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## Reification, Reanimation, and the Money of the Real\*

Alessandra Raengo

This essay is an exercise in a form of looking from a distance. It is prompted by the desire to explore the connection between two stunning objects, namely, Ken Jacobs's *Capitalism: Slavery* (2006), a digital animation of a stereoscopic card picturing slaves at work in a cotton field, and Nick Hooker's 2008 digital video for Grace Jones's song *Corporate Cannibal*.<sup>1</sup> This is not an essay directly about Ken Jacobs and even less about Grace Jones, but rather an attempt to show how, for me, these two works belong to the same set. The set I am thinking about is defined by the intersection of three (big) things: race, photography, and capital. The magnitude, but also the totalizing, all-encompassing, and elusive qualities of such large-scale formations require necessarily an analytical and theoretical gaze that beholds its objects at a distance. More precisely, these formations require a double look: one that holds the object closely and another that is distant enough to observe formations such as these that, in turn, *travel the distance*.

This essay is also committed to a broad theoretical move, which is simultaneously a stylistic one largely inspired by these two objects—the movement of Jacobs' animation in particular—as well as others I will mention shortly: it is the desire to empower what is distant because it is tucked away. In this particular case, I sketch out a visual theory from the inside out, that is, from the point of view of race, rather than the more well-mined points of view of photography or capital. This move is theoretical because it leverages what is usually understood as an object of inquiry—race, the black body—as, instead, a *lens* and a *location* from which to *look at* capital and photography *as* objects; but it is also stylistic insofar as it attempts to follow some formal characteristics I see at work both in Jacobs' film and Jones' video: a pivoting move whereby the black body itself no longer performs as the *seen*, but rather as a *vantage point*.

This is a move that Toni Morrison identified a long time ago in her close reading of the white literary imagination.<sup>2</sup> To be more precise, Morrison identified a missed opportunity, a denied movement, which she critically corrected in her book and I am equally committed to making in this essay by attending to the way in which these objects leverage the black body as a theoretical pivot. In *Playing in the Dark*, Morrison describes the whiteness of the literary canon as the result of a process of choking what she provocatively called an Africanist presence. This presence manifests itself as a tremor, a disturbance in the purportedly white literary utterance, which would like to deny it but can't, and therefore suffers a profound discomfort in order to accommodate for it. Morrison finds an example of this presence in *To Have and Have Not*, where Hemingway maintains a black character's silence (a character his protagonist refers to with the N-word) by choking his ability to see. Having to describe that the black character at the ship's wheel is seeing signs of an approaching land, he writes, "*I looked and saw he had seen a patch of flying fish burst out ahead.*" "*Saw he had seen,*" points out Morrison, is "improbable in syntax, sense, and tense but, like other choices available to Hemingway, it is risked to avoid a speaking black."<sup>3</sup> The "virtual" pivot is here: in this "distribution of the sensible" race is capable of performing on the literary utterance whereby we cannot see the African-American character tilt his head and see.<sup>4</sup> Incidentally, this syntactical detour also indicates that it is relatively easy for the literary utterance to arrange for the black to be speechless. Yet for the black to be sightless, unable to see and to effectively exist in the world, it takes a veritable contortion. The sentence has to twist and turn and, in the process, abandon its "search for transparency in the narrative act."<sup>5</sup> More poignantly for me, Hemingway's sentence

builds a twisted visual field, threatened from the *inside* by what it attempts to keep at a *distance*: the presence of a silent and sightless black.

*Capitalism: Slavery* and *Corporate Cannibal* are objects that actualize the pivoting move—the African American character’s movement of the head—that is only virtually present in Hemingway’s text and which I would like for this essay to attempt to complete. Needless to say, this is a micro movement, an almost imperceptible tilt, but one that bears large-scale consequences and thus requires a few preliminary broad theoretical steps. I first begin with capital. Seen from a distance, capital outlines what Giovanni Arrighi describes as an oscillatory history that moves through overlapping cycles of accumulation, a *longue durée* he calls the Long Twentieth Century.<sup>6</sup> Focusing on the moment of finance capital of the British cycle of capital accumulation (1750-1825), in *Specters of the Atlantic* Ian Baucom has argued that the transatlantic slave trade was instrumental to it.<sup>7</sup> The change in the scale of economic transactions occurring across the Atlantic and unfolding over much longer periods of time made necessary a series of epistemological changes, namely the formation of what Baucom calls an epistemology of “theoretical realism” whereby imaginative or speculative entities produced by social agreement, such as the insurance value of a slave cargo, could be granted a “real” existence. The implication of Baucom’s work is that, in the financial milieu of the Black Atlantic, *race is a form of appearance of capital* because the African slave is a form of money. Just like the cycles of capital accumulation move through commodity-based and speculative phases, so does the body of the slave function as money differently at different times: in some cases the living breathing biological body of the slave performs as currency (as in the West African coast where goods such as rum or firewood could be “reckoned” in terms of a certain number of slaves) and in other cases it is the “virtual” body that signifies “money.” What we find, therefore, is something that can be described as a virtual slave body (i.e. the slave that is bought and sold virtually in the insurance contracts that covered the slave ships or in the bills of credit issued to normalize cash flows at various stages of the transatlantic trade) and an actual slave body (captured and loaded on ships in the West African coast, transported across the Atlantic and then sold in the New World, or, as it happened in the case of the slave ship *Zong*, thrown overboard so that the jettison clause of the insurance contract could be appealed to seek compensation from the contract’s underwriters). Oscillating between the virtual and the actual—or the symbolic and the embodied—the slave body ultimately provides more or less material, more or less speculative forms of appearance of capital. The body of the slave is also tied to different conceptions of time: it can represent a unit of currency or a commodity in the present, but it can also offer an investment and, therefore, a financial return in the future.<sup>8</sup>

If the Long Twentieth Century can describe a *longue durée* in which race is a form of appearance of capital, from the point of view of visual forms it describes another *longue durée* that I believe Jacobs’ film and Jones’ video make visible, one that I call the Long Photographic Century.<sup>9</sup> The social uses of photography in the 19<sup>th</sup> century have been described as a form of “money of the real,” because of photography’s ability to function as a general equivalent in the realm of visual representation.<sup>10</sup> I take this expression seriously, as a way to think about *photography too as a form of appearance of capital*, photography as a type of money.<sup>11</sup> But what does it really mean to think about photography in these terms, especially once one has decided to take seriously the idea that race is a form of appearance of capital? Put succinctly, this means that photography too needs to be regarded as a *form of appearance of race*. To make this point we need to think about photography from a distance that, just like Hemingway’s African American character, is distant because it is in the *inside*. That is, we need to think of photography from the point of view of the black body. We already know how the 19<sup>th</sup> Century photographic practices reinforced the effect of the self-evidence of race and how the black

body constituted the “perfect” visual sign in which the photographic effect and the race effect mutually reinforced each other.<sup>12</sup>

