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**Evoking the memory of slavery in Ayana V Jackson's 'Prototype/Phenotype, 2012'
or *Ayana, Max and Roland meet at the Bar du Mémoire.....***

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Prologue

It is 1959 at the Bar du Mémoire, on the Place du Tertre in the Montmartre district, northern Paris, where Max and Roland have been meeting on and off for the past 30 years, or so. They are waiting for Ayana to arrive, having just finished mounting her work 'Prototype/Phenotype 2012' on the wall between two lamps, whilst being watched intently by the Maître d'. Ayana enters the Bar du Mémoire and greets the two men. Looking over at her photograph on the wall, she nods with approval at their handiwork and says "what are you having, boys?"



Bar du Mémoire, Place du Tertre, Montmartre, C1930

Introduction

“The name of Photography’s noeme will therefore be: That-has-been,’ or again: The Intractable. In Latin.....this would doubtless be said: interfuit: what I see has been here, in this place which extends between infinity and the subject....it has been here, and yet immediately separated: it has been absolutely, irrefutably present, and yet already deferred”. (Barthes 1980, 77)

The black American photographer Ayana V Jackson’s ‘Prototype/Phenotype, 2012’, speaks of the memory, trauma and legacy of slavery, presenting a work which resonates with contemporary audiences, but which has its roots firmly in the past.



Fig.1 Ayana V Jackson, Prototype/Phenotype 2012

The subject is wearing clothing which we associate with the 19th century, who, given the era and that they are black, should be read as being a slave. The subject is in straightforward pose, against a plain background reminiscent of a studio backdrop, in a neutral taupe shade. The white blouse with a neck collar is distinctly European, “..newly arrived African slaves were quickly clothed in European garb and made to conform to European concepts of decency” (White and White, 1995, 151) “...we are inclined to assume that accustoming the African body to the wearing of European garb was just one more facet of a painful process of adjusting to an alien culture” (Ibid, 152). Through the sleeves the skin of the black body is seen.

The style of such images usually contained visual clues to build a narrative of sophistication, often in the hands of the subject - such as books, fans or other trinkets (Fig.2), but here the subject sits on a plain wooden chair, hands placed firmly on their lap.

The tonal range suggests a Daguerreotype or the later Ambrotype portrait of the mid 19th century (Fig.2), processes originating in Europe and having arrived in North America became just as fashionable, according to Ann Shumard “thanks to the entrepreneurial spirit of American practitioners and a middle class made up of eager consumers.” (Smith 2018) depicting what Alan Sekula calls the “ceremonial presentation of the bourgeois *self*” (Sekula 1986, 6), but the plainness of the portrait subverts and challenges the ‘bourgeois self’ by nature of it’s subject being a slave, and is therefore the embodiment of Sekula’s “double system of representation capable of functioning both *honourifically* and *repressively*” (Miller 2020, 12). I believe this is Jackson’s intention.

The work is a composite self portrait which is typical of Jackson’s practice and as she explains “I felt that I had to use my body. If I were to expose another woman’s body to the type of violent image that I’m dealing with, I felt that it would be too close to committing a violent act upon her”. (Greenland 2018). The violence Jackson refers to is the violence of slavery towards the black body.

Jackson’s factual expression is a challenge to the viewer, it raises the question ‘*what is the subject thinking?*’, ‘*what are they feeling?*’ and more importantly, ‘*who are they?*’ We are invited by Jackson not to consider the subject as representative of *a people*, African Americans living in the 19th Century, and in so doing, the image confronts the viewer directly with their history.



Fig.2 Daguerreotypes from the mid 19th Century (source, Pinterest)

The work presents itself as an archival image as though made at the time of slavery which it depicts, as a counterpoint to the ethnographic images of the time, which John Tagg describes as “(a) format (which) varies hardly at all...vagrants, criminals...the poor, the colonised races - are taken one by one...turned full face and subjected to an unreturnable gaze; illuminated, focused, measured, numbers and names” (Miller 2020, 12).

