



Temporalities of Refusal

Symposium
Newcastle University

29–30 May 2024

“For us ‘practicing refusal’ names the urgency of rethinking the time, space, and the fundamental vocabulary of what constitutes politics, activism, and theory, as well as what it means to refuse the terms given to us to name these struggles.”

Tina Campt, “Black Visuality and the Practice of Refusal”

Temporalities of Refusal is a two-day hybrid symposium, collaboratively organized by members of [Newcastle University’s School X](#) and [CAPPE Brighton](#), that aims to create a locus for reflecting on the specifically temporal dimension of practices and processes of refusal. Taking our cue from the thinking of refusal and temporality that has recently emerged in the fields of critical Black studies and decolonial philosophy, we invite scholars from across the arts, humanities, and social sciences to discuss how practices and figurations of refusal can disrupt, upend, or signal beyond hegemonic conceptions of being and existing in time.

The symposium will be held in a hybrid format over the two days (29–30 May), and all are welcome to attend either in person or online. If you would like to attend the symposium, please complete the online [Registration Form](#) prior to doing so. Registration is free, and coffee, tea and lunch will be provided on both days for those attending in-person. The symposium will run in [British Summer Time \(BST\)](#).

Venue

The event will be held in room **FDC 1.17** of the [Frederick Douglass Centre at Newcastle University](#). The building is fully accessible, featuring both accessible toilets and a lift. For those attending online, an online link will be circulated by email following completion of the online [Registration Form](#).

More Information

For further information about symposium, including suggestions for visiting and staying in Newcastle, the venue and accessibility, please visit the [Temporalities of Refusal website](#). If you have any questions, concerns, or feedback during the event, please feel free to contact the organizers at David.Ventura@ncl.ac.uk.

Programme

Wednesday 29 May 2024, FDC 1.17

9.15 am – 9.30 am

Opening Remarks

9.30 am – 11.00 am

Imagining Refusal

Chair: German Primera Villamizar

Arianna Preite
(University of Bologna)

Narrating the Impossible: a double-dialogue between Saidiya Hartman, Carmen Maria Machado, Kathy Acker and Lidia Yuknavitch

David Ventura
(Newcastle University)

Figurations of Refusal in Édouard Glissant's Thought

Tanay Ghandi
(University of Southampton)

Dalit Manhood in the break: fugitivity and literary refusal in the Dalit Panthers

11.00 am–11.30 am

Coffee Break

11.30 am – 1.00 pm

Refusing Pathology

Chair: Holden M. Rasmussen

Sujaya Dhanvantari
(University of Guelph)

Fanon and the Refusal of Colonial Time

Darius Cret
(University of Edinburgh)

Psychotically Dissident, Liminality Human: Black Rage, Western Psychiatry and the Silenced Dialectics of Black Male Liberation

Ruben Hordijk
(Linköping University)

Exiting Developmental Man: The Maturity-trope and its Refusal

1.00 pm – 2.30 pm

Lunch Break

2.30 pm – 4.00 pm

(Counter)Tales

Chair: Lila Braunschweig

Bernardo Carvalho de Mello
(Newcastle University)

Past Continuous: Temporal Resistance in the Fight for
Human Rights in Latin America

Arantxa Ortiz
(Brandeis University)

Caring for Images: Computational Anonymization, Refusal,
and Dissident Documentation

Camila da Rosa Ribeiro
(Tampere University)

Future-Telling for improvised worlds to come

4.00 pm – 4.30 pm

Coffee Break

4.30 pm – 6.00 pm

Sonic Refusals

Chair: Luke Edmeads

Paul Rekret
(University of Westminster)

Songs of Refusal

Luc Marraffa
(University of Amsterdam)

Glitching Colonial Radio History: echoes of non-linear
temporalities in the archive

Am Ubhi
(Independent scholar)

The Ghosts of other stories, insurrections, and dub

7.30 pm

Conference Dinner

Location: Hibou Blanc Restaurant

Thursday 30 May 2024, FDC 1.17

10.00 am – 11.30 am

Refusing Performances

Chair: Am Ubhi

Melody Howse

(Max Planck Institute)

Imaginaries of Refusal

Ivan Txaparro

(Resonar Lab)

Decolonial Music Activism Kit: Musicking Activism with Afro-Descendant and Indigenous Communities in the Caribbean

German Primera Villamizar

(University of Brighton)

Anti-dialectical noise, improvisation and the temporality of Black social life

11.30 am – 12.00 pm

Coffee Break

12.00 pm – 1.30 pm

Keynote Address

Chair: David Ventura

Alia Al-Saji

(McGill University)

