process, one laden with tension and contradiction in the dynamics of each of its constituent elements."[34] In the "unfolding of this complicated drama known as slavery," contradiction is key: contradictions, seen at the level of personal relations, become institutionalized, and these institutionalizing modes create habitual pathways for resolving or, more precisely, containing and deferring tensions.[35] Patterson turns this key more avowedly in an early essay-version of social death by counter-posing an inner dialectic with its outer one:

> There is an inner dialectic by which the basic forces of slavery are revealed: master against slave; power against powerlessness; alienation against disalienation; social death against social life; honour against dishonour. This inner dialectic, however, works itself out as part of a wider, outer dialectic: that of the dynamics of the relationship between slavery, seen as a single process, and the total complex of processes which we call society or the   social formation. It is this outer dialectic which, in the last analysis, determines the outcome of the struggle within the inner dialectic. It determines, for example, whether master or slave wins; whether powerlessness is what it appears to be or something else.[36]

[8] As the heuristic terms of Social Death are always negotiated through the complex dialectic of "the social formation," natal alienation, gratuitous violence, and general dishonor do not necessarily presume to name the totalizing triumph of power, but a kind of fantasy, a fantasy situated less in an individual thinker's tool-kit and more in the dense social imagining necessary for slavery's reproduction, of which each and every analysis is an implicated thoroughfare.

[9] Patterson's intellectual practice, of course, has a historicity of its own, a way he enters into a dynamic debate about dynamism, that requires attention if we are to penetrate how the ideality of an "inner dialectic" is revealed *through the terms of its articulation*. We can detect traces in *Social Death* of those dimensions of Marxism, anthropology, law, philosophy, and literature that are materially and politically engaged with the question of the ground of a concept. There may be tremendous yield, then, for a more robust understanding of the situatedness of social death in studying Patterson's intellectual trajectory and his broader context—from his youthful black nationalism, his socio-existentialist novels,[37] his apprenticeship under C.L.R. James, his veiled Fanonian explorations,[38] his dialecticism, his overt enthusiasm for Albert Camus, his engagements with symbolic anthropology and with the Classics.[39] Reading closely the practices of meaning-making in Patterson's *Die the Long Day,* for instance, specifically in the protagonist's "struggle to the death," and the community that lives on after her, Donnette Francis suggests that "A careful tracing of the context and content of the [death's] emergence affords a more nuanced understanding of the long arc of Patterson's scholarship."[40] Patterson's PhD thesis for the London School of Economics, *The Sociology of Slavery,* was actually intended as a rejoinder to the prevailing structuralist remove from the specificity of slaves' lives, instead concentrating attention on the "completely materialistic basis—both in origins and structure" of slavery in Jamaica, and predating, in important ways, the protocols of cultural studies.[41] In a recent and revealing interview with David Scott, Patterson notes: "I thought what was missing was a central focus on the slaves, on their

lives—where they came from, what they did, how they survived. They had been treated merely as a *category.*"[42] His predecessor in this endeavor is C.L.R. James, the "great man," to whom he dedicated his work.[43] Interesting how the writer of the tome *Slavery and Social Death* began his scholarly career with a work not only on slave society, but on slaves' "social psychology" (following the different footsteps of both Stanley Elkins and Fanon), with how slaves "survived the system mentally, socially, and culturally."[44]

[10] But why did Patterson proceed to a more generic study of "slavery" in its continuities and its variants, its "internal structure and institutional patterns"?[45] In a reflection on his earlier work, Patterson identifies three methods in his trajectory—quantitative positivism, the comparative utilization of ideal-types, and the interpretive sociological essay (concerned with literary and mythic archetypes)—each suited to their respective objects: "certain aspects of the social world are best understood and articulated in certain ways...attempts to analyze and talk about them with inappropriate methods only end up doing violence to the subject."[46] Clearly, the second methodology, a purposeful Weberian nomothetic unreality (triangulated with classicist Moses Finley), is central to *Social Death*.[47] Already, we might hesitate: why strain our resources in service of an Archimedean project? Patterson's definitional inquiry, and its comparative sprawl, presumes both a minimal geo-temporal frame and a human subject through which institutions coalesce, slaves are made and sometimes manumitted, and cultures continue, or not. Its mobile typology seems to evacuate the important question as to how slavery, historically and politically, has been differentially hypostatized as an institution, and what modes of philosophical, phenomenological, and discursive knowledge facilitate freezing this institution for the flights and fancies of thought.[48] Patterson, in this vein, is adamantly unapologetic of his "schematism": "it is the essential heavy plow that must first clear the ground, turn the soil, and demarcate the boundaries."[49] *Social Death* is his attempt to arrive at the "silent languages" of "cultural systems," what we will expand to a *grammar* of violence and the governing codes of meaning-making, while recognizing how "the ground underneath differs from the pebbles and rocks above."[50]

[11] Does this ideal-type, fleshed out through the sociological data of the expansive Murdoch sample *and* a peculiarly mythic, anthropomorphized reading of the Hegelian master-slave relation, do fitting justice to the task at hand, to the reading and reconstruction of a comparative sociology of slavery, or does Patterson's treatment, as those slave historians advocating the *contextualization* of the particulars of historical suffering suggest, do "violence to the subject"?

[12] Focusing on the pebbles, not the ground, Joseph C. Miller and Vincent Brown's *Way of Death* and *The Reaper's Garden* each implicitly denounce Patterson's model of structural fixity and his concept "social death," which serve as counterpoints to their more processual "way of death," and "mortuary politics," respectively.[51] The concept of death pushes Miller's text as a figuration—death's very "comprehensiveness" arises from its indeterminacy: "physical for some slaves but sociological for others, financial as well as physical for European traders in Africa, political for many ambitious Africans, and paradoxically philosophical as mercantilism and industrialism coalesced in the Atlantic."[52] In Miller,

these different forms of death (apart from that enigmatically categorized "paradoxically philosophical") are the intensified *appearance* and *outcome* of the dynamic of the flows of commodity exchange—the trembling and transforming different economic systems, values and beliefs in Angola, Brazil, and Portugal. A year after his 1988 magnum opus, Miller published a critical review of Claude Meillassoux's influential *Anthropologie de l'esclavage*, simultaneously rejecting Patterson along with Meillassoux for achieving "little history in the empirical sense of change and cumulative process" and for the ways in which their "rigid structures remain trapped in a perpetual distillation of their contradictory internal logics."[53] His analysis continues in his much later *The Problem of Slavery as History,* in which he announces an analytic focus on "slaving" as a thick, contextually motivated strategy, opposed to the abstraction of slavery as a static "fait accompli."[54] To Miller, the most damning dead-end plaguing historians is the emotional recourse to an "ahistorical conflation of race and slavery as the abstract dual demons of prejudice."[55] Yet Miller's metahistory cannot explain how and why abstractions are socially *generated* by historical interaction (and not just delusional sociologists) or how "analogical reasoning" is reified materially. Are static abstractions a problem internal to Patterson's methodology, or does it occupy the problematic of slavery (as it becomes reoccupied by the metaphysical violence of anti-blackness) itself?

[13] Brown replicates the intellectual invocation of social death in a paragraph as already insufficient and debunked, while working in another forum (that of the concomitantly published review essay) to address it head-on. Like Miller before him, Brown situates death as a fundamental effect of the political economy of slavery, but one that because of its stark abundance, because of the "vital presence" and "social force" of the dead, created what we call "culture" for *both blacks and whites* in the Jamaica he studies. To clarify this conflux, Brown attempts to fashion a "*materialist history* of the supernatural imagination," turning the glove of the cultural historian inside-out. Brown likewise relegates Patterson to the footnotes, instead targeting Patterson directly in a supplementary essay in which the perceived failure of Patterson is attributed not so much to his conceptual basis but his emphasis.[56] Brown wants to confront a conflationary tendency on the part of subsequent interpreters who mistake Patterson's "exposition of slaveholding ideology" for a "description of the actual condition of the enslaved."[57] The implication readily drawn from Brown is that social death's efficacy has a negative correspondence to its emphasis, that a heightened presumption of pathology is opposed to the real work of politics. Ultimately, social death is, in Brown's most damaging reading, an invention of Patterson's own mind, an intellectualism, a "distillation...a theoretical abstraction that meant not to describe the lived experiences of the enslaved so much as to reduce them to a least common denominator that could reveal the essence of slavery in an ideal-type slave, shorn of meaningful heritage."[58] Brown believes that an ethnographic edge can cut through Patterson's "totalizing" tendencies. For Brown, the history of Jamaica sounds like a case study, just one convenient instance of the "historic changes" generated when the quintessential relations between the living and the dead "emerge as the source of struggle."[59] Fitting into the problem of the common, the same, the general, in "other times and places"—something about his mortuary politics remains stable.[60] If death is seen as "the driving force of a sociohistorical process," then what might happen if we see death as both methodological and historical problem, the driving force of transatlantic

slavery *in the first instance* (if something like a first instance can be speculatively gauged)?

[14] The questions I want to ask historians, about the magnitude of the magnetization of death and slavery, are as follows: Is there something unrepresentable about slavery—about the deaths of slaves, their experiences, their longings, their fears, their prayers, their grammar of suffering—about slavery's institutional logics, and slavery's historical rupturing? Is this why death enters not only as an object for historians but also as an interpretative schema?[61] Is it because both death and slavery represent limits in a certain imaginative enterprise—that which is "inexpressible, inscrutable, unmanageable, horrible"— that they are drawn together?[62] Are death, slavery and blackness connected because of an *analogous* "unspeakability"?[63] If this unspeakability is located *within* a social process, then the historical structure of analogy itself has a history, and the slave historian would be tasked with uncovering this fantasmatic interplay, and further still, tracking the ways that the legibility of the analogy may have been written in the incipient gestures of slavery, a condition of possibility for the structuring of slavery itself. A tension, between death *derived* from a system*,* and a problematic of death that *drives* a system, points to a doubling of death as it dances through the details each historian takes up. Does the (very political) division between life and death *reflect* other divisions like white and black, master and slave, present and past, or work to *sustain* (and even *generate*) the racialization of social positionalities and possibilities? What is the causality of a casualty?

