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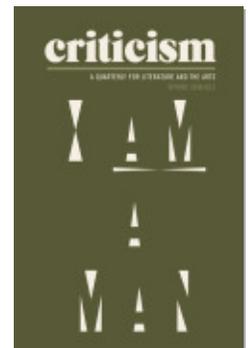
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# FROM FLOAT TO FLICKER: INFORMATION PROCESSING, RACIAL SEMIOTICS, AND ANTI-RACIST PROTEST, FROM “I AM A MAN” TO “BLACK LIVES MATTER”

Sarah Whitcomb Laiola

*I can't Breathe!*  
*Hands up, Don't Shoot!*  
*Black Lives Matter!*

Since 2015, these refrains have echoed across the United States, flickering throughout the electrical networks of the digital, social web and forming the soundscape of contemporary racial protest. The first, “I can’t Breathe!” are the last words of Eric Garner, a black man who was placed in a chokehold and ultimately strangled to death by police in Staten Island, New York, on July 17, 2014.<sup>1</sup> The second, “Hands up, Don’t shoot!” are the mythical last words of Michael Brown, a black man who was shot “execution style” by the white police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri, on August 9, 2014.<sup>2</sup> The final, “Black Lives Matter!” comes from a Facebook post by Alicia Garza that responds to Eric Zimmerman’s 2013 acquittal for the murder of Trayvon Martin, a seventeen-year-old black boy who was fatally shot by Zimmerman on February 26, 2012, in Sanford, Florida.<sup>3</sup> As reports of these (and other) instances of institutionalized police brutality spread throughout the web, each of these phrases was rendered into a hashtag: #ICantBreathe, #HandsUpDontShoot, and #BlackLivesMatter. Led by #BlackLivesMatter, the tagged phrases constitute “a call to action and a response to the virulent anti-Black racism that permeates our society.”<sup>4</sup> Though it originated online and is notable as one of the first successful mobilizations of the social web toward activist goals, #BlackLivesMatter has since been “[taken off] social media and into the streets,”<sup>5</sup> where, reflecting its online operability, Black Lives Matter (BLM) names a dispersed, decentralized network of activists working against the institutional racisms of the post-civil-rights United States. In Garza’s words, the movement effects “a tactic to (re)build the Black

liberation movement” that calls for an end to “the ways in which Black lives are deprived of . . . basic human rights and dignity” today.<sup>6</sup>

As BLM calls attention to racism’s continued influence on policing and other institutions in the United States, it explicitly works against the mistaken belief that, having abolished the institutional racisms of the Jim Crow era and elected the country’s first black president, the United States has overcome its racist past and is now “postracial.” BLM thus renders “unambiguous” what Russell Rickford calls “the refurbished, but no less ruthless, framework of white supremacy” as it operates in the post-segregation United States.<sup>7</sup> This framework aligns with what Eduardo Bonilla-Silva articulates as the recalibration of structural, institutional racism from something explicit to something implicit.<sup>8</sup> This is institutional racism that claims to be “colorblind,” as the United States no longer “sees race.” Effectively denying that racism continues to operate within and inform the country’s ideological, social, legal, or economic institutions, colorblind ideologies challenge our abilities to identify (and therefore resist) institutional racism. In a contribution to *The Colorblind Screen*, Ashley “Woody” Doane demonstrates this challenge of identification as it operates in television casting, explaining that we “see” blackness and other signs of race only so far as we process this information to indicate “diversity” or “multiculturalism”—an interpretation that subsequently reinforces “proof” of our own colorblindness.<sup>9</sup> In a colorblind environment, then, we paradoxically become blind to signs of race precisely in the moment of their visibility and legibility.

Given the ways racial information is processed by colorblind ideological systems, BLM’s efficacy comes as much from its identification of institutional racism in policing as from its insistence that *blackness* (a visible color that semiotically marks race) be fundamental to lives that matter and that the *matter* (the material) of blackness be fundamental to life.<sup>10</sup> It therefore makes explicit and *visible* the implicit and *invisible* processes through which institutional, colorblind racism operates today by (re) making visible a primary signifier of racial identity—the color black, the quality of blackness. In this move, it responds to Beth Coleman’s 2009 call to rethink race as *techné*, as prosthetics and self-extensions that allow us to liberate race from its “inherited position of abjection toward a greater expression of agency.”<sup>11</sup> This recalibration, Coleman argues, will “[change] the terms of engagement with an all-too-familiar system of representation and power.”<sup>12</sup> As BLM reclaims blackness in an age of colorblindness, it aims to do precisely this.

This article takes its cue from BLM and similarly proposes a mode by which to reclaim the technology of race in the colorblind era. This

proposal begins with the question, what has happened to the sign(s) of race, to the visual matter of blackness, that we can now be rendered “blind” to it with such ideological force that to process embodied information of race and actually *see* blackness is to activate a radical politics of information processing? Building on Bonilla-Silva’s examination of colorblind ideologies as they emerge through social, political, and economic changes in the post-civil-rights United States, I posit that the sensory contradiction of colorblind racism is the result of radical shift in cultural information processing that mirrors that which has taken place in the shift from analog to digital technologies. Specifically, as colorblind racism denies the visual matter of blackness, it effectively denies the material signs and signifiers of skin color—the information of race. In this denial, it mirrors the shift in our cultural understanding of information’s materiality—its physical matter—where analog information systems are understood as material, while digital information systems are understood as immaterial.<sup>13</sup> Effectively, then, the semiotic systems of racial information processing have shifted from a visible, material, “analog” model in the (pre-)civil rights era to an invisible, immaterial, “digital model” in our post-civil-rights era. Engaging this shift, I explore throughout how the semiotic information of race has similarly shifted, from information made up of continuous, malleable floating signifiers to discrete, fixed, flickering signifiers.

