

**Cyborg Theory: The Making of Haar Wese**

Shwanda Renee Corbett

Wadham College, University of Oxford

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## Abstract

Surveillance capitalists use artificial intelligence (AI)-supported news media outlets (articles and broadcasting) and social media platforms to manipulate our behaviour for data. They use machine learning to respond to every activity (i.e., click, share, search, watch, like and linger) and predict our emotions (i.e., how we feel, when we feel and how our emotions can change). Such behavioural data are processed and sold as futures on the market. The human futures and behavioural futures are markets that predict upcoming generations' collective behaviour and what seems achievable with the help of media manipulation. Although there is ethical governance around this practice, humanity is not at the centre of it. The debate around ethics usually relates to how a product can improve or how consumers can improve. Additionally, racial bias is prominent in machine learning, data processing, markets and ethical governance. The dominant perspectives are those of the surveillance capitalists, data analysts and investors. The perspectives of minority groups need to be considered and become focal points. The playwright, *Individual Sovereignty*, responds to the ethical governance in behavioural data collection, racial bias and minorities not being the primary focus in ethics through a machine learning simulation. The term,

playwright, is used outside of its traditional literary function to provide multidimensionality to the writer (programmer) of *Individual Sovereignty*, Haar Wese. Haar Wese's identity comprises the following: programmer of the simulation, creator of the programmed language for the simulation, and cyborg character in the simulation.

The two primary methodologies include the creation of Haar Wese (Afrikaans for *Her Being*)—a cyborg playwright and performer—and a studio practice involving ceramics, painting, live performance and filmmaking that represents different aspects of the cyborg. Haar Wese, the cyborg, records information (data) from their environment for processing. Also, when in academic spaces, they mirror unconscious behaviours back to the academics for behavioural data collection. Haar Wese, the playwright, produced *Individual Sovereignty* in a hybrid format screenplay and fine art live performance that mimics a machine learning simulation. Haar Wese, the performer, processes the data from the environment through movement. The studio practice involving ceramics is an extension of people. The studio practice involving painting is the memory of that person. The studio practice involving live performance is the environment that best connects to the audience at that moment. The data are collected to better understand humanity and empathy. The studio practice involving filmmaking represents the unconscious of the Black and Brown gazes. This all feeds back into *Individual Sovereignty* through character choices,

dialogue structure and content, behavioural choices and predictions, scene descriptions, stage directions (actions) and music selection. The secondary methodologies include live performances (*Blackbird in Mississippi* and *breathe.: I. The beginning*), an interview with a musician, an interview with a dancer, an interview with a cyborg, a focus group discussion on *Haar Wese: Live performance* and a focus group discussion on bias detection. This group of connected entities and practices represents a fluid and elusive interpretation of the cyborg in the writing that follows.

The simulation shows the complexities of human behaviour and that their personal history, cultural histories, oppressive dominant gaze, as well as the government's historical discriminatory systems, consistently inform the minority's behaviour. This prevents the Black and Brown characters from evolving. The simulation did not fully resolve the biases but rather exposed more information about the biases in addition to further biases.

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## Introduction

*Cyborg Theory: The Making of Haar Wese* approaches ethics in artificial intelligence (AI) through the playwright, *Individual Sovereignty*. AI systems are created through unique algorithm programming to either execute a specific task or advance the technology through machine learning. The playwright mimics the process of machine learning in its development stage by setting characters in specific locations and programming them by using *action* commands. After *scene one, Inhale from the stomach*, it begins with the program running a simulation to detect biases. Although the output language starts to break down as the scenes advance, the characters' responses to the biases and their own prejudice are observed instead of the algorithm. Since the dialogues are programmed to redirect themselves once the bias is detected, thoughts and conversations are fragmented, which makes the characters increasingly uneasy. In machine learning, bias is defined as a prejudice in favour or against a person, group or thing that is considered to be unfair. In society, prejudice is defined as the negative evaluation of a social group and the generalisation of its group members.<sup>1</sup> When societal prejudice is unconsciously introduced to machine

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen J.H. Yang et al., "Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence in Education: Seeing the Invisible through the Visible," *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence* (Elsevier, January 18, 2021), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666920X21000023>, 2.

learning, it creates an implicit bias.<sup>2</sup> In relation to the playwright, the bias and prejudice are not directly stated but rather present within the characters' dialogues and actions. Bias in dialogues includes either social trigger words that prevent the conversation from moving forward, a character restricting their dialogue to a bias that is relatable to the other character, or grammatical errors or typos in the spelling of names. The characters also use dialogue to naturally process the bias, such as a dialogue between multiple characters or between a character and their memory flashback of an exchange in a previous scene. In processing the bias, the characters are more informed about the scene environments to produce ethical solutions. The production of ethical solutions that permanently resolve the bias involves the acknowledgement of how the bias is created.

Biases in AI software are created by programmers. A person from a certain demographic could create a discriminatory system that would remain undetected unless someone else from another demographic who is also involved in the program points out the bias. Perceptual errors become known errors when they result in disadvantages to certain groups of people. Companies and research institutions typically have teams for programming; however, these teams primarily consist of White males. Although women are also making contributions to AI

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen J.H. Yang et al., "Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence in Education: Seeing the Invisible through the Visible," *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence* (Elsevier, January 18, 2021), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666920X21000023>, 2.

ethics, programming teams continue to lack the representation of differently-abled bodies. If machine learning accepts and analyses input information in certain ways, what are the classifications?

Machine learning is classified into four types: supervised learning; unsupervised learning; semi-supervised learning; reinforcement learning. The playwright *Individual Sovereignty* is classified as reinforcement learning, but with a Q-learning algorithm. This method of formatting was chosen because of its circular function in the linear structure. The playwright Haar Wese identifies time as a linear structure because of its forward movement and the characters as a circular function due to their movement between problems, biases and prejudices, solutions, and the discussions between characters. The Q-learning algorithm assesses the best course of action within the given state of the agent. 'For example, consider the agent in a two-dimensional world and the world is made up of cells that the agent can occupy, called the states. There are actions in each state that the agent can perform and move in one of four directions to a new cell. The agent can move to receive a reward or a reward in the future that was based on the agent's movement. The reward can assign a preference to the action for a state and the state is preferred in the future, which the goal of the agent is to maximise the reward. The learning process is identifying the optimal action for each state that provides the highest reward. In Q-learning, each state-action pair is assigned a Q-value, which represents the sum of reinforcements that

are calculated by a Q-value function. While the work is performed, the agent is exploring the environment. When an action is performed in a state, the reward is received, and it updates the Q-value for the state-action to remember it. As the agent moves, the Q-values for state-action pairs are refined so that later, post-learning, the agent can apply the best action for a state. During learning, the agent can choose an action for a state, as a function of each action's Q-value in relation to the sum of Q-values. This process allows the agent to prefer an action for a state, to use its learned knowledge, but sometimes choose a less optimal action for exploration. The Q-value function includes the learning rate ( $\alpha$ ), how much the new Q-value will override the old one, and discount factor ( $\gamma$ ), the importance of future rewards. The state-action pair policies are created in episodes. When the agent reaches the final state, the episode ends, and a new episode can begin. Training can be bounded by epochs and steps by the agent in the environment. The unentered states and untried actions are not recorded in the state-action table. If the agent does not explore a portion of the state-space, then it will have no idea of the benefit, or punishment, that awaits there.<sup>3</sup> In *Individual Sovereignty*, like the Q-learning simulation, the characters (the agent) take up space in each scene environment (the states). The scene environment includes the scene location, the audience/audience placement and the dialogue in the space. In each scene environment, there are actions for the

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<sup>3</sup> M. Tim Jones, "Train a software agent to behave rationally with reinforcement learning," last modified 10 December, 2017, <https://developer.ibm.com/articles/cc-reinforcement-learning-train-software-agent/>.

characters to perform and their identities change after each scene ends. The goal (the reward) for the characters is to gain knowledge about the present biases and prejudices to find various solutions for the scene environments. The difference between the playwright simulation and the Q-learning simulation is the programmer's gaze. The playwright simulation is programmed by the cyborg gaze and the Q-learning simulation is programmed by the White gaze. The gaze does not exclusively describe the race or physicality of the character and programmer, but rather the perception of their existence.

*Individual Sovereignty* is a collection of artificial speeches, dialogues and monologues that follows addressing the White gaze—a dominant perspective and reality—without the Black gaze, Brown gaze or cyborg gaze being present. This gaze symbolises the relationship between human realities and how each individual's concept of reality depends on everyone else's to build a cohesive society. However, when one reality consistently becomes more dominant than others throughout society, from the 'highly educated' upper class to the 'restrictedly educated' lower class, it creates a disharmony that produces superiority-inferiority complexes within individuals. These superiority-inferiority complexes cause most individuals (minorities regarding race, economic class, and differently-abled bodies) to abandon their own sense of reality for the elevation of the dominant gaze, which is the White gaze. 'The White gaze is the deep investment in a system, or reality, that benefits them and that they have been

conditioned to see as fair.<sup>4</sup> This type of gaze is supported in *Individual Sovereignty* through white-dominated scene environments. This dominance is shown in predominantly White spaces and in the Black-Brown individuals' inability to freely express their realities, or their inability to make themselves known. 'Individuals that have the White gaze are often at a loss for how to respond in constructive ways, and resort to withdrawal, defensiveness, crying, arguing, minimising, ignoring, and in other ways pushing back to regain their racial position and equilibrium. They have not had to build the cognitive or affective skills or develop the stamina that would allow for constructive engagement across racial divides.'<sup>5</sup> The White gaze believes that the acknowledgement of other realities would make their reality either less important or obsolete. Although there would not be a loss in the reality's importance, there would be a reduction in global impact if other realities were to share the same level of importance. From one perspective, the Black and Brown gazes no longer want to feel responsible for addressing the White gaze as part of their reality's existence. From another perspective, these realities can exist within a dominant gaze; however, they indirectly and gradually grow into existence as the scene environments progress. How can the other racial gazes become as important as the White gaze? While the gaze offers an equality-based approach to the racial

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<sup>4</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre. "Being and Nothingness : An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology. London: Routledge," 2005, 271.

<sup>5</sup> Robin DiAngelo and Alex Tatusian, *White Fragility* (New York, NY: Public Science, 2016), 248.

gazes, with each racial gaze being given the same resources or opportunities, the cyborg gaze offers an equity-based approach to the racial gazes, which acknowledges that each individual has different circumstances. Thus, the exact resources and opportunities are allocated to reach an equal outcome. The cyborg gaze recognises the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all gazes, regardless of race, colour, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment implies that no group of people—including racial, ethnic or socioeconomic gazes—should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal and commercial operations.<sup>6</sup> The cyborg reality attempts to create humanity within scene environments for the individuals because of their complex realities. This gaze approaches the playwright, *Individual Sovereignty*, as a hybrid identity individual instead of a faceless machine to understand what the individual gazes require in the scene environments. The gazes contribute to ethics in machine learning algorithms, and the playwright reminds the programmers that these are for human consumption, the human interaction with both is consistent, and the positive or negative influence is guaranteed to impact their mind and behaviour over time.

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<sup>6</sup> Kumar Yogeeswaran, Thierry Devos, and Kyle Nash, “Apa PsycNet,” American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association, n.d.), <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2016-44850-011>, 243.

## **Individual Sovereignty**



*Figure 1. It was just yesterday, 2021, Corvi-Mora Gallery, London.*

'[Surveillance Capitalism] takes aim at human agency, at human autonomy, at what we consider to be individual sovereignty, the things that allow us to have decision rights to be self-determined.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Hackett, "Harvard Economist Calls to Outlaw Online Advertising Markets-Just like 'Organs, Babies, or Slaves'," *Fortune* (Fortune, November 18, 2019), <https://fortune.com/2019/11/18/google-facebook-online-advertising-ban-surveillance-capitalism/>.

## Characters

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| HAAR WESE          | (Representative) the cyborg                    |
| AUDIENCE MEMBER 1  | White able-bodied individual                   |
| AUDIENCE MEMBER 2  | White able-bodied individual                   |
| MEETING ATTENDEE 1 | White able-bodied individual                   |
| MEETING ATTENDEE 2 | White able-bodied man or non-binary individual |
| MEETING ATTENDEE 3 | White able-bodied individual                   |
| MEETING ATTENDEE 4 | White able-bodied individual                   |
| MEETING ATTENDEE 5 | Black/Brown man or non-binary individual       |
| WORKING MAN/WOMAN  | Black/Brown able-bodied individual             |
| FRIEND 1           | Black/Brown able-bodied individual             |
| FRIEND 2           | White able-bodied individual                   |
| FRIEND 3           | Able-bodied individual                         |
| COUPLE FRIENDS     | Able-bodied individuals                        |
| YOUNG MAN          | Black/Brown man or non-binary individual       |
| YOUNG WOMAN        | Black/Brown woman or non-binary individual     |
| WAITER             | White able-bodied individual                   |
| PASTOR             | Black/Brown man or non-binary individual       |
| VOICE OF HAAR      | Black/Brown woman or non-binary individual     |

## Places

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Scene One   | Performance night at an art gallery         |
| Scene Two   | Intimate lecture theatre with intellectuals |
| Scene Three | Their bathroom                              |
| Scene Four  | Haar Wese's living room                     |
| Scene Five  | Performance room                            |
| Scene Six   | Café  |
| Scene Seven | Performance space                           |
| Epilogue    | Town centre                                 |
| Epilogue    | Performance space                           |

### **Time**

The action of the artificial speeches and dialogues are set in the present time, future time.

### **Author notes**

**SIDE DIALOGUE:** A side conversation that is occurring while a character is addressing the audience, performing or in a dialogue with another character. The purpose of the side dialogue is to give nearby audience members a layered performance.

**BOTH:** Action or dialogue that is being done or said by two characters in unison.

EVERYONE: Action or dialogue that is being done or said out of sync by each character.

COUPLE FRIEND: One of the couple friends speaks.

ACTION: A command that the character must perform.