[15] If concepts are not merely discursive constructs or static ideas but, rather, emanate and gain their sense and power from political situations, social conditions, and historical trajectories, then we must follow how the assumptive logic of social death, as it is hypostatized into various forms, figures, and "ideal-types," found its way into scholarly consciousness with such political, social, and historical purchase rather than, as Miller and Brown do, dismiss social death altogether. *Slavery and Social Death'*s meditation on the notion of property as important, but not essential to slavery,[64] brings Patterson to the Levi-Straussian significance of "a culture's home-made models" that attempt to do explanatory work and in turn "feed back on and shape the ordering of that reality."[65] What of social death, however? Does it also count as a dominant symbol, a "major mythic theme, a key ritual act" which "stands out as pivotal," and through its emergence "makes possible an internal interpretation of the symbolic process on both the intellectual and the social level"?[66] In his interview with Scott, Patterson speaks, in contrast to the schematic of his work as a distillation, of the grounded "emergence" of the concept social death.[67] In Patterson's circumscribed genealogy, social death percolated, piecemeal, from his various readings—from the idea of the slave as an outsider, developed by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and then elaborated by Finley and Claude Meillassoux.[68] Meillassoux worked with the Touareg in the Sahel, who expressly denote the slave as "dead," and while Patterson saw resonances among the Romans' conception of *legal* death, he also conceptually travelled "funny enough...back to the Caribbean, the indigenous Caribbean, the Caribs, our notorious, funky Caribs" whose mourning rituals (cutting of the hair) replicated the strictures put on slaves: "they're *always* in mourning for their *own* Death."[69] Patterson paired these readings with a concept of liminality developed by Victor Turner, and drew inspiration from the comparative model of Chapter 6 of David Brion Davis's mighty *The Problem of*

Slavery in Western Culture.[70] Patterson, however, distances himself from Davis's "history of ideas," in the pursuit of the "*substantive mechanics* of slavery and the *process* of enslavement."[71]

[16] To continue in our conceptual hesitation: how are these two—material, substantive processes separate from the history of ideas; knowledge antagonistic to phenomena—ever to be excised? What formal structures are informed by slavery as word made flesh? One of my major contentions is that the history of ideas—not only in its unfolding but in our understanding of the movement of ideas, of the practice of abstraction in relation to conceptual constellations—needs to be thought as part of the materiality of slavery. The metaphoricity of slavery is immanent to the categorical matrixes that make the notion of who or who is not "eligible for enslavement" a deeply ingrained reflex, whose convex is "eligibility for personhood," both profoundly interpellating the meaning of those sacrosanct terms, life and death.[72] This, I submit, is the beginning of meditation on Dionne Brand's powerful: "what if the cognitive schema is captivity?"[73] In his more structural assessment of language, Patterson seems to agree—language, he writes, "is more than simply a mode of expression; it also fashions thought."[74] While Quentin Skinner, to take one important proponent of a critical history of ideas, criticized "the Fregean assumption that meanings must somehow be timeless,"[75] Patterson argues that Skinner never went far enough—his ideality, inattentive to *institutionalization* remains "disembodied," un-interrogated "*in the course of* interaction, [in the course of] people making meaning, making sense of what's going on."[76]

[17] It should not be surprising that the question of "Genesis or Structure," a philosophical pairing at the heart of phenomenological problematics, is a tension running right through Patterson's major scholarly innovations: found from the presumptive quest for the "origin and structure" of slavery in the *Sociology of Slavery,* to the essay on "The Structural Origins of Slavery," to the thematic headings "Origins and Forms" and "Origin and Nature" that organize his early *Ethnic Chauvinism,* up through the long examination of the historical rise of freedom in Volume 1 of his proposed *Freedom* series, to his later texts that grapple with the abiding problem of continuity, cultural or otherwise.[77] To begin to ask the philosophical pertinence of these questions for the problem of slavery, taken-for-granted generally as an abhorrent, retrograde institution, but underpinning, in its "afterlife," our onto-episteme, Patterson's thinking needs to be parsed as not only proximate but responsive to the templates undergirding a series of "transition" debates. Patterson has subterranean engagement with the question of the continuity (or not) of the historical infrastructure of ancient, medieval, and modern slavery, a problematic productively elided for political texts that grapple with statehood and the subject. And Patterson's work gestures to (but suppresses) race in the problem of slavery and capitalism, further inhibiting insight into the *theological-political* problem of secularization and the re-naming of being.[78] Though not often thought together with the problem of trans-Atlantic slavery, the intellectual discourses of labor, value and property; just war, natural law and civil society; theodicy, community and the transcendental—articulate a tight relay, as conversations initiated by black theorists continue to show. The theoretical objects that these discourses each offer up—the political slavery of tyranny, the wage slavery of capitalism, the spiritual slavery of worldliness—are part and parcel of the mediating effectiveness of anti-blackness in the deepest impresses of our modern world, that of the human, our limits and possibilities. Compounding

traditions of political theory, political economy, and political theology, slavery becomes a positively productive analogical projectile, charting lines of flight *away* from the contingency undergirding the creation of "actual" slaves to instead materialize slippery associations. This, in near direct proportion to the brutal tethering of slavery in and as blackness. As Wilderson cuts it, "exploited Humans (in the throes of class conflict with unexploited Humans) seized the image of the Slave as an enabling vehicle that animated the evolving discourses of their own emancipation."[79] For thinking the discourse of race through the historicity of the sign of slavery in the onto-epistemological context of modernity and its metaphors, the concept of social death, though situated through a disavowal of the problematics of black thought, bears the traces of this problematization.

[18] With racial slavery, we cannot analytically presuppose "the system in which the subordination occurs," and then insert Euro-American and Afro-American subjects "into this pre-established matrix to engage in their functional articulation of the permutations prescribed therein."[80] Doing so, Nahum Chandler argues, almost always leaves in place an unquestioned origin—the predetermined, pure White subject—against which African Americans are posed as "nonoriginary and displaced, *and* as resistant to subordination and creative in practice."[81] This analytical presupposition of a system, the consequence of which is the situatedness of African Americans in a reactive position, is true not only for those describing the world of power, but for those discourses that go "under the guise of recognizing the agency of African Americans in the making of some social text."[82] Sexton reiterates: "...the topical foci or emphases on the agency of constituted power or the agency of resistance against constituted power are, as it were, two sides of the same analytical coin."[83] Instead, Chandler suggests that we begin to account for "the *constitution* of the general system or structure" and not just its *operational* dynamics. Can we think of social death at the level of the constitutional, rather than the merely analytic and operational?

[19] Patterson's analysis, though purportedly pursuing a full account of the dilemmas of institutionalization, does not directly open our theorization to the problematization of the constitutional. Instead, Patterson confines the concept of race to an operational technique of power. The relation of blackness to slavery was, he condenses: "something new."[84] This "something new," an imprecise phrase which, when mobilized, marks the difficulty of securing the ground of any emergence, is not heralded in its integral or transformative capacity—surprisingly instrumental, "race" contributes nothing substantively to Patterson's general definition. Indeed, in his interview with Scott, Patterson partially accounts for his move to the general presuppositions of slavery as implicitly undertaking the "ideological" work of "*undoing*" any easy translation that would demarcate the "quintessential slave as a *black* person."[85] Patterson's brief, two-paragraph summation of what this "something new" might mean, and the context in which its signification coheres, condeses a long historiographical debate on the ideological and institutional ramifications of imported Africans in Seventeenth-Century Virginia,[86] blindsides an Atlantic perspective centralizing the sugar-slave complex and plantations predating Columbus,[87] and dismisses any sustained engagement with theorists and activists of the black radical tradition, or early

writers on the concept of race, for that matter.[88] Anti-blackness is for Patterson but a variant on a spectrum—"much the same sense of apartness, of not belonging, emerged in other cultures to differentiate the genuine slave from other forms of involuntary servants over whom almost total power was exercised."[89] For Patterson, the indirect means of acquisition of slaves, and what he calls the exceptional character of the scale and rhythm of the "internal trade" in the Americas, does not occasion a different reading of death in and as slavery. Rather, the catastrophic abyss of the Middle Passage is rendered as an instance of a larger problem: "millions of slaves, *for instance*, died between being captured and being forced on board the slave ships."[90]

[20] Although the singularity of racial slavery is relativized, the formations of the American South and Caribbean are his most recurrent reference and, given the outgrowth of *Social Death* from his earlier life and work on and in Jamaica, his most apparent investigative touchstone. While his expansive scope seems to belie any distinct reference, Patterson's self-asserted "first comparative interest...was in the Americas," studying black life in the Americas and the Caribbean, through the prism of slave regimes.[91] On his own account, this work, specifically his essay on slave revolts, provided the animating impetus for a more expansive comparative project, in dialogue with classicists and with broad anthropological scope. In his interview, Scott presses Patterson on whether the "global conception of slavery is being read through [Patterson's] intimate sense of New World slavery, and slavery in Jamaica in particular."[92] Patterson, side-stepping the first iteration of the question, evidences this formative intimacy throughout the interview and in the large breadth of his work. In Patterson's rendering, so disturbing was the radical black political organizing of the 1970s, in his eyes a "dangerous identity movement," that he "put aside" the research for *Slavery and Social Death* to write *Ethnic Chauvinism: The Reactionary Impulse*, an indignant critique, as the subtitle implies, of political, cultural, and social essentialism.[93] Patterson's revelation that the research for *Ethnic Chauvinism* drew directly from his early comparative work on slavery and later fed into *Slavery and Social Death,* clarifies his deliberate attempt to eviscerate any concerted ties between blackness and slavery.[94] As we might expect, the examples towards which Patterson turns for elaborating the gratuitous violence underpinning *Slavery and Social Death* are explicitly situated in the context of the United States. Indeed, the North Carolina Judge Ruffin's 1829 statement, "the power of the master must be absolute, to render the submission of the slave perfect," is in Patterson's estimation the first full formal recognition of "the necessity or threat of force as the basis of the master-slave relationship."[95] If Ruffin's is more the disavowed self-representation of the master than the complex translation of social reality, for which Patterson provides a general account, then Ruffin has voiced what can be examined, as Marx puts it, as a "practical truth."[96]

[21] Patterson's long 1979 essay, "On Slavery and Slave Formations," written in the process of completing *Slavery and Social Death,* is both a capsule form and sounding board for the 1982 book which, condensing and reiterating its main points, also importantly engages black intellectual production and Marxist historiography, two discourses miasmatically expunged from the final form of his "landmark" text. Here, instead, he clarifies the import of analytically distinguishing between the "preliminary" work of elementary specification—slavery's synchronic features—and the "the systemic articulation of the

institution" as a structural force—its diachronic explication—yet he does so without explaining how the two are meant to be thought together.[97] Symptomatically, in this capsule essay, Patterson introduces the concept social death, for perhaps the first time, in a brief meditation on blackness:

> The social death of the black man in the American South lingers in the collective memory of his modern descendants. '*Nobody Knows My Name*', cries James Baldwin a hundred years after the legal emancipation of his ancestors. '*The Spook Who Sat By the Door*', echoes another popular black writer; '*Invisible Man*', declares the most accomplished; and there is a deadly irony in the title of the most famous of all black American novels: '*Native Son*'.[98]

[22] It would not be too much of a stretch, too, to add to this litany Patterson's reading of "dehumanization" and "mystification" in the *Wretched of the Earth*, as decisive for the concept social death.[99] When reading the gratuity of violence, as rendering the submission of the slave "perfect," it would be egregiously remiss to suppress what difference racial blackness makes in crystallizing and synthesizing slavery and death. But why did he not see fit to include these ruminations on "funky Caribs," the haunting of "collective memory" and the fury of Fanon that he once called his "hope and promise," in *Social Death*?