Jackson’s work is part of a wider body of images made by artists who belong to disadvantaged or discriminated against groups, and presents the trauma suffered by a marginalised people; so well referenced by Rotimi Fani-Kayode when speaking of the British Government’s attitude towards “black people, women, homosexuals – in short, anyone who represents otherness” and further, why he used photography “not just as an instrument, but as a weapon if I am to resist attacks on my integrity and, indeed, my existence on my own terms” (Greslé, 2014). Whilst Fani-Kayode is in a combative mood here, Jackson’s motive is, I believe, to remind audiences of the traumas suffered, by representing the experience of the marginalised, the repressed, inviting reflection, and a lesson for the future. As Jackson says of her work generally “at the end of the day the work is a form of visual activism”. (Granovsky, 2018).

Jackson is involved with the practice of what Leigh Raiford calls “*critical black memory*, a mode of historical interpretation and political critique that has functioned as an important resource for framing and mobilizing African American social and political identities and movements” (Raiford 2009).

Jackson graduated from the Spelman College with a BA in Sociology in 1999 and whilst there attended an introductory photography class to further an interest in the medium already instilled in her by her father, a keen photographer. Receiving severance pay from her post graduation employer, Jackson bought a camera and set about pursuing photography as a means to express her voice, spending time studying under the Becher’s former pupil and now Professor Katherina Sieverding at the Universitat der Kunst in Berlin, where “I first started engaging in critical thought. I began thinking about issues of representation, questioning my position as an American, as a black person, as a woman. I began to ask myself if and how that subjectivity changed how people interacted with me and my subjects, and subsequently as viewers of the work” (Connor, 2015).

With a background in Sociology, it is not surprising that Jackson takes an intersectional approach to her work as noted by Fiona R Greenland “In her 2017 video work ‘Compared to What?’ Jackson quotes performance artist Nora Chipaumire in reminding us that her intersectional status has “historically been on a ‘collision course’ with power, masculinity, and Whiteness”.” (Greenland, 2018). I will discuss how *Prototype/Phenotype* (2012) is a complex image which should be interpreted on many levels, not just on the basis of race and sex, but also in considering the many and varied factors that create and cause discrimination and disadvantage - particularly where these factors intersect with one another (for example photographic and anthropological interpretations). As Jackson says “I believe that humanity is done an incredible disservice by placing people in boxes of gender, of race, of geography, of politics. Through that mode of categorisation we create more and more distance from each other and unfortunately my medium....of photography, has had a lot to do with that illustration of those particular boxes” (Granovsky, 2018). The main argument of Intersectionality is in “....placing those who currently are marginalized in the centre (as) the most effective way to resist efforts to compartmentalize experiences and undermine potential collective action”. (Crenshaw 1989, 167), and this is exactly what Jackson has done with this work, placed herself as representative of the marginalised slave, in the centre, subject to all the various forces working against her.

Part 1

"It does not seem to me, Austerlitz added, that we understand the laws governing the return of the past, but I feel more and more as if time did not exist at all, only various spaces interlocking according to the rules of a higher form of stereometry, between which the living and the dead can move back and forth as they like, and the longer I think about it the more it seems to me that we who are still alive are unreal in the eyes of the dead, that only occasionally, in certain lights and atmospheric conditions, do we appear in their field of vision." (Sebald 2001, 261)