Here, however, I am interested in pursuing a deeper and more specific connection made explicit by Frantz Fanon who provides also some suggestions for a theory of what “photography,” in this *long* and *distant* sense, might be. Fanon shows how blackness as a visual event is born and fueled by the moment of photochemical fixation. In his notorious chapter on the “Lived Experience of the Black Man” from *Black Skins, White Masks* Fanon links the moment of visual interpellation—“Look, a Negro”—to the chemical basis of the photographic process. The Other’s gaze fixes him, he writes, “the same way *you fix a preparation with a dye.*”<sup>13</sup> For Fanon, photography describes an image-state that fixates and fossilizes, a stance that, I contend, feeds a number of affects underlying Roland Barthes’ influential conception of photography as well, and therefore has been extremely significant in ontological and phenomenological theories of photography.<sup>14</sup> What this means, in this specific case of looking in the distance, is that the way in which blackness is both imagined and rendered within these *longue durées* is still tied to this photochemical imagination, to this imaginary fixation. In fact, it keeps it alive across and beyond the digital divide. Furthermore, the focus on the moment of photochemical fixation bears ontologizing effects not only for the black body that is thus fossilized into a reified money-form, but also for notions of photography, whose essence is seemingly frozen by the very act of pinning it to its indexical sign function.<sup>15</sup> From an affective, rather than epistemological or ontological point of view, and putting at a distance a lot of the discussion about continuity and discontinuity introduced by digital imaging, “photography” indicates a technological means of image production whereby *we think we face* something that is not yet the image, which we want to fixate.<sup>16</sup> In this sense, “photography” expresses many of the same desires and dynamics already involved in our relationship to money, for example, the fact that money makes referential claims but has no referential value. Rather, within the “inverted spectral ontology of value” Marx employs in *Capital*, money is an abstraction that is factually real, even though not empirically so.<sup>17</sup> Money, writes Jameson, is the reification of the relations it is supposed to mediate. Money does not exist independently in the world; when we think we are facing it, we are actually looking at our own shadow.

Thus, while I derive the breadth of my notion of photography from the scale of two formations it intersects with, capital and race, I take the specific characterization of this intersection from Frantz Fanon who expressed succinctly, effectively and precisely the relationship between blackness and the affects and desires of a photochemical imagination, nurtured precisely by the type of body featured in Jacobs and Hooker/Jones’s works. From this distance outlined by the oscillatory and recursive history of capital and race—the Long Photographic Century—the *longue durée* that bolts race to capital, capital to photography and photography to race—photography’s ability to act as a general equivalent depends on the reification of its most accomplished mediation, the photographic object that wears its money form on its sleeve; that is, the black body *as* black. From a “photographic” point of view thus understood, Ken Jacobs’ flicker film and Hooker’s music video belong to the same set because, even though both have profilmic bodies, in both the black body already *is* the image. Even though one is originally produced within the 19<sup>th</sup> century pre-cinematic “frenzy of the visible” and the other in the heart of the digital age, in both *Capitalism: Slavery* and *Corporate Cannibal*, capital, race, and photography display their shared money form. In both, *blackness acts as the money of the real.*

To describe *Corporate Cannibal* one is forced to rely on material and tactile metaphors. The video begins with what seems like a diagonal strip of a fluid metallic black substance on a white screen,

which quickly but delicately begins to pulsate. It grows what looks like an eye on the side, which then morphs into a face, Grace Jones's face, but only for a moment, before being absorbed by the same black mercurial matter and being formed and re-formed over and over again. This shape-changing blackness is haptically rich. It is sticky, viscous, wet, slippery, thick. Shot in one long take with two digital cameras the video has no clear cuts, no punctuation, no recognizably discrete images, but rather unfolds as one fluid and continuous move. The only identifiable visual element is Grace Jones's face and upper body. Her song updates Marx's vampire-like capital for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, taunting her listeners with lyrics in which she unleashes cannibalistic desires. "Corporate Cannibal/ Digital Criminal," she sings, "I consume my consumers with no sense of humor."

Jones *speaks for* the corporation but does she *embody* it? I hesitate to say this because the corporation is historically an artificial person, but one that is deeply intimate with the biological body of the slave. This is the intersection that Jones animates. The artificial person was constituted with the Supreme Court decision *Santa Clara vs. Southern Pacific Railroad* (1885) by leveraging the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment created to protect the rights of recently freed slaves. By lending her body to represent the corporation Jones re-animates this intersection between the interests of private capital and the formal recognition but *de facto* denial of the natural personhood of the slave. Therefore, her cannibalistic desires do more than play on inversions between victim and perpetrator, container and contained, consuming and consumed.<sup>18</sup> Rather, these desires strike at the heart of one of capital's ontological scandals, the collapsed distinction between the artificial and the natural person as well as the one that pertains between person and property. Jones' own biological body reminds us that the fiction, form, and notion of the *artificial* person that grants personhood to the corporation, hijacks the legal space created to protect the recognition of the *natural* personhood of the slave. Even before cannibalizing its consumers, the very legal personhood of the corporation has already cannibalized the living-breathing body and the humanity of the slave.