[23] If there was not a decisive break between the ancient, the medieval, and the modern, and if there are general features—gratuitous violence, natal alienation, and general dishonor—in a very, very long history of enslavement, then what Barrett calls the "generative vortex of European capitalism and the modern renewal of European cultural, material, and political infrastructures and their extension particularly to the 'New World'" for which racial blackness is the "signal apparatus,"[100] facilitated the reimagining of the human subject and reconfiguring of conceptual systems. The *institutional* contradictions for Patterson's incorporability proceed apace, when racialized slavery is determined in and excessive to a complex totality as, in the words of Barrett, "...the extended geopolitical episode that, as dramatically as it revises systems of world trade and the mechanics of state powers, *revises* the materiality of the body and the relations of the body to the discursive mechanisms by which it is socially apprehended and managed in the modern exclusive paradigms of personhood."[101] The transatlantic institution of slavery, as a force disseminating the mystifications of labor in general and unleashing a gratuitous violence of displacement from any and all moorings, sustains and yet reoccupies systems of signs, *ideals*, and their vexed inhabitations for all parties of this trade. Race, in particular, became slavery's vanishing singularity, a slippery slope in the cognisability of all else—its origins and unity, its phenomenality and the ground that conditions its (im)possibility.

[24] Entering into the field surveyed at length by Sylvia Wynter—"Man overrepresenting itself as if it was human"—we might find that what congeals as the problem of the color-line is the condition of possibility for the biological conceptions of man, for man-as-species, for man as mind, for man as self-relating negativity, for man as lived experience, for woman, for laborer, for life, for death.[102] But Patterson precludes, despite his one-time effusiveness for Fanon, the famous Fanonian declaration: "beside phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny."[103] Central to Fanon's poetics and phenomenology, such a

"sociogenic principle," as Wynter calls it, challenges "our present culture's purely biological definition of what it is to be, and therefore of what it is like to be, human."[104] For Wynter, the sociogenic principle constitutes both the *genres* of the human and our *experience* of ourselves as human: the reproduction of order adaptively limits the knowledge of the subjects of order. Subjects experience a governing code not "as it really *is*" but as it "*needs to be known,* in order to secure its own existence."[105] These governing codes and their practices of legitimization are grounded in sociologically instituting practices and expressed *epistemically*; a characteristic feature of modernity is the fight against the "opacity" of this "knowability," creating mutations of itself, deepening its irreality.

[25] Appearing in complex turns as a punishment for sin, a model of devotion, and a premise for transformation, the *theological* engagement with slavery has had a central place in manifesting relations of hierarchy between the creator and creatures, the clergy and the laity, the faithful and the heretical, that bind the worldly orientation to the other-worldly.[106] So embedded is slavery in theology, writes David Brion Davis, that "to question the ethical basis of slavery, even when the institution was disappearing from view, would be to question fundamental conceptions of God's purpose and man's history and destiny."[107] However, at a time when God's purpose and man's history and destiny *were* in crisis, the early modern crucible, the institution became rapacious, swallowing up forms of life through the hyper-production of the field of social death, generalizing slavery through and as race, and consolidating modernity's epochality through reason. Wynter articulates the "epochal shift" as the product of the degodded project to make the world knowable, effected by the intellectual revolution of humanism, and elaborated by the Portuguese voyages.[108] This degodding did not do away with the premise of Christian universalism, or the question of theodicy, but announced a "re-godding" immanent to man. What modernity witnesses, when infinity is transferred from God to the cosmos, is the emergence of a radical modern problem, the characteristic Elizabeth Brient identifies as "the need for measure (both ethical and epistemological) in the newly 'infinitized' universe."[109]

[26] Patterson intuits the problem of measure, writing that while "religion explains how it is possible to relate to the dead who still live," there is little that gives us a proper relation to "the living who are dead."[110] What would it mean to instead think race as modernity's measure—the measure not only of the backwards sacred over the progressive secular, but the measure of transcendence over the affectable, of life over death? To think of history's theological hold-overs (the substantialist account of the secularization thesis)[111] as distinctly sutured through blackness as social death? This would mean, if not a break, then a historical whirlwind, in which the massive scale and scope of trade, and the transubstantiation of persons into property, is supported by and sustains new subjectivities and senses of the sovereign—a transfer, in Wynter's reading, from the "other-worldly goal of the *civitas dei* to the this-worldly goal of the *civitas saecularis*"[112] —as well as new ways of relating, narrating and reactivating this movement, as history, or as spirit. Wynter's sociogeny thus situates the epochal redescription of the human as Man (no longer redeemed in the Church but in the nation) in how key transcendental stabilizers (heaven/earth, good/evil, spirit/flesh, clergy/laity) are transposed into a rational/irrational "infrascendental oppositional principle," which finds its physical referent in its second reincarnation as

scientific racism. Modernity, further, would be the threshold where the beyond of death itself enters as a figure that is at stake, and in question, for the social whole rather than death being merely assumed as a universal in or as exchange. Social death is nothing but a mark for the solidification of the worldly infusion of death without transcendence into a single figure—the slave. When the master grants himself, as Patterson permits, a new authority in the "godlike" prerogative to mediate "between socially dead and socially alive,"[113] this theodicy has to be seen in the specificity of modernity's conception of its own secularization process as the need and desire for an inert subject, for an unborn being, for the living who are dead, for the possibility of this new religion that goes by the name of modernity. In a discussion of the difference between slavery and the caste system, Patterson evokes the "the liminality of the slave" as "not just a powerful agent of authority for the master, but *an important route to the usefulness of the slave for both his master and the community at large*...the slave, in his social death, lives on the margin between community and chaos, life and death, the sacred and the secular. Already dead, he lives outside the mana of the gods and can cross the boundaries with social and supernatural impunity."[114] Such living on the boundary, and the anterior activity of crossing, posing the incessant threat of escape, is unevenly but obsessively reflected upon and interpellated by the master and the free community to provide a different relationship between what we come to know as community and chaos, life and death, the sacred and the secular.

[27] Patterson's deep evasion of any sociogenic principle in transforming these terms becomes near crystalline in the culmination of the first volume, *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture,* of his projected two-volume *Freedom* series. His biblical pronouncement, "and so it was that freedom came into the world,"[115] is made from a conception that "the joint rise of slavery and cultivation of freedom was no accident," but was rather, a "sociohistorical necessity."[116] In a short-handed way, the three "chordal notes" of freedom that Patterson strikes can be defined as "freedom *from*, freedom *to*, and freedom *with...* The three require each other: freedom from power; freedom to exercise power, and freedom with others in sharing power."[117] For Patterson, these freedoms, formed in the matrix of a negative alignment with power and arrayed through the personal, the civic, and the sovereign, are wholly indebted to the precedent of slavery: "slavery had to exist before people could even conceive of the idea of freedom as value, that is to say, find it meaningful and useful, an ideal to be striven for."[118] The language of value derives from Patterson's sense of stakes: "slavery immediately made possible something that had never existed before: the absolute, unprotected, unmediated power of life and death of one person over another."[119] His *longue durée*, making its mark in Greek and Roman antiquity and being fairly unproblematically incorporated by Christianity, is pervaded by a static quality. Buttressed by the language of "encoding" and "cultural memory banks,"[120] Patterson has freedom "fully established" in the ancient world: "a pattern of continuity links the ancient to the modern expression and experience of the value."[121] The Renaissance retrieval of ancient knowledge from its "monastic storage" was facilitated through an active Christian memory tasked with heralding what, for Patterson, was the "only practical sociological vision of sociation" beyond the backwardness of blood ties.[122] Here, Christianity offers very little to displace or develop the thought of freedom, beyond as historical shepherd for Greek

and Roman antecedents. Further, Patterson's version of a "crypto-theology," which is really a secular continuity with a theological intermezzo, severs the church from its political and historical context: "The influence of the church on secular thought and practice persisted regardless of the nature of the relationship between them..."[123] The disjuncture partially explains why racialized modernity has little active or transformative role in his ideal-type slave. For Patterson, the secular state is stuck in the "cross-fertilization" and "trappings" of the absolutist church it strained against.[124]

[28] His first constituent element, gratuitous violence, submerges our study deeper into the density of historico-theoretical conundrums: violence is activated both as slavery's prehistory and its enabling force, through (il)logics excessive to empirics. Gratuitous violence constitutes both the *mode of operation* of slavery (and here Patterson draws from the Marxist slavery scholar Elisabeth Welskopf), and its *foundation*, such that violence saturates slavery. Although accounted for differently in the slave relations that span the centuries, the threat and execution of physical violence appears to have a constancy in keeping the slave system in place—force is necessary both to create a steady supply of slaves and to maintain the slave as a slave. Patterson isolates, as a means of description, the techniques and apparatuses (as symbolic instruments always accompanying the lash) erected as fortification, while also explaining the attraction and efficacy of these very techniques, but he cannot account for social death's productivity for modernity, nor can he account for any alternative disposition to death. Patterson's generalized slavery fails to think sociogeny most significantly in the genetic logic of slavery as *substitutability*. "[O]riginating (or conceived of as having originated) as a substitute for death, usually violent death," slavery does not pardon a war captive but instead suspends the physicality of death, now transmuted into death's living variant: slavery. By way of this mythos, the spared subject's *raison d'être* for the wider world is in her subsumption under the newly constituted master's prerogative.[125] The master thus works to uphold the precarious coherence of a death, doubled in life, by revitalizing and revalorizing what amounts to a "conditionally commuted death sentence."[126]

[29] Since the publication of *Slavery and Social Death,* Patterson has become the shorthanded source for this idea, the literature on which is actually very vast.[127] Legible enough in the justifications of the Ancients, where slavery as a by-product of war was "repeated like a litany,"[128] and, for Patterson, empirically verifiable in the practices of "kin-based or tribal societies,"[129] a rhetoric of warring violence at the origins of both the slave condition and institution is mobilized by such a wide range of early modern texts that Mary Nyquist provides us with a synthetic concept to trace its vexed reappearance: the "war slavery doctrine."[130] We have to be attentive to the parenthetical in Patterson—"originated (or conceived of as having originated)"—because this mythic origin peculiarly splinters in the questions modernity poses to itself and promises to answer. Finley, for one, complicates the certitude of the ancient invention of large-scale slavery as "a primordial fact...easily explained."[131] Indeed, the war slavery doctrine does not sociologically or historically provide us with a "window onto Roman sociomilitary practices, as is often assumed."[132] That, statistically, the inhabitants of lands conquered by Romans far outpaces the number of Roman slaves, leads us to consider alternative modes of enslavement.