Though inspired by BLM, this article is primarily grounded in three cultural objects that mobilize signs of race as *techné* both to perform the kind of racial protest that BLM seeks to revitalize and to provide a lens through which to access the shift in racial semiotic systems from float to flicker. These objects are Ernest Withers’s iconic photograph of the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers’ Strike; Glenn Ligon’s 1988 painting *Untitled (I Am a Man)*, which revises the photograph’s protest signs; and the painting’s 2000 *Condition Report*, which revises this sign once again by reframing it within a narrative of damage—a report on the object’s condition. Using these objects to examine the changing sign(s) of race from 1968 to today, this article first engages the objects on their own terms, examining them as they perform a historical narrative of racial protest and declaration that resonates through the years as the sign is revisited and revised. This examination then gives way to an investigation of race as a semiotic system that floats, as if in an analog model of ideological information processing. Grounded in Stuart Hall’s description of race as a “floating signifier”<sup>14</sup>—an ideological concept produced and supported through language and vision that lacks a fixed meaning—this examination focuses on the way the protest sign operates visually in the

image-network, sonically in the site of protest, and linguistically in its textuality to declare and perform racial ontology. This historical examination of race's semiotic floating then gives way to further development of the article's central thesis—that colorblind racism results from a fundamental shift in information processing that can be described as a semiotic movement from float to flicker. This final section responds to the opening question of racial information processing, examining how we have moved from processing racial information as if analog to processing it as if digital. This section brings together N. Katherine Hayles's work describing the body of digital information with Hortense Spillers's work describing the body of racial information to demonstrate how in a colorblind system, just as in a digital system, the semiotic information of race no longer floats but flickers. As a flickering signifier, race becomes a contemporary technology, a "mechanism of agency" rather than a "tool for terror,"<sup>15</sup> that insists on the matter and mattering of black lives.

#### "I AM A MAN": Performing Racial Protest, 1968–2000

This performance of racial declaration begins in the midst of the civil rights movement, in February 1968, two months before the enactment of the Fair Housing Act and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. A group of black male sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, have gone on strike, protesting the institutional racisms in discrimination, mistreatment, and unsafe labor conditions that uphold the legacies of slavery and the dehumanization of black workers. Ernest Withers has recorded this protest in what was to become an iconic photograph from the era. In the photograph, the striking men stand shoulder to shoulder, lined up across a city street in a calm, organized group. This line of black, male bodies dominates the visual field, extending across the image's central horizon, facing the viewer directly. Most of the men are wearing long pants, coats, and hats—clothes that mark not only the season but also their commitment to "respectable" dress.<sup>16</sup> Their gloveless hands hold their protest signs high above their heads, so that they float across the center of the image, cutting it in half—signs along the top, bodies along the bottom. In capital black letters that dominate a white background, the signs read "I AM / A MAN." The sheer number of identical signs is overwhelming, and the visual noise soon becomes audible, the signs effecting a cacophony of chanting voices demanding recognition of this basic human fact: "I AM / A MAN," "I am a man." At the front line, two men have been caught in motion. One organizes the protesters, while the other walks

across the line, staring directly at the photographer-turned-viewer. His eyes question the process of documentation, asking, why are we simply documenting the protest, rather than joining?

The next scene of this performance takes place twenty years later, in 1988. As if in delayed response to this challenge, the black, queer painter Glenn Ligon adds his visual voice to these protest signs in a painting of oil and enamel on canvas: *Untitled (I Am a Man)*. The first of what will become his signature aesthetic, this textual painting represents a moment of self-expression and self-discovery in Ligon's own artistic search. As it visually recalls 1968, the painting resonates with a cultural moment that sought to correct the exclusionary history of black artists and America's art institutions,<sup>17</sup> a resonance through which Darby English reads the importance of oil and enamel—painterly materials that supported institutional exclusion.<sup>18</sup> In this oil painting, Ligon maintains almost all of the visual characteristics of the 1968 protest signs. As in the original signs, the painting's background is white; smudges and cracks in the paint, however, reveal that this is a whitewash. Floating in the center of this whitewashed canvas, black, capitalized, block letters resiliently declare, "I AM / A / MAN." This new spatial alignment marks the one major change that Ligon has made to the 1968 signs, and this change signals that Ligon is not taking a voice from the protest and isolating it but rather adding his own voice to the chanting crowd. In this additive move, his voice refuses to be lost within the crowd, and the beat of his visual stammer takes on the rhythm of the chant.<sup>19</sup> His "I AM / A / MAN" visually rings with particular audibility, reclaiming the protest with a redefinition of masculinity and humanity that can include, for instance, the queer voices that were excluded in 1968.<sup>20</sup> As the painting recalls this protest, it denies, as well, that the cultural status of blackness, black masculinity, and race has been settled in the United States once and for all. In setting "I AM" and "MAN" on visually equivalent planes, Ligon marks these words as not only visually but also linguistically and meaningfully synonymous. Yet, held together by the weak, tenuous lines of "A," these words expose that the assumed equivalence of masculine subjectivity and (human) being is indefinite, unstable—a point to which the history of blackness and ideologies of racism can similarly attest. Although Ligon's is the only visibly present voice in 1988, the urgency of his cause has not diminished. Instead, as the post-civil-rights political tide turns to a denial of continued institutional racism, the necessity of declaring and visualizing blackness and subjectivity develops in urgency.

In the third and final scene of this performance, we find ourselves in the year 2000. Like 1968, 2000 was a charged year marking both the new

millennium and the rising ubiquity of what has now been called postracial rhetoric—the claims that we are “past race,” that we “no longer see it,” because institutional racism is nonexistent. Of course, this is far from accurate, and the effect of this discourse is to render us blind to the cultural institutions that continue to support and be supported by racist ideology, bringing an enhanced urgency to Hortense Spillers’s haunting quip from 1987: “sticks and stones might break our bones, but words will most certainly kill us.”<sup>21</sup> In the midst of what will become a powerful ideological machine, Ligon’s 1988 painting has undergone a “Condition Report.” Presented as a comparative print diptych, the left-hand panel contains a direct reproduction of the 1988 painting, while the right-hand panel features the words “I AM / A / MAN” surrounded by handwritten annotations pointing out various marks on the canvas. Reading around the margins produces a narrative of damage: “dark mark,” “blackspot,” “fingerprint,” “brown spot,” “hairline cracks,” “brown droplet,” “brown drips,” “loss at edge,” “smudge (artist?).” Something sits uneasily about this report, however, and it does not take long to notice the consistent references to damage due to “brownness,” “blackness,” and “dark marks,” damage that sounds less like the objective reporting on the painting’s condition and more like racially charged epithets. Notably, the so-called damage to the body of the canvas is the result of blackness breaking through the white-washed surface, visual matter flickering in and out of visibility, in a move that echoes the original declaration “I AM / A MAN,” even as it forecasts the future declaration “Black Lives Matter.” Though the narrative performance ends here, the flickering signifiers of blackness continue, reporting as much on the painting’s condition as on the condition of race in the new millennium.

