Monsterification through Displacement in Space and Time: Coloniality, Racism, Neoliberal Rhetoric of Time and Jordan Peele's *Get Out*

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Abstract:
Throughout U.S. history monstrous language has been deployed against racialized individuals. This essay examines the classification of monster by analyzing rhetoric on the racialized *monster*, the film *Get Out* (2017), and *coloniality of time* strategy discourses. While there are multiple dimensions to this topic, for this essay, I argue that *monster* rhetoric applied to racialized subjects shed light on the insidiousness embedded in the *coloniality of time* strategy as expressed discursively; *monster* rhetoric makes the effects of the *coloniality of time* discourses palpable in ways that unveil the overpowering dimension of the violence inflicted through racism. In order to identify and resist deployments of *coloniality of time* strategy through monsterification rhetoric, decolonizing *time* is an essential task to continue the difficult work of dismantling white supremacist tactics of oppression in order to support constructive philosophical-religious analysis rooted in antiracist foundations.

Keywords: Racism, Decolonialism, Coloniality of Time, White Supremacy, Get Out

Despite important advances in critical race/ethnic studies, the dynamics of oppression continue to morph and pervade institutional structures and practices. The rhetoric of *monsters* can shed light on a dimension of oppression that provides insight into societal structures, which perpetuate white dominance. It is important to address rhetoric that fails to account for the power of horror and the monstrous because such rhetoric challenges a positivistic, divine-focused aesthetics in religious projects. In this essay, I explore the classification of *monster* by analyzing rhetoric on the racialized *monster*, the film *Get Out* (2017), and *coloniality of time* discourses.[43]

While there are many dimensions to this topic, for this essay, I argue that *monster* rhetoric applied to racialized subjects unveils the insidiousness embedded in the *coloniality of time* as expressed discursively; *monster* rhetoric makes the effects of the *coloniality of time* strategy discourses palpable in ways that expose the overpowering dimension of the violence inflicted through racism. It remains crucial for philosophical-theological accounts which center aesthetics to take stock of the monstrous embedded in racist, antiblack, discourses to continue identifying and countering the overpowering effect such tactics inflict on the victimized.[44] This article focuses on the foundation needed so that philosophical-religious reflections against racialized monstrosity—as advanced by white supremacist ideologies—can support the work to identify, resist and dismantle such deployment of the monstrous. The foundation I explore—which extends beyond religious-theological analyses—is critical in order to support antiracist frameworks in genuine allyship with black and brown scholars in liberationist traditions.

I argue for the decolonization of time as a key strategy to challenge the racist

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[43] During this essay, I italicize the term "monster" when used in reference to rhetoric of racialization in order to decenter the term and not confer a normative status to the term within the dynamics of racism.

[44] Some critical works on aesthetics, justice and theology include: Alejandro García-Rivera, *The Community of the Beautiful: A Theological Aesthetics* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999); M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009); Cecilia González-Andrieu, *Bridge to Wonder: Art as a Gospel of Beauty* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012); Nichole Flores, *The Aesthetics of Solidarity: Our Lady of Guadalupe and American Democracy* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2021).

monsterification of black and brown communities.[45] First, I establish the role of monsterification in racist, antiblackness discourses publicly disseminated and embodied in U.S. society. Then, I address the significance of naming *coloniality of time* as an imperialist ideology that facilitates the monsterification of otherized communities. I follow up by analyzing how the tactics of monsterification depicted in the film *Get Out* intensifies the horrors and effects of enslavement through the lens of *coloniality of time*. I conclude by demonstrating how the cinematic depiction of the *coloniality of time* strategy in *Get Out* mirrors the ways this historical-philosophical concept further entrenches and sustains educational-legal-economic-political-religious white supremacist ideologies against black lives, especially, in the United States.

RACISM AS MONSTER-IFICATION

Monster as a category in racist discourses raises questions of ontology, being. *Monsters* are creatures that defy easy classification and which represent a "threat to 'conformity to the dominant social norms'" through characteristics and ideologies that exceed society's understanding of the 'human' or 'nature.'[46] A specific starting point for this analysis is the recorded testimony of a police officer who defended his action of shooting Michael Brown by describing the teenager as disproportionately larger than himself and that he looked "like a demon." [47]In what sense can we analyze the reality that emanates from the usage of *monster* rhetoric? First, one should acknowledge from an academic sense that that racism as monsterification is rooted in historical-material culture that is dynamic and enduring across centuries.

Yet, the individual that attacks racialized citizens with *monster* rhetoric uses such language as if it is ontologically true. There is a material-historical fluidity to the concept, while its usage is codified by the targeting individual as absolute at the moment of its projection unto another being. Ontological violence takes place against the victim precisely because the epistemological-ontological framework of the assailant materializes within the racist act. It is important to identify both analytical possibilities in order to clarify the historical impact of *monster* rhetoric, and, address the significance of the linguistic violence deployed in specific contexts by individuals who internalize and vocalize racist ideologies within ontological frameworks.

As manifested historically, *monster* should be taken as a serious category that exists beyond the individual psyche.[48] In relation to the topic of racism, *monster* rhetoric develops within historically rooted imaginaries, which extend beyond metaphorical signification while not arriving at an ontology that reifies race biologically.

Our understanding of *monster* is not just a personal metaphor, but constitutive of our personal worldview which has real implications for our behavior and relationships in the physical

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[45] Capitalization of Black, Brown and White takes place when referencing the conceptual ideologies that invest meanings and values to Whiteness or Blackness associated with a hierarchical designation of superiority whereas non-capitalization of the terms is applied when used as an adjective. The terms refer to racialized groups valorized within society based on deeply entrenched material and ideological socio-cultural structures developed over time, not biological-genetic essentialized realities.

[46] Robin Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film," *Robin Wood on the Horror Film*, Robin Wood, Richard Lippe, Barry Keith Grant (Wayne University Press, 2018), 83; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)," *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1996), 6.

[47] https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2014/11/25/366519644/ferguson-docs-officer-darren-wilsons-testimony
accessed 7/26/2021. Transcript of: Grand Jury Volume V, Case: State of Missouri v. Darren Wilson, Gore Perry Reporting and Video, St. Louis, MO: September 16, 2014, pp. 212, 224-225 (https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1370569-grand-jury-volume-5.html#document/p216/a189399)

[48] Stephen T. Asma, *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of our Worst Fears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 7, 13.

world.[49] The consequences are much more devastating when monstrous rhetoric becomes appropriated and integrated into the frameworks that affect the welfare and security of historically minoritized communities. In agreement with W. Scott Poole, the historical record demonstrates the formative and deeply embedded nature of monster narratives in the U.S. Monsters, Poole asserts,

> "are more than the dark side of the human personality or the dark side of popular culture. They are part of the genetic code of the American experience, ciphers that reveal disturbing truths about everything from colonial settlement to the institution of slavery, from anti-immigrant movements to the rise of religious fundamentalism in recent American politics. They are more than fantastical metaphors because they have a history coincident with a national history."[50]

The historical data reveals the physical impact monster rhetoric inflicts on marginalized populations: *monster* language has justified the marginalization, mutilation, torture and murder of innumerable human beings.[51] There is a material history as a result of *monster* rhetoric in the U.S. Communities directly targeted by the rhetoric of *monster* suffer physical-mental harm and are more likely to be physically traumatized, attacked, or killed by members of the dominant group and their allies.[52]

Monstrosity in connection to race, on the one hand, is the result of social dynamics, while on the other hand, it exceeds those social dynamics once it is enshrined within structural institutions in society that systematically privileges one group over another. Once embedded within a system of oppression, *monster* rhetoric holds cultural-social power beyond the single individual's prejudices. Socio-political institutions validate *monster* rhetoric against marginalized individuals and, conversely, *monster* rhetoric can fuel state-sanctioned policies and practices against historically minoritized groups.