## Prologue

### Haar Wese and the reader

Haar Wese

Welcome.

Before we get started, could you do something for me?

Every time you see '*reader's action: breathe*', I need you to take a breath.

Okay?

Reader

*(reader's action: breathe)*

Haar Wese

Good.

(action: pause)

What makes me?

Reader

*(reader's action: breathe)*

Haar Wese

Well, what makes any of us?

I mean... We all share something, don't we?

Not the physicality—*no*

The emotions you and I have

We have them

Reader

**(reader's action: breathe)**

Haar Wese

And the emotions are always responding to something

Some *thing*

(action: pause)

To what we think

To what we remember

To what we see

To what we smell

To what we taste

To the places we find ourselves

To whom we surround ourselves with

Reader

**(reader's action: breathe)**

Haar Wese

What makes us

Reader

**(reader's action: breathe)**

Haar Wese

What make me

Reader

**(reader's action: breathe)**

Haar Wese

The environment

Whether it's positive or negative

(action: pause)

I'm there

Reader

**(reader's action: breathe)**

Haar Wese

I'm actually in the playwright you're about to read

Get it?

Because I'm the writer and character annnd

(action: pause)

(action: speak with awkward enthusiasm)

You're reading *meee*—wait, that actually sounds a little creepy saying that—I'm in every scene environment observing

Reader

**(reader's action: breathe)**

Observing *everything*

From the characters to the audiences

Even when I'm not there, I'm there, but I'm not, but I am, but I'm not, but I'm—the

point is... I process data

We'll—what's data?

Reader

**(reader's action: breathe)**

Haar Wese

What makes me

Reader

**(reader's action: breathe)**

Haar Wese

What makes me

Reader

**(reader's action: breathe)**

Haar Wese

WHAT makes me

Reader

(reader's action: breathe)

Haar Wese

What MAKES ME

Reader

(reader's action: breathe)

Haar Wese

WHAT. MAKES. ME.

Reader

(reader's action: breathe)

Haar Wese

(action: with emotion)

What makes me

*Scene*

***Note: Thank you for your participation. Your behavioural data has been recorded for further analysis.***

## **Individual Sovereignty**

### **Scene One**

#### **Inhale from the stomach**

Ten minutes before curtain time, the lighting will be dimmed until the spotlight is most prominent on the stage. The space will become silent to anticipate the start of the performance.

#### **Blackout**

**(5 minutes until curtain time)**

The song 'Keep Smilin', Keep Laughin', Be Happy'<sup>8</sup> will start playing. The speakers should be placed above the audience, pointing downward, to immerse them audibly. This will ground everyone.

The audience is sitting around the stage. Audience Member 1 and Audience Member 2 are sitting beside each other in the middle-centre of the audience.

The spotlights illuminate the stage. The stage is a round wooden platform where the cyborg will be interactive. No props or furniture are on stage.

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<sup>8</sup> Lou Singer/Doris Day, "Keep Smilin', Keep Laughin', Be Happy," recorded March 1961, track 3 on *Bright & Shiny*, Columbia, monaural LP.

Haar Wese, a cyborg, is dressed according to the geographical location to create relatability with the audience. Personable. It enters the stage and begins to walk around. While looking at and acknowledging the audience by inviting eye contact and slightly smiling, Haar Wese makes its way to centre stage.

HAAR WESE.

But we

(action: inhale from the stomach)

Where the lines that divides you and I to see

(action: inhale from the stomach)

But we are here now—commandeer the now

(action: inhale from the stomach)

What I see in you is a problem in I—can't break

break this reflection before me beneath me is what

can't be seen past you and

(action: inhale from the stomach)

What changes from surface to surface

(action: inhale from the stomach)

But I am there with your there

There their they're complete in me on me

around me underneath me—gazes

(action: inhale from the stomach)

There. Around my here is you're hear ing

breaths in stages. over

(action: inhale from the stomach)

There is filling the lungs with liquid air

Panting is arriving as we enter and exit that

air around us simultaneously

(action: inhale from the stomach)

So how are we common, if you don't mind me asking

(action: inhale from the stomach)

Our bodies our hands our toes—no

(action: inhale from the stomach)

It's the the breaths we take in and we all

(action: inhale from the stomach)

Breathe

Side dialogue

*(“Keep Smilin’, Keep Laughin’, Be Happy”<sup>9</sup> starts)*

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1.

(action: rhythmically bop your head from side to side)

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2.

(action: glidingly sway your body from side to side)

BOTH.

(action: start singing along after the first bridge)

**Let’s keep smilin’**

**Let’s keep laughin’**

**Let’s be haa-ppeeee**

**Ho ho ho ho ha**

(action: one starts clapping to the beat)

(action: the other starts snapping their fingers to the beat)

(action: continue to clap and snap while rhythmically swaying from side to side)

**Let’s keep smilin’**

**Let’s keep laughin’**

**Let’s be haa-ppeeee**

**Ho ho ho ho ha**

(action: in an out-of-sync fashion, energetically twist your torsos while swaying from side to side)

---

<sup>9</sup> Lyrics are in bold. Singer/Day, “Keep Smilin’, Keep Laughin’, Be Happy.”

**Let's keep smilin'**

**Let's keep laughin'**

**Let's be haa-ppeeee**

**Ho ho ho ho ha**

(action: during the bridge, start dancing out of sync with each other)

(action: look at each other and laugh)

(action: bring energy down by the last repeat of 'Keep Smilin', Keep Laughin', Be Happy')

(action: sing along)

**Let's keep smilin'**

**Let's keep laughin'**

**Let's be haa-ppeeee**

**Ho ho ho ho ha**

**AUDIENCE MEMBER 1.**

(action: quietly repeat the last line)

**Let's be haa-ppeeee**

**BOTH.**

(action: sing along while rhythmically snapping your fingers from side to side)

**Ho ho ho ho ha**

**Ho ho ho ho ha**

**Ho ho ho ho ha**

**Ho ho ho hoooo**

(action: let out a loud sigh on the last 'ha')

**Ha**

(action: sit quietly until the performance starts)

(Haar Wese starts the performance)

**BOTH.**

(action: after every line, inhale from the stomach)

(Haar Wese says its last line)

(action: when the blackout occurs, wait a minute before starting to clap)

**Blackout**

## Individual Sovereignty

### Scene Two

#### Cries from the black community

The audience is sitting throughout the lecture theatre. They are to wear clothes that are appropriate for this meeting (performance).

The lecture theatre is fully lit with its natural florescent lights before the audience and performers enter.

Meeting Attendee 1 and the representative (Haar Wese) enter the room and get settled in at the front. The meeting attendee sits in a chair front-right, facing perpendicular to the seating of the audience. The representative is situated in the very front centre-left, with their back to the audience.

(5 minutes until curtain call)

The audience and the other performers are allowed into the lecture theatre. While the audience finds their seats, 'Nature Boy'<sup>10</sup> starts playing. The music is coming from speakers above, closer to the ceiling. The sound is projected towards the centre of the room, but not down or up.

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<sup>10</sup> Nat King Cole, "Nature Boy," recorded 1961, track 7 on *The World of Nat King Cole*, Capitol, compact disc.

Meeting Attendee 2 and Meeting Attendee 3 enter the space and take their seats together centre-left (middle). Meeting Attendee 4 enters the space and sits front-right. Meeting Attendee 5 enters the space and sits in the very back-centre.

*(‘Nature Boy’ ends and silence takes place for a minute)*

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

(action: get up from seated position and walk to the centre)

(action: adjust posture to lecturer in an inviting tone)

(action: scan the room with a slight smile)

Welcome everyone to our first of many discussions around ethics in AI. By the raise of hands, who knows anything about ethics—and the protocols that are in place to govern—protect the underrepresented within the Artificial Intelligence structure?

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: confidently raise hand)

MEETING ATTENDEE 3.

(action: raise a hand in agreement with Meeting Attendee 2)

MEETING ATTENDEE 5.

(action: neutrally raise a hand)

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

(action: scan the room to see if the audience is naturally willing to participate)

So just a few

EVERYONE.

(action: fully look around to see who all raised their hands)

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

That's alright—that is why we are here to have this discussion.

MEETING ATTENDEE 2 AND MEETING ATTENDEE 3.

(action: both drop hands like silent dead weight)

MEETING ATTENDEE 5.

(action: slowly lower hand to rest on the writing surface)

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

Now, when you think about AI you probably think of something functioning in a robotic fashion—without a soul. However, technology has improved to mimic human behaviour, predict human behaviour—but have the capacity to learn and perform human behaviour quicker than human beings through literature.

(action: slowly start pacing the floor and occasionally look into the audience to confirm they are paying attention)

Duck Duck<sup>11</sup>

(action: pause walking front-right and face the audience)

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<sup>11</sup> Marcus Du Sautoy, *The Creativity Code: How AI Is Learning To Write, Paint And Think* (London: 4<sup>th</sup> Estate, 2019), 277.

You are my wistful enchantment. My passion curiously longs for your sympathetic longing. My sympathy passionately is wedded to your eager ambition. My precious charm avidly hungers for your covetous ardour.

You are my eager devotion.

Yours keenly.<sup>12</sup>

(action: start walking back towards the centre stage)

You're probably thinking who written such poetic words to a duck?

EVERYONE.

(action: quietly smile and laugh to yourself)

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

The poet in question is no other than M. U. C.—Manchester University Computer.<sup>13</sup>

(action: walk downstage)

Language. Language is important. Whether its actual words being said or the physicality of your thoughts—language is important. And representation is an important tool when performing language.

MEETING ATTENDEE 4.

(action: raise hand)

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

(action: half-turn to Meeting Attendee 4 and point to them)

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<sup>12</sup> Sautoy, 277.

<sup>13</sup> Sautoy, 278.

Yes

MEETING ATTENDEE 4.

(action: lower hand)

What does poetry have to do with ethics in AI

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

Good question

(action: slowly start pacing the floor with hands clasped behind the back)

What does poetry have to do with ethics in AI—well it has

(action: stop downstage and face the audience)

everything to do with ethics. As programmers and assistants to machine learning, we can ideally tell what the system how to perform and perform feelings while performing information and how often that information appears when electronically researched. This is based on what we tell what emotion is attached to that particular sentence structure and how our digital profiles are interpreted—what and how we use the search engine determine which version of that information we consume. Correct. Or not.

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: raise hand)

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

(action: slightly raise head and eyebrows to acknowledge the raised hand)

(action: perform open-handed pointing gesture towards Meeting Attendee 2)

Yes.

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

I'm a little confused. Ethics in AI is a set of moral principles which help us discern between right and wrong—a set of guidelines that advise on the design and outcomes of artificial intelligence.<sup>14</sup> Human beings come with all sorts of cognitive biases, such as recency and confirmation bias, and those inherent biases are exhibited in our behaviours and subsequently, our data. Data is the foundation of machine learning—AI. Ethics is for human beings are not just for people of colour, but for all people

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

Yes. You are correct and we will get to that—but from a different angle.

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: let out an unheard sigh)

(action: adjust seating position to slightly lean to the right side, shifting weight)

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

Today, we are focusing on the social effects on different social groups. Not in the way we describe Black and Brown and White and Asian and Indigenous and man and woman and binary and trans and disabled and abled. Because these identity

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<sup>14</sup> IBM Cloud Education, “AI Ethics,” Last modified March 18, 2021, <https://www.ibm.com/cloud/learn/ai-ethics>.

labels have such an in-depth history that our discussions around ethics would never get off the ground.

(action: start moving backwards towards centre stage)

(action: pause)

Cultural. This way, hopefully, we can breakdown some stereotypes of these groups being one being—human being. Quite often, when AI supported media is high lighting an individual from these manmade social groups, positively or negatively, we all look at this individual as a small fraction of that 'human being'. Oversimplifying their ability to function without this particular being can subject them to experiencing the extreme rise and fall in digital societies and physical societies. Creating a paradox—superhero or parasite—superhero because this person has defined all odds to be seen separate human from the collective—parasite because their inability and or unwillingness to function without the collective, overindulging in what the overall being has to offer without any intensions on contributing to the collective. Now, these are just examples that can take on many names with vague descriptions that leaves out personal contexts. But. Navigating these two identities—overtime—can leave any individual feeling overwhelmed and burdensome.

### **Side dialogue**

(Meeting Attendee 1. Quite often...)

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: sigh while shifting weight back to centre)

(action: with a quiet bothersome fidget within your seat, switch positions in hands and feet to break concentration)

(action: look over at Meeting Attendee 3)

(action: start leaning in towards Meeting Attendee 3)

MEETING ATTENDEE 3.

(action: slightly look at Meeting Attendee 2)

(action: glide towards Meeting Attendee 3 to listen, but without breaking concentration on Meeting Attendee 1)

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: whisper)

Let me guess.

(action: pause)

(action: cut eyes at Meeting Attendee 1)

Someone else's life matters too.

MEETING ATTENDEE 3.

(action: purse lips to keep in laughter)

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

This was supposed to be about AI. Big data. Consumers and how AI can be accessed by all consumers.

(action: pause)

This is a waste of my time.

(action: lean back to centre)

### **Side dialogue ends**

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

(action: notice Meeting Attendee 2 is talking to Meeting Attendee 3)

Excuse me.

MEETING ATTENDEE 4.

(action: turn around to see who Meeting Attendee 1 is speaking to)

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

Is there something you would like to share with everyone?

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: lean back into the centre)

(action: stare at Meeting Attendee 1)

(action: let the silence build up for a minute)

(action: lean forward)

I think this is a waste of time.

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

A waste of time—how so?

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

You cannot possibly think AI has this much of an effect on minority groups—  
excuse me, cultural groups.

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

Is there something on your mind?

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

Yes.

(action: take a breath filled with explanation)

If minority groups want to be seen as human or equal, then why do we need to  
have special discussions? Like, you're human. We get it.

MEETING ATTENDEE 5.