#### Float: Analog Information Systems and the *Techné* of Race the Floating Signifier

These three images are bound to one another through the shared refrain, “I am a man.” Through each reiteration and re-vision, the images create a network that performs the changing sign of race and/as racial protest from 1968 to 1988 to 2000. Ground in Ligon’s revisions to the protest sign—repetitions with difference that constitute the network, as such—this image network effectively disrupts systems of textual, visual, and linguistic information processing, in order to both reflect and disrupt systems of racial information processing. In this move, the network responds directly to Stuart Hall’s description of race as an ideological system made

up of visual and linguistic codes designed to oppress and repress visual difference.<sup>22</sup> This reflective disruption begins with 1968 and 1988, as racial information is processed through ideological systems that operate as though analog, where blackness—the semiotic, visual matter of race—continues to be criminalized and pathologized, associated with “a certain sense of decay, even when that decay is invoked in the name of a certain (fetishization of) vitality.”<sup>23</sup> This is a cultural malady that Fred Moten calls “a case of blackness,”<sup>24</sup> a condition that provides a productive point from which to articulate the historical operability of racial information systems.

Though race is an information system that operates through language and thought, Moten’s “case of blackness” highlights two important features of racial ideology, as it has historically operated through vision. First, blackness carries the information of race, signifying this “race” through the visibility of skin color. In Jennifer González’s terms, the very notion that a body conveys a color is one born of racial ideology, and so the visual semiotics of blackness (or brownness) as skin color are inseparable from racial ideology.<sup>25</sup> Second, the information that blackness signifies can mean differently in different contexts. As Moten notes, “blackness” simultaneously means “vitality” and “decay,” two oppositional positions. This impossible position is one that describes a floating signifier: a sign that has such a gap between signifier and referent that it has no “solid or permanent . . . meaning,” and its meaning “changes all the time[,] shift[ing] and slid[ing].”<sup>26</sup> Because of this ever-present gap, the floating signifier is particularly effective for use by ideological systems, as they may “fill” the gap—attach a signifier to a particular referent—as suits their needs.<sup>27</sup> The ideology of race that operates through signs of blackness is just such a system, leading Hall to provocatively argue that race itself is a floating signifier. It is, in other words, semiotic information that lacks discrete fixity and can mean differently in different contexts.

As an information-bearing entity, the floating signifier is only able to convey information in a system that is analog. The gap that allows the floating signifier to convey information multiply, to be flexible and fluid, is an information phenomenon that is entirely reliant on the continuity of the analog system. In the digital system, which has replaced fluid continuity with fixed discreteness, this gap becomes intolerable, and the information contained in this sign may be processed only as noise or non-information.<sup>28</sup> Effectively, then, if the semiotic system of race is operable through and with floating signifiers, as Hall and Moten have shown, then this ideological system must operate as if “analog” in its information processing. Indeed, as in an analog system, the perception of blackness as the

sign of race relies on the visual continuity of color inscribed on the body's surface as a mode through which to "read" or process the information of race. This is a semiotic, ideological system of racial information, then, that assumes a cultural audience that sees blackness, an audience that is not (or does not claim to be) colorblind. In other words, this is racial information processing, operating in 1968 and 1988 and disrupted by Ligon's first revision of Withers's photograph. It is also in this painterly disruption that the revised protest sign comes to operate, not just as antiracist protest but as racial declaration—a sign, that is, of race.

Let us consider, first, the linguistic signs that tie these three images together: "I Am a Man." Independent of its historical context and cultural discourse, this phrase is linguistically significant as an ontological declarative statement, a phrase that declares the condition of being. Bound to the first-person "I," it declares, as well, knowledge of a self and knowledge of that self as "a man." Returning the phrase to its historical and discursive specificity, in 1968, "I AM / A MAN" is a sign that declares the ontological humanity of raced men. Rejecting the legacy of slavery that commoditizes these men's bodies as objects of labor, this sign of racial protest becomes, as well, an ontological declaration of raced humanity, as the sign floats between meanings to signify "man" as much as "human." In this simultaneity of meaning, Maurice O. Wallace reads a gendered as much as racial anxiety. Because the civil rights movement of the 1960s essentialized a black (hyper)masculinity, where any gendered performance that was queer, feminine, or in any way "weak" was thought to diminish the fight for antiracist civil rights, Wallace reads these signs as "a thousand protestations by men made anxious, driven to near neurosis . . . at the idea of being misrepresented in their struggle as other than proper men, their worry unspoken, of course, but writ large all the same."<sup>29</sup> When Ligon revises this sign into a painting twenty years later, he will challenge this exclusionary hypermasculinization in the subtle change he makes to the layout of the declarative text-as-image. Moving "MAN" to the third line, attached only to the declaration of being (I AM) by the indefinite article "A," Ligon signals that the ontological ground of MAN is anything but fixed, static, discrete, or definite; that is, he creates (visual) space for black masculinity—as well, (black) humanity—to float, to embrace its indefiniteness in an act of inclusivity that, in 1988, can include Ligon's own queer voice. This move anticipates BLM's radical expansion of inclusivity, as it "center[s] those that have been marginalized within Black liberation movements," including "Black queer and trans folk, disabled folks, black-undocumented folks, folks with records, women and all Black lives along the gender spectrum."<sup>30</sup>