On the other hand, *monster* rhetoric deployed by white supremacists invests ontological significance to the term; a racist usage of *monster* rhetoric employs the term as if the target truly embodies a *monster* figure. While racial monsterification proceeds from the minds of oppressive social dominant group members who invest the category with ontological significance, we can analyze the effects of such essentializing racial rhetoric without accepting the claim to ontological certainty.[53] Dominant members project ontological significance to their assessment of the racialized individual, as an effort to render her/him/them a *monster*. The racialized individual is depicted as a larger than life threat, and thus becomes designated a *monster*. The normativity of Whiteness takes

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[49] Ibid., 13; Mark Johnson and George Lakoff, "Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language," in *Journal of Philosophy* 77 (1980): 453-486.

[50] W. Scott Poole, *Monsters in America: Our Historical Obsession with the Hideous and the Haunting* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), 18; Slavoj Žižek, "Fantasy as a Political Category: A Lacanian Approach," in *The Žižek Reader*, ed. Elizabeth Wright and Edmond Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 86-101; Douglas E. Cowan, *Sacred Terror: Religion and Horror on the Silver Screen* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 263; Jonathan Lake Crane, *Terror and Everyday Life: Singular Moments in the History of the Horror Film* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994).

[51] Pamela A. Patton, *The Art of Estrangement: Redefining Jews in Reconquest Spain* (Penn State Press, 2012); Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp* (Cambridge University Press, 2001): 127-157. Lester D. Friedman, "The Edge of Knowledge: Jews as Monsters/Jews as Victims," *Melus* 11:3 (1984): 49-62; Elizabeth Young, *Black Frankenstein: The Making of an American Metaphor* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

[52] According to the FBI 2019, while hate crimes are underreported, statistics on hate crimes reveal anti-White violence victims constitute 16.8%, while victims of anti-Black violence constitute 48.7% https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2019/topic-pages/tables/table-1.xls (accessed 7/26/2021).

[53] The scholar can study the contextualized dimensions of concepts such as sacred, profane and monster; one can study the ways individuals declare their worldviews in society without assenting to claims of ontological significance. See for example, Steven Engler and Mark Q. Gardiner, "Semantics and the sacred," *Religion* 47 (2017): 616-640.

place at the expense of Blackness: "[t]he metaphysical infrastructure that supports the fiction of the white human is sustained by antiblack violence."[54] The language of *monster* on this topic must be addressed to acknowledge the enduring trauma and violence against black(ened) and brown(ed) people, which is sanctioned, explicitly or implicitly, by all sectors of society. The racialized individual is monsterified to perpetuate rhetoric and narratives of danger to white citizens.

Ontological language with regard to racial monstrosity must be resisted because it presents the current racial conflicts as inevitable and irresistible. Despite the challenge to ontological discourses on race, white supremacist ideologies operate under assumptions of ontological categories. The view that racial extermination is necessary because of irreconcilable differences is present clearly at the beginning of the U.S. in the writings of Thomas Jefferson.[55]

This particular myth of inevitable racial war-violence has been sustained throughout the history of the U.S. It is borne in Whiteness to reflect the anxieties and will to dominate at the core of Western consciousness. This myth monsterifies black(ened) and brown(ed) bodies and engenders material actions and policies that suppress and immobilize the victimized communities. The reality that produces the racialized *monster* impacts social organization, welfare, and opportunities for minoritized members of the community: the *monster* is real. Historically minoritized members are excluded and relegated to the undesirable spaces.[56] The monsterification of racialized peoples carries real world implications.

The claim generated that, on account of racialized conflicts in the U.S., the various races will always remain at odds needs to be countered on two grounds: it is untenable because the violence against black and brown individuals is grounded in the historical development of European enslavement of African peoples and the conquest of the Americas; secondly, this claim continues to ontologically support and justify racialized differences and their significations. It is important to recognize "the deeply problematic practice of reducing blackness to a fixed essence or identity."[57] By permanently separating peoples through racialized differentiation, it removes the historical contingencies that hold it in place. If racialized differentiation is understood as ontologically permanent, it excludes the discussion from the area of ethics, which requires agency and subjectivity on the part of the agents.

While addressing the contingency of racism against ontological frameworks is necessary, the physical-psychological-emotional trauma exacted on the victimized negates any easy dismissal of the metaphysical claims from such frameworks. As Calvin Warren has demonstrated, it is critical to analyze the categories of blackness and Being because "black ~~being~~ incarnates metaphysical nothing, the terror of metaphysics in an antiblack world."[58] Abjection ascribed to black(ened) humanity truly undermines liberal discourses on humanity. While Warren will argue that such abjection is based on the ontological terror of nothingness, Zakiyyah Jackson argues that such abjection "casts black people as ontologically plastic."[59] While Warren and Jackson resist and

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[54] Calvin L. Warren, *Ontological Terror: Blackness, Nihilism, and Emancipation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 54.

[55] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Philadelphia: Prichard and Hall, 1783), 147: "Deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race."

[56] Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994); Chiquita A. Collins and David R. Williams, "Segregation and Mortality: The Deadly Effects of Racism?," *Sociological Forum* 14 (1999): 495-523; Tracey Banivanua Mar, "Belonging to Country: Racialising Space and Resistance on Queensland's Transnational Margins 1880-1900," *Australian Historical Studies* (2012): 174-190.

[57] Andrew Prevot, *Thinking Prayer: Theology and Spirituality amid the Crises of Modernity* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 285.

[58] Warren, 5.

[59] Zakiyyah Imani Jackson, *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World* (New York: New York University Press, 2020), 18; Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason*, translated by Laurent DuBois (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 17.

question antiblackness violence through different lenses, they are in agreement that the root cause is found in the unquestioned epistemologies and ontologies grounded in Whiteness.

Thus, it is necessary to recognize the historical foundations of our racialized society, while at the same time attend to the pervasive and complex manifestations of racism through all institutional structures. Addressing the ontological designation of racialized black and brown peoples as *monsters* by white supremacist ideologies is a necessary task. Yet, while the monstrosity of racialization cannot be rendered permanent upon a subject, at the same time, it cannot be moralized alone. The category of *monster* allows us to reflect more critically on the enduring violence of racialized language and avoid reductionist analyses. The legacies of monstrous language remain with us and continue to shape the matrices of relationships people develop in the U.S.