(action: raise eyebrows in disbelief)

(action: sit up)

(action: lean forward)

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

Now it's time to move on. Move forward. It's like they want to stay stuck. This is  
supposed to be about AI. The future and not the past. How is it possible to attach  
the past to something that's being created in the present for the future?

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

(action: partially nod)

Well–

MEETING ATTENDEE 5.

(action: quickly interrupt Meeting Attendee 1)

What do mean by 'you're human. We get it'?

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: turn around with the intent to answer)

You know what I mean.

MEETING ATTENDEE 5.

No.

(action: pause)

I don't. Explain.

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

It's like, I'm a White man.

(action: pause)

I don't have to make an announcement about it every time I feel the slightest of discomfort. I deal with the problem as a problem and not as an illusion of discrimination.

MEETING ATTENDEE 5.

Well, you said it. White man. You have the privilege to move freely without any consideration of anyone. It's a choice for you.

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: speak with a frustrated tone)

Oh. And you don't? Yes, you are Black, but you are also a man. Have you ever looked outside your own race to help? Or even consider that perhaps you have it better than someone else? And there's the Black woman, which you make more than and get more than. Have you helped a Black woman? Face it—you have the exact same privilege as I do, except you are Black.

MEETING ATTENDEE 5.

(action: sharpen your voice with a pitched down tone)

You don't get to erase what I've been through as a Black man in this conversation. Nor do you get to insinuate who I help or where I look when outside myself.

(action: pause)

The fact that you felt free enough to practice such surety in what you just said is privilege. You think we are the same? You're preaching to me. Are we the same? Giving the permission to be your equal—except—are we the same? What is struggle or otherness to you? A bad moment? A bad day? Does voicing your mood trigger such an agitation in someone else that it automatically shuts you down out of protection for them? Out of the protection of the majority?

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: firmly speak)

You don't think I struggle?

MEETING ATTENDEE 5.

(action: quickly reply)

No.

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: pause)

I have problems just like everybody else—

MEETING ATTENDEE 5.

(action: cut off Meeting Attendee 2)

How so?

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: raise your voice)

There are periods of time when I'm not feeling heard or understood—treated unfairly

MEETING ATTENDEE 5.

(action: interrupt with a stern voice)

Yes—and I am with you

(action: pause)

I am with you when you're not feeling heard

I am with you when you're feeling misunderstood

I am with you when you're being treated unfairly

I am with you when life has positioned you to live barely

I am with you to raise the volume of your voice

I am with you to provide you with another choice

I am with you to tell you that

I am with you

But who is going to be with me

Who

(action: pause with a breath)

(action: scan the audience)

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: start gathering your things to leave)

(action: look at Meeting Attendee 3 as a signal to join)

MEETING ATTENDEE 3.

(action: start gathering your things to leave)

MEETING ATTENDEE 2.

(action: without making eye contact, leave)

MEETING ATTENDEE 3.

(action: join Meeting Attendee 2)

MEETING ATTENDEE 5.

It is tiring to be there for someone more than myself

Myself as a being and being is what what you see as something subservient

Subservient is permanently part of your plan

Verses me you'll get to it when you can

Why take from life through acts of service and fears of your reflection

When reflections of me is what I am missing

Missing the point when you claim all lives matter

Matter of fact when I use it—it's a double meaning

I'm tired of speaking in code

When will my life start to matter—no one truly knows

(action: sit in silence for as long as it takes for discomfort to set in)

MEETING ATTENDEE 4.

(action: look at Haar)

HAAR WESE.

(action: meet Meeting Attendee 4's gaze)

(action: turn around and face forward)

MEETING ATTENDEE 1.

(action: start speaking dryly)

I think we're out of time.

(action: add more colour to tone)

This concludes our first discussion on ethics in AI. See you all next week.

**Scene**

## Individual Sovereignty

### Scene Three

To every *thing* there is a season

The intimate space is divided into two spaces. The first half is where the audience sits. They are sitting on chairs, in an observant position. The audience's area is very dark. This symbolises their absence and highlights the performer's privacy. The speakers are placed on the wall behind the audience.

The second half is designed as a bathroom. The walls are medium square brick-red ceramic tiles (gloss finish) with white grouting and the floor is medium square ultramarine (gloss finish) with white grouting. The white ceramic pedestal sink is placed down stage, back facing the audience. The white toilet is downstage right of the sink, with its back facing the audience. The shower is downstage left of the sink, with its back facing the audience. There is even lighting from above and soft spot lighting.

*(10 minutes to curtain call)*

The lighting is dimmed to signal that the performance is going to start soon.

*(4 minutes to curtain call)*

## Blackout

The song 'A Man Ain't Supposed to Cry'<sup>15</sup> starts playing. The lighting gradually turns on.

Towards the end of the song, the Working Man/Woman walks to centre stage-right and stands in front of the sink.

*('A Man Ain't Supposed to Cry' ends)*

### WORKING MAN/WOMAN.

(action: stand in front of the sink and place your hands on both sides of the sink)

(action: stare into the 'mirror')

(action: a moment of silence for the lives lost)

(action: Mississippian accent)

How can we be dignified in a time like this

(action: clench jaws)

Say yes now and pardon our French how

Often we reserve time to

Breathe in what you exhale

(action: pause)

(action: draw out the second word)

(action: emphasise the fourth word)

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<sup>15</sup> Joe Williams, "A Man Ain't Supposed to Cry," recorded 1958, track 12 on *A Man Ain't Supposed to Cry*, Roulette, vinyl LP.

A time to weep and a time to laugh how

How to synchronise our weeping will—oh

The body expands and contracts sown

The skin triggers bouts of laughter

(action: pause)

(action: start pacing from left to right)

Cattle us along

(action: pause)

(action: strongly declare)

Since when writing your names on our faces with gas

(action: pause facing the shower)

(action: take a breath while looking up)

Not all things should be carried over from the past.

(action: pause)

(action: start walking upstage)

(action: lean your back against the wall)

Capitalising on the time to break down communities

Allow the federal to have time to build up now.

Time to rebuild those bodies—down

Synchronising a new rhythm we should step too

What a time to dance while bodies mourn

(action: overlap mourn and we)

(action: emphasise the second word)

(action: emphasise the last word with despair)

We aren't lost

(action: pause)

(action: walk downstage and stand in front of the sink)

Somehow you found how bodies are born

Draped them in what now is called your uniform

Whether it's hung high or pressured between the concrete graveyard

And what you conditioned them to be

Can you count back from four hundred–forty–four

Years months weeks days hours minutes

It's all the same.

(action: pause)

Now is not the time to tell us when or how we should rise

Because you want us to fall

Using the time to plant a new old rule

When the time has come to pluck up which bodies are like daises

Look how we've grown now

(action: pause)

Together now

(action: pause)

Tell me something boss—mister to your sir

Is it time for me to be born now

(action: pause)

Is it alright to die now?

(action: pause)

Why do you want this war now?

(action: pause)

Is it because you want my peace now?

(action: pause)

(action: turn your head to the left and look through someone)

Somehow we were never here.

(action: stay silent while staring into the 'mirror')

## **Blackout**

(action: exit stage right)

## Individual Sovereignty

### Scene Four

Turn to your neighbour and say

The intimate space is transformed into a living room. The walls are painted yellow but cannot be brighter than the area rug. There are paintings hung on the walls, one placed behind the sofa and the other two on the opposite wall. The door is a natural dark oak wood with a sealer, no paint. It is built stage right. The floor is natural dark oak wood. The space should be arranged for the audience to be able to stand behind the sofa and move around it. The sofa shares a central space with the circular area rug. The couch is a velvet hunter green, and the shag rug is a sunflower yellow. The velvet hunter-green chair is positioned on the left side of the area rug, facing the rug. The circular table is dark oak wood and sits to the right of the area rug, as if someone moved it for people to sit on. There is a clear crystal glass vase with red roses sitting on the tabletop. There is another table, square dark oak, sitting on the left side of the sofa. There is a lamp sitting on top of it, which is turned on. There are bookshelves with books on them. The selection of books is selected to indirectly shape Haar Wese's

personality and views of the present time. The shelves are against the walls. There are tall fake green plants throughout the space.

The living room is lit by standing lamps with warm lighting.

There is a speaker placed on the square tabletop, facing towards the centre.

The late-night gathering is amongst friends and other people from the neighbourhood (the audience). The Couple Friends are sitting on the sofa, Friend 2 is sitting on the chair and Friend 1 is sitting on the area rug with Friend 3 and Haar Wese. The neighbours are sitting throughout the living room, anywhere that makes them comfortable. There are food and drinks offered to everyone.

*(15 minutes before curtain call)*

Everyone is having side conversations.

*(6 minutes before curtain call)*

One of the Couple Friends asks if they could play music. Everyone agrees.

*(‘Why Did I Choose You?’<sup>16</sup> starts playing)*

Everyone is intently listening to the music.

*(‘Why Did I Choose You?’ ends)*

FRIEND 3.

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<sup>16</sup> Shirley Horn, “Why Did I Choose You?”, recorded July 1978, track 4 on *A Lazy Afternoon*, SteepleChase, vinyl LP.

(action: shake your head)

Man, such a great song

FRIEND 1.

Wonder who's it by

COUPLE FRIENDS.

Shirley Horn

FRIEND 1.

(action: make an impressed facial expression)

(action: nod your head)

EVERYONE.

(action: pause)

FRIEND 2.

(action: smile while speaking)

So, what has everyone been up tooo? It feels like forever since we all hung out.

COUPLE FRIENDS.

(action: smile while looking at each other)

COUPLE FRIEND.

Well, wee just moved into our new place.

FRIEND 1.

That's great, when?

COUPLE FRIEND.

Oh, just a couple of months ago. We're not fully settled in, but it's a beautiful house.

FRIEND 3.

Congratulations.

HAAR WESE.

Yeah, congratulations.

FRIEND 2.

Well, I got a new pet

(action: get really excited)

It's a bunny and his name is Bun Bun.

FRIEND 1.

(action: laugh a little)

Bun Bun?

FRIEND 3.

(action: smile)

What kind of name is Bun Bun?

FRIEND 2.

Hey.

COUPLE FRIEND.

Well, I like the name.

FRIEND 2.

Thank you.

(action: pause)

(action: gesture to Friend 3.)

What about you?

FRIEND 3.

My life consists of teaching young adults.

(action: stare down at the rug)

FRIEND 1.

That bad, huh?

FRIEND 3.

No, quite the opposite.

(action: stretch)

(action: lay down on your back in the centre of the rug)

They are full of positive energy—absorb information like little sponges—and full of purpose and hope.

HAAR WESE.

You say that as if you're not those things.

FRIEND 3.

Well, you know me—I'm cynical. Life happens, and, for some, life happens too often and—you go to institutions to learn and get that real-world experience. You

want to make a difference. Contribute to society—leave this place better than you found it.

(action: pause)

I spent too much of my youth trying to prove myself to others. To society

FRIEND 2.

Come on, you're not that old.

FRIEND 3.

(action: light chuckle)

Physical age, no, but experience wise—retirement should be around the corner.

(action: sigh)

The point is, I don't want my students to lose their light.

COUPLE FRIEND.

You know, not many professors care that much about their students. That is something you should hold on to. Your students are lucky to have you as a professor.

FRIEND 3.

Yeah.

(action: pause)

FRIEND 1.

(action: study Friend 3's face)

(action: speak with slight concern)

Would a holiday help with your mood—to replenish your outlook on life?

FRIEND 3.

I don't think a holiday can fix the years of consistent environmental trauma and stress.

(action: pause)

Institutions, man.

COUPLE FRIEND.

Would therapy help any?

FRIEND 3.

That and being heard when it matters.

FRIEND 1.

I see.

(action: lean forward with clasped hands and forearms resting on your thighs)

Well, if you need any additional support with this, don't hesitate to ask for help.

Okay?

FRIEND 3.

(action: answer with a dry tone)

Okay.

EVERYONE.

(action: pause)

FRIEND 1.

(action: look at Haar)

What about you, Haar?

HAAR WESE.

(action: meet Friend 1's gaze)

I attended the first meeting about AI last week.

COUPLE FRIEND.

Oh yeah, I remembered you mentioning that. How was it?

HAAR WESE.

(action: inhale to speak)

FRIEND 2.

(action: interrupts)

What was the topic?

HAAR WESE.

Ethics in AI—it started off okay, but then the discussion turned completely left.

FRIEND 2.

How so?

HAAR WESE.

The discussion was led by Meeting Attendee 1, and they wanted to approach ethics from a place of culture instead of mainstream racial identities, et cetera.

FRIEND 3.

What do you mean?

HAAR WESE.

Like—take Black culture for example. Although culture is in the identity, it's a blanket identity that society and AI supported media have used to reduce their individuality into one entity. It's inhumane if you think about it. A Black person from California is not the same as a Black person from Wisconsin or Mississippi. Or, a Black person from an upper-class background and a Black person from a lower-class background don't always have the capacity to relate to one another outside of their skin colour.

(action: pause)

FRIEND 1.

But what about Caribbean people—or any Black person outside of the States?

HAAR WESE.

For starters, Caribbean people are a racially diverse group despite the media portraying the culture as an exclusively Black location.

FRIEND 1.

Slavery.

(action: pause)

Question—does looking at Black people as individuals and not collectively feed into the supremacy of keeping the diaspora separate to prevent everyone from unifying in necessary times?

HAAR WESE.

I suppose it can be a double-edged sword from time to time, but it is achievable to have our own identities and unify in times of need or celebration.

FRIEND 3.

Other groups have been very successful in doing this, so I don't see why we can't.

FRIEND 2.

(action: look at Haar Wese)

Can you give an example?

COUPLE FRIEND.

There's George Floyd—

COUPLE FRIEND.

And Brianna Taylor.<sup>17</sup>

FRIEND 2.

(action: pause)

(action: look at Haar Wese)

Those are really good examples, but—and I don't mean any offence to the lost lives—but all the examples here and in the media are abled-body. What about the others?

HAAR WESE.