Patterson enumerates: "slaughter, ransom, temporary imprisonment, colonization, impressment, and simple release were all at various time, separately or together, the more common fate of captives."[133] If Patterson's study shows that the means of acquisition of slaves were actually carried out more by birth and trade than by war,[134] why remain entranced by slavery's proximity to death in a war story?

[30] Though opposition between the enemy, who will die a physical death, and the slave, who will live a social and political death, is given a shared genetic root in Patterson, the foundations sustaining the difference between the conceptual and political categories of enemy and slave always require remarking. When the speculative origins of the slave trade in slavery are still directly imputed to the slave's acquisition in war and capture, the slave has a degree of subjectivity, even if of distant province, even if a memory.[135] But if the war slavery mythos, the symbolic scene of the slave's conversion, could be neatly translated into the global commerce of transatlantic slavery, would the concept "race" ever have emerged with all the desire for rigorous metaphysical and scientific coherence? A "mark" bears the cultural and representative burden of explaining social death and, according to Patterson, the mark follows the mode of slaving: either compelling a justification for enslaving an *intrusive* domestic enemy or an *extrusive* foreign enemy.[136] Yet this militarized distinction misunderstands the *qualitative* difference of trans-Atlantic slavery: the friend/enemy distinction relies on a minimal premise of sovereignty that sustains and engages the claims of two competing sovereigns.[137] Racial slaves, however, captured and commodified, do not enter legally or otherwise as formidable actors in a recognizable war. The commercial network producing slavery had little connection to the practice of war: inter/national martial codes dictated neither modes of engagement nor protocols of surrender with any recognized West African sovereign.[138] In the rise of the modern nation-state, racial blackness is key to distinguishing the internal and external, the transcendent and the immanent, the friend and the enemy—extrinsic, "liminal," "vestibular,"[139] without itself being fully incorporated anywhere.

[31] Troublingly, when his decades-long series' of books and essays on the genealogy of freedom finally arrives at the early modern period, Patterson provides an out for the Enlightenment. In *Freedom,* he credits John Locke with the distinction of having "bluntly stated," like few others before or since, the war slavery doctrine's "nearly universalizing way of rationalizing and symbolically expressing the condition of slavery."[140] Patterson's later "Modern Construction of Rights," continues this theme, praising both Locke and Hobbes for initiating the modern "reconception of freedom" through the language of "fundamental human rights," most fundamental among them is the right not to be a slave.[141] But, as I am developing elsewhere, Hobbes and Locke utilized the war slavery doctrine not to include racial slaves into the discourse of rights, but to forge a generalized myth for the founding of the nation in the articulation of the globe. Indeed, along with other key natural law theorists like Hugo Grotius, they not only participated in and upheld racial slavery,[142] but directly elided the racial slave, evoking instead an idealized political subject (the metaphorical slave), whose self-determination is set in opposition to an originary, affectable, and threatening indeterminacy at the border of the polis, a blackness that the political calls itself to protect. Patterson collapses the line of rhetorical condensation in which war slavery provides only partial

rationalization and severed symbolic expression for slavery, explaining away any impasse between the ideal and the real, blithely incriminating political theorists for a hypocritical, but insubstantial, voluntarism, cemented by unfortunate circumstance: neither Hobbes nor Locke, he writes, "had the courage or the means to practice or even to encourage what they preached for real living slaves."[143] Patterson's decontextualization of political theory is presaged in his earlier, effusive *Ethnic Chauvinism*: "it should be clear that none of the major faults of the Enlightenment were intrinsic. They came mainly from carelessness, bourgeois selfishness, and the over enthusiasm of the intellectual frontiersman. They can all be easily corrected."[144] This displacement of the intimacy between slavery and a modern discourse of subjectivity from the internal architecture of rights correlates across all Patterson's assessments of both race and racism as problems of parochial disposition. Instead, I have been arguing, racial slavery is the sociogenesis of the human, an unthought mediation for a precariously indeterminate state, the shadow generated by an attempt to give form and order to a disintegrating world.

[32] Because of the peculiar way that blackness has been figured as fungible within and in service of differentiating the registers of the psychic, symbolic, physical, *and epiphenomenal,* Patterson's *constitutive* account is insufficiently generalized. The proposed parochialism of race intensifies the deleterious dimensions of Patterson's project: social death as slavery's "general abstraction,"[145] spanning various forms of production in history, and not actually constituting a mode of production itself,[146] rests on a reductive view of the productivity of power—positing an incidental relationship not only between property and slavery, but capitalism and freedom, only sustained by divorcing political philosophy, history, and humanism from race.[147] Race, in Patterson's view, is external to slavery, just as, for him, slavery is external to the specificity of the modern world, and freedom external to capitalism.[148] The endemic reading of race as "extraneous to the modern ethical landscape," in which the racial is but an "unbecoming aid to (economic) class subjection," or, as Fanon's critique of Sartre reveals, but a stage in "Universal History,"[149] is shot through with the dialectical sublations of both Hegelianism and Marxism, even its critical race variants, to the present day.[150] Other limits, most apparent in Patterson's theorization of man, are generated by situating the emergence of freedom and property outside of raciality.[151] For one, Patterson backs away from the "internalization" of slavery: "there is absolutely no evidence," he writes, "to suggest that any group of slaves ever internalized the conception of degradation held by their masters. To be dishonored—and to sense, however acutely, such dishonor—is not to lose the quintessential human urge to participate and to want a place."[152] The ahistorical and asocial authentic subject he seems to find hiding behind contingent relations of power, draws from Camus' invocation of the slave as one who sets a limit that demands "recognition of his humanity"—the slave presciently arrives at an "existential" realization of Camus' intellectual project.[153] If this makes the slave more properly existential than the intellectual, it nonetheless grounds its project of freedom in an incorporative project of the human.

[33] Patterson's extended call to shift the terms of the debate to class, transcendent of race, signals precisely this nexus. We can find a partial expression of this contingency in his first major text, in which

slavery is contained to specific parameters, dissolving with its formal abolition: "The abolition of slavery in 1834 was simply the official seal of ruin on a system that had already collapsed."[154] And we can find it throughout his career, in his vexed relationship to the conservative logics of Daniel Patrick Moynihan,[155] without even Moynihan's minimal political programmatics,[156] as well as in all his more recent publications, in which Patterson displaces race and racism by prioritizing problems of class and domestic pathology.[157] His own centralization of the essay "Toward a Future That Has No Past" (published alongside Moynihan in *Public Interest*), details an increasing tendency to "lumpenization," through which emerges a "universal culture of poverty."[158] In this text, salvation is found in the choice Black Americans have to think "Beyond Blackness," staged not as a multidimensional option but as an imperative: for blacks to engage in "de-ethnicating" and act "in concert with natural class-allies—those poor Whites, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and downwardly mobile Latins," the "black masses" must "cease to interpret the situation in racial terms and must begin to take account of the underlying class realities."[159] Another of his early essays advocates a wholesale rejection of "ethnicity and parochialism" (and "race" more strongly still) in favor of a "cosmopolitan ideal," thus rejecting the whole field of naming and organizing in tension with the force of the fiction of race, taken up so carefully by thinkers since W. E. B. Du Bois.[160] In *Ethnic Chauvinism,* Patterson gives ultimate value to a "truly modern and developed society" which, to him, any claim to ethnicity "works against" by rejecting statehood, lacking a commitment to change, and being, overall, "particularistic, self-deluding, and ultimately counterrevolutionary."[161] The full range and highest summit of the human, for Patterson, can only be achieved by a repressive de-racialization, itself a racial project.[162]

[34] In *Rituals of Blood,* Patterson abdicates the resources of "second sight" and a radical political and philosophical engagement with blackness: "I refuse to call any Euro-Americans or Caucasian person 'white,' and I view with the deepest suspicion any Euro-American who insists on calling Afro-Americans 'black.'"[163] Sanitizing the revalorization of "radical blackness" in the Black Aesthetic, Black Arts and Black Studies Movements in which Sylvia Wynter finds an ethical explosion of our present order of knowledge,[164] Patterson surmises instead that "Blacks have *exhausted* the constructive possibilities of ethnicity and that a continued commitment to ethnicity not only legitimizes the reactionary ethnic revival...but more importantly reinforces styles and orientations which are dysfunctional for the group in its attempt to seek an equal place in that society."[165] The summary dismissal of blackness as a pathologically exhausted subject position, rather than a profound problematization, can also be unpacked in his methodological imperatives as, when in "Slavery," he cautions: "it is ironic that when not theoretically oriented and methodologically rigorous, comparative work can and often does become parochial."[166] In adopting the prevailing multicultural framework, Patterson argues that the oppression of other races—namely the "visibly nonwhite Asians and Latin Americans"—suggests that a "serious crisis of racial definition now confronts those clinging to the binary conception of race."[167] Most problematically, if this "serious crisis" necessitates a disposal of the black/white binary, it implicitly calls into question his analysis that slavery is a singular formation of power, leaving blackness in the lurch of a

more capacious and insidious anti-blackness.[168]

[35] We noted earlier that in the interview with Patterson, Scott asks if a "global conception of slavery is being read through [Patterson's] intimate sense of New World slavery, and slavery in Jamaica in particular." Scott presses, a second time: "one of the questions that I want to ask is whether, in a sense, you haven't been always rewriting the story of Jamaican slavery" to which Patterson replies,

> Yes, that's where things started. In a way you can see *all* of what I've been doing ever since [*Sociology of Slavery*] as a way to try to understand Jamaica—but then I went wider and wider afield in trying to understand the people who were enslaving Jamaica, and how they themselves were so obsessed with freedom.[169]

[36] Patterson's looping, circular expanse, frozen at a certain presumptive notion of the human, needs to be looped back again; he indicates his intention to return to writing on Jamaica, and to continuing his Freedom Series, but both projects have yet to be see publication. The recursivity of this not-yet, Patterson's interminable encircling, itself has significance. Perhaps the closest Patterson gets to the tenor of our questions here is the revision in his 2008 essay "Black Americans": "the most important common consequence of slavery was the experience of racism," with natal alienation as a second major feature.[170] Here, he even invokes Du Bois, for one of the first times, and his formulation of the color-line.[171] Yet, Patterson presupposes, again and again, that this color-line is not our onto-epistemological context, but an *experiential* result of conscious choices, taken by both blacks and whites: "the major problem of the new century will be the reformation, by all parties, of those ethnic preferences, intimate networks, cultural practices, and other ingrained habits of the heart" that sustain socio-cultural segregation.[172] Unsurprisingly, he calls into question black capacity to "meet the challenges of internal lifestyle and interethnic changes and do the cultural and interpersonal work required for integration into the private sphere of the 'beloved community' for which Martin Luther King, Jr., so often yearned."[173] Patterson's decontextualized, static dialectic, both diverging from and corresponding to Marx and Hegel, mirrors the raciality that not only provided justification for slavery but made its presence in the modern world so voluble.