COLONIALITY OF TIME AS A STRATEGY OF RACIAL DOMINATION

Coloniality typically recalls the historical imperial colonial expansion efforts from the fifteenth century until the mid-twentieth century, but as a philosophical concept, coloniality exists deeper than the outward, self-proclaimed national projects of human and territorial subjugation. Coloniality refers to the enduring tactics that preceded the projects of colonialism, and which continue operating without explicit acknowledgment by governments and multinational corporations, but are just as violent and genocidal in nature. As First Nations authors remind us, "war has been the major motif of Indian life over the past five centuries."[60] Dominant societies have convinced its citizens that the state no longer practices colonialism, yet subaltern communities personally know the duplicitous nature of such statements. Beyond the initial illegal possession of foreign territory, "settler colonialism as a structure necessarily has to shift and adapt in order to meet the insatiable need of the state for land and resources."[61] While settler colonialism is distinct from coloniality of power, they share similar patterns and methods.

Coloniality as a theory identifies and questions all tools and mechanisms that undergirded the colonial projects beginning in the fifteenth century, yet continue to be adopted by state powers. Coloniality "has survived these manifestations to establish a global system of power relations relative to knowledge and being."[62] At the foundation of the ir-rational justifications for the current world order was the subjugation of black(ened) and brown(ed) communities outside of Europe as lower biological beings in contrast to European citizens.[63] Coloniality of power, as developed by Aníbal Quijano refers to the reality that

> [a]s a matrix of power, coloniality came to operate in Abya Yala, and subsequently elsewhere, in multiple spheres, exercising control over humanity, subjectivity and being, gender and sexuality, spirituality, knowledge production, economy, nature, existence and life itself.[64]

Coloniality of power is more expansive than just direct physical and military possession of territories and peoples; it identifies the goal of the aggressors, through direct violence or "benevolence," as aiming to dominate the totality of the subjugated peoples' being.

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[60] Paula Gunn Allen, *Spider Woman's Granddaughters: Traditional Tales and Contemprary Writing by Native American Women* (New York: Facett Books, 1989), 21.

[61] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 46.

[62] Melissa Pagán, "Cultivating a Decolonial Feminist Integral Ecology: Extractive Zones and the Nexus of the Coloniality of Being/Coloniality of Gender," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 22 (2020): 7.

[63] Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Lain America," *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1 (2000): 534.

[64] Catherine E. Walsh and Walter D. Mignolo, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 23; Quijano, 536. Abya Yala is the name of the land given by the Kuna-Tule people from Colombia and Panamá.

Alejandro Vallega builds upon the coloniality of power and being by proposing the *coloniality of time* as tactic that reinforces the coloniality of power. This concept, the *coloniality of time*, is rooted in the fact that various communities operate under multiple time registers.[65] When the Spaniards and Portuguese invaded the inhabited continent, there was not just a clash over land and wealth, but also times. Europeans imposed their political-economic-military might upon the conquered, but also imposed the domination of time that privileged the conquerors. By imposing a *coloniality of time*, the victimized were stripped of their histories, their past, and denied agency within this new world order, their present and futurity. The Western sensibility of a linear teleology ordering of time is a cultural product to subjugate subaltern communities.

Vallega designates "'time' to refer to the broadest fields of experiences of temporalities, while 'temporality' refers specifically to the sense of time that arises from the configuration of specific systems of power and knowledge."[66] Under Vallega's model of analysis, 'time' refers to a pre-rational sensibility on how we experience the world, while 'temporality' refers to the act of shaping time to serve a particular end typically ordered towards the benefit of an agent. In his work, Vallega states that the aim is "to expose the sense of temporality that operates as a fundamental sensibility under the coloniality of power and knowledge, which I will ultimately call the coloniality of time."[67]

The *ego cogito* and the *ego conquero* at the beginnings of modernity set the parameters for the model and ideal human. This ideal becomes internalized and defended against all non-Europeans. Such internalization ultimately

> reduces rationality to a self-recognition that, even in its most critical moments, will affirm and remain committed to the centrality, to the single originality and determining power, of Western thought over all senses of being human and all ways of understanding existence.[68]

All other civilizations, while theoretically recognized, become subsumed and evaluated against Western hegemonic criteria. The present links primarily to past European accomplishments and the potential of future possibilities are based on the prioritized white imaginary. Thus, *coloniality of time* becomes a strategy that facilitates the monsterification of racialized individuals excluded from inscription into the timeline and temporality of dominant white exceptionalism.

Religions complicit in the *coloniality of time* strategy sacralize racist, hegemonic rhetoric, policies, and violence against minoritized communities. The historical links between colonial and missionary violence demand that religious groups, Christians particularly in the U.S., evaluate the ways their religious narratives and practices operate under the epistemic-ontological frameworks of coloniality in the current moment. While white, Eurocentric Christians publicly acknowledge the category of sin with regard to racism, many still minimize the overpowering effects of racism.[69]

The following analysis on the monsterification of racialized individuals through the lens of *coloniality of time* reveals the impotency of some religious responses that do not fully account for the traumatizing effects of systemic racism. In order to identify and resist deployments of *coloniality of time* through the monstrous, decolonizing *time* is an essential task to continue the difficult work of dismantling white supremacist tactics of oppression in order to advance philosophical-religious responses rooted in antiracist foundations.

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[65] Alejandro A. Vallega, *Latin American Philosophy from Identity to Radical Exteriority* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 101.

[66] Ibid., 102.

[67] Ibid., 101.

[68] Ibid., 104.

[69] Bryan N. Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2010): "Race is far from being an insignificant reality in American life. It remains our deepest national obsession; it is still a principal and all too often decisive lens through which we filter our perception and understanding of the world. We continue to live in a highly racialized society, that is, 'a society wherein race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life opportunities, and social relationships,'" 8.

U.S. RACIALIZED HISTORY AND THE MONSTROUS

Some individuals have justified, through the media and the legal system, the killings of unarmed black men through discourses that distort and deny their humanity via narratives that attributed beast-like qualities to the victims. Darren Wilson, the Ferguson police officer who shot and killed an unarmed Michael Brown on August 2014, described the encounter as follows:

"And when I grabbed him, the only way I can describe it is I felt like a 5 year old holding onto Hulk Hogan…and [he] had the most intense aggressive face, the only way I can describe it, it looks like a demon, that's how angry he looked."[70]

Wilson, an adult police officer, feels justified in dramatizing the confrontation to portray himself as an innocent, childish victim at the mercy of an oversized, violent, demonic being despite the fact that his confrontation was with a high school graduate ten years his junior. By claiming his self-image as a child, "he appropriates for himself the child's innocence, offering himself as someone in need of saving, as well as casting Brown as a more-than-child, more-than-(hu)man figure."[71] To begin thinking critically on the real life experiences of racism whereby individuals are rendered monstrous in order to gain, at best, sympathy from the public and, at least, engender doubt among the majority, one cannot ignore the discourses of savageness that have been used to further the causes of colonial and neocolonial agendas in U.S. history.