Why Phenomenology needs to become anticolonial: Fanonian methods of refusal

1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Lunch Break

3.00 pm – 4.00 pm

Refusing Judgement

Chair: Bernardo Carvalho de Mello

Luke Edmeads

(University of Brighton)

“Practices of Vigilant Repetitions”: refusing to judge and the suspension of time

Ruth Houghton and Aoife O’Donoghue

(Newcastle University and Queen’s University Belfast)

Walking Away from Omelas: Feminist Refusal as an exercise of Constituent Power

4.00 pm – 4.30 pm

Coffee Break

4.30 pm – 6.00 pm

Chronopolitics

Chair: Ruth Houghton

Lila Braunschweig
(Utrecht University)

From refusal to renouncement: Privileged subjects, temporal mastery, and the antiracist vision

Pilar Morena d'Alò
(Newcastle University)

“They won’t burn us this time”: chronopolitical refusals and coloniality in the Green Tide spirituality

Jessica Johnston
(University of Sydney)

Building an *elsewhere within*: understanding land-based resistance through the lens of generative refusal

Keynote Speaker

[Prof. Alia Al-Saji \(James McGill Professor, McGill University\)](#)



Alia Al-Saji was born in Baghdad, Iraq. She is James McGill Professor of Philosophy at McGill University (Montreal, Canada). Al-Saji's work brings together phenomenology, critical philosophy of race, and feminist theory, with an abiding interest in questions of time and affect. She has published extensively on Frantz Fanon, Henri Bergson, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Notable among her recent publications are: "[A Debilitating Colonial Duration: Reconfiguring Fanon](#)" (*Research in Phenomenology*, 2023); and "[Too Late: Fanon, the dismembered past, and a phenomenology of racialized time](#)" (*Fanon, Phenomenology and Psychology*, Routledge 2021).

Abstracts

From refusal to renouncement: Privileged subjects, temporal mastery, and the antiracist vision

Lila Braunschweig (Utrecht University)

What does it mean to engage in practices of refusal for privileged subjects? Scholars in race critical theory have highlighted how unequal social structures not only oppress certain groups but also unrightfully advantage others, and how these undue privileges play a key role in white subjects' resistance to social change (i.e., Sullivan 2006, 2019, Táíwò 2022). Others have theorized non-oppressive conceptions of whiteness and transformative forms of allyship which seek to refuse inherited colonial institutions and practices (i.e., Alcoff 1998, 2015, Al Saji 2009). Yet, the ways lasting privileges play out, are to be undone and can be refused in non-oppressive embodiments of whiteness remains unclear. How can we account for the costly and ambiguous character of refusing a world that despite being strikingly unjust, might also be beneficial and safe for oneself?

In this paper, I would like to argue that engaging in practices of refusal when one benefits from current social structures also involves a dimension of *renouncement* which implies, among other things, negotiating a different relationship with time. I will focus more specifically on the renouncing dimension of suspending and interrupting what Al Saji has termed the racialized and objectifying visions of others (2009) that generate intersubjective racial stereotyping and assignations. For Al Saji, this critical and ethical change implies a reiterated kind of affective and cognitive "hesitation" to disrupt the long-lasting effects of inherited perceptual frames. Yet such refusal of the racialized imagination also goes along with what I will call a critical and ethical practice of *exposition* that asks privileged subjects to renounce the unequally distributed sense of sovereignty over one's being and existing in the world characteristic of privileged epistemological positions (Markell, 2003). Indeed, racialized and objectifying intersubjective assignations often unconsciously function as clues for subjects to orient themselves in a deeply uncertain world, and in a life among others whose actions and reactions, remain fundamentally unpredictable. Therefore, interrupting the racialized vision also requires renouncing the privilege of objectifying others for the sake of one's sense of sovereignty, while coming to terms with a new relationship with time where one has lost the illusion of mastering, predicting, and controlling what is to come, including in the very near future of social interaction.

The goal, here is not to pity privileged subjects or congratulate white allies for their supposed sacrifice, fueling what has been called white fragility (Di Angelo, 019). On the contrary, I want to argue that precisely examining subjective and collective practices of privilege refusal is necessary to develop kinds of allyship that alter, rather than insidiously reproduce racialized social structures.

Past Continuous: Temporal Resistance in the Fight for Human Rights in Latin America

Bernardo Carvalho de Mello (Newcastle University)

This paper explores the concept of temporal refusals as a decolonial strategy within the sphere of human rights activism in Latin America. It posits that temporal refusals – acts that challenge and disrupt established conceptions of time and history – serve as a potent means for confronting and resisting oppressive systems rooted in colonial legacies and historical injustices. The study brings forth diverse examples from Latin America to demonstrate how these temporal refusals operate as a form of resistance and advocacy for justice.