[37] A further consequence to note: the practice of delinking slavery from blackness opens up space for the delinking of social death from slavery, against Patterson's own prescriptions, now re-commissioned as a catch-all for political technologies.[174] Effectively portraying dominant ideology's own staging of itself, Patterson's work has elicited the approbation of a broad range of thinkers of power, absent slavery. While these thinkers, often notable advocates for the people-of-color paradigm, might be intuiting the intimacy between the problem of power and the problem of slavery in the modern world, Patterson provides no foot-holds for a critical perspective on what ultimately is slavery's gratuitous re-commission. "Ethnic studies" dangles "social death" from a multitude of unrelated pegs, connected under the banner of contingent comparisons, like solitary confinement (see Lisa Guenther) or "eligibility for citizenship" (see Liza Marie Cacho), but sustained neither rigorously nor relationally. The analogizing that makes the legitimation of power a problem internal to slavery is turned inside-out: instead, slavery is a footnote problem, derivative of other claims of power. Although in both modes everything can be analogized to

slavery, giving slavery—and abolition—conceptual and historical priority provides for a thinking of the conditions of analogy and metaphoricity in modernity while also allowing us to begin to re-ask the problem of freedom, in a way that slavery's collapsing as a minor term does not.

[38] We can, instead, ask: is there an autopoesis of slavery? The hereditary mark of race, like slavery, may mean that "slavery arguably survives in the institution of race."[175] For Anthony Paul Farley, white-over-black, the colorline, *is* slavery, such that "the movement from slavery to segregation to neosegregation is the movement of slavery perfecting itself."[176] Perhaps slavery's perfection, its telos towards an absolutely divisive power, proceeds in the erasure of its own conditions of possibility—the density sustaining the verb "to be" in the logic "white-over-black *is* slavery" disappears, such that slavery no longer appears as slavery. If this insight has any credence, then what Patterson calls "institutionalization" is absolutely essential to any general definition, wresting the causality of violence and history from its common-sense coding. As Patrice Douglass and Wilderson have argued, blackness is not blighted by slavery but rather slavery "as an ancient political system finds itself disfigured by blackness."[177] The elements that may have sutured the piecemeal, inchoate rendering of slavery in its particular contexts, when articulated with the concept of race, "proliferate the constraints and definitive power of the master's gaze beyond the reach of actual physical property status and proximity."[178] In such "infinite refractions of violence at the level of being and existence within the world," the cure of the concept of race was no palliative to the disease of slavery, neither was the metaphorical mobilization of slavery at every level of discourse to signify everything—wage-labor, tyrannicism, discrimination—except the anti-blackness at its heart. Insofar as Patterson freezes infinite refractions of metaphysical violence with Camusian humanism, Patterson can veil the out-of-control reification of social death. Reducing the historicity of slavery's general horizon, instead operating in and as a *lag*, Patterson appeals to a generalized humanity apart from history, anticipating and disavowing the infinitization of violence.

Conclusion

> Blackness, then, is a challenge at the heart of what is to be done as humanity reflects on how it is bound to its subsequent generations, how, that is, it is bound to itself. This binding, the hallmark of religiosity, raises the question as well, in a secular age, of the extent to which religiosity itself as a disavowed condition is also a blackened one.[179]

> It's after the end of the world. Don't you know that yet?[180]

[39] This essay may be little more than an elegy to the modes and methods—the grammar, more profoundly—that underwrite Patterson's analysis, insofar as they underwrite our world. We have begun to retrieve, however, alternative black engagements with death as and in the end of the world, the world whose categories Patterson sustains with aplomb, and whose premises we have only begun to dust up. Patterson's comparative approach (generalized but also posing a genealogical question of the emergence of freedom, his "ghost" that he is tracking) both intuits and evacuates the strain of black critical thought that, in the words of J. Kameron Carter, interrogates the modern world as the "formation of (onto-)political theology."[181] While we may contest Patterson's historicity, his problematic is a

productive prism, showing the limitations of our thought in/about/around/through/as slavery.

[40] Patterson teeters on the realization that blackness collides with death not only, to return to Chandler, in the system of racial slavery's *operational* dynamics, that is, not only *derived* from historical processes, but also *driving* them, with the contestations and aporias attendant to representations of life and death, and presence and absence, central to "the *constitution* of the general system or structure." If the "ideal-type" of social death is less an intellectual distillation (as per Brown and Miller) than a political ontology (as Wilderson and Sexton encourage us to consider) abstracted in the modern conundrum of the meaning of death, then social death may be our disavowed eschatology. "Social death" raises questions that are not discursive *pace* Foucault, or phenomenological *pace* Heidegger, nor are they "simply historical." Rather, writes Chandler, "they arise at another level of existence. They should be understood as part of the conditions of existence, of thought, as such. Or they mark, perhaps, the *unconditional conditions of the operations of thought.* That is to say, thought is always an inhabitation of the problem of essence."[182] This historicity opens us to generality. Drawing from Wynter, Lewis Gordon takes us to the edge of a beginning: "the theodicean grammar of the world in which race was constituted is also, we should understand, one about the negotiation of life and death."[183] In the global-temporal fissures of modernity, the project of "perfecting slavery" appears also as the project of perfecting death.

[41] If social death is instead read as an allegory of anti-blackness—a "thanatological mode of interpretation," let's call it[184] —it is because social death, as we write it here, formatively dis/integrating, bears both the trace of blackness for the making of the modern world and the centrality of death for meaning-making. Is there a danger in reading social death as an allegory for black ontology? Perhaps, and perhaps not, if black scholars not only expand on what is already implicit in Patterson, the spectre irrupting in Patterson's work, but draw from what Patterson has suppressed, while being attentive to the impasse of representation, a certain formal impossibility. To both defend Patterson against the historians' charge of intellectual abstraction (exemplified by thinkers such as Vincent Brown and Joseph C. Miller) and excise social death from the speciousness of sociological abstraction (exemplified by Lisa Marie Cacho and Lisa Guenther), we can follow Afro-Pessimist thinkers by arguing that social death is neither historical nor sociological enough because the slave has never cohered as a historical and social figure. This is not to disavow the materiality of slavery, but to emphasize a different vortex of immanence. Patterson's lacunas gesture to a problematic—social death—that is in excess of the protocols of sociology *and* history, as it sits at the cusp of the announcement of both frameworks—the history of history and the sociology of sociology. That is to say, "social death" has not yet found its properly methodological frame, and it *cannot* because the conceptual problems that inhere—between the ideal and the actual, the transcendent and the singular, the immaterial and the material, genesis and structure, violence and the law—are the core of the torsions of slavery and modernity. Social death requires thinking philosophically, in the most radical sense, and at the very least. Central not only to the right to live or die but the meaning of being and existence and the way these questions are given to us, in time, as history, we can follow Sexton to ask: "But what if slavery does not die, as it were, not because it is immortal, but rather because it is non-mortal, because it has *never* lived, at least not in the psychic life of power? What if the source of slavery's longevity is not its resilience in the face of opposition, but the

obscurity of its existence? Not the accumulation of its political capital, but the illegibility of its grammar?" [185]

[42] The wound that the concept social death uneasily sutures has been made to telescope the debate over the gift and secret, the subterranean power of critical black discourses on death, which is also a debate about the "structure and genesis" of first principles. Insofar as blackness is, dances with, and signals questions of the beyond—paraontology/*lysis* (Moten), the Thing (Silva), the incalculable (Du Bois), exorbitance/X (Chandler), ante-anti-blackness (Sexton)—this critical, time-warping excrescence may have called our first principles to attention.[186] If blackness is never safe, not even, or especially, in death, does the slavehold, both a "floating tomb" and a "floating laboratory,"[187] generate or prefigure slaves' capacity to reflect upon the white world's relation to death? What might this "second sight," with insights into the asociality of whiteness in excess of those of the scientist, *do*? Is the generation of a deathliness without transcendence the secret function of the slave, slavery's "dream-work"?[188] Is the "fantasy in the hold" itself fungible, always already recirculating in an economy not unlike that of the death drive? Or is blackness, as Moten suggests, irrepressibly "more and less than one in nothing," an "informal, informing, insolvent insovereignty"?[189] What is nothing? What is the world?

[43] These impossible questions, insofar as they grapple with world-rending presence and absence, infinity and stasis, transcendence and immanence, may resist final marking. Rather than attempt answers, we have suggested their gravitational force as they bend the violently phantasmatic material world animating Patterson's "social death" into innumerable paradoxes, paradoxes intensified in the recuperative work of contextualizing historians and the "people of color" political expanse, but not limited to them.

Notes

1. Anthony Paul Farley, "Perfecting Slavery," *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal* 36 (2004), 105.
2. Hortense Spillers, "'All the Things You Could Be By Now, If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother': Psychoanalysis and Race," in *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 409.
3. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).
4. For interpretations of social death most pertinent to the discussion here, see the following by Frank B. Wilderson II, Jared Sexton, Saidiya Hartman, and Fred Moten: Wilderson, "Grammar and Ghosts: The Performative Limits of African Freedom," *Theater Survey* 50, no. 1 (2009): 119-125; Wilderson, *Red, White and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Sexton, "People-of-Color-Blindness: Notes on the Afterlife of Slavery," *Social Text* 28, no. 2 (2010): 31-56; Sexton, "The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism," *InTensions* 5 (2011) «www.yorku.ca/intent/issue5/articles/jaredsexton.php»; Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Moten, "The Case of Blackness," *Criticism* 50, no. 2 (2008): 177–218; Moten, "Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)" *The South Atlantic*

Quarterly 112, no. 4 (2013): 737-780; Moten, "Notes on Passage (The New International of Sovereign Feeling)," *Palimpsest: A Journal on Women, Gender, and the Black International* 3, no.1 (2014): 51-74. The appreciative of "landmark" explicitly prefaces many discussions of Patterson. For examples, see Sharon Patricia Holland, *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000); Christopher Peterson, *Kindred Specters: Death, Mourning, and American Affinity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); David Brion Davis "Equality, Slavery, Violence, Citizenship: Notes on a Symposium," *Quaderno* 3 (1988): 246-248; Nicholas De Genova, "Introduction: Latino and Asian Racial Formations at the Frontiers of U.S. Nationalism" in *Racial Transformations: Latinos and Asians Remaking the United States,* ed. De Genova (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 4; Matt Richardson, "'My Father Didn't Have a Dick': Social Death and Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18, no. 2-3 (2012): 361-37; Colleen Glenney Boggs, *Animalia Americana: Animal Representations and Biopolitical Subjectivity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

5. Moten, "Blackness and Nothingness."

6. The form of these questions are drawn from ongoing readings counter-posing black feminist critiques of history, specifically the formative guide of Hortense Spillers, with Reinhart Koselleck's "Conceptual History," Derrida's reading of ideal object, and historical materialism. See Spillers, *Black, White, and in Color*; Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time,* trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985); Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History Spacing Concepts,* trans. Todd Samuel Presner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's 'Origin of Geometry': An Introduction* [1978], trans. John P. Leavey Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); Derrida, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy* [1990], trans. Marian Hobson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

7. Moten, "Black Op," *PMLA* 123, no. 5 (2008), 1743-1747.

8. Abdul R. JanMohamed, *The Death-Bound-Subject: Richard Wright's Archaeology of Death* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 3; Karla F.C. Holloway, *Passed On: African American Mourning Stories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 6. See Kiese Laymon, *How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America*,(Evanston, IL: Bolden Books, 2013).