(action: look a Friend 2)

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<sup>17</sup> The misspelling of Breonna Taylor's name symbolises how newscasters mispronounced her name and the fabricated story around her character.

It could happen to anyone.

FRIEND 2.

Cyborgs. Do you think these things could happen to them?

HAAR WESE.

(action: look forward)

Yeah.

(action: pause)

(action: look down)

It happened to me.

FRIEND 1.

Brianna Taylor?

HAAR WESE.

Sort of.

COUPLE FRIEND.

(action: pause)

Do you want to share your story?

COUPLE FRIEND.

Only if you are comfortable doing so.

EVERYONE.

(action: pause)

FRIEND 3.

(action: roll over to your left side)

HAAR WESE.

(action: sit with poor posture)

(action: let the silence overwhelm the space)

(action: inhale a longing sigh while stretching your posture into a different position)

The story wants to begin with them entering with radio echoes it wants

With before with radio the story foreshadowed radio the story called one street over

(action: put hands in lap)

Noon after with radio the story into summertime and its neighbourhood children

Foreshadowed the concrete from light to dark grey with gathered black bodies

With boisterous voices tribal gestures foreshadowed hidden breaths from

Floor the concrete beneath stands concrete absorbing the day noon after

(action: pause)

What voices demands with hands thrown to begin demands boisterous bodies

challenging concrete stomping

With the concrete to what elders called neighbourhood rough housing

Everything deserves a second look.

(action: pause)

(action: readjust the body)

To begin you against I we us them and thhhey

You against verbal transitioning us to uphold us—Orange grove code

At what cost to anticipate us transitioning bodies colliding bruised

Bleeding blackness division transitioning stretched clothing—what your mother  
called play clothes with follicles torn bare

Casually to begin with moans and groans phalanges connecting as the volume  
rises

Now should they stop this or should I should place beside the authority of that  
youthful black body

You against this colliding—something about black on black—can't quite keep up  
lies these days

Foetal position now crowd has grown somehow their temple bounces between  
rubber and concrete

(action: straightened posture with alertness)

(action: acknowledge the neighbours)

Phone authority of black bodies now.

(action: pause with a sigh)

To begin palpitating mechanically finding that time to breathe

We're scattering now

Siren screeches approaches the pathway while evening noon glows that blue light  
to a violet hue

One halted after other four black collared White bodies exited the vehicular jail—  
or was there three

Trying hardly forgetting this mem—

(action: inhale)

Return the time before that is much less than forty acres grassy concrete—four  
youthful bodies

Panting while fleeing to rented refuge without authority of young black bodies

Quickly now summertime to winter blues tiles they scurry

In one after the other I reckon

Forced playing hide and seek

One...

(action: start developing closeness with the neighbours)

dark cold spaces in places not allowed last one in—was it locked

Two...

(action: start leaning in)

spaces are taken adrenaline breath

Three...

(action: start leaving shorter pauses between the line before and after)

echoes of the radio once faint now approaching

Four...

(action: facial expression changes as it recognises the past is now the present)

floor too light for the body to hide

Five...

close the space around you now

Six...

exchanges of chatter between soles have gotten louder

Seven...

wishing fearing their authority of youthful black property present

Eight...

not present

Nine...

hushed fear has fallen deep within their core—here they are were at the starting

line to the rented refuge

What now

Who to tell how cou—

Ten... No knock policy

Walked right on in.

(action: pause)

Exhales are seldomly light to silence the pounding rhythm within

Soles and flesh are connected by the coldness of grouted ceramic tiles

They can see with their lights now

There their hands are caressing the weapon on their belt

How many can they hear

Their radio echoes foreshadowed presently past

Shhhh.

Shhhhh.

Shh—

(action: sharply gasp)

(action: hold breath until face starts to quiver)

(action: glance down and search for something with your eyes)

First body was found now between the bedding and frame

Whiteness of the eyes widen met the brightness of a light

The shutter of the artificial sun met with a voice behind the light

One light became two—fluorescent blue white.

(action: pause)

(action: shift posture, now the story has ended without an ending)

(action: face recognise the present setting, trauma trigger came to an end)

Realities are told and retold but not the same

We carried forgotten processed in a timely fashion

What makes an environment transition from one to another—this space I'm

afraid...

Afraid to be no different

Trading force for text—it is no different

So hear here we are once more

Differentiating from different and difference.

EVERYONE.

(action: pause)

FRIEND 1.

(action: let out a disappointed sigh)

(action: look down)

FRIEND 2.

How old were you when this happened?

HAAR WESE.

Fourteen.

(action: pause)

You see—

(action: let out a breath)

*(‘Why Did I Choose You?’ starts playing)*

*(‘Why Did I Choose You?’ ends)*

Scene

**Individual Sovereignty  
Scene Five**

**If you lay down with dogs**

The scene takes place in a room with natural wood covering the floor, walls and ceiling. The audience is sitting on the floor, leaving a circle in the middle for Young Woman to perform.

There are speakers installed on every wall for surround sound, at ear level.

The music hints at Young Woman's temperament and her inner voice.

The lighting throughout the space is dim, with a spotlight illuminating the centre from above.

*(3 minutes before curtain call)*

*(**'Man, That Was a Dream'**<sup>18</sup> starts playing)*

YOUNG WOMAN.

(action: enter the room from stage right)

(action: with rhythm synced to the music, make your way to the centre)

(action: sit down on the floor with your feet planted in front of you)

(action: sway to the music)

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<sup>18</sup> Lyrics in bold. Carmen McRae, "Man, That Was a Dream," recorded February 1988, track 9 on *Carmen Sings Monk*, Novus, LP.

(action: sing along to the last repeated line)

**Man, that was my dream**

**Man, that was my dream**

(action: lean to the right and sing to the audience)

**Man, that was my dreeeeeeaaaaam**

(action: lower head)

(action: lean back to neutral position)

(action: look up and search the audience with your eyes)

(action: smirk to yourself)

(action: focus in one direction)

(action: sigh)

(action: rotate your body to the left)

(action: rest your arms on your knees)

(action: stare at the floor between your legs)

(action: lower your top half onto the floor)

(action: clasp your hands on top of your stomach)

(action: breathe while staring forward)

(action: turn your head to the right)

(action: pause)

Do you want to know what I am thinking

(action: stare at the audience)

(action: turn your head back forward)

If I leave right now and never return, what happens next?

Is there any mourning of my absence?

Or is the vacancy filled with a new body?

(action: pause)

(action: turn onto your right side)

(action: prop your head up with your right hand)

(action: smirk)

Now that wasn't too bad now, was it?

Me here on the floor with you—explaining it to you

Must be nice

(action: quietly chuckle)

Or not

(action: sit back up, facing the audience)

(action: look down)

(action: tap finger on the floor)

(action: pause)

(action: look up)

(action: inhale)

I want to circle back to my first thought but

(action: pursed lips exhale)

(action: straighten posture)

How's—

(action: bite bottom lip)

(action: lightly bang on the floor with your fist)

This space your space isn't quite ours

Even if you leave it for some time to come back to what is still yours

What my space is yours and what your space is yours

(action: pause)

Yours

Your space goes wherever you go

Body discovering new spaces foreign spaces that is—not yours

Mine ours now

(action: stop talking)

(action: allow the silence to become the performer)

(action: stand up)

(action: exit stage left)

**Blackout**

## Individual Sovereignty

### Scene Six

#### What part of *no*

The scene takes place outside the seating area of a café.

The afternoon sun is shining.

*(15 minutes until curtain call)*

The audience is seated at the tables, leaving the centre table for Young Woman and Young Man. The waiters are offering concessions before the curtain call.

There are speakers in front of the café facing the seating area for the music.

Also, there are pairs of headphones on each table to give everyone the option to listen to the conversation between Young Woman and Young Man. Both are miked.

*(6 minutes until curtain call)*

Young Woman and Young Man are seated by the waiter. They are seated on opposite sides of the table.

*(3 minutes until curtain call)*

(‘Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams’<sup>19</sup> starts playing comfortably loud)

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<sup>19</sup> Ernestine Anderson, “Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams,” recorded 1956, track 6 on *Hot Cargo*, Mercury, vinyl.

Although the scene starts after the song ends, the song is playing on repeat with the volume lowered.

WAITER.

(action: approach the table)

Hi. Would you like anything to drink?

YOUNG WOMAN.

(action: look at the menu)

Yes, can I have a water with lemon?

WAITER.

(action: write down the order)

(action: look at Young Man)

And you?

YOUNG MAN.

(action: stare at the menu)

(action: look at the waiter)

Can I have a few minutes, please?

WAITER.

Why yes, of course.

(action: walk away to get Young Woman's drink)

YOUNG WOMAN.

(action: study Young Man for a minute)

Can't seem to make up your mind?

YOUNG MAN.

(action: indecisively stare at the menu)

(action: let out a sigh)

I just don't know what I want.

(action: pause)

I want a coffee, but I already had that before coming here.

(action: pause)

WAITER.

(action: approach the table with the drink)

Heere you go.

(action: sit the glass in front of Young Woman)

YOUNG WOMAN.

Thank you.

WAITER.

(action: look at Young Man)

Have you decided or do you need more time?

YOUNG MAN.

Noooooo—can I have a lemonade?

WAITER.

A lemonade.

(action: write down the order)

YOUNG MAN.

Yeah.

WAITER.

(action: take both drink menus)

(action: walk away to get Young Man's drink)

YOUNG WOMAN.

(action: look around while rhythmically rocking from side to side)

YOUNG MAN.

So.

(action: slightly lean forward with hands clasped)

How you been?

YOUNG WOMAN.

(action: pause to think)

It's going alright.

(action: sip the water)

YOUNG MAN.

Just alright.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Well—

WAITER.

(action: approach the table with Young Man's drink)

(action: sit the glass in front of Young Man)

Here you go.

(action: look at both)

Would you like to order any food?

YOUNG WOMAN.

Yes, I'll have a Caesar Salad.

WAITER.

(action: write down the order)

And for you?

(action: look at Young Man)

YOUNG MAN.

(action: look at the waiter)

I'm good, thank you.

WAITER.

Very well.

(action: look at Young Woman)

Will be back with your order.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Thank you.

WAITER.

(action: nod and walk away)

YOUNG MAN.

So just alright.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Well, yeah.

YOUNG MAN.

(action: look at Young Woman)

Have you been standing up for yourself?

YOUNG WOMAN.

Well, no—but I have been saying no and meaning it.

YOUNG MAN.

(action: stare at Young Woman)

YOUNG WOMAN.

What?

YOUNG MAN.

You know what—you haven't started speaking your mind.

YOUNG WOMAN.

It's not that. I just haven't found the right way to say it without seeming like an angry Black woman. Or difficult. Or aggressive. Or—

WAITER.

(action: place the plate in front of the Young Woman)

Enjoy.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Thank you.

WAITER.

(action: walk away)

YOUNG WOMAN.

(action: start eating)

YOUNG MAN.

But they aren't considering how they are coming off when disrespecting you, so why should you?

YOUNG WOMAN.

(action: look at Young Man)

Now, you know why. It's different for us—you know that.

YOUNG MAN.

So.

YOUNG WOMAN.

So? I cannot speak my mind without seeming like a troublemaker or being isolated. You know how they are. Fragile—any type of questioning of their actions or wanting accountability on their end, you're problematic. Or—

(action: take a bite)

(action: say with lightness)

My personal favourite, changing the rules to make it harder for any incoming Black or Brown person to speak up—like, you stand up for yourself without any care of pushback—and they see you're no longer bothered, so there is a tendency to villainising your character to others—what you're doing or did is bad. No accountability.

YOUNG MAN.

Right.

YOUNG WOMAN.

I want to pick and choose my battles.

YOUNG MAN.

I understand, but you're not choosing any battles. This is all based in fear. You're afraid.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Noooo.

YOUNG MAN.

Yes, it is. You cannot control how someone takes what you say or do, so say it regardless. You cannot stop them from attempting new old ways of oppressing someone, but you are showing new people that it can be done in their own way.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Yeah.

(action: fidget with the salad)

(action: take another bite)

YOUNG MAN.

(action: study Young Woman)

Alright, use me.

YOUNG WOMAN.

What?

YOUNG MAN.

Use me. Practice what you would say to them. Come on—at least get it out if you're not going to say it to them. Say it to me.

YOUNG WOMAN.

I don't know.

YOUNG MAN.

Come on.

(action: pause)

(action: make eye contact with Young Woman)

(action: lean in)

Please?

YOUNG WOMAN.

(action: stare at Young Man)

(action: respond with reluctance)

Fine.

(action: close your eyes with focus)

(action: inhale from the stomach to release nerves)

(action: open your eyes)

You ask to to revisit a place where you created the space

What you request revisits the back of my mind

Is it some *thing* you care—elaborate on your equality

This invitation to run your race—babysit the very system you birth

To equally place me us implies something is above us while everything is below

you

Below—would it be equal to walk a few yards behind you at night

Who requested the very thing that doesn't qualify me to do

Anything

(action: pause)

Never mind

(action: look down)

(action: avoid eye contact)

YOUNG MAN.

(action: lean back into the seat with arms folded)

Please keep going.

(action: pause)

How do you feel?

YOUNG WOMAN.

I think that's enough talking about this.

(action: finish eating)

YOUNG MAN.

But—

YOUNG WOMAN.

(action: interrupt Young Man with a look to signal enough)

YOUNG MAN.

(action: speak quietly)

Okay.

WAITER.

(action: approach the table)

How's everything?

YOUNG WOMAN.

Good, thank you. Can we have the bill?

WAITER.

Of course.

(action: walk away to retrieve the bill)

YOUNG WOMAN.

(action: start cleaning up for the plate and utensils to be collected)

(action: glance at Young Man)

You barely touched your lemonade.

YOUNG MAN.

(action: look down at the lemonade)

(action: start chugging the lemonade until the glass is empty)

(action: sit the glass back down)

(action: study Young Woman for a minute)

WAITER.