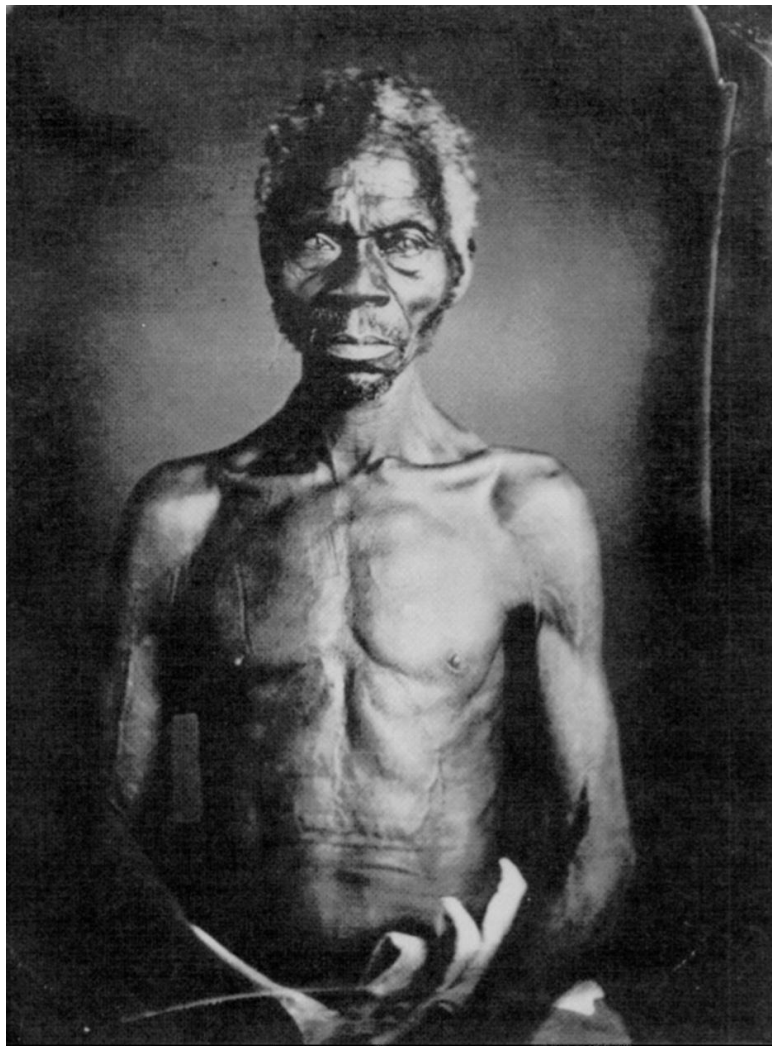


Fig.3 Example 'Slave Daguerreotypes' of Louis Agassiz, A slave named Renty, a native of the Congo, from the plantation of BF Taylor of Columbia, Daguerreotype by JT Zealy for Louis Agassiz, 1850

To place Jackson's work in context, it is necessary to understand the depiction of the black body by photography following its invention, and prominent examples of this are seen in the work commissioned in 1850 by Louis Agassiz, who gave "explicit instructions" (Schneider 2012, 209) to photographer JT Zealy in their execution. Agassiz's daguerreotypes of slaves (see Fig.3) were discovered at Harvard's Peabody Museum in 1975 and saw their first major display in 1992 at the 'Nineteenth Century Photography' exhibition organised by the Amon Carter Museum (Wallis 1996, 102). Agassiz was one of the world's most honoured scientists, and the photographs were designed to support two assertions, "One, nominally scientific, the other frankly political. They were designed to analyze the physical differences between European whites and African blacks, but at the same time they were meant to prove the superiority of the white race" (ibid,102). Agassiz was a creationist, and in particular he believed that black people were a "separate creation" (ibid, 102).. He found black people repugnant, "it is impossible for me to repress the feeling that they are not of the same blood as us" (ibid, 104).

As a scientist, Agassiz presented images to his audience on the basis of credible science, showing those of a "separate creation" to them (ibid, 102) not the same as them, inviting the view that the audience was of a superior nature.

There is of course a clear motive to give this impression, firstly to justify the exploitation (for profit) of black people by white people, and secondly to support harsh treatment of slaves simply due to their huge outnumbering of white slave owners - "in 1850 the white population of Columbia was just over 6,000, whereas the slave population was in excess of 100,000" (ibid, 104) "and the need for discipline seemed to encourage an attitude of contempt towards slaves" (ibid 104). Agassiz dehumanised black people with his work. "Even in the artistic perception of whites, black people generally remain anonymous" (Reust 2000, 200). What is anonymous is not seen, and their mistreatment not cared about.