9. Along with Wilderson, Sexton, Moten, Hartman, JanMohamed, Holloway, and Holland, see also Mikko Tukkanen, *The American Optic: Psychoanalysis, Critical Race Theory, and Richard Wright* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009). For works that intuit a connection between blackness and death in ways exorbitant to Patterson's social death, see the entirety of Du Bois's corpus, especially *Souls of Black Folk*, *Darkwater*, *The World and Africa,* and *Dusk of Dawn*. And Frantz Fanon, of course.

10. Sexton, "The Social Life of Social Death," 21.

11. For "ruse of analogy," see Wilderson, *Red, White & Black,* Chpt. 1.

12. Sexton "People-Of-Color-Blindness," 47.

13. Moten, "Blackness and Nothingness," 249.

14. Sexton, "The Social Life of Social Death," 21. See Sexton's theorization, in conversation with Albert Memmi, on "the complex interaction between the general and restricted economies of white supremacy and antiblackness—that is, an interaction through which the general is both productive of *and* dependent upon the restricted or particular" in *Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 28.

15. See, for instance, the analysis of *racialized modernity* in Barnor Hesse, "Racialized Modernity: An Analytics of White Mythologies," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 4 (2007): 643-663.

16. Valentin Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988), ix. See Colin Koopman for how Foucault reformulated "transcendental philosophy as phenomenology, thus opening the irreducible residuum of 'historical transcendentality'" in "Historical Critique or Transcendental Critique in Foucault: Two Kantian Lineages Reformulating" *Foucault Studies* 8 (2010): 100-121.

17. Denise Ferreira da Silva, "Notes for a Critique of the 'Metaphysics of Race,'" *Theory, Culture & Society* 28, no. 1: 138-148.

18. Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 15.

19. Black Feminist thought is a driving force behind a critique of Foucault. Joy James writes that the prototype of the body for Foucault, "the white, propertied male," obscures the slave body-as-property, and thus, "the metanarrative of *Discipline and Punish* vanquishes historical and contemporary racialized terror, punishments, and control in the United States; it therefore distorts and obscures violence in American in general," "Erasing the spectacle of racialized state violence," in *Resisting State Violence: Radicalism, Gender, Race in U.S. Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 24. See, importantly, too, Brady Thomas Heiner, "Foucault and the Black Panthers," *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action* 11, no. 3 (December, 2007): 313-356.

20. Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race,* xi.

21. See Silva, "No-Bodies: Law, Raciality, and Violence," *Griffith Law Review* 18, no. 2 (2005), 213.

22. Silva, "Notes for a Critique," 139.

23. Lindon Barrett, *Racial Blackness and the Discontinuity of Western Modernity,* eds. Justin A. Joyce, Dwight A. McBride, and John Carlos Rowe (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 2.

24. Patterson, *Social Death,* vii.

25. Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-bellum South* (New York: Knopf, 1956). On Patterson's affirmative reading of Stampp's project, see also, Patterson, "Prologue" and "John Hope Franklin: The Man and His Works," in *The New Black: What Has Changed—and What Has Not—with Race in America,* eds. Kenneth Mack and Guy-Uriel Charles, (New York: New Press, 2014).

26. Moses Finley, "Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour?," in *Slavery in Classical Antiquity,* ed. Finley (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1960), 53-72; Moses Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (New York: Viking Press, 1980).

27. See, by contrast, Robin Blackburn's attempt at definition, cast as an exploration into the possibility of defining, rather a possibility taken for granted: "Defining Slavery – its Special Features and Social Role," in *Slavery and Other Forms of Unfree Labour* ed. L. Archer (New York: Routledge University Press, 1988), 262–79. See also, Susanne Miers, "Slavery: A Question of Definition," *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 24, no. 2 (2003): 1-16.

28. Patterson, *Social Death,* 2.

29. Lois Wacquant, "My Top Five Books in Sociology (with Apologies to the Next 95)," *Sociologie Magazine* (Amsterdam, Spring 2011).

30. Patterson, *Social Death,* 2.

31. *Ibid.,* 13.

32. See Patterson's 2012 revised definition of social death as "*the violent, corporeal possession of*

socially isolated and parasitically degraded persons." Patterson, "Trafficking, Gender and Slavery: Past and Present," in *The Legal Understanding of Slavery,* 329.

33. A phrase found in both *Rituals of Blood,* 26; and Patterson, *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Basic Books, 1991), 10.

34. Patterson, *Social Death,* 13.

35. *Ibid.,* 296.

36. Patterson, "On Slavery and Slave Formations," *New Left Review* 117 (1979), 47.

37. Patterson, *An Absence of Ruins* (London: Hutchinson, 1967); *Children of Sisyphus* (London: Hutchinson, 1964); *Die the Long Day* (New York: William Morrow & Co. 1971).

38. Patterson, "Frantz Fanon: My Hope and Hero", *New World Quarterly*, 2, nos. 3 & 4 (1966). Interestingly, this is one of the only essays not cited in Patterson's Harvard C.V. A search of Patterson's work has found only one additional quote from Fanon, in his *The Sociology of Slavery: Jamaica, 1655-1838* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1967).

39. See Patterson's thorough interview with David C. Scott, "The Paradox of Freedom: An Interview with Orlando Patterson," *small axe* 40 (2013): 96-242.

40. Donette Francis, "'Transcendental Cosmopolitanism': Orlando Patterson and the *Novel Jamaican* 1960s," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 5, no. 1 (2013), 12.

41. Patterson, *Sociology of Slavery,* 51.

42. Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 151.

43. *Ibid.*, 137.

44. *Ibid.*, 153. Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959).

45. Patterson, *Social Death,* 341.

46. Orlando Patterson, *Rituals of Blood: The Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries* (Washington, D.C.: Civitas, 1998), xviii-xix. Similarly, in a response to an interview question about method, he says "You know, I don't know if I self-consciously think about this, but I do think that some kinds of issues are best settled empirically, and some kinds of issues are essentially moral and can only be resolved ultimately in moral terms. What most academics try to do is to claim that they can separate the two completely. I don't think that that's possible. I think it's important to bear in mind the differences and to use arguments that are appropriate to the issues. My general strategy is that where certain issues are unambiguously empirical, you use the appropriate data. But there are many issues where it's very hard to do that and you just have to, as skillfully as you can, shift from one orientation to the other" in Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 237.

47. On Weber's theorization of ideal-types, see both his *Essays in Economic Sociology,* ed. Richard Swedberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), and *2: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology,* eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). On Finley, see his *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 38; Jack Cargill, "A Memorial Address for Sir Moses Finley," *The Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries* 68, no. 2 (1986)" 65-74; and Mohammad Nafissi, *Ancient Athens and Modern Ideology: Value, Theory and Evidence in Historical Societies. Max Weber, Karl Polanyi and Moses Finley* (London: University of London, 2005). For a pertinent discussion of the intersections of Finley's political and intellectual activity see Daniel P. Tompkins, "The World of Moses Finkelstein: The Year 1939 in M. I. Finley's Development as a Historian" in *Classical Antiquity and the Politics of America: From George Washington to George W. Bush*, ed. Michael Meckler (Waco: Baylor University Press,

2006), 95-126.

48. For concerns with comparative method see, Winthrop D. Jordan, "Planter and Slave Identity Formation: Some Problems in the Comparative Approach," in *Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies,* eds. Vera Rubin and Arthur Tuden (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1977), 35-40; Philip McMichael "Rethinking Comparative Analysis in a Post-Developmentalist Context," *International Social Science Journal* 133(1992): 351-365.

49. Patterson, *Social Death,* 332.

50. *Ibid.,* 334.

51. Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830.* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

52. *Ibid.*, xxi.

53. Miller, "The World According to Meillassoux: A Challenging but Limited Vision," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 22, No. 3 (1989): 473-495.

54. Miller, *The Problem of Slavery as History: A Global Approach* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 29.

55. *Ibid.*, 15.

56. Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," *American History Review* 114, no. 5 (2009): 1231-49.

57. *Ibid.,* 1248.

58. *Ibid.,* 1226.

59. Brown, *Reaper's Garden*, 6.

60. *Ibid.*, 258.

61. For suggestions as to why death is the "unmatched" prism through which to grapple with New-World "cross-cultural encounters", see Erik R. Seeman, who points to 1) death's ubiquity in the violent encounters of the New World; 2) its centrality to religious systems of meaning; 3) its curious encumbrances pervade archival fragments accounting for cultural exchanges; 4) its sedimented materiality "leaves traces" that preoccupy archaeologists most, *Death in the New World: Cross-Cultural Encounters, 1492-1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 4-5.

62. Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (New York: Routledge University Press, 1992), 255.

63. See Walter Johnson for how slavery is unspeakable for modernity, "The Pedestal and the Veil: Rethinking the Capitalism/Slavery Question," *Journal of the Early Republic* 24, no. 2 (2004): 299-308.

64. A hugely problematic idea bound up with his peculiar divorce of personalistic and materialistic violence, which will be the topic of another essay on the political economy of social death.

65. Patterson, *Social Death,* 19.

66. This is Patterson's riff on Victor Turner's concept of the "dominant symbol," *ibid.,* 37.

67. Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 219-220.

68. Patterson cites three texts of Claude Meillassoux's: "Introduction" in Meillassoux, ed. *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); Meillassoux, *L'Esclavage en Afrique Précoloniale* (Paris: Maspero, 1975) and Meillassoux "Historical Modalities of the Exploitation and Overexploitation of Labour," *Critique of Anthropology*

4 (1979): 7–16. A later work of Meillassoux's is also essential reading: *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold* [1986], trans. Alide Dasnoise (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

69. Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 220.

70. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

71. Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 241.

72. "Eligibility for enslavement" is a succinct formulation drawn from David Eltis's essay, "Europeans and the Rise and Fall of African Slavery in the Americas: An Interpretation," in *The American Historical Review* 98, no. 5 (1993): 1399-1423.

73. Dionne Brand, *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging* (Toronto: Doubleday, 2001), 34.

74. Patterson, *Social Death,* 334.

75. Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* 8, no. 53 (1969), 3-53.

76. Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 229.