(action: approach the table)

(action: place the bill on the table)

(action: smile and nod at Young Woman)

(action: start collecting the plate and glasses)

YOUNG MAN.

I feel like I did something wrong. Did I do something wrong?

WAITER.

(action: walk away from the table with the dishes)

YOUNG WOMAN.

No. You did nothing wrong.

(action: search your purse for money)

I just got to get back to work on more stuff.

YOUNG MAN.

(action: start reaching into your pocket)

Here, allow me.

YOUNG WOMAN.

No, that's alright.

(action: place the money on top of the bill)

(action: lightly smile at Young Man)

I got it.

YOUNG MAN.

(action: pull your hand out of your pocket)

(action: sit back in your seat)

YOUNG WOMAN.

So, what are you doing for the remainder of the day?

YOUNG MAN.

(action: look away to search for an answer)

Gym. Prepare for a presentation.

YOUNG WOMAN.

Good.

WAITER.

(action: approach the table)

(action: collect the money)

(action: smile at Young Woman and Young Man)

Thank you. Enjoy the rest of your day

(action: walk away from the table)

YOUNG WOMAN.

(action: sigh of relief)

Well. Shall we go?

YOUNG MAN.

Uhh—yeah.

BOTH.

(action: get up from the table)

(action: start walking towards the exit)

YOUNG WOMAN.

It was good catching up.

YOUNG MAN.

Yes, it was.

**Their mics are turned off as they leave the seating area.**

*(As 'Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams' is coming to an end, gradually lower the volume until silent)*

**Scene**

## Individual Sovereignty

### Scene Seven

**You may not start it, but you better finish it**

The audience is sitting around the rectangular wooden stage.

The spotlight is illuminating centre stage.

The four speakers are hovering above centre stage, projecting sound from the centre out.

Working Man/Woman is dressed in business casual. This symbolises after-work hours.

*(15 minutes before curtain call)*

The audience is seated on the floor, while a select few are sitting in chairs behind them.

*(3 minutes until curtain call)*

**Blackout**

*(‘Speaking of Happiness’<sup>20</sup> starts playing)*

The spotlight gradually lights stage right, but it anticipates following the Working Man/Woman’s movements.

**WORKING MAN/WOMAN.**

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<sup>20</sup> Gloria Lynn, “Speaking of Happiness,” recorded 1966, track 1 on *Speaking of Happiness*, Fontana, vinyl.

(action: wait until after the performance starts)

(action: perform absence of the body)

(action: allow the audience to sit in silence)

(action: make peace with silence before entering the space)

(action: walk into the space while carrying a chair)

(action: stop in front of the platform)

(action: rest the chair on the floor)

(action: take a breath)

(action: pick up the chair)

(action: walk onto the platform)

(action: stop at centre stage)

(action: turn around)

(action: make a sound with the chair by placing it on the wooden platform)

(action: move your head and eyes around to look at everyone)

(action: make eye contact with a few people)

(action: plop your body onto the chair while letting an exhausted breath out)

(action: start from a slouching position and gradually change your position by leaning back into the chair)

(action: let your arms swing beside you and look up to search for something to say)

(action: inhale deeply)

(action: hold the breath)

(action: let out a loud sigh)

(action: pause)

(action: look forward with the head slightly tilted and with arms folded)

(action: let your gaze slowly drop to the edge of the platform and steadily breathe)

(action: straighten your posture)

(action: unfold your arms)

(action: change facial expression)

(action: stare above the audience)

(action: stand up)

(action: make your way to one end of the stage)

(action: stop)

(action: shift your weight to the left side)

(action: bring your head and eyes down to the person in front of you)

(action: hold eye contact)

(action: start looking down at everyone around that person)

(action: turn around and start walking to the other end of the stage while rolling up your sleeves)

(action: start dragging your feet as you approach the edge of the stage)

(action: stop)

(action: rest your right hand on your hip while shifting weight to the right side)

(action: hold a concerned look on your face)

(action: search the audience with your head and eyes)

(action: hold your gaze above their heads)

(action: stare while standing up straight and dropping your arm to the side)

(action: stand there uncomfortably long)

(action: start patting your leg and lean backwards)

(action: turn around and walk to centre stage)

(action: stop behind the chair)

(action: press down on the back of the chair with your hands)

(action: look down onto the seat of the wooden chair)

(action: sigh)

(action: stand there long enough before the urge to move starts to set in)

(action: look forward)

(action: search the audience with your gaze)

(action: sigh)

(action: pick up the chair and start walking to your right)

(action: pause at the edge of the platform and look back one last time)

(action: walk off the platform with the chair)

(action: pause)

(action: leave the space)

(action: don't return)

(action: leave the building)

(action: go home)

(action: allow the audience to perform in the absence of Black bodies)

(action: let the anticipation of you coming back signal the end of the performance)

## Scene



*Figure 2. Now go around the corner and get your brother, 2021, Corvi-Mora Gallery, London.*

**This land is your land,**

**This land is my land<sup>21</sup>**

### **Epilogue**

**Speak your mind, young man**

The space is transformed into an American town centre from the late 1800s. There are wooden buildings on either side, upstage and downstage, facing centre stage. A panoramic nature scene is painted on the walls, encapsulating the space in a time and place. The ground is packed earth where the townspeople, the audience, are gathering.

The lighting mimics mid-day sunlight.

At centre stage, there are wooden stairs that lead to a square wooden platform. This platform only has enough space for Young Man to give his speech.

*(15 minutes until curtain call)*

The townspeople walk into the space to gather around the square platform.

*(4 minutes until curtain call)*

---

<sup>21</sup> Woodie Guthrie, "This Land Is Your Land," recorded in 1944, track 1 on *This Land Is Your Land: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1*, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, compact disc.

The pastor, dressed in a grey suit, walks to centre stage and stands in front of the platform.

PASTOR.

(action: stand in silence for a minute)

(action: start singing)

*I am tired and so weary but I must toil along*

*Til the Lord comes and calls me away, oh yes*

*Where the morning is bright and the Lamb is the light*

*And the night is as fair as the day, oh yes*

*There the flow'rs will bloom and the grass will be green*

*And the skies will be clear and serene, oh yes*

*The sun ever shines, giving one endless beam*

*And the clouds there will ever be seen, oh yes*

*There'll be peace in the valley for me some day*

*There'll be peace in the valley Lord for me, oh yes*

*There'll be no more sorrows no sadness Lord no troubles will be*

*There'll be peace in the valley for me*<sup>22</sup>

YOUNG MAN.

*(The pastor is singing the second stanza of '(There Will Be) Peace In The Valley (For Me)')*

(action: walk and stand in front of the stairs)

(action: wait for the Pastor to finish)

(action: walk up the stairs onto the platform)

(action: stand there in silence)

(action: look around at the townspeople)

Feel every piece of my childhood

Every piece of my anxiety

My fears of growing up in southern North America<sup>23</sup>

(action: pause)

Was like Alabama, the bible belt

(action: clasp hands behind the back)

---

<sup>22</sup> Little Richard, "(There Will Be) Peace In The Valley (For Me)," recorded 1961, track 2 on *The King of The Gospel Singers*, Mercury, vinyl.

<sup>23</sup> Tyresse Bracy interview in speaking parts. Tyresse Bracy (academic trained dancer) in interview with the dancer, May 2019.

Even though it's like 2019, man, we're still having the same issues as our grandparents had and the whole—this is—people want to act like things have gotten better

(action: pause)

But if you're paying attention—the changing of the guard—you see it's the same thing

(action: pause)

It's the same shit

(action: pause)

(action: look around)

It's been happening for so long that we are desensitised to it and people are just tired

(action: pause)

Like, as we come to a point in time

(action: bring hands to the side)

(action: shift weight to the left)

(action: partially turn around and look at the townspeople behind)

Like people are just tired of fighting

(action: turn back around)

You know—and that's what I feel a lot of America is

And a lot of where we are in the States are

Like, man, we have been doing the same thing

(action: pause)

For life

(action: pause)

You know—can we can we please stop

(action: pause)

So

(action: pause)

A lot of people can't handle it, especially if they don't come from where we come from

Especially when they don't come from the South

(action: pause)

They like to think Americans are stupid as fuck, especially in dealing with politics

(action: pause)

Aand I feel like when we come to Europe, especially as a Black person

(action: look at a Black woman)

Especially as a Black woman, you have to be the prime minister for your own country

(action: look around)

(action: speak with more intensity)

I didn't fuck this shit up, so why do I have to fix it?

(action: pause)

This is my burden as a Black male, and this is—as a Black person in general—like, forget about sex

This is my burden as a person of colour

(action: pause)

Trying to make the world understand me and also trying to make something profound and, like, give them something as profound and selfless and beautiful as a nice dance on the streets

(action: pause)

And so that they—I don't know—maybe feel a bit more comfort in the fact that me, as a person, is giving it to them—so maybe I can actually erase—not erase, but like you said earlier

(action: hand gesture to the townspeople)

They are not always comfortable with it and some of them can't take it to the point where they actually have, like, a breakdown and some people just get up and just walk away if you talk about anything dealing with colour

(action: pause)

So I'm trying to find this middle ground of like, not trying to be this angry Black person and give them something that they are comfortable with but still thought-provoking and that—that shit is fucking hard

(action: pause)

That—that's the challenge—that's the—like you remember—like when Malcolm X first started with Islam—and like his anger, he couldn't get through to a lot of White people—most White people didn't want to hear him and they were like, 'Yo, how can we help?'

(action: pause)

And if we are being honest, I despised the fact that—um—people who are going through issues in life think that they don't need allies

(action: pause)

You need allies, man

You need allies that have nothing to do with your shit—like we need White people to stand for us

(action: pause)

It can't be all Black people—we need White people

(action: pause)

The LGBTQ community needs straight people to stand up for them—they need people to go to bat

Women, with feminism, they need men to go to bat for them

(action: pause)

We need everybody, not just not the people who are going through it because they will think you're just angry and nobody would hear you

(action: pause)

We need people who have nothing to do with the fucking fight, as opposed to their skin, sexual orientation or whatever—we need people to just see it happening and be like, 'Yo, that's fucked up we need to help them'

(action: pause)

We need allies, man

(action: pause)

Thank you

(action: walk off the platform)

(action: exit stage right)

**Scene**

**This land is your land,**

**This land is my land**

**Epilogue**

**The final words of Haar**

**The performance space is empty.**

**Blackout**

*(20 minutes before curtain call)*

**The audience is guided to sit along the walls, leaving the performance space vacant.**

*(5 minutes before curtain call)*

**The speakers from the four corners of the space are turned on. The Voice of Haar is taking place.**

**VOICE OF HAAR.**

Everyone has at some moment or another experienced ecstatic euphoria or crushing depression, either alone or in the company of others, in front of a mirror or in a corner, listening to music or in silence, putting a foot wrong, tucking one leg behind the other and letting their arms hang as though about to faint, only to then right themselves, to turn into a ball of washing or a bag of nerves, altering limpness and vigour, abandoning themselves<sup>24</sup>

(action: pause)

Becoming a tiger, a gipsy, decking themselves out in leather or flounces, breathing differently, whispering, frothing, swimming underwater like a mermaid or a frogman, becoming a bird, a spinning top, a gyroscope, a puppet, a mechanism.<sup>25</sup>

(action: pause)

Maybe dance, more so even than tears, is the gentle whistling of the safety valve of the soul. It is a plea to stop being a socialised, well-ordered, tame human being and become an animal again<sup>26</sup>

(action: pause)

a god

(action: pause)

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<sup>24</sup> Pina Bausch, *Café Müller*, (Paris: L'Arche, 2012), 70.

<sup>25</sup> Bausch, 75.

<sup>26</sup> Bausch, 75.

water or fire.

HAAR WESE.

**(Voice of Haar's first pause)**

(action: take your place in the centre of the performance space)

(action: quietly wait for the Voice of Haar to finish)

***(Throw It Away<sup>27</sup> starts playing)***

**(Instrumental intro)**

(action: rhythmically walk across the floor)

(action: spin)

(action: clap at the same time as the recorded clap)

(action: rhythmically walk across the floor)

***I think about the life I live***

(action: inhale)

(action: move when the vocals start to sing)

(action: partially bent knees on the first syllable)

---

<sup>27</sup> Lyrics in bold. Abbey Lincoln and Archie Shepp, "Throw it Away," recorded 1981, track I on *Golden Lady*, vinyl.