Fig.4 Louis Agassiz, *Daguerreotype, Jem, Full Frontal*. (Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University)



Fig.5 Louis Agassiz, *Daguerreotype, Delia, Frontal*. (Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University)

The images commissioned by Agassiz contain several full frontal photographs of black male bodies clearly showing their genitals (Fig.4) and to the modern viewer can easily be interpreted as voyeuristic, titillating (Fig.5) or even pornographic. Suzanne Scheider, in a larger argument about Agassiz's motives suggests "If the images that sprang from Agassiz's lascivious lens, and the various iterations of the eroticized black masculine that were to follow, were to escape official censure while ensuring public pleasure, it was because, for all their pornographic transgressions, they might still be seen, finally and ultimately, as working within the service of the state" (Schneider 2012, 234/5).

Notwithstanding Scheider's concerns about Agassiz's motives, it is easy to judge Agassiz harshly through the lens of contemporary liberalism, and to his credit Agassiz was an abolitionist. Certainly in 1850 the modern concept of racism didn't exist, it is a modern construct. The point is that Agassiz's view of black people as a 'separate creation' in 1850 still finds favour in some quarters, "All too easily, a history that starts from the present

overestimates the power of ideas and underestimates the responsibility of the people who have made use of those ideas.” (Banton 2015, 83).

Jackson’s ‘Prototype/Phenotype 2012’ depicts a formal portrait exactly as a response to the more commonly made ethnographic photographs of black people depicted by Agassiz. Jackson says: “My family, many of my friends’ families, and if you ask most black diasporans, you’ll probably find at least one photograph of an in situ, in studio, that was for personal consumption, whereas the world knows more the ethnographic photography that present a completely different ideal of the (black) body” (Granovsky, 2018). Jackson is acutely aware of the power of the archive and its use in categorisation on both popular consciousness and governmental power.

Agassiz was, in common with many of his contemporaries (Bertillon¹, Galton²...), involved in cataloguing the population through photography in an attempt to understand differences and in so doing created archives which categorised them. This was part of a larger and wider change where government sovereigns, having spent many years expanding empires in terms of land mass (and resources), turned their attention to the people within them. Sally Miller, commenting on Michael Foucault says “In describing how contemporary forms of power/knowledge came into being, Foucault argues that in eighteenth century Europe there was a shift in the focus of government where population, rather than simply territory, came to be understood as the object of political rule” (Miller 2020, 13). The populations under governmental control were no longer seen as workers and owners, but people who looked different, who spoke different languages and observed different customs. Once catalogued, these peoples become easy to label and therefore control and create narratives and histories about. Jacques Derrida’s point regarding the power of the archive in the service of the state, “There is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory” (Derrida 1995, 11), is particularly pertinent especially given the role of photography in that service, as Jackson herself says “photography has a muddled up relationship with propaganda” (Jackson, 2018).

¹ Discussed in this document.

² “Galton is known for developing the technique of composite portraiture. In this process negatives of different subjects are combined through repeated partial exposures to produce a single image.....in order to secure a definitive, unique identification, Galton sought to produce a visual record of the characteristics common to a particular group”. (Miller 2020, 15).

When Sekula talks about the repressive portrait, he is referring in part to the use of the portrait by the authorities, particularly the police and judiciary and in 'The Body and the Archive' he talks about Alphonse Bertillon, who in 1883 (early on in the history of photography) devised a system for precisely measuring eleven characteristics, mostly facial, and recording these as a means to identify certain character types, chiefly criminality³.

Bertillon devised a complex system by which measurements recorded in an individual could be compared to a large archive that he had collated, containing portraits with measurements relating to known criminals, against which a new 'sample' could be compared, with the objective of identifying criminal character traits (Fig.6), but as Sally Miller comments "The organization of the photographic portrait within an archive is paradoxically what allows for the subject to emerge as a unique individual. And the way in which the individual's individuality - the difference - was organised was not neutral" (Miller 2020, 15). And so, comparing a new set of measurements from an individual to those which match the assumed criminal characteristics of repeat offenders, creates a stereotype based, effectively, upon no more than appearance. As Sekula says "Here was a method for quickly assessing the character of strangers.....Here was a gauge of the intentions and capabilities of the other" (Ibid, 14). Jackson has created a Bertillon Card within her work (Fig.7), and the message is very clear - the cultural representation of black people is that they are considered to be part of the same stereotype, one of people who are essentially considered untrustworthy, even criminal, sitting outside of society and not invited to have any part in it, and therefore, open to abuse.