Considering Ligon's painting to be as much a revision of Withers's photograph as of the protest signs' declaration reveals a second intervention in the signs of racial protest. If *Untitled (I Am a Man)* revises Withers's photograph, it does so by focusing—as if by zooming in—so much on the image that the visual plane is occupied entirely by the protest sign declaring racial being. That is, Ligon's revision shifts the sign of racial protest from one that includes the indexical trace of photographed, raced bodies to one that removes those bodies from the image plane to focus instead on the visibility of the textual signs—the words declaring both antiracist protest and racial ontology.<sup>31</sup> Following Eve Sedgwick's description of protest signs as an extension, not simply of the protestors' bodies but of their voices,<sup>32</sup> this move revises, as well, a visual recording of racial protest into a vocal recording, a revision that emerges as much through the particular discursivity of the protest sign and the particular materiality of the linguistic sign. To this latter point, language's visual modes—its written letter-forms—are simultaneously audible modes, a phenomenon of hearing written words in one's head that N. Katherine Hayles describes as subvocalization<sup>33</sup> and that D. F. Mackenzie further describes as “hear[ing] these letter-forms” in the “silence of a reprint.”<sup>34</sup> Through this particular materiality of language, the textuality of Ligon's painting renders his painting audible as much as visible; encountering the images, we hear as much as see the sign of racial protest and declaration change with each iteration: “I am a man,” “I AM / A MAN,” “I AM / A / MAN.”

In this sonic revision of Withers's photograph, Ligon insists not that we disregard the visibility of racial protest<sup>35</sup> but that we attend as well to the noise produced in this ontological declaration of raced humanity—an important sensory addition that recalls Fred Moten's theory of racial ontology. Moten argues that it is precisely the sonic materiality produced by the slave—the impossible yet historical commodity who speaks—that animates and constitutes the radical black aesthetic and its ontological “freedom drive.”<sup>36</sup> Through his reading of Frederick Douglass's *Narrative*, Moten demonstrates that the enslaved black man knows himself not through vision, as Lacanian psychoanalysis would suggest, but through sound. Douglass becomes aware of himself as a black, enslaved human—a commodity who speaks—through his Aunt Hester's shrieks and through the slaves' songs. Moten hears these moments as improvisatory calls and responses between slave and master, enslavement and freedom, commodity and humanity. This audibility allows him to trace the phonic materiality through the history of black musical (re)production and “claim for this reproductivity the status of an ontological condition.”<sup>37</sup> In songs from the “free jazz” movement, such as Abbey Lincoln, Max

Roach, and Oscar Brown Jr.'s "Protest," that feature sounds such as humming and shrieking over "insistently intense percussion," "you cannot help but hear the echo of Aunt Hester's scream as it bears, at the moment of articulation, a sexual overtone, an invagination constantly reconstituting the whole of the voice, the whole of the story, redoubled and intensified by the mediation of years, recitations, auditions."<sup>38</sup>

Although Ligon's painting is not a musical performance, it is one that sonically recites, echoes, and performs a racial protest. We may not be able to hear Aunt Hester's shrieks as we can in Lincoln, Roach, and Brown's "Protest," but we can certainly "hear" the shriek echoed in the protests of the Memphis sanitation workers in the subvocalization of Ligon's redoubled, reproduced, re-citation of the protest mediated by twenty years. The textual reproductions of the sign of protest throughout the image-network are, thus, visual iterations, "graphic (re)productions" of "the radical materiality and syntax that animates black performances."<sup>39</sup> The signs are brandished with the goal of "emergence from political, economic, and sexual objection"<sup>40</sup> and so express the "freedom drive" that, for Moten, ultimately animates black performance and/as racial ontology. This network of signs—this series of images declaring "I am a man"—in their mobility of a multisensory, visually audible narrative, becomes a repeated, ritualized performance, a refrain that ontologically declares and establishes a sign of race that uses the floating signifier against itself to operate in opposition to oppressive, analog systems of racial information processing.

Repeated and reproduced, echoing and resonating, the graphic (re) production of Ligon's "I AM / A / MAN" mobilizes the floating signifiers of race such that they challenge the very gap between signifier and referent on which the floating signifier's ideological use-value depends. That is, Ligon's *Untitled (I Am a Man)*, as it recasts the visual and vocal sign of racial protest into the discourse of oil painting, will effectively blend Moten's racial performance with Judith Butler's gender performativity, particularly as this latter discourse embraces the promising implications of J. L. Austin's speech-act theory to challenge assumed semiotics of embodiment. As well, this blending is one that challenges the effects of language and discourse as they work on and in society, on and in (raced) bodies, in a move that echoes Butler's use of Monique Wittig's argument that (gendered) oppression is inherent in systems of language and syntax. Finally, as Ligon's textual painting uses the visibility of language to challenge the floating signifier's necessary gap between signifier and referent, it anticipates the intolerability of this gap for digital information systems—precisely that which will necessitate the transition of the analog

floating signifier into the digital flickering signifier and which will articulate the sign of race in a colorblind ideological system.

J. L. Austin demonstrates in his theory of speech-acts that in certain utterances, the gap between linguistic signifier and signified action (referent) is absent. As he notes, certain phrases such as “I promise” or “I apologize” constitute the very act that they declare; the linguistic signifier and the signified action are one and the same.<sup>41</sup> Rather than reduce these semiotically aligned speech-acts to a metric of truth or falseness, Austin places them on a spectrum of happiness and sadness, a value determined by the alignment of the utterance to its action and by the contextualized, performed repetition of these utterances within a culture. Though this latter point often includes other rules by which a speech-act may be happy, there is nevertheless a promising implication in these two required elements of a happy speech-act: any repeated, culturally ritualized statement that resists reduction to truth or falseness can become a happy linguistic performative, a speech-act that collapses the space between signifier and referent. Butler expands on this implication so that it may speak to the body on which “gender” has been inscribed. Noting that there is no such thing as a true or false gender, and thereby arguing that the core of a performative’s happiness stems from its ritualized repetition, Butler demonstrates that the semiotic information of the marked body is “read,” its meaning accessed, through its ritualized repetition within a culture or ideological system.<sup>42</sup> As Ligon’s revision of the declarative racial sign turns “I Am a Man” into both the (re)produced performance of sounded images and a ritual of ontological declaration, the utterance and its attendant implications move closer to becoming a happy performative, a material fact where signifier and referent are one and the same. This movement, however, remains largely potential, despite the performance of happiness, because, as many evaluations of “the lived experience of the black man” will reveal,<sup>43</sup> the socioeconomic and cultural disenfranchisement stemming from institutional racism continues. As Frantz Fanon would remind us, there is still a gap between the signifier of the phrase and the material condition it points to: the black man is not simply A MAN; he is a *black* man, even (and perhaps especially) in a colorblind society that ideologically purports not to “see” his blackness but to see him only as “A / MAN.”