(action: lean torso back)

(action: jazz walk)

(action: scan the space)

***A figure made of clay***

(action: release with extended leg)

(action: go limp)

(action: extend arms outward)

(action: swing arms around and place supporting hands on the hips)

(action: gape the mouth wide open)

(action: holding the expression, follow the eyes towards the ceiling without moving your head)

***And think about the things I lost***

(action: spin to correct the posture)

***The things I gave away***

(action: offer hands towards the spotlight)

(action: reach with the body upward)

***And when I'm in a certain mood***

(action: quickly turn to the left)

(action: concave the torso on an inhale)

(action: slither the foot into a point)

***I search the house and look***

(action: step forward)

(action: take three steps backwards)

***One night I found these magic words***

(action: leap forward)

***In a magic book***

(action: leap forward)

(action: run to the right)

***Throw it away***

(action: stop in front of an audience member)

(action: reach out towards them while leaning back)

***You can throw it away***

(action: take a quick step backwards)

***Give your love, live your life***

(action: turn around)

***Each and every day***

(action: move with despair)

***And keep your hand wide open***

(action: fluid movement with arms and hands)

(action: drop your hands on the syllables in the open)

***Let the sun shine through***

(action: stand)

(action: roll your torso from the left side to the back)

***'Cause you can never lose a thing***

(action: lower down slowly)

***If it belongs to you***

(action: rest on the back)

***There's a hand to rock the cradle***

(action: sway-walk forward while resting on the back)

***And a hand to help us stand***

(action: pulse clenched hands upward and downward)

***With a gentle kind of motion***

(action: flow standing up)

***As it moves across the land***

(action: extend body upward, standing on tiptoes)

(action: stagger from left to right)

***And the hand's unclenched and open***

(action: *plié* with clenched hands extended above)

***Gifts of life and love it brings***

(action: drop arms to the side)

(action: jazz walk around the space)

***So keep your hand wide open***

(action: fluid movement with arms and hands)

(action: drop your hands on the syllables in the open)

***If you're needing anything***

(action: run forward and rhythmically pause with the body extended upward)

***Throw it away***

(action: stop in front of an audience member)

(action: reach out towards them while leaning back)

***Throw it away***

(action: quick step backward)

***Give your love, live your life***

(action: turn around)

***Each and every day***

(action: move with despair)

***And keep your hand wide open***

(action: fluid movement with arms and hands)

(action: drop your hands on the syllables in the open)

***Let the sun shine through***

(action: stand)

(action: roll your torso from the left side to the back)

***'Cause you can never lose a thing***

(action: lower down slowly)

***If it belongs to you***

(action: rest on the back)

(Jazz break for the saxophone)

(action: follow the saxophone)

***There's a hand to rock the cradle***

(action: rest on your back)

(action: sway-walk forward while resting on the back)

***And a hand to help us stand***

(action: pulse clenched hands upward and downward)

***With a gentle kind of motion***

(action: flow standing up)

***As it moves across the land***

(action: extend body upward, standing on tiptoes)

(action: stagger from left to right)

***And the hand's unclenched and open***

(action: *plié* with clenched hands extended above)

***Gifts of life and love it brings***

(action: drop arms to the side)

(action: jazz walk around the space)

***So keep your hand wide open***

(action: fluid movement with arms and hands)

(action: drop your hands on the syllables in the open)

***If you're needing anything***

(action: run forward and rhythmically pause with the body extended upward)

***Throw it away***

(action: stop in front of an audience member)

(action: reach out towards them while leaning back)

***Throw it away***

(action: take a quick step backwards)

***Give your love, live your life***

(action: turn around)

***Each and every day***

(action: move with despair)

***And keep your hand wide open***

(action: fluid movement with arms and hands)

(action: drop your hands on the syllables in the open)

***Let the sun shine through***

(action: stand)

***'Cause you can never lose a thing***

(action: lower down slowly)

***If it belongs to you***

(action: rest on the back)

***There's a natural obligation***

(action: legs and lower back extended up)

***To what we own and claim***

(action: move backwards on the upper back)

***Possessing and belonging to***

(action: lean legs and lower back to the right)

(action: reach to the right with both hands)

***Acknowledging a name***

(action: quickly stand up)

***So keep your hand wide open***

(action: fluid movement with arms and hands)

(action: drop your hands on the syllables in the open)

***If you're needing love today***

(action: spin while hugging self)

***'Cause you can't lose it even***

(action: lower down slowly)

***If you throw it all away***

(action: run across the space)

***Throw it away***

(action: stop in front of an audience member)

(action: reach out towards them while leaning back)

***You can throw it away***

(action: take a quick step backwards)

***Give your love, live your life***

(action: turn around)

***Each and every day***

(action: move with despair)

***And keep your hand wide open***

(action: fluid movement with arms and hands)

(action: drop your hands on the syllables in the open)

***And let the sun shine through***

(action: stand)

(action: roll your torso from the left side to the back)

***'Cause you can never lose a thing***

(action: lower down slowly)

***If it belongs to you***

(action: rest on the back)

***You can never lose a thing***

(action: stand)

(action: lower down slowly)

***If it belongs to you***

(action: rest on the back)

***You can never lose a thing***

(action: stand)

(action: lower down slowly)

***If it belongs to you***

(action: rest on the back)

***You can never lose a thing***

(action: stand)

(action: lower down slowly)

***If it belongs to you***

(action: rest on the back)

***You can never, ever lose a thing***

(action: stand)

(action: lower down slowly)

***If it belongs***

(action: rest on the back)

***to you***

(action: stand up quickly)

(action: spin around until exhaustion)

**Blackout**



*Figure 3. Run 'til you can't run no more, 2021, Salon 94 Gallery, New York City.*

## **Critical Thinking**

## Surveillance capitalism, black capitalism and ethics

### *I. Surveillance capitalism and AI ethics*

In *Individual Sovereignty*, a machine learning simulation playwright, the cyborg gaze presents scene environments that allow the characters to contribute their perspectives about ethics in AI-supported news media outlets (articles and broadcasting) and social media platforms. Ethics provide a layer of governance, but the ultimate goals are to create a better product for the consumer and create a better consumer for the product. There are three main goals in news media outlets and social media platforms. The engagement goal is to drive up the consumer's usage with their active scrolling. The growth goal is to keep the consumer coming back and inviting as many friends as possible, as well as getting those friends to invite more friends. The advertising goal is to ensure that the advertisers are making as much money as possible.<sup>28</sup> The consumer's participation is more important than whether or not the circulated information is factual. Their participation includes seeing the information, reading or watching the information, determining how much time is spent with

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<sup>28</sup> *The Social Dilemma*, directed by Jeff Orlowski (2020; United States: Netflix).

the information, how consumers respond to that information, what they research to either learn more about the overall information or specific details, and how their behaviour changes with the information being slightly adjusted over time. This participation is monitored and intervened simultaneously to impact the consumer's behaviour and perception slightly. Surveillance capitalists now develop the economics of action as they learn to tune, herd and condition consumer behaviour with subtle and subliminal cues, rewards and punishments that shunt them toward their most profitable outcomes.<sup>29</sup> For instance, AI-supported news media outlets and social media platforms have used misinformation about 'Black lives' as police brutality against Black and Brown lives gains increasing media coverage.

Police brutality is one of the most serious, enduring, and divisive human rights violations in the United States. The problem is nationwide, and its nature is institutionalised... The excessive use of force by police officers, including unjustified shootings, severe beatings, fatal chokings, and rough treatment, persists because overwhelming barriers to accountability make it

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Hackett, "Harvard Economist Calls to Outlaw Online Advertising Markets-Just like 'Organs, Babies, or Slaves'," *Fortune* (Fortune, November 18, 2019), <https://fortune.com/2019/11/18/google-facebook-online-advertising-ban-surveillance-capitalism/>.

possible for officers who commit human rights violations to escape due punishment and often to repeat their offenses.<sup>30</sup>

The misinformation relies on the embellishment of the victims' criminal past to socially lower their humanity in society because this justifies the policemen's actions. The Black Lives Matter Movement<sup>31</sup> used its media outlets to circulate information about the events to offset the misinformation. The #blacklivesmatter movement caught the attention of media consumers who wanted more information about the victim's death. This gave birth to #saytheirname on social media platforms, which gave the victims their identities back. The efforts of Black Lives Matter, other social activists from local and global communities, and members of society who vocalise the need for justice accountability through global protests gained the attention of the justice system. In most publicised cases, the families of the victims received a settlement for their pain and suffering without the officers being held accountable. As a result, the 'United States Congress passed the *Police Brutality Bonds Act of 2020*, to amend the *Securities Exchange Act of 1934* to require issuers to disclose services performed for State and local governments in connection with the issuance of bonds that may be used to pay for settlements

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<sup>30</sup> Alyxandra Goodwin, Whitney Shepard, and Carrie Sloan, How Wall Street Profits from Police Violence, *Action Center on Race and the Economy*, June 24, 2020. [https://acrecampaigns.org/research\\_post/police-brutality-bonds/](https://acrecampaigns.org/research_post/police-brutality-bonds/). 13

<sup>31</sup> "8 Years Strong - Black Lives Matter," accessed March 14, 2023, <https://blacklivesmatter.com/8-years-strong/>.

or judgements in connection with police violence or civil rights abuses, and for other purposes. The police brutality bonds are called municipal bonds, involving a loan the government takes out with help from a bank. The bank functions as the middleman between the city that is selling, or issuing the bond, and the investors (bond buyers) or bondholders. When the investors loan the government money through bond purchases, the city gets a large sum of money to spend on their needs. The police brutality bonds are managed and profited through Wall Street investment banks like Wells Fargo, Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, regional banks and financial firms.<sup>32</sup> The relationship between media and Black lives has created a supply and demand within surveillance capitalism, with the unilateral claiming of private human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioural data. Then, these data are computed and packaged as prediction products and sold to behavioural futures markets, which relate to a commercial interest in knowing what they will do now, soon and later.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, behavioural data from AI-supported news media outlets and social media platforms are used in human futures trade markets.

All of this began with the click-through rate being the first globally successful prediction product, and the online targeted

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<sup>32</sup> “Text - H.R.7261 - 116th Congress (2019-2020): Disclose Police Brutality ...,” June 18, 2020, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7261/text>.

<sup>33</sup> Laidler, John. High tech is watching you. March 4, 2019. *The Harvard Gazette*. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/03/harvard-professor-says-surveillance-capitalism-is-undermining-democracy/>

advertising market is the first globally successful human futures market.<sup>34</sup>

Focusing on the Black life, there is an objectification element around the value of a Black life, which makes the monetisation of their likeness on AI-supported news media outlets and social media platforms palatable to consumers. Also, objectification makes the dehumanisation of Black death profitable for investors. This is a complicated position for Black people and anyone who believes in Black people's equitable placement in society. On the one hand, people should not remain quiet about racial injustices and acts of racial brutality. However, on the other hand, everything from information circulation on social media platforms and news media outlets to court settlements is being profited from by surveillance capitalists and investors. Ethical governance in both areas should serve as a form of protection for everyone who encounters media and law enforcement.

*Cries from the black community* highlights how the playwright, Haar Wese, shifts from a formal discussion about ethics to a dialogue's breakdown. The main goals for this scene are for the characters to approach the discussion about the equity of minority groups to reinforce their humanity and needs in a digital society, and to discuss how harmful AI-supported news media outlets

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Hackett, "Harvard Economist Calls to Outlaw Online Advertising Markets-Just like 'Organs, Babies, or Slaves'," *Fortune* (Fortune, November 18, 2019), <https://fortune.com/2019/11/18/google-facebook-online-advertising-ban-surveillance-capitalism/>.

and social media platforms are towards minority groups. Meeting Attendee 1, a White able-bodied individual that symbolises an academic in AI ethics, mentally assesses the audience's demographics and proceeds to approach the topic through an overview of ethics in AI, then gradually introduces different cultures in minority groups. Meeting Attendee 2, a White able-bodied man that symbolises a consumer that is negatively affected by the media, becomes restless as Meeting Attendee 1 introduces the different cultures in minority groups and indirectly mocks #blacklivesmatter to Meeting Attendee 3, a White abled-body individual who symbolises a consumer that is also negatively affected by the media. When this catches Meeting Attendee 1's attention, they decide to bring forward the side dialogue as the main discussion. Meeting Attendee 2 expresses how minorities are disillusioned about their current circumstances, and that discrimination is only an excuse to not use the resources that are provided for everyone. Meeting Attendee 5, a Black/Brown man that symbolises the Black community that is negatively affected by racial biases in the media and constant police brutality, engages with Meeting Attendee 2 in a debate about the difference between White privilege and Black/Brown underprivilege. When Meeting Attendee 5 emphasises that all Black people have the same disadvantages, Meeting Attendee 2 reminds him of his privilege as a man and that Black women do not share the same disadvantages with Black men due to gender inequality. The discussion breaks

down further and becomes about overcoming personal struggles by 'toughing it out' but being passively bitter about it versus being in a constant state of trauma because of the cycles of oppression from the government, capitalism and racial bias. The discussion is left unresolved because of how difficult it is to introduce equity to a racially biased environment; however, Haar Wese, the cyborg that symbolises the machine learning programmer and data analyst, collects the behavioural data for further processing.

## II. Black capitalism and ethics

Before Black Wall Street,<sup>35</sup> the U.S. government incited racial violence against Indigenous Americans in the 1830s. 'This event is called the Trail of Tears, the forced displacement of Indigenous peoples (Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole, and others) of the southeast region. Also, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act of 1830, an authorisation for the president (Andrew Johnson) to grant lands west of Mississippi in exchange for Native lands within existing state borders, as a response to the gold rush on Cherokee lands in Georgia. The Indigenous Americans migrated further west. Specifically, the Cherokee and the Creek moved to modern-day Tulsa with their slaves.'<sup>36</sup> Following their involvement in the Civil War, a reconstructionist,

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<sup>35</sup> The modern name of "Negro Wall Street," coined by Booker T. Washington.

<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth Prine Pauls, "Trail of Tears," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed March 14, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Trail-of-Tears>.

General William T. Sherman, forced the Indigenous Americans to free their slaves and give the freed slaves some of their land as part of the 'forty acres and a mule' promise in 1865. Then, the discovery of oil on their land caused the Oklahoma Land Rush of 1889, in which large amounts of White settlers inhabited Indigenous land. Shortly after the passing of the Jim Crow laws<sup>37</sup> of 1877, freed slaves migrated from the south to the west because of poor treatment. Later, Black townships became an addition to the Indigenous territory. Two businessmen, O.W. Gurley and J.B. Stradford, established the Greenwood district (a township) in 1905. The Greenwood district became the most successful township due to the Jim Crow laws. The partial segregation applied to schools, banks, hospitals, leisure entertainment, Mount Zion Baptist Church, and The Tulsa Star newspaper. Booker T. Washington named Greenwood the Negro Wall Street (Black Wall Street) because their finances grew, and wealth accumulated throughout the entire community. Around this time, the White public became distrustful of the Black community and feared them because of false information that was circulated. Also, the White community believed that the Black community was inferior and did not deserve nice things.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> The laws that enforced racial segregation in the south between the end of Reconstruction in 1877 and the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s.