Central to this exploration is the case of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, whose persistent vigils for their disappeared children defy the state's attempts to erase painful histories. This act of remembrance confronts the notion that time diminishes trauma and insists on accountability and recognition of past atrocities. Similarly, the paper examines the "Never Again" movement in Chile, which emphasises the necessity of remembering and addressing the abuses of the past as a foundation for national reconciliation and healing.

Additionally, the paper delves into the struggles of the Quilombola communities in Brazil. These communities, rooted in a history of resistance against slavery, challenge the erasure of Afro-Brazilian contributions and experiences from the national narrative. Through cultural preservation, legal battles for land rights, and activism against ongoing discrimination, the Quilombolas assert alternative historical narratives and temporalities that honour their heritage and demand equal recognition and rights.

In conclusion, the paper argues that temporal refusals in Latin America are not merely acts of remembrance or cultural preservation but active strategies of decolonisation. By challenging linear, Eurocentric historical narratives, these refusals open up spaces for alternative visions of justice and equality. The study contributes to a broader understanding of how human rights activism, coupled with temporal refusals, offers innovative pathways for addressing historical and ongoing injustices in Latin America.

Psychotically Dissident, Liminal Human: Black Rage, Western Psychiatry and the Silenced Dialectics of Black Male Liberation

Darius Cret (University of Edinburgh)

Eurocentric concepts of insanity and mental illness have historically been utilised as colonial tools to repress, stifle, or outright erase the dialectics of liberation articulated by oppressed peoples in their ongoing struggle against white supremacy. As observed by Frantz Fanon throughout his writings, the denial of a colonised person's sanity inherently entails the impossibility of their becoming a political subject – an ongoing moratorium which I argue is nowhere rendered more visible than in the Western psychological sciences' involvement in manufacturing and reinforcing the myth of the psychotic, dissenting Black male. From Samuel Cartwright's drapetomania to the shifting categories of paranoid schizophrenia during the 1960s, Anglo-American psychiatry has consistently demonstrated a tendency to project the refusal of Black men and boys to take part in the white supremacist project as indicative of an inherent criminal psychopathology, a 'protest psychosis',

particularly when such a refusal took on violent forms through antisociality and social upheaval.

Running both parallel and contradictory to this colonial project, a salient yet overlooked tradition within Black radical thought has persistently drawn upon the linguistic descriptors of mental illness to disrupt hegemonic concepts of freedom and humanity. Building upon this intellectual genealogy through the interrogative paradigm of Black Male Studies, alongside notions such as W. E. B. DuBois's 'double consciousness', Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'adaptive maladjustment' and William Grier and Price Cobbs's 'healthy cultural paranoia', my intervention presents itself as an anti-colonial corrective. By confronting the racist analytic dictums that have reified psychopathy within the ontology of Black masculinity, I introduce a radical reconstruction of the historically-misinterpreted concept of 'Black rage' as a cogent, actively enacted refusal of colonial oppression and efficient psycho-affective catalyst of revolutionary struggle which seeks to elicit the very break in reality required for the articulation of non-hegemonic conceptions of being and existence through time.

Fanon and the Refusal of Colonial Time

Sujaya Dhanvantari (University of Guelph)

This paper proposes that the colonial duration structures not only oppressive temporalities but also the potential for refusal (Al-Saji). Drawing on Frantz Fanon's psychiatric writings, it considers the potential for a different temporality emergent in the refusal of the colonial structuring of linear time (Quijano). The distrust of the diagnostic method shown by his racialized and colonized psychiatric patients leads Fanon to theorize its failure. After witnessing the patients' rejection of the colonial doctor's search for the origins of illness within the spatiotemporal boundaries of the lesion, Fanon concludes that the fault lies with the nonrecognition of the sensory experience of timelessness associated with racial terror (hooks). Critiquing his fellow practitioners, Fanon discerns that the centuries of racial and colonial oppression structuring somatic and psychic life in the present are not viewed as belonging to reality. In the colonial hospital, Fanon observes, "This conformity to the categories of time is something to which the North African seems to be hostile" (1967, p. 4). Fanon thus identifies the North African's refusal of the colonial control over time. This paper will read Fanon's "The North African Syndrome" (1952) and his other psychiatric writings, to draw out the traces of refusal found in the antipathy shown toward the dominance of linearity and its suppression of other pasts and histories. The latter are "thingified" (Césaire) within the collective unconscious of the colonizer, but perdure in the lived body and consciousness of the patient, eliciting the debilitating effects of racial and colonial oppression. Fanon's patients experience "slow death" (Berlant) and "weathering" (Geronimus) in the forms of chronic illness, premature ageing, and early death. Yet, the latter exceed the limits of the linear diagnosis. This paper asks: Is the time for anticolonial resistance available to the racially and colonially oppressed patient within the structure of refusal?