Darren Wilson's statement is consistent with the historical rendering of black and brown bodies as monstrous throughout U.S. history. The tactic of monsterifying black(ened) and brown(ed) citizens by dominant, white society in the U.S. goes back to the beginnings of the violent colonial project and chattel slavery. It continued through the nineteenth century. Frederick Douglass appealed to monsterification of the enslaved within the U.S. system as a way to reclaim the humanity of black enslaved peoples from the authoritative judgment and practices of white peoples.[72] Douglass intends to subvert the enslavement apparatus by naming how practices linked to enslavement monsterified black peoples. Prior to the disclosure of the actual details of the 1870 Marias River Massacre of Blackfeet Nation peoples by U.S. military units that came to light, the *Helena Daily Herald* defended the commanding officer, "General Sheridan ordered men to hunt them down, just as we hunt down wolves. When caught in camp they were slaughtered, very much as we slaughter other wild beasts, when we get the chance."[73] In both these instances, one in the name of rehumanizing enslaved people and the other in dehumanizing Blackfeet peoples, animalistic monstrous language is taken as normalized.

Animality and monstrosity are two separate categories that deserve more attention because animality does not always imply monstrosity. Animality does not immediately equate with

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[70] https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2014/11/25/366519644/ferguson-docs-officer-darren-wilsons-testimony
accessed 7/26/2021. Transcript of: Grand Jury Volume V, Case: State of Missouri v. Darren Wilson, Gore Perry Reporting and Video, St. Louis, MO: September 16, 2014, pp. 212, 224-225 (https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1370569-grand-jury-volume-5.html#document/p216/a189399)

[71] Robert Larue, "Holding onto Hulk Hogan: Contending with the Rape of the Black Male Psyche," *Jordan Peele's Get Out: Political Horror*, edited by Dawn Keetley (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2020): 175.

[72] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Boston: 1845), 63-64: "O, why was I born a man, of whom to make a brute."

[73] https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/sunday/blackfeet-remember-montana-s-greatest-indian-massacre/article_daca1094-4484-11e1-918e-001871e3ce6c.html Accessed 7/26/2021.

monstrosity. Monster categorizations as such can carry a large range of significations,[74] which can exceed humanity as much as represent a debased form of humanity.

With regard to racism, language of animality applied to humans creates a new category of being that serves the role of a threatening *monster* in racist discourses. Applying the terms *beasts, brute* and *wolves* among others on racialized human communities projects unto the racialized a new way of being that is no longer simply human, but it is neither a different animal species.[75] The individual has now been reified into the discourse as a hybrid creature no longer simply human. The being becomes a "fusion figure [who] is a composite that unites attributes held to be categorically distinct and/or at odds in the cultural scheme of things in *unambiguously* one, spatiotemporally discrete entity."[76] The language applied to racialized groups signifies a new form of hybrid existence that threatens the security of white citizens; the individual is rendered monstrous and deserving of exclusion, abuse and extermination.

The concepts of humanity and animality are biopolitical realities, neither strictly demarcated through biology, nor culture. Black scholars across political borders have addressed the reality that "all must define themselves in a globalizing antiblack order that raises 'the animal question' as ultimately an existential one."[77] Statements across time reveal the racist assumptions that "black people are animals occupying the human," that blackness represents "*the emblematic state of animal man, as the nadir of the human.*"[78] When abject animality is imbued into human populations, the resulting representation recreates humanity into a monstrous agent of terror.

One important link of this historical manifestation of racist narratives resides in a sensational play in the early nineteen hundreds. At the turn of the twentieth century, the play that inspired D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, *The Clansman*, portrayed black men as beasts. A theater critic declared that Thomas Dixon Jr.'s play conveyed the message: "'Hate the Negro; he is a beast; his intention is to rob and murder and pollute; he should be transported or annihilated.'"[79] Another critic in Virginia observed the dynamics of the performance between the stage presentation and the audience, "'But between the audience and that black shadow, sneaking with the quiet and caution of a beast of prey, there is a child—a white child. The act is called 'In the Claws of the Beast.'"[80] This portrayal of the black man as beastly and predatory of white citizens—especially the threat against the white child resonates with Darren Wilson's own self-portrayal—was intended to move the audiences toward a state of fear and panic that their lives are under threat.

In the subsequent film adaptation of the play, *Birth of a Nation*, an actor in blackface depicts the black man as a threat to the virginal purity of the white woman. The character Gus is characterized as a military black man who incessantly pursues and stalks a white woman, Flora. When Gus encounters Flora alone in the woods, the film presentation and techniques convey an

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[74] Michael Heyes, "Domestication in the Theater of the Monstrous: Reexamining Monster Theory," *Journal of Gods and Monsters* 1 (2020): 36-54.

[75] There have been some philosophical reflections on 'beast' language in connection to racism, but a few studies have reflected on the link between humans and animality. Some studies look at animality from a non-threatening perspective to investigate human distinctiveness from other species: Mary Midgley, *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1995); G. E. R Lloyd, "Humanity between Gods and Beasts? Ontologies in Question," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17 (2011): 829-845. Zakiyya Jackson, *Becoming Humans,* articulates a powerful resistance to the *human* as a category that stands in opposition to the *animal* in Western liberal humanist traditions.

[76] Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 43.

[77] Jackson, 34.

[78] Ibid., 22.

[79] The State (Columbia), October 9, 23, 1905 as quoted in John Hammond Moore, "South Carolina's Reaction to the Photoplay, The Birth of a Nation," in *The Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association* (Charleston, South Carolina Historical Association (Charleston: South Carolina Historical Association, 1931: XXXIII, 32-33 cited in "The Clansman on Stage and Screen: North Carolina Reacts" by John C. Inscoe, *The North Carolina Historical Review*, 64 (1987): 143

[80] John A. Morosco, 'The Clansman,' Public Ledger, Norfolk, and 'Race Line in 'Clansman', in *Richmond and Manchester News Leader*, Richmond, Virginia, September 23, 1905 in "Restirring and Old Pot: Adaptation, Reception and the Search for an Audience in Thomas Dixon's Performance Text(s) of The Clansman" by Stephen Johnson, *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* (Winter 2007): 17.

experience of transformation, "from human to beast—in a metamorphosis from normality to abnormality."[81] As Regester notes, through the cinematic representation of the threat to white female purity, the film "chose to represent blackness as a threat to the safety of whiteness, embodied in the preservation of the white South—blackness must be excised in order for the white South to exist and reclaim its position of power."[82] As Michael Rogin declares, this particular trope of black maleness interlocked with sexual deviancy as threat is a violent, white supremacist power tactic against black males and white women: "White supremacists invented the black rapist to keep white women in their place."[83] Racial and gendered subjugations are interconnected.