Just a century before Bertillon, the German Philosopher Christopher Meiners described black people as having larger skulls than white people, but with a smaller brain and "the less they possess the capacity and disposition towards virtue, the more they lack adaptability; and not only that, but the less sensitive are their bodies" (James and Das Gupta 2007, 25-26). I believe it is arguable that work such as this seeped in to collective understanding of black people.

Anthropological work on race based upon the physical differences between them continued right up to the mid twentieth century, most notably with Carleton S Coon's work 'The Origin of Races' (1962), which was concerned largely with craniofacial anthropometry⁴, it has been made

³ See (Gridlack 2009).

⁴ "Craniofacial anthropometry is an objective technique based on a series of measurements and proportions, which facilitate the characterization of phenotypic variation and quantification of dysmorphology" (Jayaratne and Zwahlen 2014, 101-107).

obsolete by increased understanding of genetics, as A Templeton says "[T]he answer to the question whether races exist in humans is clear and unambiguous: no." (Losos and Lenski, 2016, 360),

| BERTILLON. | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------|------|------------|------|-----------|-------|--------------|-------|
| Height, 1 m | 76.1 | H'd lgth | 19.9 | L. Foot | 26.2 | Eye-Class | 4 | Age | 24 |
| Eng. Ht. | 5 ft 9 1/2 in. | " width | 15.1 | L. Mid. F. | 16.3 | Circ. | 2.25 | Apparent Age | years |
| Outs. A. | 1 m | Chk " | 14.4 | L. Lt. F. | 8.9 | Periph | 2.5 | Born in | 1880 |
| Trunk, | 74.2 | Lgth | 5.9 | L. Fore A. | 47.1 | Pecul. | brown | Nativity | Ohio |
| Remarks incident to measurements | | | | | | | | | |
| Haze blind - gray pupil. | | | | | | | | | |



| DESCRIPTIVE. | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------|-------------|------------|----------|------------|------------|--------------------------------|-----|--|
| Incl. | reed | Profile | Ridge | rect sin | Beard | | | | |
| Hght | 76 | Base | ell | Root | thin close | Hair | dk ch | | |
| Width | 14 | DIMENSIONS. | | | | Complexion | dk | | |
| Pecul | | Length | Projection | Breadth | Right Ear | lobes long | Weight | 150 | |
| | | long | in | in | Chin | frag | Build | in | |
| MEASURED AT MASSFIELD, O. | | | | | | | DATE Dec 2-1904 BY H. Hastings | | |

Fig.6 Bertillon Card 1904 (source University of Pittsburgh, University Art Gallery)



Fig.7 Ayana V Jackson, Prototype/Phenotype 2012 (Detail)

Part 2

“With regard to many of these photographs, it was History which separated me from them. Is History not simply that time when we were not born?.....Thus the life of someone whose existence has somewhat preceded our own encloses in its particularity the very tension of History, its division. History is hysterical: it is constituted only if we consider it, only if we look at it - and in order to look at it, we must be excluded from it” (Barthes 1980, 64/5)

Quite apart from the fact that the suffix in Prototype/Phenotype is a clear riff on Daguerreotype and Ambrotype (Platinotype, Cyanotype, Calotype or indeed Talbotype), the title of Jackson's work, certainly worthy of Jerry Uelsmann⁵, provides a clear direction from the artist to the viewer as to how they should interpret the image.

‘Prototype’, defined as “...the first example of something..... from which all later forms are developed” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). Jackson is telling us that the subject is the first or amongst the first to suffer the trauma of slavery, and that subsequent memories of this will follow on to following generations.

“The term ‘phenotype’ refers to the observable physical properties of an organism; these include the organism's appearance, development, and behavior. An organism's phenotype is determined by its genotype, which is the set of genes the organism carries, as well as by environmental influences upon these genes”. (see Phenotype/Phenotypes, 2014).