Importantly, the visual and textual qualifier “black” is absent from both the original 1968 sign and Ligon’s 1988 revision of that sign. In both cases—indeed, throughout the ritualized declaration—the absence of “black” is a move that aims to universalize a particular, to make the particular case of black humanity/masculinity a part of the universal case of

masculinity/humanity. This move resonates with the writings of Monique Wittig, a second theorist of language and culture through which Butler develops her theory of gendered performativity. According to Wittig, the oppression of women will not end until the particular case of the feminine can become a universal case.<sup>44</sup> For her, this point stems as much from patriarchal culture as from the syntax and grammar of the French language, in which the plural masculine pronoun, *ils*, is used to indicate a universal group, while the plural feminine pronoun, *elles*, is reserved to indicate a particular group of feminine items (or persons). Wittig, thus, calls for dismantling patriarchal culture through dismantling its language and syntax, a call that resonates in other cultural theories connecting information systems—such as language—with ideology.<sup>45</sup>

Though Wittig's claim that universalizing a particular through language will end (gendered) oppression is frequently and effectively challenged today by both the ideology of colorblindness and BLM's counterrefrain of "All Lives Matter,"<sup>46</sup> the notion that to disrupt an ideology, one must disrupt its information system—in this case, its language—is a compelling one to which Ligon's images respond and through which they mobilize the floating signifier of race as antiracist *techné*. Though Ligon's textual painting does not completely overhaul the syntax of English in its declaration "I AM / A / MAN," it nevertheless responds to Wittig's call as it disrupts discursive systems of painting and writing and the structures of informational privileging that each system contains. As a painting of words, *Untitled (I Am a Man)* exposes the constructedness of these discourses and, in its contextual recollection of the 1968 antiracist protest signs, the similar constructedness of racial discourse.<sup>47</sup> In many ways, this discursive disruption emerges as Ligon rejects the privileging of textual information over visual in writing systems, the privileging of visual information over textual in painterly systems, and the privileging of visible information over sonic in both. In this light, Ligon's insistence that we process the information of sonic, visual, and written signs in a textual painting (an image-based discursive system) enacts a political insistence that we process the information of racial signs within a colorblind ideological system—a system that would insist that the information of race remain unprocessed. Just as we can no more silently process the information of Ligon's textual paintings, then, neither can we (in) visibly process (and immediately erase) the semiotic information of race. Though not the result of a complete overhaul of the English language and its syntax, this system of information processing that Ligon creates nevertheless comes about through his particular use of the English language against itself.

As the refrain “I Am a Man” has resonated throughout the historical contexts of the image network, it has operated as a declaration of survival, animated by the “freedom drive” of radical black performance. In Ligon’s revision of this declaration, this performance attempts to collapse the oppressive gap between signifier and referent and thereby render the ideologically mobilized floating signifier into a happy, liberatory performative. In the face of colorblind ideology, however, this revision becomes a disidentificatory act of survival. The process of disidentification is, as articulated by José Muñoz, “descriptive of the survival strategies the minoritarian subject practices in order to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously *elides* or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship.”<sup>48</sup> As a strategy of survival, disidentification entails neither assimilating to nor reactively rejecting dominant ideologies but, instead, posits a third position that, like Ligon’s painting, works “on and against dominant ideology,” in order “to transform a cultural logic from within.”<sup>49</sup> Acts of disidentification transform cultural logic by “slicing into” and “disassembl[ing]” the majoritarian public sphere, in order to use “the majoritarian culture as raw material to make a new world.”<sup>50</sup> Ligon’s practice of maintaining the linguistic legibility and signification of the painted English words slices into and disassembles the hegemonic, discursive systems of painting and written language, reassembling them into alternative systems. Leaving the words intact, Ligon works on and against these institutions by requiring that his audience experience the visible as audible, the audible as visible, and the textual as painterly. Noting the connections between linguistic oppression and cultural oppression, as he disidentifies with the signifying system of language, Ligon also disidentifies with the sign of blackness as that which signifies race as “decay” or “vitality.” Instead, as blackness noisily, visibly, and textually returns in the final image in the network—the 2000 *Condition Report*—it becomes a sign not of oppression but of expression, a racial *techné* that specifically resists the digital information processing of colorblind racism and postracial ideology by shifting from a sign that floats to one that flickers.

#### Flicker: Digital Information Systems and Race, the Flickering Signifier

Ligon’s disidentificatory challenge to the ways we “read” the written and visual signs of his painting is effectively a challenge to the ways we process the semiotic information systems of language and vision—those that (in)form the ideology of race. Whereas the 1968 photograph and 1988

painting primarily disrupt an ideological system of race that processes skin color as an analog floating signifier, the 2000 *Condition Report* mobilizes this same disidentificatory disruption so that it may work on and against an ideological system of race that processes embodied information as a digital “flickering” signifier. That is, if the 1968 and 1988 images mobilized “I Am a Man” to disrupt and challenge ideological institutions that are explicit in their racism, then the 2000 *Condition Report* mobilizes this same sign to challenge and disrupt ideological institutions that are implicit in their “colorblind” racism. Building on the critique of race, language, and discourses of vision that operated through semiotic inscriptions on the body of *Untitled (I Am a Man)*, the *Condition Report* effects this shift as it reincorporates blackness within the body of the print. As the sign of race is simultaneously incorporated within and inscribed on the body of the image, the *Condition Report* mobilizes a duality of racial information systems that recalls Hortense Spillers’s work. It is this duality, particularly as performed through the image, that allows for the shift in blackness to become a flickering signifier of race that resists colorblind ideologies.