“Practices of Vigilant Repetitions” : refusing to judge and the suspension of time

Luke Edmeads (University of Brighton)

In an aphorism entitled "Regressions" found in *Minima Moralia*, Theodor Adorno suggests that when faced with oppression, it is imperative to refuse the temptation to pass judgment on others. Refusing to assert one's being in the right serves to shield those who have suffered harm from perpetuating cycles of violence and alienation that separate individuals from the world of which they are part. I propose that this refusal from judgment embodies what Bernstein terms a fugitive ethical encounter – events that defy damaging norms of social reality, challenging their legitimacy. Similarly, Lisa Baraitser advocates for a refusal of judgment which is in itself a suspension of time. This involves rejecting the notion that the new must solely be directed towards the future while also refusing to merely resurrect the past. Baraitser suggests that time folds, advocating for a departure from linear temporal frameworks in favour of exploring enduring alternative perspectives. In this paper, I draw these viewpoints together to consider the ramifications of refusing judgement. I explore the possibilities of salvaging and repurposing overlooked knowledge, contemplating how both the act of refusing judgment and the rejection of linear temporality – both of which I argue are inherently violent – can engender unforeseen and innovative modes of coexistence.

Dalit Manhood in the break: fugitivity and literary refusal in the Dalit Panthers

Tanay Ghandi (University of Southampton)

This paper develops a novel and radical reading of the politics of Dalit literature in the works of the Dalit Panthers exemplified here through Namdeo Dhasal and Baburao Bagul. Engaging with new translations of ten of their texts (some of which have never been translated into English before), the paper suggests that we find in Dhasal and Bagul the performance of a literary politics constituted by fugitive departures and refusals. Building on a Rancièrian reading of Dhasal and Bagul's work, I show how they write a dismantling of literary form and its strictures – and of the order of bodies internal to such forms. Against attempts to identify in Dalit writing the inscription of some stable, fully-formed vision of Dalit subjectivity, I show the ways in which their work problematises the question of in/visibility – opening an interstitial break in which (from within which) they write Dalit manhood precisely as suspension; as the refusal of form, of appearance. Building on theorisations of fugitivity in Black radical thought, I suggest how this art of Dalit writing both resonates with and 'speaks back to' Rancièr's account – generating an unruly augment in which we can locate the radical politics of a restless and restive refusal in the Dalit Panthers.

Exiting Developmental Man: The Maturity-trope and its Refusal

Ruben Hordijk (Linköping University)

Building on Sylvia Wynter's framework, Ariella Azoulay argues that the temporality of imperial Man is premised on the closure of a common and plural past, through which the imperial world surfaces as the only imaginable futural possibility. Breaking with the chronoliner-progressivist frames of Man is not a question of "who will come after Man, but rather how to exit the world dominated by him" (Azoulay). Extending Wynter's and

Azoulay's analysis of Euromodernity's chronolinerity premised on the genocidal logic of disappearing non-coeval people in the name of white civilizational futurity, I read Man's chrono-politics in terms of heteronormative *developmentalist* discourses. The Othering-mechanisms that divide between the fully human, the subhuman and the nonhuman are synthesized in a developmental language of maturation: By analogy with the ontogenic development of an abstract (implicitly white bourgeois male) Child's maturation into Man (McClintock; Gill-Peterson), the notion of im/maturity organizes who is capable of sovereign self-governance and who must be governed. Ranging from Kant's definition of enlightenment to paternalistic justifications of tutelage of the colonized-qua-immature Other; from women's historic immaturity-status to the nonconsensual experimentation on trans children to "correct" development into binary sex/gender; from psychoanalytic models from infantile queerness into heteronormative adulthood to the abjection and destruction of children deemed incapable of non-pathological development, Developmental Man's maturity-trope forecloses queer and wayward becomings for a white supremacist civilizational future. What does it mean to refuse the maturity-trope? What reconfigurations of the plural past (Al-Saji) and futural possibilities emerge when we decide not to grow up? From the refusal of the dignified status of mature subjecthood and its white heteropatriarchal chrono-politics, another futural imaginary emerges of family abolition (Lewis) and queer mothering (Gumbs), based on honoring everyone's vulnerable becoming (Butler, Hedva) and multigenerational networks of care rooted in resistant inheritances of Man's disavowed plural pasts.