The play's popularity decreases within a decade,[84] but the monstrous narratives it engendered were transmitted and captured through the film *Birth of A Nation*. Some rejected the brazen racism publicly, but many also held on to the implicit criminalization narrative of black men in private. This is evident continually through narratives in U.S. history all the way to the present where black male criminality and inhumanity remains unquestioned by dominant white society and internalized by some peoples of color.[85] Tommy Curry points out the resulting dominating narrative that claims the black male ontologically "to be malicious and contrary to civility, so he exists as the physical manifestation of evil—bestial—where any violence imaginable becomes a possible action or atrocity that a Black male would commit."[86] Such one-dimensional, deadly visions target the very being and challenge the existence of brown and black individuals.

It is not a coincidence that, whether consciously or unconsciously, former officer Darren Wilson chose to appropriate the language of the monstrous to elicit sympathy from the public. As sociological studies demonstrate, Wilson is not alone in portraying black and brown male bodies as disproportionately massive in size and threat.[87] It is clear that his chosen imagery is targeting the sympathies of the dominant, white members of his community. The appeal of racial distress is a recurring tactic to elicit emotions of terror on the listener and emotions of sympathy for his supposedly terrifying ordeal.

There is a legitimate need to delve further on the ways that the monstrous resides within the dehumanizer, but in this initial exploration, the focus is on how the monsterified victim continues to be targeted in U.S. society.[88] Critically identifying the strategies of oppression is crucial in order to

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[81] Charlene Regester, "The Cinematic Representation of Race in 'The Birth of a Nation: A Black Horror Film" in *Thomas Dixon Jr. and the Birth of Modern America* edited by Michele K. Gillespie and Randal L. Hall (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2009), 170. See also the analysis by Ed Guerrero, *Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993): 11-17.

[82] Regester, 166.

[83] Michael Rogin, "'The Sword Became a Flashing Vision': D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*" in *The Birth of a Nation*, ed. Robert Lang (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 267.

[84] Inscoe, 155.

[85] Tommy J. Curry, *The Man-Not: Race, Class, Genre, and the Dilemmas of Black Manhood* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2017), 165-168.

[86] Ibid., 167. As Julia Kristeva points out, "from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master" ("Approaching Abjection" in *The Monster Theory Reader* edited by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 96.

[87] Colin Holbrook, Daniel Fessler, and Carlos David Navarrete, "Looming Large: Racial Stereotypes Illuminate Dual Adaptations for Representing Threat versus Prestige as Physical Size," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 37 (2016): 67-78.

[88] It is important to acknowledge that prophetic voices have attempted to subvert and redirect language of monstrosity towards the oppressor. Frederick Douglass denounced chattel slavery as a monstrous institution. While we tend to focus on the attacks leveled by the dominant colonial-settler descendants, the marginalized declare the institutions and people participating in slavery as monstrous. Douglass called out slavery as the *monster* and demonic beast sanctioned by the U.S.: "The dealers in the bodies and souls of men erect their stand in the presence of the pulpit, and they mutually help each other. The dealer gives his blood-stained gold to support the pulpit, and the pulpit, in return, covers his infernal business with the garb of Christianity. Here we have religion and robbery the allies of each other—devils dressed in angels' robes, and hell presenting the semblance of paradise" (*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (Boston: 1845), 120; In "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?," delivered on July 5, 1852 Douglass declared: "Oh! Be warned! Be warned! A horrible reptile is coiled up in your nation's bosom; the venomous creation is nursing at the tender breast of your youthful republic; for the love of God, tear away, and fling from you the hideous monster, and

craft the decolonizing strategies that can undermine the tactics of oppression and dehumanization.

Despite the ideals upheld in the rhetoric at the beginning of the U.S., the nation was built through the trafficking of humans and exploitation of peoples of color, and there is a persistent impetus to eliminate such designated individuals—physically, economically, culturally, emotionally—when the possibility of integration appears on the horizon. Monstrosity in this sense aligns with Jeremy Cohen's observation that "[r]epresenting an anterior culture as monstrous justifies its displacement or extermination by rendering the act heroic."[89] While Cohen aligns this observation with the abuse against First Nations peoples, it is applicable to similar dynamics in all foundational events in the U.S. connected to the peoples of Africa, China and Mexico. Once the particular demand that fueled exploitation of non-whites decreases, U.S. institutions adopt policies and actions to deny the peoples' humanity and implement policies to displace, disempower and eliminate the minoritized communities.[90] The film *Get Out* provides a cinematic representation that embodies the experience of displacement, exploitation, and eradication of the black subject.

MONSTERS, RACISM, *COLONIALITY OF TIME* in *GET OUT*

Some mainstream films have explored the horror of racism enacted against members of black and brown communities. *Get Out* (2017) in particular "recalls the memory of slavery, while projecting contemporary ignorance and racism that persist in American culture and society under the guise of neoliberalism."[91] All individuals must wrestle with the forces that propel and sustain a racist *modus operandi* in society while experiencing a transfiguration that descends into the monstrous.

A key insight in *Get Out* is found in its depiction of the *sunken place*. The *sunken place* provides a visual depiction of racialized individuals targeted and monsterified through displacement in space and time. I contend, against some theological interpretations, that robust theological readings of the film cannot minimize or rationalize the concept of the *sunken place* because such readings fail to take into account the overpowering insidiousness of racism.[92] They fail to produce effective means of resistance to the violence inherent in racism. *Get Out* fleshes out through visual storytelling how minoritized peoples are systematically disempowered through words, emotional manipulation and physical aggression.[93] The film reveals by the end how a malevolent family systematically disarms their victims through verbal microaggressions, emotional manipulation

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let the weight of twenty millions crush and destroy it forever!"). Douglass called out one of his enslavers "savage monster" in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas*, 5.

[89] Cohen, 8.

[90] State sanctioned policies such as Indian Removal Act (1830), Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), Jim Crow laws, Operation Wetback (1954).

[91] Melba Joyce Boyd, "Double Entendre and Double Consciousness in the Cinematic Construct of Get Out," *Black Renaissance Noire* (Fall 2018): 43; Jada Yuan and Hunter Harris, "The First Great Movie of the Trump Era," *New York Magazine*, February 19-March 4 (2018): 34; Michael Jarvis, "Anger Translator: Jordan Peele's Get Out," *Science Fiction Film and Television* 11 (April 2018): 98.

[92] There are few analyses within religious-theological publications. I am engaging the available analyses by Delonte Gholson, "'Get Out' Contains a Theological Lesson that is Easy to Miss," *Relevant Magazine* (March 6, 2018): https://relevantmagazine.com/god/get-contains-theological-lesson-easy-miss/; Lawrence Rodgers, "#GetOut of Sunken Place Theology," *Patheos* (March 9, 2017): https://www.patheos.com/blogs/rhetoricraceandreligion/2017/03/get-out-of-sunken-place-theology-html Accessed: 7/12/2021; Kenji Kuramitsu, "The Theology of Suspicion: What 'Get Out' Can Teach White Christians," *Sojournes* (March 17, 2017): https://sojo.net/articles/theology-suspicion-what-get-out-can-teach-white-christians Accessed: 7/26/2021.