If Phenotype refers to the behaviour of the ‘organism’, in this case and in the context of this photograph it is analogous of African Americans as determined by genetic heritage. What could be more representative of ongoing collective memory than the genetic makeup of people, predestined by their ancestral line? Can it be that the trauma of those original slaves, several generations before - or “transgenerational trauma” (Grossi 2020, 102), can be felt as trauma in their modern day descendants? As Marianne Hirsch says “parental trauma can be encoded in children's DNA structures, making them more vulnerable to traumatic and post-traumatic stress symptoms. Although this research is in its very beginnings and not yet conclusive, it does

⁵ Jerry Uelsmann, influential photographer practicing in the late twentieth century, known for titles directing meaning in his work, such as *Simultaneous Implications* (1973), *Apocalypse II* (1967), *Riddle of Innocence #1* (1951).

corroborate the accounts of members of what writer Eva Hoffman (2005) has called the 'postgenerations'. (Hirsch 2019, 172).

In 2017 the California State Legislature examined the evidence of the genetic encoding of trauma and during extended consideration were convinced enough to pass Resolution ACR177 which aimed at "raising public awareness of transgenerational trauma and the role that epigenetic research plays in understanding this 'trauma' suffered by 'communities of color'" (Ibid), as evidenced by it's wording:

"Our genes are covered with a layer that holds the memory of trauma experienced by our ancestors and can influence how we react to trauma and stress.

The impact of traumatic experiences may be epigenetically inherited via molecular memory that is passed down through generations.

This emerging scientific field of epigenetics is discovering that trauma is being passed down to future generations through more than simply learned behaviors [. . .]" (Ibid)

If we accept this new theory has a basis in fact, and in even the wildest meanderings of evolutionary thought, I think we must do, then the political ramifications of a Resolution like ACR177 challenge not only existing bureaucracies and legislation, but also brings to the fore an interesting and obvious parallel, that is, the genetic coding inherent in those who belong to a 'race' which is seen as having superior whiteness predicated genetically (or epigenetically), originally fostered at the dawn of slavery by those arranged who profited from it, and supported by the philosophies of people like Meiners, and which continues today, "...black people continue to live with the pain that had been inflicted upon them as white supremacy gene is transferred from one white generation to another white generation"⁶. (Harris, 2016).

The existence of genetic or physical transference of memory adds considerable weight to the idea of postmemory, which is that traumatic events of the past live on through those living in the present. If the trauma is profound enough, then it transcends the time that has elapsed between the past and the present, as if time were not there at all, and the historic events are occurring concurrently with the contemporary memory of them. This is a many faceted, almost

⁶ This particular discussion related to the unpopularity of reparations for the descendants of slaves amongst white people, but it does highlight the parallel point and has a wider application.

intersectional phenomena, particularly where it concerns the inequalities that are rooted to the cause of the traumatic events in the first place.

With its roots firmly in thinking about the trauma of the Holocaust on postgenerations⁷, the idea of postmemory is, I think, strong enough to lift out of this area, and apply it to other significant traumatic events to understand their repercussions on later generations, such as slavery, “Postmemory is not identical to memory: it is ‘post’; but, at the same time, I argue, it approximates memory in its affective force and its psychic effects”. (Hirsch 2012, 31).

Perhaps the objective of creating work which speaks of the trauma of the past, is to make it real for any audience at any time (postgenerations), subverting the passing of time, so that the viewer experiences it as if first hand. Marianne Hirsch says “Postmemorial work....strives to reactivate and re-embody more distant political and cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonantforms of mediation and aesthetic expression. In these ways, less directly affected participants can become engaged in the generation of postmemory that can persist even after all participants....are gone” (Hirsch 2012, 33).

If Jackson’s photograph portrays a person subjugated by the environment in which they lived, it can easily be seen as a visual analogy for the mechanisms of that subjugation and the biases inherent within them. Whilst there isn’t space here to explore this fully, it is impossible to ignore the direct link with the contemporary debate about Critical Race Theory, which is currently under attack by white right wing political agitators globally, particularly in the US and indeed which has seen a pre-emptive attack by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities quango in the UK⁸ (following activism by the Black Live Matter movement internationally, a response to police brutality towards black people and the police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in 2020), precisely because it demonstrates the pro-white/anti-black bias in bureaucratic systems and legislation.