A common practice within art historical and cultural preservation practices, condition reports such as this one provide a critical evaluation of an art object’s matter, its physical, material condition. This report is often undertaken in order stabilize an artwork’s location within an archive and to set up protocols for its cultural preservation and valuation. Arguably a necessity of cultural preservation, this *Condition Report* is complicated, as it reports as much on the condition of Ligon’s painting as on the condition of the sign of race that that painting revises. To the effects of this latter report, Ligon’s declaration, “I AM / A / MAN,” finds itself (re)contextualized, grounded within a frame of handwritten annotations; the sign of race no longer floats freely in (white, “colorless”) space. As a caveat to this grounding, the annotations crowd the declaration, challenging the clarity of its resonance through the visual noise of multivocality. The chaotic environment of simultaneous listening, reading, and seeing effected by the other images in the network has now duplicated, redoubled, and intensified with the addition of the annotations’ visual noise that challenges—even as it enhances—our focus on “I AM / A / MAN.” The inseparability of noise and information further intensifies as the annotations draw our eyes and ears to specific areas in the whitewashed surface; these are areas where “dark marks,” “blackspots,” and “brown smudges” break through the otherwise whitewashed body of the image, flickering in and out of visibility, just as the audience’s attention flickers among the visual, textual, and audible signs of racial declaration, the information and noise

of the *Condition Report*. As the report exposes color breaking through white paint, it effectively rejects the erasure and silencing of racial information in a colorblind ideological system. Instead, it exposes color and blackness—semiotic information of race—as information that is both inscribed on and incorporated into the very body of the art object. It is this simultaneity of incorporation and inscription of racial information that effectively reconfigures the sign of race from one that merely floats to one that flickers.

As the sign of color breaks through the whitewashed surface of Ligon's canvas, it demonstrates the simultaneity of racial semiotics, as they are both inscribed on the body and incorporated into embodiment—the body as a culturally legible person. This simultaneity effectively performs Spillers's "American grammar," her theory of racial semiotics that connects the processes of inscription and incorporation with the ancestrally enslaved and contemporarily raced body.<sup>51</sup> Focusing on the problematic position of the gendered (female) black person whom Spillers describes as embodying a "signifying property *plus*,"<sup>52</sup> she demonstrates that these semiotics of embodiment are the result of a violent history wherein the raced body operates as a surface for damaging inscription and nonhuman signification. Setting up a dialectic between the body and flesh, the person and the living material of that person, Spillers writes, "Even though European hegemonies stole bodies . . . out of West Africa . . . we regard this human and social irreparability as the high crimes against the *flesh*, as the person of African males and females registered the wounding. If we think of 'flesh' as the primary narrative, then we mean its seared, divided, ripped-apartness."<sup>53</sup> These crimes against the flesh, scarred from being seared, divided, and ripped apart, form "a kind of hieroglyphics of the flesh whose severe disjunctures come to be hidden to the cultural seeing by skin color."<sup>54</sup> That is, as these "hieroglyphics of the flesh" constitute and signify the violent history of enslavement—a history that is intertwined with and inseparable from ideologies of racism—they operate as a kind of internalized, incorporated code. This incorporated code, this source of racial information, is nevertheless hidden, internalized, embedded within the body by skin color—the very *sign* of race, visible, inscribed, and legible on the body.

Spillers's formulation is notable here as it suggests that there are two distinct yet simultaneous sources of racial information that are processed in the production of racial ideology. Though operating in simultaneity with each other, these threads of racial information are in constant tension; to process the information of one is to deny or dismiss the information of the other. That is, to read the sign of race in the inscribed textual signs

of the “I Am a Man” image network is to (dis)miss the incorporated, (in) visible signs of blackness within the whitewashed body, and to see these signs in the *Condition Report* is to *not* read (or even misread) the textual signs. Importantly, the tension between incorporation and inscription is also a tension between the internal and external, the visible and invisible, the phenotypic performance of skin color and the genotypic code from which that color originates. It is, in other words, a tension of racial material and/as information processing that mirrors that between analog and digital information processing technologies and that describes the sensory contradiction, the conceptual tension, at the heart of colorblind racism.

To recall, “colorblind racism” is a term coined by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva that refers to contemporary institutional racism that is implicit, rather than explicit, covert rather than overt.<sup>55</sup> Amelia Jones locates colorblind racism and postracial ideologies as part of a wider spectrum of post-identity politics, a discourse that claims that, following the civil rights, feminist, and gay liberation movements of the 1960s, ’70s, and ’80s, institutional oppressions based on identity are exclusively historical problems that have been solved in the present.<sup>56</sup> In contrast to the present, during the (pre-)civil-rights era, the United States was, in Bonilla-Silva’s words, overtly racist. The ability to discriminate based on skin color was operable at all levels of the country’s culture, perhaps most memorably in the Jim Crow South. Following the civil rights movement, this form of discrimination has become illegal, the ideological ramifications of which have rendered “racist” one of the worst insults a (white) American can earn; the very mentioning, remarking on, or noticing of race has become a kind of cultural cardinal sin. The popular refrain of the moment is to “not see race,” a sentiment that stems from a (mis)appropriation of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech.<sup>57</sup> Though the ideology of colorblindness allows space for racism, it becomes the problem of individuals rather than the problem of institutions. The effect of this model is to render racism a covert, implicit, culturally encoded aspect the United States. That is, though systems of policing, education, or housing (for instance) may no longer be explicitly racist, they are nevertheless based on internalized, implicit codes of racist ideology. As noted, BLM works precisely against these implicit, internalized codes in its revitalization of racial protest that insists that *black* lives matter—a phrase that insists as much that black lives are important and valuable as that the material matter of blackness is integral to life. Despite the work of BLM to return cultural attention to the matter of black lives, the strength and effects of colorblind racism continue to operate in the popular response to “Black Lives Matter”: “All Lives Matter,” a phrase that erases the visible, sonic, and linguistic racial

signifier “black” not to claim that black lives do not matter but to erase, internalize, and deny the material information of the racial sign in an invocation of colorblindness.