[93] While the film *Get Out* subversively re-presents to the viewer the monstrosity of racism, I explore how the re-presentation of the *Sunken Place* reflects the power dynamics of monsterification from the perspective of white dominant oppressors. From a minoritized perspective, the horror is the act of being categorized and treated as an aberration of the "norm" of humanity and thus monsterified. From a minoritized perspective, being rendered a 'monster' is the true horror whereas the dominant whites unquestioningly label the racialized-other 'monster' in ways that support and regenerate the structures which ensure their social dominance. The monsterification of racism and white supremacy could be further explored with Annalee Newitz' insights on The Birth of a Nation in *Pretend We're Dead: Capitalist Monsters in American Pop Culture* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press2006): 101-105.

based on personal tragedies, and finally through physical aggression and anti-ethical medical experimentation.

While the film exposes the *monster* as systemic, institutionalized racism to the ethical viewer, I analyze how the actual actions of willing and unwilling participants monsterify the racialized individual within the narratives of the dominant members of a society.[94] The film exposes the true monster, yet it is by subverting the ways black individuals are first monsterified by the aggressors. This analysis aims to unpack the consistent historical record where racism continues to be adopted as a viable and persuasive option by dominant whites despite the incongruence with general liberal-humanistic ethical statements that repudiate inequalities within the human race.

Jordan Peele's *Get Out* begins with an interracial couple—a black boyfriend and white girlfriend—preparing to meet the woman's parents for the first time at a remote lake house.[95] Chris, the male protagonist, is a professional photographer who experiences awkward racial microaggressions and conversations with his white in-laws and their black employees. The twist in the film occurs as an extended family annual reunion takes place during the weekend visit. The family guests are actually gathering to place auction bids to purchase the body of Chris in order that one of them may transmigrate their brains into his body. In the twist of the film, *Get Out* is a film of resistance that inverts the legacies of *Birth of a Nation* by transposing the *monster* threat figure from the black male to the white female, the white family.[96]

The main character discovers that his girlfriend and her immediate family have developed a brain surgery operation to transmigrate the consciousness of the elder white aggressor into the body of a young black victim. The emphasis on this procedure, as developed by the secret white society, is based on their understanding of time as a reality that is meant to serve them. The *coloniality of time* strategy here becomes expressed in the desire of extending their own life expectancy through any means necessary. For the community in the film, this extension of life is directly dependent on the deprivation of the black subject's own autonomy and futurity: the black subject is displaced from their own body both in space and time.

The monsterification of the black body here is realized by the valuation of their corporeality as useful through the rejection of their full personhood and individuality. The haunting dissonance is clear when members of the extended family express their perceived understanding of African American life as a life of comfort, and renewed acceptance in society. Yet, for the white characters, through their actual praxis, African Americans are valued solely based on the benefit that they provide to the trafficking buyer.[97] By extricating the idealized physical qualities from the full personhood of black Americans, the minoritized individual is denied coexistence with the dominant whites within the same time continuum, temporality.

The film introduces the *sunken place* as the location in the human psyche that remains to be colonized. In the *sunken place* the individual is excluded from participation in time by the loss of their motor skills. The victimized is also displaced in space because they are no longer able to rightfully occupy their own body. The *sunken place* refers to a moment in the film when Chris is hypnotized by his supposed mother in law. The family prepares their victims by first hypnotizing

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[94] Karen Idelson, "A View to Thrill," Variety (February 8, 2018): 24: quoting Jordan Peel, "As I was writing the movie, the more I realized the monster is the system at play."; Yuan and Harris, 30: quoting Jordan Peele, "The bad guy is society…"; Michael Lane, "Living in the Sunken Place: An Analysis of 'Get Out,'" April 20, 2018: https://lewislitjournal.wordpress.com/2018/04/20/living-in-the-sunken-place-an-analysis-of-get-out/ Accessed: 7/26/2021.

[95] While the interracial relationship can be analyzed more in depth, the relevant point for this analysis is that, while the white girlfriend will turn out to be the aggressor, the premise of this relationship exploits prejudicial judgments against black men that will be subverted through the finale of the film.

[96] This is a fascinating contribution by the film that deserves further study on its own in order to analyze monstrosity at the intersections of race and gender relations in U.S. history. Boyd, 37, connects the film's interracial theme to *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967), starring Sidney Poitier, which adds another layer for inquiry. Boyd also provides an initial analysis of Rose, the girlfriend, on page 41.

[97] Boyd, 36. Lane 2018: "…Peele lambastes our society's objectification of black bodies and white people's damning appropriation of black culture."; Jarvis, 100.

them to debilitate their ability to resist prior to the moment of the surgery. Through hypnotization, Chris is paralyzed physically. While visually Chris can still experience reality, he is unable to respond (in the film, the event is represented by showing the body of Chris eternally free falling down into a dark abyss away from access to his vision periphery and unable to control his motor abilities). The *sunken place* "is an intensification of 'double consciousness,' wherein the person is helplessly trapped, experiencing a world from afar, while suffering within."[98]

The *sunken place* is a state of paralysis where his consciousness retains awareness, but he is incapable of responding or resisting. The *sunken place* stands in for the reality of the dispossession of one's own being, and agency while self-witnessing the trauma inflicted on the body, mind and soul as victim.[99] Monsterification through the *sunken place* occurs by the separation and dislocation of Chris from his own body through the experience of powerlessness and exploitation. The victim is stripped of voice and the power to resist the violation of her own freedom and bodily autonomy. As Wilkinson notes, "*Get Out* draws on the visceral experience of being objectified or colonized by another consciousness."[100] Again, the Black subject is denied free, personal agency to respond within chronological time with the white subject. In the end, a new hybrid is introduced where the white mind resides in a black body.

Eurocentric Christian theologies in the U.S. bear a specific responsibility on the dehumanization of peoples because of its complicity in the larger trans-Atlantic slave trafficking and colonial abuses. While not fully recognized by current Christian religious analysis of the film, taking seriously the *sunken place* as reflective of the debilitating and traumatic experiences of powerlessness and violence against the racialized victim is the main task of a robust understanding of oppression. Delonte Gholson provides an important critique of the failures by U.S. Christianity in its complicity, directly and indirectly, in the exploitation of black communities, but Gholson's emphasis on the link between abusive anti-somatic theology to *sunken-place* theology shifts the focus from the victim to the victimizer. All of a sudden, the victimizer becomes the one in the *sunken place* who must *get out*; this interpretation unintentionally recenters whiteness.[101]

Lawrence Rodgers considers the theological significance of the *sunken place* by asking the reader to question whether a "theological teaching bring[s] further oppression to myself or my community or does it bring liberation?"[102] While Rodgers reflects deeply on the violent and destructive nature of the *sunken place* as bearing both physical and cultural death, the final takeaway, which ignores the systematic nature of oppression, renders analysis of the *sunken place* as limited to the human will.