Differently than Jones/Hooker's video, Ken Jacobs's *Capitalism: Slavery* features actual slave bodies. It is a stereographic card retrieved at the Library of Congress during the conversion of paper prints into 8mm celluloid. The video features a double photograph of cotton-pickers at work with an overseer monitoring them on horseback. Jacobs has digitally animated it to activate its depth by the rapid alternation between the two parallax views with the insertion of a black frame in between. The result is a twisting, pulsating 3D force field in which the image seemingly moves, but does not progress. The film is, in Jacobs' own poignant words, "[s]ilent, mournful, brief."<sup>19</sup>

While *Capitalism: Slavery* displays, in fact capitalizes on, clearly identifiable and discrete stuttering movements, *Corporate Cannibal* makes a spectacle of the possibility of moving seamlessly. The always-mutating mercury strip in Grace Jones/Hooker's video, instead, is seemingly unstoppable, unfixable, and unbound like capital. When considered alongside one another, these two objects display the collusion between race, photography, and capital by pivoting around two highly charged and complex kinds of bodies, the slave body and the corporate body. Both bodies have a long and distant history. Both bodies have a natural form and a money form, a biological flesh and a sublime flesh. Thus, as much as their blackness is physical, it is also meta-physical, *artificial*, and, in a Hobbesian sense, contractual as well.<sup>20</sup> Both bodies have been at some point understood within the framework of the medieval doctrine of political theology that Ernst Kantorowicz has described as the "King's Two Bodies," a doctrine that also travels the distance.<sup>21</sup> As Kantorowicz has shown, it is a repurposing of St. Paul's notion of the *corpus Christi* into a more flexible concept of the *corpus mysticum*, performed expressly in order to explain the continuity of kingship beyond the mortality of

individual kings. Because the natural (biological) body of the King is constitutively inadequate to represent his kingship, his being produced the “abstract physiological fiction of a sublime, quasi-angelic body, a body of immortal flesh that was thereby seen to enjoy both juridical and medical immunity.”<sup>22</sup> Thus medieval political theology posited that the King has two bodies, a body natural and a body politic, a body mortal and a body *artificialis*. What is important here is that this is the dual body Marx evokes in his discussion of the commodity form and Stephen Best argues inspires the way 19<sup>th</sup>-century legal discourse grappled with the slave’s dual character—the fact that the slave is at the same time a person and a thing, an object of property but a subject of sentiment, a monetary value (in an insurance contract, for example) and a laboring tool (in a cotton field), immobile (like real estate) but obviously mobile (and potentially fugitive) as well.<sup>23</sup>

To recap, money, says Marx, is the general equivalent. “General equivalent” is also the function that the sublime body of the king performs in the politico-theological doctrine that Marx evokes to describe the commodity form, and that Best argues inspires the aesthetic of slave law. What Jacobs and Jones add to these series of connections is the suggestion that photography might have two bodies as well, a body natural and a body politic, and that, by functioning as the general equivalent, its sublime body is in fact the reification of the social relations that sustain it. In its reified form, photography is like the blackness it fixates.

Money has two characterizations as well. In its reified form, money affords absolute stillness; yet as a means of circulation, money never ceases to move. *Capitalism: Slavery* and *Corporate Cannibal* keep in focus the distance between these two poles in two distinct and yet dialectically related movements, flickering and modulation.<sup>24</sup> Jacobs’ flickering foregrounds the temporality of recurrence, rather than progress or linear development. The Hooker/Jones video on the other hand, presents a series of variations within a limited set of possibilities.<sup>25</sup> Both are oscillatory, like capital, but while the former stutters, the latter flows seamlessly. Why?

In my title, I allude to this tension as the distance between *reification* and *reanimation*. It was Bill Brown’s reading of Spike Lee’s 2000 film *Bamboozled* “Reification, Reanimation, and the American Uncanny,” whose title I partly reproduce, which first brought this movement to my attention. I have offered an analysis of salient theoretical moments in the film in previous and forthcoming work.<sup>26</sup> Yet, I keep returning to it because of the rich theoretical work it performs on a multiplicity of levels. Here I am concerned mostly with the exploration of the relationship between stereotype and commodity form, in addition to the more commonly explored relation between stereotype and fetish, and the relationship the film suggests between blackness and the profilmic.<sup>27</sup>

Brown’s reading of the film within the historical ontology of slavery that, he argues, survives in visual and commodity culture, calls attention to the pivotal role of the black-faced “Sambo” artifacts (cookie jars, salt and pepper shakers, piggy banks, and so on) that populate the film. It also highlights how the film produces a theory of the confluence between stereotypes and reification. These objects are obviously stereotypical and, as such, represent scenes of desire that are affected by the dynamic of love and theft presiding also over the minstrel show.<sup>28</sup> As household items, in some respects these stereotyped objects foster proximity with the Other, whose surrogate body can be touched and held, filled and emptied, in quotidian acts of hoarding and consumption. Yet, on the other hand, they also testify to the seemingly unbridgeable distance between the other’s thingness and their owner’s personhood. Additionally, these objects are also concrete and tangible products of processes of commodification that first operate over the body of the slave. Supposedly modeled after it—supposedly representing something that their makers and users believe they are *facing*—they

fictionally exchange with the living body of the slave thanks to their shared blackness. It is their blackness that secures the visibility of their commodity status, blackness that acts as their commodity form. Thus, reification in *Bamboozled* is a way to describe the fixation of the stereotype in the realm of material culture, which is where it acquires the “fortitude of solid form.”<sup>29</sup> Reification is not only a direct effect of capital but also a generative aesthetic principle within U.S. material culture.

Brown identifies a central tension in the film between reification and reanimation, between stillness and movement, fixity and mobility, all aesthetic equivalents of a more profound flickering distinction between objecthood and personhood. This tension comes to a dramatic expression in the scene in which the Sambo artifacts assembled in Pierre Delacroix’s office reanimate and take revenge against him.



Brown attributes to the *photogenie* and, I would add, the magical realism of Lee’s cinematography the ability to make these objects seem to come alive, the possibility for their chocked inner life to come through.<sup>30</sup> In this moment the film stages “the recollection of the ontological scandal perpetrated by slavery, as the reanimation of the reified black body... the ‘relentless objectification’ that reappears as the personification of objects.”<sup>31</sup>



This is a pivotal moment not only as a turning point in the film's plot but because the objects that initiate this narrative development themselves act as pivots. Rather than being silently tucked in the depth of the visual field, here they seemingly turn around and look back.



They perform the movement that Toni Morrison saw Hemingway deny to his black character. They take charge and, by asserting their position, they show the extent of the contortion and denial the literary or visual utterance has to perform in order to keep them mute and blind. What becomes visible in this movement is something that the stereotype, the fetish, and the commodity form programmatically obscure, which is the ontological instability of these objects, the fact that they are nothing other than a step in the process that consolidates the thingness, or (with Heideggerian language) the “tool-being” of the slave. This is the movement that Jacobs’ digital reanimation stages, as well. As we watch *Capitalism: Slavery* it is us who have to turn our neck, torque our vision, and stutter in the attempt to restore what the photographic utterance had denied: movement, agency and, ultimately, personhood.