Walking Away from Omelas: Feminist Refusal as an exercise of Constituent Power

Ruth Houghton (Newcastle University) and Aoife O'Donoghue (Queen's University Belfast)

Within constitutional scholarship, the power to effect constitutional change is called the "constituent power". Exercises of this constituent power, often invoked in singular historicised constitutional moments, are conceptualised as a coming together of a community or constituency to confirm, affirm or ascent to the particular constitutional document. There is little space within this construction of constituent power for dissent. For Emmanuel Sieyès, who first coined the term "pouvoir constituant" or constituent power during the French Revolution in 1791, the constituent 'submits himself in advance [...] by a free act of his own will, reserving only the right to leave the association [...] if the laws that it makes do not suit him'. The right to leave the association is evocative of the image of "Walking Away from Omelas". Whilst in Le Guin's short-story, "walking away" is indicative of a rejection of the harms that can underpin utopian societies, in NK Jemisin's response to Le Guin the characters "Stay and Fight", *refusing* to abandon the postcolonial utopian project. The different approaches to refusal by Le Guin and Jemisin open up questions about the role of refusal (and in particular the refusal to participate in social norms) as constitutive in constitutional scholarship. In Bonnie Honig's feminist theory of refusal, Euripides' *Bacchae* is used to explore the "slow regicide", which starts when the women refuse to work. The refusal to perform gendered-roles, or the withdrawal of acts of service, is a rejection of how a constitution has constructed the role of women, and as assertion of an alternative constitutional arrangement. Drawing on feminist science fiction utopias and

feminist manifestos, this paper discusses feminist refusal as an exercise of constituent power.

Imaginarities of Refusal

Melody Howse (Max Planck Institute)

Critical fabulation is a concept and term that Saidiya Hartman (2019) furnishes us with to think differently about the critical space of the imaginary, a space where the archive can take on new meaning. This space of fabulation reimagines and refuses the conventions and the Colonial and Eurocentric frames that have been imposed on the Black subject. These reframing's and reimagining's are refusals to be defined by racist logics that seek to reduce Black histories and experiences to a singular narrative of oppression and pain. Instead, it is through this use of critical fabulation that the imaginary is reasserted as a central modality that reminds us how it has the power to make and break worlds. The temporality of the Black diaspora is cyclical, there are countless examples of gestural, sonic, gustatory and movement vocabularies that are utilized in the everyday and have their origin in the geographically dislocated space of the middle passage. This point of rupture doesn't signify an end, but a cleaving and fracture which we see, hear, smell and taste fractions of in the most unlikely of places. In thinking with the temporalities of refusal, how the archive isn't dead but alive and how critical fabulation is a site of reclamation and return. I take up the work of Black diaspora artists and dancers in Berlin whose work engages with these facets of reimagining and redefining Black diaspora experience.

In exploring these themes through the work of Black diaspora artists it is possible to trace what Satch Hoyt has called the "Afro Sonic signifier," what I understand as those sounds that are rich with meaning and defy literal translation. Instead, they echo different times and places to produce a resonance that connects with the ancestral embodied archive. An archive expressed through rhythm, pace, sensation, and movement, one that we can recognise in dance. It is also through such works that the critical work of fabulation can be understood as refusing the narration of Black life as narrow, when in fact it is limitless.

Building an *elsewhere within*: understanding land-based resistance through the lens of generative refusal

Jessica Johnston (University of Sydney)

Within the analytical framework of resistance, there is a commonly perceived "resistance-change syntax" in which resistance acts are understood to *precede* change. In this model, resistance is thought to 'work' – if it does at all – by engendering a slow transformation of values over time. But the centrality of linear time to this understanding of resistance necessarily implicates resistance activities in a "politics of waiting" where their ultimate impact hinges upon the future. Tied to this notion of futurity is the Western liberal narrative of progress, which asks – problematically – that we believe in the fantasy of history as progressive, and in resistance movements as the engine of that unstoppable positive change to come. This singular and linear notion of time and futurity undermines

In my work, I examine two case studies in Palestine and Turtle Island in which Indigenous bodies reoccupy or refuse to leave 'contested' geographies through the lens of generative refusal. In doing so, I position refusal as a generative posture of resistance that rejects the ongoing relations of power established by the modern/colonial world and disrupts strictly linear notions of time. I argue that generative refusal aids in two main conceptual shifts: firstly, using Gillian Rose's feminist conception of paradoxical spaces, I understand these acts of resistant decolonial refusal as not so much escaping historical structures of coloniality and their power relations, but instead producing a kind of contradictory space which critically reworks these power relations *from within* (Desbiens 1999: 183). In ways both metaphorical and very real, resistant actors walk out of the colonial-centred frame and put its power "out of the picture".