A staple of colorblind ideological systems, this act of rendering visible, external information invisible and internal occurs as a result of racial information processing that operates as a digital system. In contrast to the analog system of overt racism that processes the information of race through the visibility of skin color performed on the body’s surface, the digital system of colorblind, covert racism processes the information of race as an invisible, internalized code, performed within the body. That is, whereas an analog system sees race as information *inscribed* on a body’s surface, the digital system sees race as information *incorporated* within that body—a tension, in other words, that aligns with Spillers’s dual systems of racial information. Rather than a return to the pseudoscientific biological basis of race, colorblind ideology’s internalized, encoded processing separates racial information from its inscribed, visible performance on the surface of the body. Skin color becomes, like the graphics and icons populating the user interface of a computer screen, not the information itself but the *result* of discrete information processing, the “inscribed,” external performance of the encoding and decoding of incorporated, internal information. As noninformation, external, inscribed signs of race can be ignored, denied, unperformed, unseen, while the information of race—its incorporated signs—is rendered if not an entirely “machine-readable” code (as in the digital computer), than certainly a human-illegible code. In this chaos of racial information processing, institutional racism is able to similarly become invisible, to become noninformation, as a cultural body unable to process the information of race is similarly unable to process the information of racism.

This chaos of (embodied) information processing that describes the colorblind ideological system mirrors the cultural shift in our understanding of information and its materiality following the digital turn. In this shift, information has effectively “lost its body,”<sup>58</sup> a phrase that Hayles deploys throughout *How We Became Posthuman* that articulates our (mis) understanding of digital information’s materiality, even as it resonates with similar shifts in the relationship between information and (human) embodiment. In both cases, the shift from analog to digital systems has effected a sense that information is, itself, entirely immaterial, disembodied, ephemeral, requiring no matter of its own.<sup>59</sup> Hayles proposes that this sense of informational immateriality is a misunderstanding due to the replacement of external, visible, analog continuity with internal, invisible, digital discreteness. Consider the differences in word processing with a

typewriter and a computer: whereas in a typewriter we see the mechanical continuity between our action of pressing a key and a letter being pressed onto the paper, in a computer, we press a key and a letter simply and suddenly appears. The letter on the computer screen appears as the result of discrete processes of encoding and decoding—digital information processing—that have taken place within the machine. In further contrast to the letter inked and pressed into paper by the typewriter’s key, however, the letter on the computer screen is no more than a virtual, apparently immaterial image of text performed on the computer screen; it is not itself a letter but the image of a letter.<sup>60</sup> To recognize the materiality of this digital text-as-image and the discrete actions of information processing that have produced it, Hayles develops a semiotic system around what she calls the “flickering signifier.”<sup>61</sup> A revision of the analog floating signifier, which is intolerable within the digital system, the digital flickering signifier describes both the literal “flickering” of the letter virtually inscribed and constantly performed on the screen and the internal information processing—what she describes as layered signification of encoding, decoding, and recoding—incorporated within the mechanic body that produces that letter on the screen. The flickering signifier thereby provides a lens through which to access, to understand and process, material signs of digital information that would otherwise remain wrapped up in machine-readable code, invisible, immaterial, and inaccessible to human legibility.

As the flickering signifier does for information within a digital system, it similarly provides a lens through which to access the “digital” semiotic information of race as it operates within a colorblind ideological system—a system that effectively removes the information of race from its body through an ideological insistence to “not see color,” to claim that “All Lives Matter.” In such an environment, to see, process, or access the signs of race at all—whether inscribed as skin color or incorporated as code—is to work against the system. In this light, the *Condition Report*’s final revision to the racial sign—its mobilization of blackness incorporated within and inscribed on the body of the image—is to allow the information of race to flicker in its signification among informational systems, to flicker in its legibility and its visibility in resistance to the ideological erasure of colorblindness in this moment. The chaos of the image is the chaos of navigating different, conflicting informational systems, of seeing and reading the semiotic information of race as it flickers among textually inscribed and (in)visibly incorporated systems. This is the visual and textual matter of blackness, racial information rematerialized within and on the body, visibility signifying as matter—as that which matters—in protest

to its erasure, its dematerialization, its matter denied by the colorblind, postracial system. As the *Condition Report* closes the “I Am a Man” image network, it brings “I am a Man,” “I AM / A MAN,” and “I AM / A / MAN,” to resonate outward, as refrains that echo in “I can’t breathe!” (#ICantBreathe), “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot!” (#HandsUpDontShoot), and “Black Lives Matter!” (#BlackLivesMatter). Here is racial protest revitalized, rematerialized, the technology of race mobilized as and through digital information, resisting colorblindness and institutional racism, as blackness flickering in declaration of its matter.

As I have demonstrated throughout, Ligon’s “I Am a Man” image network revises the sign of race into a flickering, rather than merely floating, signifier. Using the sign of race as *techné* throughout the image network, this recalibration of the racial sign develops through the image network’s repeated, ritualized performance of antiracist protest, as it disrupts and reclaims systems of text and inscription, code and incorporation, voice and painting. It reimagines visible images, graphic marks, and painterly inscription to create possibilities for a new reality. Our contemporary moment of institutional racism, which takes its power from its own denial, attests to the fact that this new reality is not the one that we currently live in. But “I AM A MAN” slips, slides, and sounds through this reality, reclaiming its tools of oppression and using them as tools for expression. In that expression, the protest in 1968, floating alone and indefinite in 1988 and flickering against institutional noise in 2000, is seen, heard, and experienced today as signs of race and racial protest that are once again recalibrated, reproduced, and revitalized in antiracist protest that insists on both the *matter* of black lives and that *black* lives matter.