77. In a footnote (*Social Death,* 392n115), Patterson refers us to Jean Hyppolite's *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit,* trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1974). See "Slavery" where he writes that "students concerned with the structural causes of slavery neglect the issue of the evolutionary origins of the institution" (433); Orlando Patterson "Culture and Continuity: Causal Structures in Socio-Cultural Persistence" in: Mohr J, Friedland R Matters of Culture: Cultural Sociology in Practice. Cambridge University Press; 2004; Orlando Patterson "The Mechanisms of Cultural Reproduction: Explaining the Puzzle of Persistence" in: Hall JR, Grindstaff L, Lo M-C Handbook of Cultural Sociology. New York: Routledge; 2010. pp. 139-151. On the philosophical problem of Genesis and Structure see also, Jacques Derrida, "'Genesis' and 'Structure' and Phenomenology," in *Writing and Difference* (London: Routledge, 1978).

78. Each of these sub-fields are the subject of forthcoming essays on dimensions of Patterson.

79. Wilderson, *Red, White & Black,* 19.

80. Chandler, "Originary Displacement: Or, Passages of the Double and the Limit of the World" [2000], in *X: the Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 140.

81. *Ibid.*, 141.

82. *Ibid.*, 140.

83. Sexton, "The Social Life of Social Death", 39.

84. Patterson, *Social Death,* 7.

85. Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 220. See, by way of contrast, Paul Lovejoy's definitional enterprise, published a year after Patterson, singling out the "special case of slavery in the Americas," "unique in...the manipulation of race as a means of controlling the slave population and the extent of the system's economic rationalization" in *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 8.

86. See Alden Vaughn's survey of the scholarly field sustaining the conviction that blacks in early Virginia, barring any legal claim of ownership, were first de facto indentured servants, until laws in the 1650s and 1660s began to adjudicate relations of slavery in "The Origins Debate: Slavery and

Racism in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 97, no. 3. See also, Donald Noel, *The Origins of American Slavery and Racism* (Columbus, OH: Merill, 1972); Winthrop D. Jordan, "Modern Tensions and the origins of American Slavery," *Journal of Southern History* 28 (1962); and Raymond Starr, "Historians and the Origins of British North American Slavery," *The Historian* 26 (1973-4): 1-18.

87. See Charles Verlinden, *The Beginnings of Modern Civilization: Eleven Essays with an Introduction* trans. Yvonne Freccero (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970), ix. See also, the self-proclaimed "heretical disciple" of Verlinden, Felipe Fernandez-Armesto's *Before Columbus: Exploration and Colonization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229-1492* trans. Yvonne Freccero (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1987); Sidney M. Greenfield's essay "Plantations, Sugar Cane and Slavery" in *Roots and Branches: Current Direction in Slave Studies* ed. Michael Craton, Toronto: Pergamon Press, 1987) 85-119; the work of Barbara L. Solow, especially "Capitalism and Slavery in the Exceedingly Long Run" in *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery,* eds. Barbara Solow and Stanley Engerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and the essays in her edited *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

88. See, for the later, Sara Eigen and Mark Larimore, eds. *The German Invention of Race,* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

89. Patterson, *Social Death*, 7.

90. *Ibid.*, 164, emphasis added.

91. Orlando Patterson, "Slavery and Slave Revolts: A Socio-historical Analysis of the First Maroon War, Jamaica, 1655—1740," *Social and Economic Studies* 19, no. 3 (1970): 289–325; reprinted in Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (New York: Anchor, 1973), 246–92; and Orlando Patterson, "Toward a Future That Has No Past," *Public Interest*, no. 27 (Spring 1972): 25–62. See his contextualizing of these early articles in "Paradox of Freedom," 216.

92. Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 221.

93. Patterson, as Scott points out, does not ever directly refer to "Black Power movement," "Paradox of Freedom," 239. Patterson, *Ethnic Chauvinism: The Reactionary Impulse* (Briarcliff Manor, NY: Stein and Day, 1977).

94. Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 193, 216. See page 204 of this interview too for his discussion of the very critical black American responses to *Ethnic Chauvinism*.

95. Patterson, *Social Death*, 3.

96. See Christopher J. Arthur, "The Practical Truth of Abstract Labour," in *In Marx's Laboratory: Critical Interpretations of the* Grundrisse, eds. Richard Bellofiore, Guido Starosta, Peter D. Thomas (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV), 101-120.

97. "On Slavery and Slave Formations," 32.

98. *Ibid.*, 39-40.

99. Patterson, "Frantz Fanon"; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York, NY: Grove Press, 1993).

100. Barrett, *Racial Blackness,* 83; 87.

101. Barrett, *Racial Blackness,* 1.

102. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument. *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 257–337.

See Lewis R. Gordon, "Is the Human a Teleological Suspension of Man? Phenomenological Exploration of Sylvia Wynter's Fanonian and Biodicean Reflections" in *Caribbean Reasonings: After Man, Towards the Human: Critical Essays on Sylvia Wynter,* eds. Anthony Bogues, (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2006).

103. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks* [1952], trans. C. L. Markham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), 11.

104. Sylvia Wynter, "Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, Identity, the Puzzle of Conscious Experience, and What It Is Like to Be 'Black,'" in *National Identities and Sociopolitical Changes in Latin America,* eds. Mercedes F. Duran-Cogan and Antonio Gomez-Moriana (New York: Routledge, 2001), 31. See David Marriott's critique of a certain kind of positivism to Wynter's trans-historical "breakthroughs," reductive of the Fanonian "leap," in Inventions of Existence: Sylvia Wynter, Frantz Fanon, Sociogeny, and 'the Damned,'" *CR: The New Centennial Review* 11, no. 3, (2011): 45-89. Also, Karen Gagne's overview in "On the Obsolescence of the Disciplines: Frantz Fanon and Sylvia Wynter Propose a New Mode of Being Human," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 5, no. 3 (2007), «http://scholarworks.umb.edu/humanarchitecture/vol5/iss3/23»

105. Scott, "The Re-Enchantment of Humanism: An Interview with Sylvia Wynter," *Small Axe* 8 (2000): 119–207.

106. See Chapter 3 of Davis's *Problem of Slavery*; Gervase Corcoran, *Saint Augustine on Slavery,* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1985); John Bryon, "Paul and the Background of Slavery: The Status Quaestionis in New Testament Scholarship, *Currents in Biblical Research* October 2004 vol. 3 no. 1, 116-139; Dale B. Martin's *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Jon Bryon *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2nd Series, No. 162. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Sister Margaret Mary, C.I.M., "Slavery in the Writings of St Augustine," *The Classical Journal* XLIX (1954), 367; Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Robert Schlaifer, "Greek Theories of Slavery from Homer to Aristotle," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology,* 47 (1936), 165-204; John Francis Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church: The History of Catholic Teaching Concerning the Moral Legitimacy of the Institution of Slavery* (Chichester and London: Barry Rose Publishers, 1975); John B. Killoran, "Aquinas and Vitoria: Two Perspectives of Slavery," in *The Medieval Tradition of Natural Law,* ed. Harold J. Johnson, (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1987); Joseph E. Capizzi, "The Children of God: Natural Slavery in the Thought of Aquinas and Vitoria," *Theological Studies* 63 (2002); Hector Zagal, "Aquinas on Slavery: An Aristotelian Puzzle," *Congresso Tomista Internazionale*, 2003; Stephen F. Brett, *Slavery and the Catholic Tradition: Rights in the Balance* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994).

107. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture,* 91.

108. Scott, "The Re-Enchantment of Humanism: An Interview with Sylvia Wynter," *Small Axe* 8 (2000). 201-2; Wynter, "'Columbus, The Ocean Blue and 'Fables that Stir the Mind': To Reinvent the Study of Letters," in *Poetics of the Americas: Race, Founding and Textuality*, eds. Bainard Cohen and Jefferson Humphries (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 141–64. See Wynter, "1492: A New World View," in *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, eds. Vera Lawrence and Rex Nettleford (Washington and London: Smithsonian

Institution Press, 1995), 13; 5–57.

109. Elizabeth Brient, *The Immanence of the Infinite: Hans Blumenberg and the Threshold to Modernity* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 9.

110. Patterson, *Social Death,* 45.

111. See Hans Blumenberg's critique of Karl Löwith and Carl Schmitt in *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. Robert Wallace (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1983).

112. Wynter, "1492," 14.

113. Patterson, *Social Death,* 46.

114. *Ibid.,* 51.

115. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death,* 340.

116. *Ibid.*, ix.

117. Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 224.

118. Patterson, "Freedom, Slavery, and the Modern Construction of Rights," in *The Cultural Values of Europe*, eds. Hans Joas and Klaus Wiegandt (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 115-151; 117.

119. *Ibid.*

120. Patterson, *Freedom,* 376.

121. Patterson *Freedom,* xii.

122. *Ibid.,* 376.

123. *Ibid.*, 377.

124. *Ibid.*

125. Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery,* 106. See all of 99-115.

126. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death,* 5.

127. Whereas in 1982, Patterson affirmatively quotes Ali Abd Elwahed's early work: "all the situations which created slavery were those which commonly would have resulted, either from natural or social laws, in the death of the individual," (Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death,* 5), in Patterson's 1977 "Slavery," just five years prior, he is more cautiously contextual, scaling back from Elwahed's "wholly unoriginal idea," to the fresher insights of positivist and comparative ethnologists at the turn of the twentieth century. See Ali Abd Elwahed, *Contribution à une théorie sociologique de l'esclavage* (Paris: Mechelinck, 1931), 243. He reads this also from L. T. Hobhouse, G. C. Wheeler, and M. Ginsberg, *The Material and Social Institutions of the Simpler Peoples* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1930) and Edvard Westermark, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas, Vol. 1.* (New York: Macmillan, 1908); Richard Thurnwald, *Economics in Primitive Communities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932); and Thurnwald and Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology* (New York: Appleton, 1893).

128. See Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, 67- 92; 82.

129. Patterson, *Social Death,* 113.

130. Mary Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny, and the Power of Life and Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

131. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology,* 67.

132. Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule,* 52.

133. Patterson, *Social Death,* 170. Patterson draws largely from Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978). See also, Peter Hunt, "Arming Slaves and Helots in Classical Greece," in *Arming Slaves in World History,* eds. Philip Morgan and Chris Brown (Yale

University Press, 2006.)

134. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 105-115; 148-166; 169-171.

135. Meillassoux, *Anthropology of Slavery,* 74.

136. Patterson, *Social Death,* 39-40.

137. See Carlo Galli's insight: "The enemy, is nonetheless never fully alien: it is never the bearer of a dissimilarity so radical that, through its mere existence, it could strengthen the identity of the Us from the outside," in "On War and on the Enemy," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 9, no. 2 (2009): 195-219.