But there is another reading of *Bamboozled* that is important here, one that emphasizes how the system of objects in the film and the interplay of a variety of black surfaces show another aspect of the money form of race, specifically the facility with which blackness is taken to express a supposedly mimetic relation. Reification, in this other sense, describes the Fanonian moment of (photochemically imagined) fixation. Like money and like photography, blackness too is not referentially bound but still perceived as if it was. As it travels back and forth, a seemingly endless chain of mimetic equivalences—between black skin, black-face, black paint, black people, all the way to the Mau Mau’s idea of BLAK—*Bamboozled* also keeps their distance in play. This distance, however, is not to be found between the representation and the represented, nor between the image of the black and a profilmic blackness.<sup>32</sup> The very idea of the profilmic relies on the assumption that we might face something that is not yet the image, and I believe *Bamboozled* shows that this is not the case. A gap, a distance between blackness and the image, needs to be sought, of course, but it lies elsewhere. It is not in front of us, but to the side. The always-already-image needs to pivot, stutter, and make *us* torque our vision in order for us to be able to see that mimesis is always only mimicry and that our relationship with what we think we face is never frontal but is instead always oblique.<sup>33</sup>

Jacobs' film begins with a flickering image of a little girl, her head tilted downward toward her hands full of white cotton. It is an image of suspension, subtraction, refusal. For an instant, she has stopped her labor and seems to look at her hands—perhaps with puzzlement, perhaps with exhaustion, in a gesture that temporarily subtracts her from the enforced rhythm of plantation production. Jacobs' digital reanimation creates the effect of a semi-circular movement to the right repeatedly letting her come forth as that which the viewers' gaze is attempting to circle around. The image moves, but does not progress. This movement, which is repeated for other subjects in the stereograph, most notably other three women, bears two important consequences. The first is temporal: this is a movement that begins repeatedly but is never completed, thus it creates an "illusion of movement disarticulated from time, so that [...] time appears oscillating and elastic."<sup>34</sup> The movement, therefore, establishes a temporality akin to that of capital, which proceeds by repetition, accumulation, and intensification.<sup>35</sup> "The space I mean to *contract*," writes Jacobs, "is between now and then, that other present that dropped its shadow on film."<sup>36</sup> The second is a question of agency: the sense that the photographed subject is in control of this pivoting movement, which the viewer is condemned to repeat over and over again without ever achieving a visual mastery over the scene. The observer can seemingly move around the cotton-pickers and yet never quite do so. Spiraling motions begin but they are never completed. The image moves but does not progress. Rather, in Adrian Martin's words,

The constant, alternate shuffling from left to right, likewise, both heightens the illusion of real space unfolding in a temporal move of the camera apparatus and frustrates it—by always bringing us back, with a jolt, to the original staticness of the images.<sup>37</sup>

Through a series of oscillatory movements—first toward the left around the little girl, then pulling back to show men working behind her, then cutting to women who are singled out and command their own pivoting movement—the film eventually turns to the right and pulls back to offer something close to an "establishing shot," which reveals an overseer on horseback, with rifle in his hand, watching over the slaves. The figure of the overseer offers a visualization of the plantation from the inside out, what Nicholas Mirzoeff might describe as an instance of counter-visibility.<sup>38</sup> After having circled around the little girl, and yet not quite, we cannot see this overseer from a position of mastery, but from one simple gesture of refusal and disruption, which, thanks to Jacobs' reanimation, reverses the power relations of this highly charged visual field. Then, finally and abruptly, the film cuts to the stereoscopic card itself, showing its two panels, their repetition with a difference, thus suggesting that mimicry (not mimesis) might lie at the heart of photographic reproduction.



This repeated and yet never completed movement puts *Capitalism: Slavery* in direct relation with the sequence of the revenge of the memorabilia in *Bamboozled*. Like *Bamboozled*, Jacobs' film travels the distance between reification and reanimation through the flickering effect obtained by its digital manipulation. But it does so also in the way it negotiates its dependence on the physiology of vision of the embodied viewer with the genre of the picturesque. While the stereographic card fosters the involvement of the viewer's body in the form of a prosthetic presence in the image, through the illusion of depth, it also keeps it at a distance.<sup>39</sup> It maintains the "segregation of the spaces," to use Christian Metz's expression in an explicitly racial sense: it is the unequivocal separation between the haptic space of the image and the body of the viewer that allows the stereograph to participate in the genre of the picturesque.<sup>40</sup> That safe distance between seeing haptically and being there keeps it quaint. That distance is also what maintains the slaves in their role as purely visual objects—as fixtures within a southern landscape that a photographic tradition continuing at least all the way to the Depression Era Farm Security Administration archive has always portrayed as enveloped within a metaphysical stillness.<sup>41</sup> Removed from the realm of the picturesque and reanimated by Jacobs now the photographed cotton pickers instead act as pivots. Just like the reawakened racist collectibles in *Bamboozled*, they command close-ups, trigger movement and ultimately they turn the very principle of their reification into a critical vantage point onto the system that reifies them. No longer quaint or picturesque, the movement initiated by the little girl actualizes the move Hemingway's black did not get to make. Now its subject dictates the tone of the image digitally, and compassionately, reanimated by Jacobs: it is indeed mournful.

This flicker effect is common in Jacobs' work, but here I want to understand it in relation to his decision to animate *this* specific object, rather than, let's say, the Victorian stereoscopic photograph of a 19<sup>th</sup> century factory floor in which children work alongside adults as Jacobs does in *Capitalism: Child Labor*.<sup>42</sup> In *Capitalism: Slavery* the constant oscillatory movement, the spatio-temporal differential produced by the reanimation of the stereoscopic picture, the interval between the two views, allows the picture to show its two bodies—its body natural and its body *artificialis*—and thus dramatizes, as it peels them apart, the two bodies of the slave. Unlike *Capitalism: Child Labor*, the stuttering of the image does not mimic the implied repetitive movement of the laboring hands but rather resists the metaphysical stillness these subjects are nevertheless confined to by the genre within which they are represented.<sup>43</sup> The stereoscopic effect seems to be deployed mostly to suggest depth, not movement. The actual movement, instead, needs to be restored by the act of viewing.

Thus, it is the viewer's visual strain that animates the object. The lack of progress and resolution mimics not only the alienation of labor, which in the slave is taken to its most reified extreme, but also the slave's alienated person.