Secondly, I suggest that acts of resistance grounded in generative refusal dislocate the resistance-change syntax and assume "an alternative temporality of change" by directly establishing the futures they seek in the here and now. This is consistent with Moten and Harney's work on call and answer, in which "you are always already in the thing that you call for and that calls you". Through a politics of generative refusal, *what is to come* is not subjected to a politics of waiting. Instead, we understand resistance as an emergent intervention in which the future is an unfolding of the present; it is *already* becoming.

Glitching Colonial Radio History: echoes of non-linear temporalities in the archive

Luc Marraffa (University of Amsterdam)

The French and Dutch colonial radio archives I research mainly consist of programmes glorifying colonialism, made by colonizers for colonizers. Informed by black feminist critiques, my work partakes in efforts to disrupt the circulation of such discourses in an economy of knowledge production that preys on racialized trauma. Rather than engaging in content-based debates with these recorded discourses, I approach them through the lens of sound studies. I examine the semantic significance of sonic ruptures in recorded speeches: carnal irruptions such as coughs, hiccups, stutters, voice cracks, or technological disruptions such as crackling, loops or skips. I propose a listening session to a digitized children's programme, 'Kinderhalfuurtje door Oom Dick' (1936), recorded on a zinc plate heavily marked by its trip from Indonesia to the Netherlands. At the hand of this example, I will interrogate what counter histories can be produced from glitched archival recordings?

Following Legacy Russell, I embrace technology's malfunctions by centralizing glitches – elements meant to be cast aside as impeding on knowledge production. Glitches are productive, they act on the system which they dysregulate, thus exposing seemingly transparent systems. Unsettling the organizing system of colonial language, glitches carve a minor language of refusal: they loop a single syllable, making listeners engage with its sonic materiality rather than its semantic significance, they skip forward, withholding access to the elided time-bracket, or brutally interrupt fiery speeches which remain suspended mid-sentence. In their disruption of linear temporalities, glitches render alternative narratives audible in archived recordings: stories of lack of control, non-sensical speech and disruptive bodies, stories of warped timelines, ellipsed futures, lacunary pasts. Working with glitches to sonically fabulate alternative histories, I approach the illegibility of glitched archival

materials as a rejection of transparency and accessibility, undermining the colonial archive's function of circulating and producing of colonial knowledge.

“They won’t burn us this time”: chronopolitical refusals and coloniality in the Green Tide spirituality

Pilar Morena d’Alò (Newcastle University)

In recent years, the Argentinian feminist movement of the Green Tide proposed a form of spirituality as feminist and decolonial. Here, far from being just a cultural symbol, the figure of the Witch emerges as a pivotal political category of feminist, anti-capitalist, and anticolonial thought and action. Through a discourse analysis of feminist knowledge production, the paper examines how politics of time constitute the discursive fabric of the Green Tide spirituality. Understanding temporality as chronopolitics (Puar, 2007), thus as an epistemological experience of time that defines urgency, the Green Tide refuses the impossibility of escaping Man, hence affirming itself as a spiritual-political actor of decolonial change for another possible world. At the same time, however, the ways in which the Witch’s temporalities are constructed, as well as what constitutes urgency for the Green Tide, uncovers an unacknowledged racial/colonial rationality, the same that enables the anticolonial position of the Green Tide. If, on the one hand, the Green Tide refuses the neoliberal politics of a financially predatory Global North, on the other it leaves unaddressed the internal colonial history of the country. In this sense, the Witch as a decolonial category of feminism from the South is possible only through tropes of Indigeneity that risk perpetuating the structural marginalisation Indigenous People in Argentina. A chronopolitical articulation, finally, that discursively refuses Man and positions the Green Tide as a movement that can represent all identities in struggle. But where the refusal to address colonialism’s racial consequences within Argentina brings the Green Tide to elide the political possibilities of centring the historical and contemporary struggles of the country’s racial others. Citing the initiatives of the Argentine Indigenous Women Movement for the Good Living, the paper concludes by drafting the contours of what other radical frameworks we might be overlooking.

Caring for Images: Computational Anonymization, Refusal, and Dissident Documentation

Arantxa Ortiz (Brandeis University)

This piece is based on a contribution to a series titled *Relating, Refusing, and Archiving Otherwise*. The series is centrally concerned with the circulation of images of state and border violence, its impact on our apprehension of the oppression directed at illegalized people, and possible imaginaries for crafting dissident documentation practices that steer away from a politics of recognition centered on transparency and disclosure. As an activist and visual anthropologist studying the implications of the digitalization of biometric registration systems for illegalized immigrants, and emerging grassroots efforts to counter such exclusion, I found myself with a recurring dilemma: documenting such efforts without exposing activists—who actively sought visibility and recognition—to further physical and/or digital surveillance.

such exclusion, I found myself with a recurring dilemma: documenting such efforts without exposing activists—who actively sought visibility and recognition—to further physical and/or digital surveillance.