Both readings fail to take seriously the disproportionate violence inflicted on the racialized body; both readings minimize the impact of the *sunken place* metaphor by linking it too closely to the oppressor or the victim's will. They become reductive interpretations that moralize the monsterification of the victim and fail to take into account how the *monster* transgresses beyond individualistic renderings of racism. In the *sunken place,* the *monster* is now attached to dynamic webs of oppression beyond the control of any one individual.

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[98] Ibid., 39: "The view of the world from Sunken Place is like a view through a telephoto lens that extends the human eye and frames a scene in the distance. But unlike photography whereby Chris controls the mechanism of the camera, The Sunken Place is like a space of suspended animation."

[99] Yuan and Harris, 34: quoting Tananarive Due, "…he realized that it represented the prison-industrial complex."; Boyd, 39, 41-42; Lane 2018.

[100] Alissa Wilkinson, "*Get Out* is a horror film about benevolent racism," Vox (February 25, 2017): https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/2/24/14698632/get-out-review-jordan-peele Accessed: 7/26/2021.

[101] Gholson, https://relevantmagazine.com/god/get-contains-theological-lesson-easy-miss/ : "Sunken-place theology is a theology that separates the key matters of the soul from the equally important matters of the body, and in America it privileges a soul-obsessed gnostic Christian whiteness over a biblical Christian witness. Thus any theology that is concerned about a person's soul but could leave their bodies trafficked and sold is a sunken-place theology…To a sunken-place theology rooted in white supremacy, Jesus says get out. To those who exchanged the cross of Christ for a lynching tree or police brutality, Jesus says get out," Accessed: 7/26/2021.

[102] Rodgers, https://www.patheos.com/blogs/rhetoricraceandreligion/2017/03/get-out-of-sunken-place-theology-html Accessed: 7/26/2021.

Another commentary from a religious angle argues that the presentation of the *sunken place* serves as a salutary warning: "Approaching white people with a deep awareness of the harm they are prone to inflict can better prepare people of color to resist all manner of physical and psychological violence."[103] Kuramitsu rightly recognizes the insights from the *sunken place* in connection to white domination and subjugation of black and brown people. Kuramitsu arrives closer to the larger point that the violence is real, persistent, personal, communal, and often overpowering.

I contend that it is crucial to not undermine the sinister intentionality that undergirds the *sunken-place* at the hands of the oppressor and through systemic policies across institutional social structures. While some theological analyses make valid points, their focus of placing the onus on the victim misses the larger point of the concept. The significance of the *sunken place* lies precisely in the violence and debilitating effects from institutionalized structures and practices against the racialized victim that renders them unresponsive within the confines of historical time. The victimized are denied agency in spaces and times where their humanity is denied.

COLONIALITY OF TIME: STRATEGY OF MARGINALIZATION, DISPLACEMENT AND DOMINATION

Discourses based on premises linked to *coloniality of time*, coined by Alejandro A. Vallega, legitimize and support the domination and subjugation of minoritized communities. Strategies based on defending sanitized re-tellings of history, linear based teleologies, pro conquering apologetics, criminalization or imputation of immorality unto an entire ethnic-racial group, erasure of the victimized, and indifference to the plight of the minoritized enable and justify the monsterification of the racialized subject. Racial monsterification discourses rely on the domination of time.

The emphasis on time, *coloniality of time*, stands as a core strategy of monsterification. The representation of time as a linear movement with "white progress" as the hallmark identifier renders void the experience of marginalized peoples. Such narratives are founded on

> "teleologies of progress that rank economic practices and political institutions, making it impossible to imagine coexistence and harmony or even come to terms with the implications of the fact that there are multiple temporalities co-existing in interdependent relation to one another."[104]

The movement of "progress" is tied to narratives of dueling groups and conquest by dominant white peoples. The conditioning of the dominant group in society through narratives of victorious conquest at all generational levels perpetuates supremacist ideologies that monsterify minoritized black and brown individuals.

The elevation of sanitized discourses through a virtuous, nationalistic lens prohibits others from questioning their legitimacy. Vallega points out that the "West as a principle of universalization recognizes itself in advancing over the other in a continuous expansion."[105] The winners are rendered virtuous and the conquered deficient in moral character and human capabilities. The conquered fail to live up to the moving goalpost set by the conquerors, are considered less than as humans, and end up being projected as monstrous obstacles within the sanctioned and sanitized

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[103] Kuramitsu, https://sojo.net/articles/theology-suspicion-what-get-out-can-teach-white-christians Accessed: 7/26/2021.
[104] Linda Martín Alcoff, "Vallega, Dussel, and Radical Exteriority," *Inter-American Journal of Philosophy* 8:2 (2017), 14.
[105] Alejandro A. Vallega, "Towards a Situated Liberatory Aesthetic Thought," *Comparative and Continental Philosophy* 9:2 (2017): 189.

historical record of the victors. Later, the state of affairs is justified as the natural reality and no action is taken to rectify and reconcile the effects of such actions because under the banner of "progress" society has moved on. *Progress* functions to both justify the actions of dominant whites, and negate redress of injustices.

Through the philosophical lens of the *coloniality of time*, it becomes clear that marginalization and desecration of the racialized individual is connected to the will-to-dominate inherited from centuries old colonial practices in our continent. Euro-western temporalities are dependent on specific tropes developed to enshrine and preserve the superiority of European ways of reasoning, living and governing. This artificial understanding of self-identity, presented as neutrally objective, is not based on logical argumentation but rather on a "'…specific sensibility grounded on the temporality that accompanies the ordering of existence under the coloniality of power and knowledge" (2014b, 103)."[106] Through the lens of power, the *ego conquero* becomes the dominant arbiter of truth. Truth becomes that which is told from the perspective of the dominant, victorious group. Euro-western intellectual descendants take for granted that history is written by the winners, and uncritically accept that such results are "natural." There is no room to consider setbacks, mistakes, or failures. Discourses based on the *coloniality of time* strategy are committed to controlling the narrative and resisting multiplicity of narratives.

If the conqueror is morally justified in domination and continued subjugation of racialized individuals, the dominant group feels compelled to craft a narrative to support their dominance. The racialized individual is precluded from participating in the linear narrative of "progress" espoused by the colonial dominant. The racialized individual is relegated to the sphere of death—the non-living. The dominant group, labeled as *homo oeconomicus* by Sylvia Winter, preserves their status by the "consolidation of the figure of the racialized Other as symbolic death."[107] The racialized individual is rendered monstrous—living dead, an abject outcast—by the dominant group. In order to justify such exclusion, totalizing narratives are created to rationalize the marginalization of the otherized individual.

Narratives linked to the *coloniality of time* strategy reify the subordinated groups through pro conquering apologetics of innocence. With regard to African Americans in the U.S., the dominant group must assert that "Black males—specifically, heterosexual Black males—exist, then, as the depository of other's negativity, the scapegoats for all social and ethical ills in America."[108] In the *coloniality of time* strategies, we see historically how problems in society are projected upon marginalized communities. Narratives based on pro conquering apologetics of innocence present a linear narrative where minoritized groups simply exist to interrupt and derail progress; narratives from minoritized groups that challenge the dominant group are not valid.