Because of the specific subject matter, Jacobs' use of his patented technique of "eternalism" at the service of the pivot created in *Capitalism: Slavery* bears larger and more profound implications. Jacobs defines "eternalisms" as "unfrozen slices of time, sustained movements going nowhere [...] without a discernable start and stop and repeat points *a neck may turn....eternally.*"<sup>44</sup> Following Jacobs' own description we appreciate the idea that eternalism offers an aesthetic rendering of the fact that historical recurrence can have ontologizing effects: the ontological scandal of slavery is repeated with each instance of alienated black labor, each time blackness functions as the commodity form. And with each repetition, they continued to be reified.

Even more subtly and perversely, the ontological scandal of slavery is repeated also in each corporate "person." As already mentioned, the corporate person is the result of a leveraging of the equal rights protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which was originally designed to safeguard the recognition of natural personhood of the recently freed slaves. Arguing that artificial persons deserve the same equal protections as natural persons, Southern Pacific Railroad attorneys allowed the corporation to produce a body *artificialis*, akin to the sublime body of the king, so that its interests could be successfully protected.<sup>45</sup> This "germination" was not an isolated occurrence but rather part of a systemic confusion between person and property—the afterlife of slavery in the text of the law.<sup>46</sup> As Stephen Best shows, 19<sup>th</sup> century law mobilized the notion of the "person," as a "sublime" extension of the figure of the slave. Before *Santa Clara*, in the Fugitive Slave Law (1850) the fugitive slave is presented (implicitly) as a person because she is treated as a debtor. That is, personhood is "extended" (in scare quotes) to the slave merely as a foundation of her obligation toward the master. The slave's "debt makes property appear in the form of personhood."<sup>47</sup> Intellectual property laws also relied on a similarly extended notion of "personhood" as a way to protect property rights in "heretofore inalienable aspects" of the person."<sup>48</sup> Overall, concludes Best, personhood is merely a textual effect; it is a *form* that the law "engenders" out of the archives of culture, "one effect of the traffic between incarnation and figuration," between a biological body and a sublime body politic.<sup>49</sup> As "the reification to which we assent as members of the body-politic," ultimately in 19<sup>th</sup>-century jurisprudence, the person is the reification of agreed upon market relations.<sup>50</sup>

If in *Capitalism: Slavery* the two bodies of the slave are maintained distinct and put at a remove from each other, in *Corporate Cannibal* not only are the natural body and the body *artificialis* conflated, but their relationship is turned inside out like a glove. *Corporate Cannibal* gives the sense that one might be touching, so to speak, the slave's alienated sublime person. An entirely digital production, *Corporate Cannibal* makes a spectacle of this reversal, even as it continues to rely on the blackness of Grace Jones's actual, embodied biological skin and on the intensity of her impersonations. By impersonating the corporation, Jones takes back the "prosthetic body" that the figure of the slave produced and was hijacked by the corporate person. In doing so, she embodies capital's ability to constantly mutate and adapt, abstract and extract.

Second, by challenging the distinction between foreground and background, between ambient and figure, surface and depth, *Corporate Cannibal* problematizes the distinction between the image and the profilmic, the black image and the black *as* image. Hooker's video —entirely in black and white, or only in black, as Shaviro suggests, since the whiteness behind Jones is merely an empty space behind

her—begins quietly, with just one strip of mercury that cuts the screen diagonally. Part organic and part metallic, it shivers softly at least until the first lyrics of the song, which coincide with a medium shot of Grace Jones wearing a black suit with pointed shoulder pads, a vampire or the high priest of an unnamed masonic rite: “Pleased to meet you,” she enunciates, “pleased to have you on my plate.”



The glow of her skin is so strong that its blackness looks like a reflecting metal surface. Blackness is something fluid yet dense, an ever changing surface, and yet never simply just that: it cannot hold an identifiable shape and does not have a distinguishable inside. Any cell, any particle can be moved to the surface and then, in an instant, sink to the bottom, be absorbed and disappear. Yet the tilting movements of Jones’s head remain recognizable, and so do her sideways glances, as well as her menacingly direct looks. There are two identifiable distinct camera angles, one fully frontal and the other slanted to the side alternating rather rapidly. A series of skewed reversals punctuates the song’s lyrics: “You’re my life support, your life is my sport,” “I can’t get enough prey/pray for me.” The imagery of cannibalism pursued by the lyrics evoking taboo bodily consumption is sustained throughout the song: “Your meat is sweet to me,” she sings. “Corporate cannibal, eat you like an animal.” At times she shakes her head like a ravaging animal pulling flesh from a rotting carcass while the refrain grafts bestial allusions onto the imagery of industrial production: “I’m a man-eating machine,” it repeats throughout.

As we hear the oscillatory structure of the lyrics’ rhetoric we can also identify two movements from depth to surface and vice-versa. One is a movement whereby the profilmic and the image are visibly conflated and Jones becomes, as Shaviro has noted in *Post-Cinematic Affect*, nothing but an electronic signal whose modulation fills the screen.



The other is toward a detachment of the image from the profilmic; this is when, suddenly, the image becomes grainy and fuzzy, low-fi and we become aware of its texture and its “failure” to fully render what it is an image of.<sup>51</sup>



These flashing images act almost as a return of the repressed in which the Grace Jones that stood before the cameras reasserts herself as something other than the image we are looking at. Her concrete corporeality cannot be undone. As much as her figure floats to and from the surface, at times lost in an image that absorbs her, the facial expressions, the tilting of the head are hers, and so is the movement of the wide-open mouth threatening to devour everything and anything.