⁷ Marianne Hirsch in ‘The Generation of Postmemory’ uses the term postgeneration/s/al to describe generations beyond the one that suffered historical trauma. (Hirsch 2012).

⁸ See article in Al Jazeera by David Child 31 May 2021 ‘UK report denies systemic racism, prompting angry backlash’: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/31/uk-race-report-says-system-not-rigged-Against-minorities>, and also the description of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities quango on Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commission_on_Race_and_Ethnic_Disparities, particularly the first line of the second paragraph.

Originally a critique of pro white/anti black bias in the law, later applied to further education, and now considered as a foundational theory of inherent pro-white bias in many areas including governmental policy, Critical Race Theory could well have stayed within the confines of the academic world had it not been singled out for the Bannonesque⁹ criticism of liberal thinking by illiberal white commentators.

The ‘Jim Crow’ Laws in the US, which operated chiefly but not entirely in the southern states of the US between the 1870s and 1960s “was more than a series of rigid anti-black laws. It was a way of life” (Pilgrim 2000 ed 2012) and saw “African Americans....relegated to the status of second class citizens” (ibid) proves the bias beyond doubt, and supports the basic tenets of Critical Race Theory¹⁰ “Jim Crow laws in the United States promoted racial prejudice” (Hswen et al 2020). Attempts to rewrite history by essentially denying Jim Crow (which is what you do if you denigrate Critical Race Theory) are met head on by Jackson in this work.

Attempts at discrediting Critical Race Theory are the *modus operandi* typical of a thinking which, in government, seeks to categorise the population as ‘citizens’ and ‘noncitizens’ and it is these categorisations which determine how they are governed, “their status as citizens or noncitizens is what then categorizes the *form* of governance.” (Azoulay 2008, 32). If Jackson is reacting against the use of photography and in particular the way that historic governmental archive seeks to differentiate and control the population in her work, then she is an example of what Ariella Azoulay has identified in ‘The Civil Contract of Photography’, an activist community which uses photography outside of the ‘sovereign power’ and presents it’s own arguments which challenge those of the sovereign power: “It was a new political community of people between whom political relations were not mediated by a sovereign ruling power that governed a given territory. Neither were the people of this community subject to such a ruling power. The civil contract of photography that the emergence of this community exemplifies is the hypothetical, imagined arrangement regulating relations within this virtual political community. It is not dictated by the ruling power, even when this power attempts to rule and to control photography”. (Azoulay 2008, 21).

⁹ Steve Bannon, right wing strategist for Donald Trump, credited with Trump’s fortunes in the US election of 2016 and known for antagonism towards liberal thinking, see Britannica ‘Steve Bannon’ for an overview <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Steve-Bannon>

¹⁰ See ‘Background: CRT’s Tenets and Key Concepts’ in (Cabrera 2018, 211).

If Jackson, as part of this community, is challenging the role of photography in political categorisation, then it can be argued that she is unlearning the way that photography represents the imperial world view. This is mirrored by Azoulay's unlearning as part of the process of writing 'The Civil Contract of Photography' (which) "coincided with unlearning the knowledge provided to us by imperial institutions such as sovereignty and citizenship through which we learn to dissociate ourselves from others with whom we are governed in exchange for certain privileges offered for different patterns of loyalty and complicity" (Azoulay and Carville, 2020, 190). It is this 'unlearning' that is so important in considering new ways of thinking about and creating photography, especially activist photography.

Jackson is in good company within Azoulay's Civil Contract community, joining and continuing the legacy of perhaps its inaugural member, Sojourner Truth. Isabella Van Wagner was born into slavery around 1797 and undergoing a profound religious experience in 1827, changed her name to Sojourner Truth in 1843 (Painter 1994) and began a life of public speeches, publications and preachings pursuing abolitionism; "Sojourner Truth translates as itinerant preacher" (ibid, 462). Plenty has been written about Truth, her relevance here is that she set a precedent, in the mid nineteenth century, of using photographic images of herself to support her outspoken support of abolitionism, and selling cartes de visite (Fig.8) in order to provide an income, with the caption 'I sell the shadow to support the substance' referring directly to the 'shadow' being analogous of the photograph, and the 'substance' being her message.