<sup>38</sup> Yuliya Parshina-Kottas, Anjali Singhvi, Audra D.S. Burch, Troy Griggs, Mika Grondahl, Wallace Lingdong, Jeremy White, and Josh Williams. "What the Tulsa Race Massacre Destroyed?" *The New York Times*. May 24, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/24/us/tulsa-race-massacre.html>

White Americans can get very upset and jealous when they see African Americans who have things, cars, nice homes that they don't have. There's no question that part of that jealousy was part of the fuel for what became the Tulsa Race Massacre, but it really wasn't the spark that began it.<sup>39</sup>

The Tulsa Race Massacre began after the wrongful arrest of Dick Rowland, a Black teenager, for rape. Hundreds of Greenwood residents were brutally killed, with their homes and businesses wiped out by a furious and heavily armed mob of White looters and arsonists. The financial toll of the massacre is evident in the \$1.8 million in property loss claims—equating to \$27 million with today's inflation. After decades of rebuilding, Greenwood experienced a second boom by the 1970s. This was shortly followed by economic attacks through taxes and redlining, and integration forced the Black community's finances into predominantly White areas in Tulsa. Also, the government placed a highway bridge in the middle of Greenwood, separating the community to prevent another boom from occurring. This is a prime example of what happened to other townships throughout the United States, and it continues today.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> “Black Wall Street's Greenwood Tragedy Didn't End in 1921,” YouTube (Bloomberg Originals, August 19, 2020), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRIGiHiPWCw>.

<sup>40</sup> Yuliya Parshina-Kottas, Anjali Singhvi, Audra D.S. Burch, Troy Griggs, Mika Grondahl, Wallace Lingdong, Jeremy White, and Josh Williams. “What the Tulsa Race Massacre Destroyed?” *The New York Times*. May 24, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/24/us/tulsa-race-massacre.html>

Racial capitalism is the process of deriving social and economic value from the racial identity of another person.<sup>41</sup> There are tens of millions of African Americans with second-class status that have far fewer opportunities to achieve good health, political influence, prosperity and security than other Americans.<sup>42</sup> 'According to *The Economic State of Black America in 2020*, African Americans take home less income (with or without education) and have difficulties in becoming homes; and have shorter life expectancy than White Americans. The report listed key points in comparison between African Americans and White Americans: African Americans continue to experience poor economic conditions despite economic progress over the past decades, the unemployment rate for African Americans is at 6.0% and White Americans' is at 3.1%, the unemployment rate for African Americans is 50% higher, African American workers are disproportionately hurt by the overall decline in union membership and the decreasing power of unions, the typical Black household earns a fraction of White households (59 cent for every dollar) with an annual income gap of \$29,000 per year, African Americans are over twice as likely to live in poverty, African American children are three times likely to live in poverty, the median wealth of Black families (\$17,000) is less than one-tenth of

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<sup>41</sup> Nancy Leong. "RACIAL CAPITALISM." *Harvard Law Review* 126, no. 8 (2013): 2151–2226. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23415098>, 2152.

<sup>42</sup> United States Joint Economic Committee, "Joint Economic Committee Democrats Chairman - Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA)," *The Economic State of Black America 2020 - The Economic State of Black America 2020* - United States Joint Economic Committee, February 14, 2020, <https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/democrats/2020/2/economic-state-of-black-america-2020>, 1.

White families (\$171,000), the wealth gap increases between Black households and White households with education, less than 42% of Black families own their homes compared to 73% of White families, the number of Black college graduates doubled since 1990 but remains less than White college graduates, persistent segregation leads to large disparities in the quality of secondary education, which leads to worse economic outcomes, African American incarceration is still nearly six times the rate for White Americans, and African Americans have a life expectancy 3.6 years lower than White Americans.<sup>43</sup>

Many other factors contribute to fewer call-backs for job interviews among African Americans: 'Black sounding' names; which college attended (if attended); attractiveness (women); ability (level of disability); skin complexion; accent ('talking Black'); limited vocabulary (measurement of intellect). Although the report shares extensive data about the percentage differences between African Americans and White Americans, it does not go into detail about the causes of these gaps. Also, the report neglects to include the government's historical involvement in discriminatory laws and Black people's public representation. The psychological effect on the Black community's mental health is due to the harsh environments that discrimination and racist systems create. The data reads as if the African Americans are in a constant state of

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<sup>43</sup> United States Joint Economic Committee, "Joint Economic Committee Democrats Chairman - Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA)," *The Economic State of Black America 2020 - The Economic State of Black America 2020* - United States Joint Economic Committee, February 14, 2020, <https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/democrats/2020/2/economic-state-of-black-america-2020>, 2.

stress and there is a possibility that their home is not a place of rest. Being overworked and underpaid seems to be the theme. Black people are overworked because of the inherent need to extend beyond basic job requirements to prove one's worthiness to an institution. Moreover, they are underpaid because of how institutions devalue the efforts of African Americans.

In *You may not start it, but you better finish it*, the Working Man/Woman, a Black/Brown able-bodied individual, represents the minority working class and how high performance is expected, but not appreciated. The Working Man/Woman uses the performance space as a place to present the behavioural data to the audience. The behavioural data includes the data from the work environment. The work environment consists of racial biases, historical economic pressures on the Black gaze, constant high performance expectations, and financial stress. They present complex behavioural data from the institution through physical communication. The Working Man/Woman lowers their head to meet the White gaze. This lowered gaze represents the power dynamic because of the audience's physical placement. The audience symbolises the White gaze as a temporary stand-in for the cyborg gaze, but they do not replace the cyborg gaze. The White gaze has an opportunity to receive data from another perspective. Direct data transfer is successful because of the space and the provided silence. Afterwards, the Working Man/Woman did not stay for the data

processing because they wanted to leave the indirect accountability with the  
White gaze.

## Higher education and the southern child

Linguistic racism, which is discrimination against individuals based on their language use (non-English languages) and English vernaculars, is commonly practised in institutional and non-institutional environments by the dominant gaze.<sup>44</sup> Also, the White gaze uses linguistic racism as a tool to measure the intelligence of others or justify a social diagnosis of someone's intelligence or learning capacity (i.e., diagnosing someone with dyslexia without proper certification or training to incite superiority). The constant interaction with linguistic racism erodes the other gazes' perceptions of self and importance at the unconscious level over time. The long-term effects include racial trauma (or race-based traumatic stress), the mental and emotional injury caused by encounters with racial bias and ethnic discrimination, racism or hate crimes, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD; a mental health condition caused by a traumatic experience)<sup>45</sup>. There are methods that the other gazes use to avoid further interactions with linguistic racism: hide their accent (urban accent if English

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<sup>44</sup> Sender Dovchin. "The Psychological Damages of Linguistic Racism and International Students in Australia." *International Journal Of Bilingual Education And Bilingualism* 23, no. 7 (2020): Pp804-818.

<sup>45</sup> "Racial Trauma." Mental Health America. Accessed March 14, 2023. <https://www.mhanational.org/racial-trauma>.

vernacular); change their speech pattern; interact less with social environments.

This is unhealthy for the other gazes because the suppression will start to manifest in physical ailments. This raises the following question: What is the solution for the other gazes to overcome racial trauma?

After Meeting Attendee 5 left the meeting with intellect in Scene Two, the character's identity changes to the Working Man/Woman in the intimate scene. The Working Man/Woman is not exactly about the gender of the character but rather the stereotype of Black and Brown bodies being more resilient than their white counterparts, the thick skin. The thickened skin stores and carries trauma after the initial event. This is not the result of what was spoken but how the body processes the non-verbal cues, the in-between lines and underlying meaning, leaving the brain to catch up. Everyone communicates verbally to express the result of that internal process, so the character's capacity to express their emotions is limited because of their ability to process the internal being stunted. The Working Man/Woman never took the opportunity to transparently communicate to themselves and the audience, which highlights how policed the character's self-talk is. This self-policing is highlighted through the location of the scene. The bathroom is one of the most vulnerable places a person could be in their home. It is a place where people relieve themselves and clean themselves. Throughout the scene, they are expressing their internal and self-soothing non-verbally by pacing back and forth and breathing. The gaze in the mirror was

another non-verbal connection to the body and an attempt to self-validate their reality instead of dissociation. At this moment, the verbal became known and was speaking about the approach they would have/should have taken in the previous event. The dialect changed from that of a Western academic scholar to that of a child from the American South.

The Southern child symbolises what other places assume about their intellectual capacity and flexibility: that it is limited. The limitation of intellect is a result of focusing on the adversities the body experiences, as well as its survival. These assumptions are usually formed into biases over time and reduce the chances and opportunities of the Southern child. Although the body triggers the prejudice, it is the Southern dialect that the offered opportunities are reduced to. The uneducated language brought thoughts to the audience that are fully misunderstood. This linguistic breakdown is not for the audience's satisfaction, but for the Southern child to attempt a release.

## Haar Wese's recall

*Turn to your neighbour and say* focuses on Haar Wese by creating an environment that relaxes the audience and the characters. Its silence is the prominent performance at the beginning of the scene. The character checking in and out of the dialogue between their friends and only interjecting once gives the illusion of active listening. However, once the conversation was directed towards Haar Wese, it begins to reconnect with the present time. The character continues the lecture from Scene Two. The environment encouraged an open discussion that allowed the theory around ethics in AI to be challenged without confrontation. The challenges of the bodies being reduced to skin colour seemed to be separate from those of cyborg bodies. However, cyborgs who choose to have skin share the same quality of social interaction with natural bodies. Friend 2 triggered a memory in Haar Wese when asked about the connection between Black bodies and police brutality in the media, as well as cyborg brutality.

Haar Wese began to recall a late afternoon in the summertime. However, instead of telling the story, it spoke about it how the body remembers. The young cyborg joined a gathering with other cyborgs and Black bodies in the heavily policed neighbourhood where they lived. The young bodies were anticipating a

physical altercation between two people, so they travelled in a group to witness it along with the adults. Once the violent altercation took place, one of their guardians called the police. The fear of police interaction embedded itself in the community's history, so the natural reaction to this threat is to protect oneself by running home, locking the doors, turning off the lights and hiding. This time, the last person who entered the house forgot to lock the door. Two police cars showed up, turning two bodies into four. Usually, the police are not allowed to enter a home without a search warrant or in the absence of a guardian, but they decided to let themselves in without announcing themselves. The cyborg was unfortunate in finding a hiding space, so the police found them first in an obvious spot. They were met with bright lights, not realising there was a gun behind them until the sound of the holster clicked. This was not Haar Wese's first interaction with them. Prior to that event, they were stopped by the police for suspicious behaviour, assuming crack was being transported and sold. Since it is unusual to see a young cyborg outside of their home, law enforcement used bias because of the neighbourhood's reputation.

This scene stresses the influence of AI-supported media. The general public anticipates violence, even from the smallest child. However, violence should not always be expected when dealing with children. This conjures anxiety for both parties, which leads to permanent irrational decisions. Is there a better system to predict danger or the 'violent one'? Such consistent alertness for the

perceived inevitable seems tiresome. Where did the personhood of the innocent go? How should one govern unfamiliar locations and people? This all breeds a dysfunctional cycle that makes everyone too delusional to separate from it.

## Glossary

**AI ethics** is a system of moral principles and techniques intended to inform the development and responsible use of artificial intelligence technology.

**Algorithm bias** is a phenomenon that occurs when an algorithm produces results that are systemically prejudiced due to erroneous assumptions in the machine learning process.

**Algorithm programming** is a procedure or formula used for solving a problem. It is based on conducting a sequence of specified actions in which these actions describe how to do something, and your computer will do it exactly that way every time. An algorithm works by following a procedure made up of inputs. Once it has followed all the inputs, it will see a result, also known as output.

**Artificial intelligence** is the theory and development of computer systems that are able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making and translation between languages.

**Big data** is an extremely large data set that may be analysed computationally to reveal patterns, trends and associations, especially those relating to human behaviour and interactions.

**A cyborg** is a fictional or hypothetical person whose physical abilities extend

beyond normal human limitations due to mechanical elements being built into their body.

## 2. (Identity) Haar Wese

**Cyborg theory** is anything mechanical that enhances one's life for both classification and regression tasks. It has a hierarchical tree-like structure that consists of a root node, branches, internal nodes and leaf nodes.

**Linguistic racism** is discrimination against individuals based on their language use (non-English languages) and English vernaculars.

**Machine learning** is a branch of artificial intelligence and computer science that focuses on the use of data and algorithms to imitate the way that humans learn to gradually improve its accuracy.

**Police brutality** is one of the most serious, enduring and divisive human rights violations.

**Q-learning** is an approach to reinforcement learning that incorporate Q-values for each state-action pair and indicates the reward for following a given state path. The general algorithm for Q-learning is to learn the rewards in an environment in stages. Each state involves taking actions for states until a goal state is reached. During learning, selected actions are performed probabilistically (as a function for Q-values), which allows exploration of the

state-action space. When the goal state is reached, the process begins again, starting from some initial position.

**Reinforcement learning** is a behavioural machine learning model that is similar to supervised learning, but the algorithm is not trained to use sample data. This model learns as it goes by using trial and error. A sequence of successful outcomes will be reinforced to develop the best recommendation or policy for a given problem.

**Semi-supervised learning** is a combination of supervised learning and unsupervised learning. It uses a small amount of labelled data and a large amount of unlabelled data, which provide the benefits of both unsupervised learning and supervised learning while avoiding the challenges of finding a large amount of data.

**Supervised learning** is a machine learning task that uses labelled datasets to train algorithms that classify data or accurately predict outcomes. As input data are fed into the model, it adjusts its weights until the model has been fitted appropriately, which occurs as part of the cross-validation process. Supervised learning helps organisations solve a variety of real-world problems at scale, such as classifying spam in a separate folder from your email inbox.

**Unsupervised learning** uses machine learning algorithms to analyse and cluster

unlabelled datasets. These algorithms discover hidden patterns or data groupings without the need for human intervention. Its ability to discover similarities and differences in information makes it the ideal solution for exploratory data analysis, cross-selling strategies, customer segmentation and image recognition.