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## NOTES

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1. Al Baker, Benjamin Mueller, and J. David Goodman, “Beyond the Chokehold: The Path to Eric Garner’s Death,” *New York Times*, June 13, 2015, [www.nytimes.com/2015/06/14/nyregion/eric-garner-police-chokehold-staten-island.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/14/nyregion/eric-garner-police-chokehold-staten-island.html).
2. Michelle Ye Hee Lee, “‘Hands Up, Don’t Shoot’ Did Not Happen in Ferguson,” *Washington Post*, March 19, 2015, [www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/03/19/hands-up-dont-shoot-did-not-happen-in-ferguson/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/03/19/hands-up-dont-shoot-did-not-happen-in-ferguson/).

3. Black Lives Matter, "About," accessed May 27, 2017, <http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>.
4. Black Lives Matter.
5. Black Lives Matter.
6. Alicia Garza, "Herstory: Black Lives Matter," accessed May 27, 2017, <http://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>.
7. Russell Rickford, "Black Lives Matter: Towards a Modern Practice of Mass Struggle," *New Labor Forum* 25, no. 1 (2016): 34–42, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1095796015620171>.
8. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*, 4th ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013.
9. Ashley "Woody" Doane, "Shades of Colorblindness: Rethinking Racial Ideology in the United States," in *The Colorblind Screen: Television in Post-Racial America*, ed. Sarah Nilsen and Sarah E. Turner (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 15–38.
10. For more on the multiply embedded meanings of "black lives matter" and "the matter of black lives," see George Yancey and Judith Butler, "What's Wrong with 'All Lives Matter'?", *The Stone* (blog), *New York Times*, January 12, 2015, <http://shifter-magazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Whats-Wrong-With-All-Lives-Matter.pdf>.
11. Beth Coleman, "Race as Technology," *Camera Obscura* 70, no. 24 (2009): 177.
12. Coleman 178.
13. Describing and correcting this misunderstanding is a core argument throughout N. Katherine Hayles's oeuvre. As such, her writings inform the technological arguments throughout this article, and they will receive more attention throughout. For more, see N. Katherine Hayles, *Electronic Literature: New Horizons of the Literary* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008); Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Hayles, *My Mother Was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Hayles, "The Time of Digital Poetry: From Object to Event," in *New Media Poetics: Contexts, Technotexts, and Theories*, ed. Adalaide Morris and Thomas Swiss (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 181–210.
14. Stuart Hall, "Race, the Floating Signifier," presentation at the Media Education Foundation Conference, Northampton, MA, 1997.
15. Coleman, "Race as Technology," 180.
16. It is worth noting that this is a major area in which BLM differs from historical racial protest, in that it does not give credence to "respectability politics." See Rickford, "Black Lives Matter," 34–42.
17. In addition to the year's importance to the civil rights movement, 1968 was also the beginning of the Black Arts Movement and art shows featuring the work of black artists, such as the Studio Museum in Harlem's *Invisible Americans*, as an attempt to correct the years of exclusion. See Kobena Mercer, *Discrepant Abstraction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).
18. Darby English, *How to See a Work of Art in Total Darkness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).
19. English 208.
20. Maurice O. Wallace, "I Am a Man: Latent Doubt, Public Protest, and the Anxious Construction of Black American Manhood," in *Ideology, Identity, Assumptions*, ed. Howard Dodson and Colin Palmer (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007).

21. Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): 68.
22. Paraphrased in Jennifer González, *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 3.
23. Fred Moten, "The Case of Blackness," *Criticism* 50, no. 2 (2012): 177.
24. Moten.
25. Jennifer González, "Morphologies: Race as Visual Technology," in *Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self*, ed. Coco Fusco and Brian Wallis (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003), 379–93.
26. Hall, "Race, the Floating Signifier."
27. See Louis Althusser, *On Ideology*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 2008); Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012); Ernesto LaClau, *Emancipation(s)* (London: Verso, 1996).
28. N. Katherine Hayles, *My Mother Was a Computer*.
29. Wallace, "I Am a Man," 146.
30. Garza, "Herstory."
31. Though it is possible to read this removal as an act of erasure in line with colorblind and postracial ideologies, I read it as an act that is ethically aligned with Saidiya Hartman's argument in *Scenes of Subjection*, that the removal of the abject black body resists the naturalization of black suffering and abjection. See Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
32. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 27–34.
33. Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 207–8.
34. D. F. Mackenzie, "The Sociology of a Text: Orality, Literacy and Print in Early New Zealand," in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finkelstein and McCleery (New York: Routledge, 2010), 205.
35. See the importance of sound to racial protest as described in Shana L. Redmond, *Anthem: Social Movements and the Sound of Solidarity in the African Diaspora* (New York: NYU Press, 2014).
36. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 7.
37. Moten, 18.
38. Moten, 22.
39. Moten, 7.
40. Moten, 7.
41. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 1–24, 53–66.
42. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
43. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove, 2008), 89–119.

44. Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon, 1992).
45. See, for instance, Jacques Derrida on Lévi-Strauss and Rousseau's anthropology, as he reads Western modes of thought, such as ethnocentrism, leading to their anthropological phonon-centrism that privileges the spoken word over the written one. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).
46. See Garza, "Herstory."
47. This is similar to the ways Michel Foucault writes about the proliferation of discourse in Magritte's *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, in which the surrealist play of text and image confirms, for Foucault, only the proliferation of discourse into things. Michel Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*, ed. and trans. James Harkness (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
48. José Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 4.
49. Muñoz, 11–12.
50. Muñoz, 196.
51. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 65–81.
52. Spillers, 65, original italics.
53. Spillers, 67.
54. Spillers, 67.
55. Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*.
56. Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory Identification and the Visual Arts* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
57. Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*, 1.
58. Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*.
59. Throughout *How We Became Posthuman*, Hayles notes that it is precisely this sense of the separation between information and that has produced the popular "dream" of uploading a consciousness to avoid the limitations of human bodies.
60. Hayles, 31.
61. Hayles, 30–31.