Augusta Rohrbach's description of Truth's self represented photographs could easily and very strikingly describe Jackson's work, especially in terms of an intersectional approach: "Sojourner Truth plays with the idea of the photograph as an indexical sign marking the presence of the subject, demonstrating her awareness and manipulation of visual codes permeating nineteenth-century U.S. culture regarding race, gender, class, and region" (Rohrbach 2012, 97). But look at the engraving for the frontispiece of Truth's publication 'Narrative of Sojourner Truth 1850' (Fig.9). Take away the headscarf (symbolising African heritage) and look at the expression. Truth is confronting the viewer. This is Jackson in 'Prototype/Phenotype 2012'.

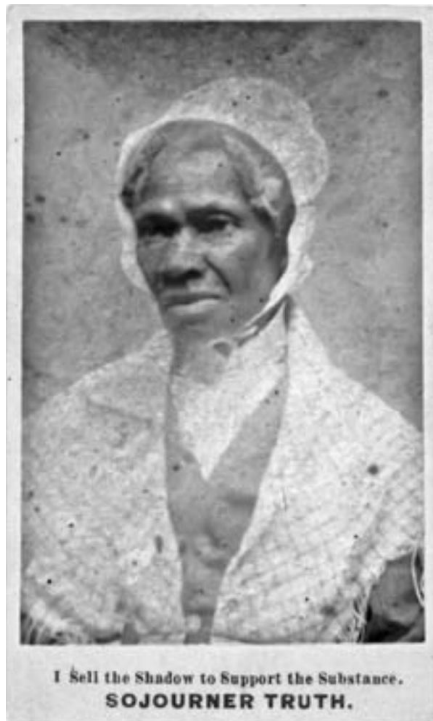


Fig.8 Sojourner Truth 864 carte de visite with caption, from the Library of Congress



Fig.9 Author frontispiece, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, 1850 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries

Conclusion

“So the memory is the only help that is left to them [the dead]. They pass away into it, and if every deceased person is like someone who was murdered by the living, so he is also like someone whose life they must save, without knowing whether the effort will survive”. (Sebald 2001, - xv -)¹¹

I have been concerned at discussing how Jackson's work has challenged the memory of slavery and inherent racism using an intelligent and intersectional visual language, using several historical, mnemonic, aesthetic, sociological and theoretical devices to confront the viewer with the history of slavery and the predicament of the diaspora of African Americans, as Jackson says “for me, beyond aesthetics, beyond the paper and the ink and the post production, it really is about our relationship to the image, it really is about having a certain literacy around imagery” (Granovsky 2018).

Ultimately, confronting the viewer is about confirming the particular history by passing on and preserving the memory of it, “Art does not serve to underscore the global existence of the facts, but instead addresses a particular ‘memory’ that cannot find rest”. (Reust 2000, 203). If the memory is restless, as Reust suggests, so it should be. It is the memory of the traumatic past that should be accepted and not denied, as a means of ensuring a fairer society..

The bodies of black people taken from their homelands and forced in to slavery may be dead, their experience lives on, reminding us of the violence and trauma of a history which is etched in to our memory, but what also lives on is the legacy of Agassiz, Meiners, Jim Crow etc, which echo through time on every occasion that somebody speaks of black people derogatively, or seek to deny the existence of institutional racism.

Jackson's objective is “to shift something in the past, to get right with the present, in order to have a better future” (Jackson 2018).

¹¹ Sourced from the introduction to Sebald's Austerlitz, by James Wood, quote from Adorno, 2002).

Epilogue

It is 1959 and Ayana, Max and Roland finish their conversation and drain their glasses at the Bar du Mémoire, Place du Tertre, Montmartre, northern Paris.

They thank the Maître d' and say their farewells - "until next time mes amies....", and leave, each by a different door, and each at a different time.



Interior of the Bar du Mémoire, Place du Tertre, Montmartre, C1950

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