Specifically, the *coloniality of time* strategy facilitates the criminalization of minoritized peoples. For African Americans in particular, "barbaric caricatures of Black maleness are historically salient in the minds of scholars and policy makers precisely because they are thought of as the same figures throughout the centuries—the rapists and killers of women."[109] Through the willful neglect to analyze the social realities of institutional racism, U.S. rhetoric primarily associates crime with non-white populations in a static time continuum. The historical and persistent legacies of housing-living segregation are never part of the conversation. Thus, since

"racialized bodies are confined to inhumane living conditions that nurture

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[106] Omar Rivera, "Reading Alejandro Vallega Toward a Decolonial Aesthetics," *Comparative and Continental Philosophy* 9 (2017): 163; (Vallega 2014b, 103); Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas* (1995) and "Anti-Cartesian Meditations" (2014). "This co-determination between sensibility and temporality is the "coloniality of time." It is constituted through a linear historical *narrative* attached to the image of the conquerors of the Americas and its corresponding mode of subjectivity, the *ego conquero"* (Dussel 1995, 2014).
[107] Tiffany N. Tsantsoulas, "Sylvia Wynter's Decolonial Rejoinder to Judith Butler's Ethics of Vulnerability," *Symposium* 22:2 (2018): 167.
[108] Curry 2017, 167.
[109] Ibid., 191.

violence and despair that become attributed to the savage nature of nonwhites and evidence of their inhumanity, the deaths of these dehumanized peoples are often measured against the dangers they are thought to pose to others."[110]

While monsters are not the strict opposite of dehumanized peoples, dehumanization enables the monsterification of minoritized peoples. Monsterification becomes the preferred tactic precisely because empirically, there is no absolute correlation between genetics and race; there is no absolute genetic distinction between dominant and non-dominant group members. The political-ethical ramification of dehumanization of the human "other" renders non-dominant members incapable of belonging as equals within society. The otherized groups are labeled as uncivilized, amorphous, hybrid abnormalities that transgress the boundaries of humanity and exist within a separate category that is more closely aligned with the violent hybrid monstrous. *Coloniality of time*, as a strategy, codifies the dominant-based-imposed reality unto an entire people and denies them their humanity by censoring non-criminalized narratives from the community that is monsterified or contemporary narratives of their diversity.

Finally, in these narratives the racialized outcast is denied any place in the future of the country. The denial of futurity is experienced through the exclusion in socio-political participation in the governance of society and, most powerfully, state sanctioned violence and death. As Tommy Curry notes, "Black male death places Black men and boys within a horizon of finality. They are confined to the present by the denial of futurity."[111] Thus, we can see how the racialized other is one whose survival and integration cannot be envisioned by the dominant group.

In the film *Get Out*, Jordan Peele, the screenwriter and director, had intended to conclude his film emphasizing that the black hero never has a chance of succeeding in advocating for his right to life. Peele had intended to conclude his film *Get Out* with the main character picked up by law enforcement agents and facing the criminal justice system. Peele's vision intended to portray the futility and persistence of antiblackness in U.S. society, but the ending did not play well with test audiences.[112]

The original ending, argues Ryan Poll, "is the true ending—the ending that stays with the philosophy of Afro-pessimism."[113] It is the ending that affirms the Afro-pessimists' warning "against narrative fantasies that seek to escape the foundational truth that capitalist/colonial modernity is predicated on black slavery."[114] It is in Peele's original ending that Afro-pessimism's philosophy and *coloniality of time* are most palpably experienced, yet Peele is unable to deliver that particular vision precisely because it clashes with the neoliberal capitalist interests of Hollywood. Peele had to contend with the forces linked to the *coloniality of time* as his vision was threatened.[115]

The monstrosity projected unto black(ened) and brown(ed) bodies throughout the colonial history of empire in the United States is based partly on this intransigent defense of a linear narrative, linked to Manifest Destiny, as onward progress. If this image of progress is attached to Whiteness, then anything ascribed to non-Whiteness cannot share in the narrative and must be rendered monstrous. There is a deep sacralization of time in connection to Whiteness in the national identity of the U.S., that whenever it is threatened, the response is to monsterify the racialized citizen. Thus, the *coloniality of time* serves as one dimension that needs to be deconstructed continuously to challenge narratives of racialized monsterification and the persistence of racism in our society.

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[110] Tommy J. Curry and Gwenetta Curry, "On the Perils of Race Neutrality and Anti-Blackness: Philosophy as an Irreconcilable Obstacle to (Black) Thought," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 77 (2018): 658.

[111] Curry 2017, 185.

[112] Yuan and Harris, 33.

[113] Ryan Poll, "Can One 'Get Out?' The Aesthetics of Afro-Pessimism," *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 51 (2018): 93.

[114] Ibid., 93.

[115] One may consider Peele's alternate ending as an act of capitulation, but historically marginalized peoples should not bear full blame for the results in a system that operates under frameworks steeped in racism.

The *sunken place* in *Get Out* replicates the domination that takes place through *the coloniality of time* on black subjects. The mother-in-law hypnotizes her victims by tapping her sugar spoon to her teacup, which triggers the descent of the subject into the *sunken place*.[116] The victimized becomes paralyzed and dis-abled at the tap of a spoon. The monsterification of the racialized subject results in a new *monster* when their body becomes ruled by the white mind. Such form of domination is at the heart of the colonial enslavement project that continues to haunt the U.S. A dimension of the efforts to disenfranchise minoritized groups is rooted in ideologies that employ the *coloniality of time* strategy where brown and black people are denied genuine participation in the present initiatives to build, reform, or replace the relevant socio-political structures.

Any philosophical-religious vision that seeks to become antiracist must resist and challenge the monsterification of black(ened) and brown(ed) through *coloniality of time* frameworks. Theological and philosophical reflection cannot dismiss the overpowering effects that result from racist tactics of oppression. Any such reflection is not authentic, and ultimately is deficient because it fails to account for the socio-political realities of marginalized communities. For philosophical-religious scholars, anti-racist frameworks cannot coexist with strategies of *coloniality of time*; genuine anti-racist, decolonial efforts—in all religions—must disrupt it to advance coequal and dialogical spaces and times committed to the liberation of all. These spaces have been forged in black and brown communities since the first acts of resistance against land theft and enslavement in the Americas, yet they have been historically marginalized.

Decolonization of time is one of the tasks that must take place in the work of dismantling racist hegemonic rhetoric and structures. *Coloniality of time* is an intentional, targeted strategy of domination that erases agency and diversity of historically minoritized communities. The *coloniality of time* strategy further supports arguments that racism in our society is not based solely on reason but is an oppressive anti-ethical strategy. In this model, racism is not irrational, it is anti-rational. Deconstructing the *coloniality of time* strategy yields important insights when considering how racist tropes from enslavement to a play in the early twentieth century of monsterified black men threatening white children resurface violently in Darren Wilson as the police officer who shot an unarmed Michael Brown through the second decade of the twenty first century.

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[116] Boyd, 39, notes the link of tea drinking with Southern gentility.