I draw on Judith Butler's reminder that "the photograph is not merely a visual image awaiting interpretation...but itself actively interpreting, sometimes forcibly so" (2009, 71) to consider questions of representability, refusal, and recognition (Camp 2019) in relation to what has become a "migrant image." With the heightened awareness that most images that become publicly available are used to train the very same facial recognition algorithms used to profile, target, and surveil non-citizens, people on the move, and negatively racialized populations, how are we to contribute to the documentation of such struggles and counter the digital hypervisibility to which such demographics are exposed? How ought we to document otherwise and care for the afterlives of the images and artifacts we produce, collect, or keep custody over?

I consider a set of dissident methodologies for working with audiovisual artifacts and offer some reflections on the affordances and limitations of drawing on technologies such as computational anonymization for bringing about experiments in refusal. What kinds of compromises, if any, do we consent to, when pursuing such "creative-critical ways" (Alvarez Astacio, Dattatreyan, Shankar 2021) of engaging liberatory struggles?

Narrating the impossible: a double-dialogue between Saidiya Hartman, Carmen Maria Machado, Kathy Acker and Lidia Yuknavitch

Arianna Preite (University of Bologna)

"What is required to imagine a free state or to tell an impossible story?" – asks Saidiya Hartman in *Venus in Two Acts*, within the opening of Carmen Maria Machado's memoir, *In the Dream House*. An attempt to answer that same question is also found in the pages of Lidia Yuknavitch's memoir, *The Chronology of Water* which takes Kathy Acker's *Blood and Guts in High School* as a narrative model for telling an impossible story. Drawing from their shared experiences of trauma, particularly as women navigating oppressive systems, these authors employ innovative narrative techniques to transcend conventional storytelling boundaries. Their works serve as conduits for imagining alternative states and storytelling possibilities, crucial in an era where pessimism dominates discourse regarding the future. The presentation is positioned within ongoing discussions on anti-utopia and the crisis of imaginaries, exploring its impact on narrative. The reflection aims to underscore the refusal strategies utilized by these authors to surpass the narrative limitations of crisis and trauma, presently immobilized, and to discover innovative perspectives for envisioning and reimagining reality. Through temporal manipulation and narrative fragmentation, these authors navigate the complexities of their lived experiences, blurring the lines between memoir and experimental fiction. The presentation critically engages with the interplay between personal narratives and broader sociopolitical critique, underscoring how these authors redefine the boundaries of storytelling. By analyzing the strategies employed in both memoirs and experimental texts, this contribution illuminates the ways in which imaginative ideas are generated beyond individual life stories.

Anti-dialectical noise, improvisation and the temporality of Black social life

German Primera Villamizar (University of Brighton)

What if the priority of resistance to power or counterstatement to statement were something on the order of a previousness without origin, or even a haunted, precedential re- or misunderstanding of origin as an original disturbance?" (Moten, *Stolen Life*, 20). At stake here is the anti-ontological character of improvisation, that is, the question of whether the improper, fugitive nature of Black social life can be conceptualised without a determinant relation to social death. This paper revisits the debate between Afro-pessimism, which views improvisation as fundamentally and categorically constrained, and Black optimism, which sees improvisation as a refusal of the necessity in which it emerges. It argues that improvisation, as black noise, is a form of refusal that suspends the struggle for recognition and, with Moten's insights, continuously and ubiquitously re-establishes itself otherwise and "at another time, neither here nor there nor here and now" (Ibid, emphasis added). Against the ontopolitical conflation of Blackness and social death, this paper examines the generative force of refusal, focusing on improvisation as an anti-dialectical tonality of Black social life and one that provides a means to wrestle with the linear temporality of modernity.

Songs of Refusal

Paul Rekret (University of Westminster)

This paper brings theorisations of the refusal of work into dialogue with key figures in the Black radical tradition in order to conceive of song and musical practices as a refusal of the discipline of the wage and capitalist control over labour. The idea of the refusal of work is mainly associated with the Italian Marxist journal *Quaderni Rossi* founded in 1961 by Antonio Negri, Mario Tronti and Raniero Panzieri, among others, who develop the notion of labour struggle as an originary force which capital can merely capture and subsume. This is a framework later further extended by feminist scholars and activists to encompass struggles over unpaid domestic or reproductive labours gathered under the ideology of the family. But this notion of refusal tends to assert labour as an independent identity and so both reiterate the reductions of human activity upon which capitalist subsumption is premised as well as centre on the factional identities of (white) factory labourer and housewife.