For Shaviro there is no profilmic Grace Jones but only “an electromagnetic field”: “Jones’s imaged body is not a figure in implied space, but an electronic signal whose modulations pulse across the screen.”<sup>52</sup> Yet when recalling director Nick Hooker’s comment about capturing on a single long take “the raw glow of [Jones’s] skin,” Shaviro also calls attention to the role of Jones’s corporeal blackness and the fact that her profilmic blackness is seemingly already the image we are looking at.<sup>53</sup> Just like labor, it is immediately *abstracted* from her body. Just like burnt cork, it is also seemingly immediately fictionally *extracted*. To be sure, Jones’s profilmic blackness continues to reappear in Shaviro’s text and Hooker’s statements as a wish for its own disappearance, a desired conflation of the blackness of the profilmic subject with the blackness of the image. “It is true, of course,” concedes Shaviro, “that Jones actually did stand before the camera, at one point in the production of ‘Corporate Cannibal.’ But the video’s *ontological consistency* does not depend, in the way that a film would, upon the fact of this prior physical presence.”<sup>54</sup> The video’s ontological consistency, for me, depends on blackness as the money form and on the way digitality can underline this fact. Understood here as etymologically linked to tactility, as Laura Marks argues in *Touch*, paradoxically, in Hooker’s video digitality makes us touch the money form in new ways.<sup>55</sup> “In the digital image,” writes Peter Osborne, “the infinity of exchange made possible by the abstraction of value from use finds an equivalent visual form.”<sup>56</sup> Not only that, but in the digitized *black* image the infinity of exchange finds an equivalent tactile form. When Grace Jones’s blackness, acquires the density of an “oil spill,” the digital emerges not as a site of disappearance of the carnal body but rather as a site in which the roles between the sublime and the natural body might be reversed. We finally “touch” the sublimity of the corporate body.<sup>57</sup>

Ultimately, by staging a return of the slave body in the *artificial* body of corporation, the dense blackness of Hooker’s video makes us touch the bottomless emptiness of the corporate person, the fact that the corporation has “personality (but not a face), intentions (but no feelings), relationships (but no family or friends), responsibility (but no conscience), and susceptibility to punishment (but no capacity for pain).”<sup>58</sup> An augmentation, intensification and accumulation of the pivoting, flickering and stuttering moves either actual or virtual slave bodies have made throughout the Long Twentieth Century, Grace Jones’s blackness offers a spectacle for the conflation of the image with the profilmic *and* of money with the real. What we find is the denial, via absorption, of the duality of form as a type of “seeing double.” The parallax views are no longer visible, our visual strain is no

longer required, and the two bodies of the commodity, the slave and of photography have become undetectable, while the digitization of a blackness that is conflated with the image, makes a spectacle of the difficulty/impossibility to distinguish them.

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## Notes

\* The title for this essay is inspired by Bill Brown, "Reification, Reanimation, and the American Uncanny," *Critical Inquiry* 32 (2006), which I'll discuss below. I want to thank Chip Linscott for advising me to watch *Capitalism: Slavery* and Deborah Levitt for letting me know about *Corporate Cannibal*. These two objects are really stunningly rich and I already know that I will come back to them in the future, since with this essay I am only beginning to scratch the surface.

<sup>1</sup> *Capitalism: Slavery* (Ken Jacobs, 2006, digital video, 3 min, color, silent). *Corporate Cannibal* (Nick Hooker, 2008, digital video, 6 min, b/w), visible here: <http://www.nickhooker.com/video/grace.html>. Later I will use some frame grabs from this video to illustrate some points. The very act of "grabbing", "stilling" this video is obviously paradoxical given the extent to which it makes a spectacle of seamless movement. I therefore strongly encourage looking at the video in its entire, untouched form before reading the rest of the essay.

<sup>2</sup> Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, ed. Anonymous (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Emphasis in original. *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>4</sup> The idea of the distribution of the sensible comes from Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004). I am particularly thinking about his thoughts on the structure of the sentence in Flaubert.

<sup>5</sup> Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, 73.

<sup>6</sup> Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century. Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (London, New York: Verso, 1994). See also Fredric Jameson, "Culture and Finance Capital," *Critical Inquiry* 24.1 (1997).

<sup>7</sup> Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic. Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* See especially part I.

<sup>9</sup> I develop the notion of the Long Photographic Century in my book, *On the Sleeve of the Visual: Race as Face Value* (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Press, forthcoming 2013), Chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>10</sup> Jean-Louis Comolli, "Machines of the Visible," in *The Cinematic Apparatus*, ed. Teresa and Stephen Heath de Lauretis (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980); Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990); Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991); Allan Sekula, "The Traffic in Photographs," in *Only Skin Deep Changing Visions of the American Self*, ed. Coco Fusco and Brian Wallis (New York: International Center of Photography, 2003); Vivian Sobchack, "The Scene of the Screen. Envisioning Photographic, Cinematic, and Electronic "Presence," in *Carnal Knowledge* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004). In the realm of cinema, there are at least three crucial recent titles: Sean Cubitt, *The Cinema Effect* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004); Jonathan Beller, *The Cinematic Mode of Production: Attention Economy and the Society of the Spectacle* (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Press: University Press of New England, 2006); Steven Shaviro, "Post-Cinematic Affect: On Grace Jones, Boarding Gate and Southland Tales," *Film-Philosophy* 14.1 (2010). See also Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism. Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester, UK and Washington, USA: Zero Books, 2009). Influential in my early thinking about this subject has been also Matthew Tinkcom, *Working Like a Homosexual: Camp, Capital, Cinema*, Series Q (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> As I argue in *On the Sleeve of the Visual*, the money-form manifests itself as a hermeneutic of the surface shared, but also repeated, amplified, and fleshed out, by photography; a hermeneutic of face value whereby value is visible on the surface and the surface is understood as value. Here, however, I am less interested in reflecting on this hermeneutic (which, I argue in my book, is also an ontology), and more committed to reflecting on the idea of money as "general equivalent." I am interested in what equivalences are being created, on what ground, at what price, and what exchanges they enable.

<sup>12</sup> See at least essays by Coco Fusco, “Racial Time, Racial Marks, Racial Metaphors,” Nicholas Mirzoeff, “The Shadow and the Substance. Race, Photography, and the Index,” and Jennifer Gonzales, “Morphologies: Race as a Visual Technology,” all in Coco Fusco and Brian Wallis, eds., *Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self* (New York: International Center of Photography, 2003). See also Beth Coleman, “Race as Technology,” *Camera Obscura* 24.1 (2009); Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); ———, *Photography on the Color Line: W.E.B. Du Bois, Race, and Visual Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). I discuss this idea of the ‘perfection’ of the black body as a visual sign in the Introduction to *On the Sleeve of the Visual*.

<sup>13</sup> Emphasis added. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008 [1952]), 89.