138. Some compelling historiographical insights into this fact can be found in Stephanie Smallwood's analysis in *Saltwater Slavery:* "Purchasing 'in large numbers' and dealing in 'multitudes' of captives transformed the very nature of captivity," 31; Anthony Pagden's assertion in *Lords of All Worlds:* "For the first time, instead of taking slaves in so-called 'just wars,' instead of, as the Roman Law of slavery had insisted, 'saving' a captive from the death his captor was entitled to inflict on him, men began to buy slaves who were innocent of any act of aggression," 170; and A. J. R. Russell-Wood's insistence that "...neither the Americans nor their slave traders from Portugal and later England made war in Africa (with the possible exception of the Portuguese in Angola) in order to draw on that reservoir that potential slave labor represented," 85. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500-c.1800* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995); Russell-Wood, "Iberian Expansion and the Issue of Black Slavery: Changing Portuguese Attitudes, 1440-1770," *The American Historical Review* 83, no. 1 (1978). See also, William D. Phillips, Jr., "The Old World Background of Slavery in the Americas," in *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System,* ed. Solow: 43-61; Phillips, *Slavery from Roman Times to the Early Transatlantic Trade* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

139. Spillers, "Interstices: A Small Drama of Worlds," in *Black, White and in Color,* 155.

140. Patterson, *Freedom*, 10.

141. Patterson, "Modern Construction of Rights," 151.

142. On Locke, see James Tully, *An Approach to Political Philosophy: Locke in Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Mark A. Michael, "Locke's Second Treatise and the Literature of Colonization," Interpretation 25 (1998): 407-27; Duncan Ivison, "Locke, Liberalism, and Empire," in *The Philosophy of John Locke: New Perspectives*, ed. Peter R. Arnstey (London: Routledge, 2003), 86-105; Herman Lebovics, *Imperialism and the Corruption of Democracies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), chap. 5; David Armitage, "John Locke, Carolina, and the Two Treatises of Government," *Political Theory* 32 (2004): 602-27; Wayne Glausser, "Three Approaches to Locke and the Slave Trade," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 51 (1990): 199-216; Robert Bernasconi, "Locke's Almost Random Talk of Man: The Double Use of Words in the Natural Law Justification of Slavery," *Perspektiven der Philosophie* 18 (1992): 293-318; Bernasconi and Anika Maaza Mann, "The Contradictions of Racism: Locke, Slavery and the Two Treatises," in *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy* ed. Andrew Vails (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); Jennifer Welchman, "Locke on Slavery and Inalienable Rights," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 25 (1995): 67-81; Peter Laslett, "Locke as Founder of the Board of Trade," in *A Locke Miscellany,* ed. Jean S. Yolton (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1990), 127-36; and Richard Tuck *The Rights of War and Peace: Political Thought and the International Order from Grotius to*

Kant (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)*,* 167-169. On Hobbes, see Noel Malcolm, "Hobbes, Sandys, and the Virginia Company," *Historical Journal* 24, no. 2 (1981), 297-321; Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace,* 128.

143. Patterson, "Modern Construction of Rights," 151.

144. Patterson, *Ethnic Chauvinism,* 286.

145. This formulation of abstraction draws from Sandro Mezzadra, 'The Topicality of Prehistory: A New Reading of Marx's Analysis of "So-called Primitive Accumulation,"' *Rethinking Marxism* 23, no 3 (2011): 302-321.

146. See Patterson's "Commentary," in *Roots and Branches,* when he notes that though it may be possible to "arrive at a typology of *orders* of slavery," slavery is generally defined as an "order of power." More definitively, he writes, "in twelve years of diligent searching I have not found a slave mode of production. It does not exist," 289.

147. Patterson, "The Ancient and Medieval Origins of Modern Freedom," in *The Problem of Evil*, eds. John Stouffer and Steven Mintz (University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 60. A deeper explanation of Marx's parsing of slavery and capitalism is in order, though beyond the bounds of this essay. On the similarity between Patterson's line of thought here and Marx, see his *Theories of Surplus Value,* where plantations are only formally capitalist in their mode of production. Although commercial, speculative and global "from the start," "slavery of Negroes precludes free wage labor," and thus any incipient capitalist orientation on the part of slave holders and merchants "has not arisen out of slavery but is grafted onto it," *Theories of Surplus Value, Part II*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968), 302-3. On Marx and Slavery, see also, Jarius Banaji, *Theory as History: Essays on Modes of Production and Exploitation* (Leiden: Brill 2010); Dale Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery: Labor, Capital, and World Economy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

148. See the latter in Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 203.

149. Fanon: "Sartre had forgotten that the Negro suffers in his body quite differently from the white man...Though Sartre's speculations on the existence of the Other may be correct . . . their application to a Black consciousness proves fallacious...because the white man is not only The Other but also the master, whether real or imaginary," *Black Skin, White Masks,* 133-139. See also, Marriott, "On Racial Fetishism," *Qui Parle* 18, no. 2 (2010), 232-4; Lewis Gordon, "Sartrean Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism," in *Philosophers on Race: Critical Essays,* eds. Julie K. Ward, Tommy L. Lott (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Lt., 2001), 241-269.

150. Silva, *Toward a Global Idea,* xxvii. See Stuart Hall's "Race, Articulation, and Societies Structure in Dominance," [1980] famous for its argument that race "qualifies class" as "the needs of slavery can explain the emerge of attitudes of racial superiority rather than the other way around," in *Black British Cultural Studies,* ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 441-49

151. See Patterson, *Social Death,* 20-8.

152. *Ibid.*, 97.

153. *Ibid.*, 214; Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*, trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Vintage, 1991), 13. See Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 96-8; 138-141.

154. Patterson, *Sociology of Slavery,* 29.

155. Patterson protests this as a "caricature" in Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 240. Patterson elsewhere has proudly confessed to being a key participant in neo-conservative "ethnicity sessions," in "A

Meeting with Gerald Ford," New York Times, January 6, 2007. For a stinging critique of Moynihan see Stephen Steinberg, "The Liberal Retreat from Race," *New Politics* 5, no. 1 (1994): 30-51.

156. See Eric Foner, "The Crisis Within," *New York Times Book Review,* February 14, 1999.

157. His books *Rituals of Blood* and *The Ordeal of Integration* try to qualm what he sees as an overdramatization of the racial problem. See Martin Kilson's reading of Patterson through E. Franklin Frazier: "Critique of Orlando Patterson's Blaming-the-Victim Rituals" *Souls* (2001): 91-106. Kilson persuasively demonstrates how Patterson has rhetorically shifted his positionality (specifically from the 1993 essay "Blacklash: The Crisis of Gender Relations Among African Americans" (in *Transitions,* No. 62 (1993)) to its extended version as "Broken Bloodlines" in *Rituals,* from "within" to "without" an American-American perspective and the public stance has progressively, "normative thrust and calibrating tone," become "black-rejectionist" if not "negrophobic" (95). His thesis of *Rituals of Blood*, that the problems in the black community extend from the patriarchy in the black family, has been repeated in numerous NYT articles: see "Race by the Numbers" or "Poverty of the Mind."

158. Patterson, "Toward a Future That Has No Past," *Public Interest* 27 (1972): 25–62. See his comments on this essay in Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 169; 192-5; 216.

159. *Ibid.*, 60.

160. Patterson, "On Guilt, Relativism, and Black-White Relations," *American Scholar* 43, no. 1 (1973): 132. On Du Bois, see "The Concept of Race" in *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept,* ed. Herbert Aptheker (Millwood, NY: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1975.) Nahum Chandler's discussion is, as always, invaluable: "Du Bois never seemed to *assume* the possibility of simply stepping outside or beyond systems of racial distinction. Which is not to say that one cannot fundamentally challenge them," "The Figure of the X: An Elaboration of the Autobiographical Example in the Thought of W. E. B. Du Bois" [1996], in *X*, 222n34.

161. Patterson, *Ethnic Chauvinism,* 194.

162. See Moten for a profound critique of the "racialized responsibility for de-racialization, an externality imposed upon those who desire, as well as those who disavow, the sovereign's impossibility, now often passes as a critique of blackness leveled from a vast range of colonial outposts that have been and remain man's staging area and theater of operations," "Notes on Passage," 53.

163. Patterson, *Rituals of Blood*, xxii.

164. Sylvia Wynter, "On How We Mistook the Map for the Territory, and Re-Imprisoned Ourselves in Our Unbearable Wrongness of Being, of *Désêtre*: Black Studies Toward the Human Project," in *Not Only the Master's Tools: African-American Studies in Theory and Practice*, eds. Lewis Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2006), 107-118.

165. Patterson, "Language, Ethnicity and Change*," Journal of Basic Writing* 3, no. 1 (1980): 62-73.

166. Patterson, "Slavery," 439.

167. Patterson, "Ecumenical America: Global Culture and the American Cosmos," *World Policy Journal* 11, no. 2 (1994),114.

168. See Jared Sexton, Amalgamation Schemes; Sexton, "People-of-Color-Blindness"; Nicholas Brady, "Riding with Death: Defining Anti-Blackness." «http://progressivepupil.wordpress.com/2014/02/27/right-to-death-defining-anti-blackness»

169. Scott, "Paradox of Freedom," 225.

170. Patterson, "Black Americans," *Understanding America: The Anatomy of an Exceptional Nation,*

eds. Peter H. Schuck and James Q. Wilson (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), 383.

171. *Ibid.*, 409.

172. *Ibid.,* 410.

173. *Ibid.*

174. See Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* (New York: New York University Press, 2012); Lisa Guenther, *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and its Afterlives* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2013); and Sexton's critique of Mbembe's "Necropolitics" in "People-of-Color-Blindness."

175. Guyora Binder, "The Slavery of Emancipation," *Cardozo Law Review* 17 (1995), 2101.

176. Farley, "Perfecting Slavery," 222.

177. Patrice Douglass and Frank Wilderson, "The Violence of Presence: Metaphysics in a Blackened World," *The Black Scholar* 43, no. 4 (2013), 119.

178. *Ibid.*

179. Lewis Gordon, "Race, Theodicy, and the Normative Emancipatory Challenges of Blackness," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 112, no. 4 (2013), 734.

180. Sun Ra, "It's After the End of the World," in *Soundtrack to the Film Space is the Place,* Evidence Records 22070, 1972 [1997], compact disc.

181. J. Kameron Carter, "Paratheological Blackness," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 112, no. 4 (2013), 589.

182. Chandler, "Of Exorbitance," 56.

183. Gordon, "Race, Theodicy," 725.

184. Beatrice Hanssen, *Walter Benjamin's Other History: Of Stones, Animals, Human Beings, and Angels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 33.

185. Sexton, "Curtain of the Sky," 15.

186. Moten "Blackness and Nothingness"; "To be Announced: Radical Praxis or Knowing (at) the Limits of Justice,"*Social Text*(2013) 31: 1-14; Du Bois, "Sociology Hesitant" *boundary 2* 27, no. 3 (2000): 37-44; Chandler, *X*; Sexton "The Social Life of Social Death."

187. Greg Grandin, "How Slavery Made the Modern World," *The Nation* Feb. 24, 2104, «http://www.thenation.com/article/178509/how-slavery-made-modern-world».

188. See Farley, "Perfecting Slavery."

189. Moten, "Blackness and Nothingness," 774.

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