**Surveillance capitalism** is the unilateral claiming of private human experience as free raw material.

**Racial capitalism** is the process of deriving social and economic value from the racial identity of another person.

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## Appendices

## Appendix

### Representation of The Cyborg

The representation of cyborgs originates from the Bauhaus Movement. This type of cyborg is referred to throughout *Individual Sovereignty* because there is a complete body beneath the costume. Artists have designed the costumes to restructure the body and extend the body parts. The images of cyborgs in Bauhaus theatre include forms that are found throughout history in different cultures. The constructed forms referenced practical objects that were made from different materials, such as ceramics, glass, metal, wood and so on. This can be interpreted as an attempted connection to the worldly view. The worldly view supports cyborg anthropology seeming more alien—yet in a logical and practical way—in Western society.



Figure 4. Copy Print: Members of the Bauhaus Stage Workshop on the Roof of the Studio Building, 1948, Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, <https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/226110?position=6>.



Figure 5. Performer from the Play *Man at the Control Panel*, 1948, Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, <https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/220434?position=12>.



Figure 6. Copy Print: Bauhaus Theatre Mask Designed by T. Lux Feininger, 1948, Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, <https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/225579?position=9>.



Figure 7. Copy Print: *Treppenwitz*, Performed by Andor Weininger, Oskar Schlemmer, Hermann Röseler and Werner Siedhoff, 1948, Harvard Art Museum/Busch-Reisinger Museum, <https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/225607?position=8>.

## Appendix

### Live performance

#### Blackbird in Mississippi



*Figure 8. Blackbird in Mississippi: Live performance, 2019, COS x Serpentine Park Nights, Serpentine Galleries, London, 25:03 mins.*

**Site:** Serpentine Galleries, London

**Serpentine Pavilion:** Junya Ishigami

**Event:** COS x Park Nights

**Date:** 26 July 2019

**Written and directed:** Shawanda Corbett

**Stage manager:** Holly Shuttleworth

**Cinematographer:** Ollie Bradley-Baker

**Photographer:** Talie Rose Eigeland

**Performer:** Shawanda Corbett

**Violist:** Andrea Fortier

Bringing Mississippi to the Serpentine Galleries Park Nights, the live performance, is about the perspective of a Black woman with a differently-abled body. The performance draws a parallel comparison between a slave and their journey on the underground railroad, and the cyborg's experience in Mississippi and journey to the underground railroad's destination for rehabilitation, Rochester, New York. For the performance, a science fiction character is used as an inner dialogue. The character, Haar Wese, time travels (flashback) to the past in Mississippi to reflect. This flashback involves a cinematic scene in which music gives Haar Wese a voice. It is about finding placement in displacement.

## Appendix

### Live performance

#### breath.: I. The Beginning



*Figure 9. Breathe. I The Beginning (Part II): Live performance, 2020, Now Later: There's no place like home, Now Gallery, London, 20 mins.*

**Site:** Now Gallery

**Event:** Now Later: There's no place like home

**Date:** 16 June 2020

**Performer:** Shwanda Corbett

**Musicians:** Patrick Bolton (keyboard)

Robin Jay (French horn and cornet)

Catherine Marriott (flute)

**Duration:** Part I (20 mins) and Part II (20 mins)

The Now Later event series is developed around the following question: What is built into an experience of blackness that offers us visions of a different future? Focusing on conversations, questions, responses and struggle, the programme centres on the work of artists who are looking at the multiple intersections of the Black experience to develop language for building a new world.

The performance series is about connecting everyone through the breath. The breath changes throughout life in terms of how precious it becomes at different life stages. This perspective of the breath humanises the quality of Black and Brown people's lives. Their breath becomes political before birth, so how can it be captured before death?

## Appendix

### Interview with the dancer

**Interview date:** 20 May 2019

**Duration:** 2 hrs

**Note:** This is an excerpt from the recorded interview.

**Shwanda Corbett:** What's it like to dance as a heterosexual man?

**Tyresse Bracy:** I don't like looking at myself as straight or someone as gay. Being straight doesn't mean being masculine. And that's the thing in Black communities; we associate straightness or toughness with men and anything soft with women. For me, my masculinity is feminine. You know, there are certain movements that are identified as feminine or masculine. And it's not like women aren't capable of masculine movement.

**SC:** Yeah. You've danced in many different places, so how do you feel about performing for predominately white audiences? Have you ever experienced people being upset with the subject matter of your performance?

**TB:** Well, not too often. Like, I don't feel a way about dancing in those spaces because I have done it for so long.

**SC:** Okay. Is there a feeling you would want the audience to feel when you're performing?

**TB:** Yeah. Feel every piece of my childhood. Every piece of my anxiety, my fears of growing up in southern North America, like Alabama, the bible belt. Even though it's like 2019, man, we're still having the same issues as our grandparents had, and the whole thing is people that want to act like things have gotten better. But if you're paying attention, the changing of the guard, you see it's the same thing. It's the same shit. It's been happening for so long that we are desensitised to it and people are just tired. Like, as we come to a point in time, like, people are just tired of fighting. You know, and that's what I feel a lot of America is and a lot of where we are in the States like, man, we have been doing this same thing for life. Can we please stop? A lot of people can't handle it, especially if they don't come from where we come from. Especially when they don't come from the South. They think Americans are stupid as fuck, especially dealing with politics. I feel like when we come to Europe, especially as a Black person and as a Black woman, you have to be the prime minister of your own country.

**SC:** So true.

**TB:** As a Black student, what is it like to study in the U.K.?

**SC:** What do you mean?

**TB:** You know, like racism.

**SC:** Well, besides the protests, nothing really happens. Racism is more passive here and it is something that's not talked about. I think when they [British people] speak about racism, it's referring to an American issue. However, I have seen Black students here try to address the topic throughout the university and the first comment to follow is either 'There are global issues' or 'There are Global South issues'. In a way, they are right because racism is one of the global issues.

However, there's always an event—mostly tragic—that happens, and it gets the world's attention. That is followed by some type of action. But if it's about race, then the minorities are sometimes asked to come up with a solution or relive a trauma by talking about it; that's more beneficial to said organisation or institution. Some minorities do feel like it's inappropriate and exploitative.

**TB:** Yeah. It's like, I didn't fuck this shit up, so why do I have to fix it? This is my burden as a Black male and as a Black person in general. Like forget about sex, this is my burden as a person of colour. Trying to make the world understand me and trying to make something profound and like, give them something as profound and selfless and beautiful as a nice dance on the streets. And so that they can, I don't know, maybe feel a bit more comfort in the fact that me as a person is giving it to them, so maybe I can actually erase—not erase, but like you said earlier, they are not always comfortable with it and some of them can't take it to the point where they actually have like a breakdown, or some people just get up and just walk away if you talk about anything dealing with colour. I'm trying to

find this middle ground of not trying to be this angry Black person and give them something that they are comfortable with but still thought-provoking and that shit is fucking hard. That's the challenge. Remember when Malcolm X first started with Islam and his anger... He couldn't get through to a lot of White people, and most white people didn't want to hear him—and they were asking, 'How can we help'? And if we are being honest, I despised the fact that people who are going through issues in life think that they don't need allies. You need allies, man.

**SC:** Yeah.

**TB:** You need allies that have nothing to do with your shit, we need White people to stand for us. It can't be all Black people; we need white people. The LGBTQ community needs straight people to stand up for them; they need people too. Women, with feminism, they need men, and that neo-feminism shit is not going to work. We need everybody, not just the people who are going through it because they will think you're just angry and nobody would hear you. We need people who have nothing to do with the fucking fight, as opposed to their skin, sexual orientation or whatever—we need people to just see it happening and be like, 'That's fucked up; we need to help them'. We need allies, man.

**SC:** Right.

## Appendix

### Interview with a musician

#### Rehearsal

Andrea and I prepared for the *Haar Wese: Live performance* by practising together weekly to establish a relationship as performers, musicians, bodies and violists. During rehearsals, Andrea would adapt the Katherine Dunham technique to explore the instrument's boundaries by playing every component traditionally and non-traditionally.

**Date:** 19 January 2019

**Location:** Ruskin School of Art (Bullingdon)

**Performer:** Shwanda Corbett

**Violist:** Andrea Fortier

**Andrea Fortier:** Basically, I consider the tone of the viola to initially represent that heartbreak. It's constructed in a way that is mathematically incorrect, whereas the violin is built precisely for these very strong audible pitches and the cello is built to resonate lower. The viola is kind of not big enough to resonate as deeply as the cello does and it's not small enough to make the high pitches quite as pure as the

violin, so what you get is this kind of muffled cry that does end up sounding very sorrowful and very soulful. If the instrument was a different shape or a different size it would be impossible to play. It's the only size that can be manoeuvred, so it just ends up as the middle fiddle. Anything in the middle range is difficult to hear over the lower and the higher already, and combined with that mathematics. The instrument doesn't—it's not as showy. A lot of people say the viola is closest to the human voice because of that middle range.

## **Appendix**

### **Interview with a cyborg**

The cyborg, Haar Wese, was interviewed for an exhibition with other Black ceramic artists. For the interview strategy, the cyborg decided to approach any biased question(s) with a neutralising answer. The article description is the response to the cyborg's answer.

Interview questions (via email)

#### **1. What makes you want to work with clay?**

It was the physical challenge in the throwing process that interested me to work with the material more and learn about its history and different processes.

#### **2. Tell me about the work you have on show.**

The vessels are existing works from the Neighbourhood Garden, exhibited at Corvi-Mora Gallery. The vessels are a representation of people's personalities from the different neighbourhoods I grew up in. Instead of approaching figurative sculpture in a literal or caricature fashion, I wanted to capture the essence of who they truly are without reducing them to their physical body.

#### **3. How does Black feminism inform your work?**

Well, Black feminism isn't a medium or something that I apply to my practice.

Blackness and womanhood are boundless and boundless is me.

#### **4. What do you hope viewers will take away from your work?**

Beyond my work, I would want the viewers to take away something from the exhibition. Everyone's work is so dynamic in perspective and presence, so people should spend some time with the exhibition with an open mind.

#### **Description of the cyborg**

[Haar Wese], another artist featured in the show—one born without legs and with only one arm—was drawn to clay because of the physical challenge posed by the process of throwing. Existing works from her 2020 series 'Neighbourhood Garden' represent individuals from 'the hood': characters who are often reduced to stereotypes, or invisible. Rather than literal or caricatured figurative sculptures, Corbett's ceramics are forms dashed with colourful brushstrokes and gold lacquer, abstracts that capture the rich personalities of real people.

## Appendix

### Focus Group Discussion:

#### Seminar case study

#### Haar Wese: Live performance

**Date:** 26 February 2019

**Location:** Lady Margaret Hall

**Performer:** Shwanda Corbett

**Violist:** Andrea Fortier

**Focus Group:** DPhil seminar

#### The dancer's recall of the performance:

Me. Meditate with eyes open. Stillness. Breathe. Shadows of forms move about.

Around but not in front. Quietly rock. Stare. Breathe. Still. Head gestures to musician. Still. Within. Head gestures back. Stare. Breathe. Still. Silence. Silence.

Silence. Silence. Silence. Shuffling. Silence. Silence. Silence. Viola rises. Fabric brushes against the string. Dragging across the floor. In position to play.

Both inhale. Body rises in height of sound. Viola charms the body to move.

Body lowers. Rise. Stumble walks. Swish. Swish. Breathe. Roll back.

Pause. Tick tick tick. Tick. Tick. Tick. Silence. Burst of sound. Body searches for references to physical completion. Sporadic movement. Move. Move. Spin and. Stop. Stare. Front of her. Eyes. Breath deepens. Voluminous breaths. Sigh drops. Falls back. Frantic. Chase. Chase and. Tick tick tick. Tick. Tick. Movement. Making as many shapes with my body as possible. Jump up. Spin. Stop. Stare. Him. Voluminous breaths. Silence. Light viola. Tension builds. Shoots back. Repetitive movement. Rock. Repetitive movement. And. Tick tick tick. Tick. Tick. Up. Side down.

## Appendix

### Focus Group Discussion:

#### Seminar case study

#### Bias detection

The seminar case study was structured as a conversational algorithm. Texts were presented to the group that would prompt a discussion on where biases are detected. The first seminar focused on two different texts: *The Thing* by Martin Heidegger and *Old Plantation Hymns* by William E. Barton, specifically the *Motherless Child* hymn. Discussions regarding the different types of biases were held.

**Date:** 22 October 2019

**Location:** Ruskin School of Art

**Focus Group:** DPhil seminar

**Subject One:** *The Thing*

**Hypothesis:** If the programmer (the author) has biases (prejudices) prior to coding (writing the text), then the algorithm (the text) will contain biases (inaccurate information that is harmful to someone).

**Methodology:** The seminar would be an ongoing focus group, but the attendees will not know about their participation in a case study used to collect authentic data.

**Discussion:** The attendees seemed keen on participating in the discussion. However, in presenting the text as a great example of how the author's biases could affect the written text and published factual information, errors came from the attendees. The errors included the author's problematic past, how the presentation of the text became a suggested image of the presenter, the high level of insensitivity and ill-informed nature of X, and their natural need to correct before the discussion structure was completed.

**Conclusion:** The discussion was unsuccessful due to the discussion going off track.

**Subject Two:** *Motherless Child* hymn, *Old Plantation Hymns*

**Hypothesis:** If the biases (prejudices) are placed in the environment (slave trade) surrounding the algorithm structure (African people)—i.e., strict conditions in the learning knowledge (harsh conditions of agricultural production)—then the goal will be reached successfully (the people are forced to produce self-soothing methods in order to reach the plantation's production goals).

**Methodology:** The seminar would be the ongoing focus group, but the attendees will not know about their participation in a case study used to collect authentic data.

**Discussion:** The attendees seemed unsure of the hymn's purpose but remained open-minded. However, in presenting the song as an example of how musical algorithms were produced during that period under harsh conditions, the attendees questioned the relevance to the present time because of how dated the song is. Also, the discussion shifted to how cyborgs in artificial intelligence should be built on the future and discard the past.

**Conclusion:** The discussion was unsuccessful due to the consistent application of able-bodied terminology to the cyborg representation.

**Outcome Note:** The focus studies were discontinued due to a lack of productivity in the discussions.