<sup>14</sup> I develop this point in the first chapter of *On the Sleeve of the Visual* also in relation to the rich and provocative literature on the role of blackness in *Camera Lucida*. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Carol Mavor, “Black and Blue: The Shadows of *Camera Lucida*,” in *Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Camera Lucida*, ed. Geoffrey Batchen (Boston: MIT Press, 2009); Margaret Olin, “Touching Photographs: Roland Barthes’s ‘Mistaken’ Identification,” in *Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Camera Lucida*, ed. Geoffrey Batchen (Boston: MIT Press, 2009); Shawn Michelle Smith, “Race and Reproduction in *Camera Lucida*,” in *Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Camera Lucida*, ed. Geoffrey Batchen (Boston: MIT Press, 2009); Ruby C. Tapia, *American Pietàs: Visions of Race, Death, and the Maternal* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> I take this suggestion partly from Greg Hainge who sees photographic fixation as analogous to the process of constitution of normative bodies: “photography appears doomed to petrify the shifting ground of performative (Butler 1993) or heterogenetic (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) subject formation that has characterized so much recent work on the human and, rather, to arrest man in the vertical, transcendent structure of normative embodied subjectivity.” Greg Hainge, “Unfixing the Photographic Image: Photography, Indexicality, Fidelity and Normativity,” *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 22.5 (2011): 723.

<sup>16</sup> Most of the discussion about the ontology of the photographic image after the digital turn has occurred in the following publications: Tom Gunning, “What’s the Point of an Index? Or, Faking Photographs,” *NORDICOM Review* 25.1/2 (2004); ———, “Moving Away from the Index: Cinema and the Impression of Reality,” *differences* 18.1 (2007); Mary Ann Doane, “The Indexical and the Concept of Medium Specificity,” *differences* 18.1 (2007); David Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Frank Kessler, “What You Get Is What You See: Digital Images and the Claim on the Real,” in *Digital Material: Tracing New Media in Everyday Life and Technology*, ed. Marianne van den Boomen, et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009); Philip Rosen, *Change Mummified. Cinema, Historicity, Theory* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001). In *On the Sleeve of the Visual* I describe as a reality a(e)ffect the ability for the black body to suture the visual field and provide visual integrity.

<sup>17</sup> I am paraphrasing Peter Osborne, “Infinite Exchange: The Social Ontology of the Photographic Image,” *Philosophy of Photography* 1.1 (2010): 64. Marx’s spectral ontology has been discussed at length by Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge, 2006 [1994]).

<sup>18</sup> See Stephen Best, *The Fugitive’s Properties: Law and the Poetics of Possession* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004). In my discussion of *Santa Clara* I follow Nneka Logan’s work on the corporate person, and specifically her paper Nneka Logan, “Santa Clara, the Fourteenth Amendment and the Rise of Corporate Personhood and Power: A Rhetorical Analysis of Text in Context” (paper to be presented at National Communication Association, Orlando, Florida, 2012 Conference).

<sup>19</sup> Ken Jacobs, notes on *Capitalism: Slavery* (2006), in *Film-makers’ Cooperative Online Catalogue*, <http://film-makerscoop.com/>, accessed June 2012. See Logan, “Santa Clara, the Fourteenth Amendment and the Rise of Corporate Personhood and Power: A Rhetorical Analysis of Text in Context.”

<sup>20</sup> Best discusses the influence of Hobbes’s social contract theory in 19<sup>th</sup> century legal positivism.

<sup>21</sup> Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, (1957) 1997).

<sup>22</sup> Santner, Eric L. *The Royal Remains: The People’s Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011, 35. Emphasis added. For Santner the more flexible notion of the *corpus mysticum* became “a master trope that allowed for the aggregation and sacramentalization of all manner of secular entities.” Thus “the problem of the continuity of corporations – of the body politic – had to be in some way folded into and elaborated as a problem internal to the complex physiology of kingship [...]. The flesh of the royal ‘super’ or ‘surplus’ body was grasped as the locus of a series of *virtual realities*.” *Ibid.*, 39, 41.

<sup>23</sup> In order to illustrate the relationship that connects the commodity form to value, Marx adopts the language of the medieval doctrine of the King’s Two Bodies: “An individual A, for instance, cannot be ‘your majesty’ to another

individual B, unless majesty in B's eyes assumes the physical shape of A, and moreover changes facial features, hair and many other things, with every new 'father of this people'." Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin Classics, 1990), 143. For the idea of the slave's two bodies see Best, *The Fugitive's Properties*.

<sup>24</sup> "Modulation" is Shaviro's term.

<sup>25</sup> This is Shaviro's observation: "Nick Hooker does not manipulate Jones's image, so much as he modulates, and actively recomposes, the electronic signals that she already is, and whose interplay defines the field of her becoming." Shaviro, "Post-Cinematic Affect: On Grace Jones, Boarding Gate and Southland Tales," 17. The idea that Jones is already a digital image seems to express the fantasy of total exchangeability connected to the idea of digitality. See Drew Ayers, *Vernacular Posthumanism: Visual Culture and Material Imagination* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Communication, Georgia State University, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> See Alessandra Raengo, "Optic Black: Blackness as Phantasmagoria," in *Beyond Blackface: Africana Images in U.S. Media*, ed. Akil Houston (Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2010); Raengo, *On the Sleeve of the Visual*. Among other things, *Bamboozled* has been read in relation to its strategic and subversive employment of stereotypes with a focus on its generic status in between tragedy and satire, by leveraging minstrelsy as an allegory of exploitative relations of blackness in the entertainment industry, the commerce of blackness, as raising questions about the ownership and self-definition of blackness, as an example of the aesthetics of the grotesque, as a reflection on post-humanism and so on. See "Living Color: Race, Stereotype, and Animation in Spike Lee's *Bamboozled*," in W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005); Brown, "Reification, Reanimation"; Kara Keeling, "Passing for Human: *Bamboozled* and Digital Humanism," *Women & Performance* 15.1 (2005); Harry J. Elam, Jr., "Spike Lee's *Bamboozled*," in *Black Cultural Traffic Crossroads in Global Performance and Popular Culture*, ed. Harry J. Elam, Jr. and Jackson Kennell (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005); Beretta Smith-Shomade, "'I Be Smakin' My Hoes': Paradox and Authenticity in *Bamboozled*," in Paula J. Massood, *The Spike Lee Reader* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007); Tavia Nyong'o, "Racial Kitsch and Black Performance," in *ibid.*; Susan Gubar, "Racial Camp in *the Producers* and *Bamboozled*," *Film Quarterly* 60. 2 (2006); Gregory Laski, "Falling Back into History: The Uncanny Trauma of Blackface Minstrelsy in Spike Lee's *Bamboozled*," *Callaloo* 33 4 (2010); Ed Guerrero, "*Bamboozled*: In the Mirror of Abjection," in *Black Contemporary American Cinema: Race, Gender and Sexuality at the Movies*, ed. Mia Mask (New York: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>27</sup> For a canonical text on the relationship between stereotypes and fetishism, see Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994). For a direct reflection on the role of profilmic blackness in *Bamboozled* see Keeling, "Passing for Human."

<sup>28</sup> Eric Lott, "Love and Theft: The Racial Unconscious of Blackface Minstrelsy," *Representations*, 39 (1992).

<sup>29</sup> Brown, "Reification, Reanimation," 185.

<sup>30</sup> Manthia Diawara has discussed a similar effect in relation to David Levinthal's photographs of similar artifacts, an aesthetic influence openly acknowledged by the film, in the fact that these photographs, just like Michael Ray Charles's art, hang from the walls of Delacroix's office. Manthia Diawara, "The Blackface Stereotype," in *Blackface*, ed. Levinthal David (Santa Fe, NM: Arena Editions, 1999).

<sup>31</sup> Brown, "Reification, Reanimation," 197.

<sup>32</sup> What Kara Keeling describes as the lack of coincidence—the gap, the distance—between the projected image and the profilmic, which is finally brought to the surface by the digital regime of the image, is instead continuously sutured, filled, and indexed in more and more subtle ways within the profilmic itself. It is the coincidence between skin pigmentation and race of the profilmic body that the digital is unable to question. What might have changed in the digital is the way in which the profilmic is *rendered*, but not the seeming ontological thickness, incontrovertible certainty, and pristine intelligibility of the black body's visuality. Keeling, "Passing for Human."

<sup>33</sup> I derive this idea of mimicry from Homi Bhabha, but I also think about it in spatial terms, hence the suggestion that mimicry bears an oblique rather than a frontal relation with that which is being mimicked. Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994). I develop this idea through an exploration of the visual form of the shadow both in *On the Sleeve of the Visual* as well as in Alessandra Raengo, "Shadowboxing: Lee Daniels's Non-Representational Cinema," in *Contemporary Black American Cinema: Race, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*, ed. Mia Mask (New York: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>34</sup> Michele Pierson, "Jacobs' Bergsonism," in *Optic Antics: The Cinema of Ken Jacobs*, ed. Michele Pierson, David E. James, and Paul Arthur (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 204.

<sup>35</sup> For this notion of the temporality of capital see Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*; Arrighi, *Long Twentieth Century*; Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic*.

<sup>36</sup> Ken Jacobs, "Notes on the Nervous System," In *Films That Tell Time: A Ken Jacobs Retrospective*, ed. David Schwartz.

(Astoria, NY: American Museum of the Moving Image), 24, quoted in Pierson, "Introduction: Ken Jacobs - a Half-Century of Cinema," 17.

<sup>37</sup> Adrian Martin, "Busby Berkeley, Ken Jacobs: A Precarious, Extravagant, Populist, and Constructivist Cinema," in *Optic Antics the Cinema of Ken Jacobs*, ed. Michele Pierson, David E. James, and Paul Arthur (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 225.

<sup>38</sup> For the idea of 'visuality' as the mastery of the visual field of the plantation, see Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011).

<sup>39</sup> Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*.

<sup>40</sup> Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981).

<sup>41</sup> The idea of metaphysical stillness comes from James Snead, *White Screens, Black Images: Hollywood from the Dark Side* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994). For a discussion of this iconographic tradition see Nicholas Natanson, *The Black Image in the New Deal: The Politics of FSA Photography* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

<sup>42</sup> Jacobs writes, "A stereograph celebrating factory production of thread. Many bobbins of thread coil in a great sky-lit factory space, the many machines manned by a handful of people. Manned? Some are children. I activate the double-photograph, composer Rick Reed suggests the machine din. Your heart bleeding for the kids? The children will surely be rescued and by their bosses! 'Boys,' they will say, 'Have we got a war for you.'" Electronic Art Intermix, <http://www.eai.org/title.htm?id=12750>, accessed June 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Vivian Sobchack elaborates on Eisenstein's view of Disney animation as a way to compensate for the fully regulated laborer by effacing the labor. She, instead, prefers animation that stutters. Stuttering becomes a figure for the visibility of labor. Vivian Sobchack, "Animation and Automation, or, the Incredible Effortfulness of Being," *Screen* 50.4 (2009).

<sup>44</sup> Jacobs, "Notes on the Nervous System," quoted in Pierson, "Introduction," 17. This movement has been also described as "turning your head toward a passing car you can never quite catch up with, but are somehow always ahead of. See Jesse P. Finnegan, "Ken Jacobs in 3D at Anthology Film Archives (May 13-19),"

<http://altscreen.com/05/12/2011/ken-jacobs-in-3d-at-anthology-film-archives-may-13-19/>, accessed June 2012

<sup>45</sup> Logan, "Santa Clara, the Fourteenth Amendment and the Rise of Corporate Personhood and Power: A Rhetorical Analysis of Text in Context."

<sup>46</sup> "Germination" is Eric Santner's term.

<sup>47</sup> Best, *The Fugitive's Properties*: 81.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>51</sup> For an exciting discussion of low-fi aesthetics see Hugh S. Manon, "Rude Aesthetics in the Digital Mainstream." Paper presented at World Picture Conference, Oklahoma State University, October 24-25 2008.

<sup>52</sup> Shaviro, "Post-Cinematic Affect: On Grace Jones, Boarding Gate and Southland Tales," 16.

<sup>53</sup> Hermitosis, "Interview: How Nick Hooker Turned Grace Jones into a Corporate Cannibal," (2008), quoted in *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>55</sup> Laura U. Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

<sup>56</sup> Osborne, "Infinite Exchange," 67.

<sup>57</sup> Hooker's personal email to Steven Shaviro, 2009, cited in Shaviro, "Post-Cinematic Affect: On Grace Jones, Boarding Gate and Southland Tales," 13.

<sup>58</sup> Elizabeth Hankins Wolgast, *Ethics of an Artificial Person: Lost Responsibility in Professions and Organizations*, Stanford Series in Philosophy (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), 86. Cited in Logan, "Santa Clara, the Fourteenth Amendment and the Rise of Corporate Personhood and Power: A Rhetorical Analysis of Text in Context." She cites Wolgast as an elaboration on Justice John Paul Stevens's dissenting opinion for *Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission*, 2010: "Corporations have no consciences, no beliefs, no feelings, no thoughts, no desires" (75-76).