Conversely, we can locate a distinct notion of refusal in accounts of aesthetic sociality as it is developed among key figures in the Black radical tradition, from Amiri Baraka to Paul Gilroy, Sylvia Wynter, Stuart Hall and Fred Moten, among others. Here, what Wynter called "economic marginality", exclusion from the full rewards of wage labour and the protections of citizenship, is reconfigured as a potent liminality. Where social life is lived as unassimilable, marginality can become the site for resistive cultural forms and it is on this basis that this paper seeks to outline a view of song as a mediator of oppositions and struggles over the historical form of capitalist time.

Future-Telling for improvised worlds to come

Camila da Rosa Ribeiro (Tampere University)

This creative contribution entwines philosophy of blackness, performance and childhood to engage with 'the future' as a field of refusal to the modern representation of the World - with its violent operations. The World, which is the World of Man, is woven from the threads of time and space, forming its most fundamental metaphysical fabric (Ferreira da Silva, 2018). Within this intricate tapestry, the future remains intricately bound to the foundational metaphysical principles that govern the World. In 'the world as we know it', estimations, predictions, and comments about the future cannot avoid but relating to the anti-black expropriating apparatus of colonial violence. The future, more blatantly the future of the 'Others of Europe', are caught in a cause-consequence binary logic presupposing those Others' future-existence as effects of the racial/colonial order. This study explores a Poethics of Blackness (Ferreira da Silva, 2014), announcing possibilities for the demise of the Subject, as well as worlds and futures otherwise.

'What happens as we face the future' has been the orienting question for the study, delving into the connections between futures and pasts beyond the lexicon of causality and sequentiality. The question has been pursued by writing childhood memory stories about moments when we faced futures. The stories become the 'material' for the co-creation of a 'future-telling' deck of cards. The fortune-telling cards release the stories from the confinements of individual experience to tell about time-passage in and across the world's material and political constitution, to improvise new worlds.

I will present 2 (out-of-21) cards. Each card brings a unique image and text opening up different kinds of futural affective relations. These new relations accord to those described in the stories but deterritorialise them, de-centering the individual teller's past and present. The system does not intend to predict scenarios but rather act as a medium to enhance the participants' sensibility to non-linear temporalities while improvising incipient futures.

Decolonial Music Activism Kit: Musicking Activism with Afro-Descendant and Indigenous Communities in the Caribbean

Ivan Txaparro (Resonar Lab)

This contribution will describe the process and results of an immersive artistic experience, developed in small towns in the Colombian Caribbean. It belongs to a long-term participatory process that points at carrying out experiments of music activism, decolonial thinking, epistemologies of the south and civic participation through the promotion of artistic community co-productions.

I will focus on the initial stage of the project, carried out in San Basilio de Palenque, the first free African town in the American continent after European colonial invasion, which was declared a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2005; a place where I developed an initial experiment of participatory musicking, counter-history and artistic civic participation.

The results of such project encompass a series of community-based music co-productions and interventions in public space related to silenced versions of history and the music traditions, intangible patrimony and creole language of San Basilio de Palenque.

The research methodology put together: Latin American decolonial politics, activist music, decolonial applied ethnomusicology and participatory musicking.

The following video is one of the results of the participatory co-productions alongside the Palenquero community. We started by discussing the factors that Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples in Colombia feel threaten their most cherished traditions, which led us to co-create a 'Caribbean folkloric hip-hop' song, where we reflect upon the causes of the latest and most relevant world problems, featuring a mix of Spanish and Palenquero language.

The Ghosts of other stories, insurrections, and dub

Am Ubhi (Independent Scholar)

In this paper I will focus on one cultural artefact, *Handsworth Songs*, a 1986 film by the Black Audio Film Collective, which represents this relationship of periphery between dub and socio-political uprisings in late 20th Century Britain. *Handsworth Songs* is a richly layered documentary representing the hopes and dreams of post-war black British people in the light of the civil disturbances of the 1980s. It engages with archives of Britain's colonial past, public and private memories, and the struggles of race and class. The title refers to the riots in Handsworth, Birmingham during September 1985, and yet it is eerily representative of the many events of riots throughout the 70s and 80s, and even the present day.

The riots of 1970s and 80s postcolonial Britain were a crescendo, a visceral moment that shattered the surface of British life, exposing the roots that are buried deep in its history. *Handsworth Songs* refers to 1985 Handsworth and Tottenham, but it could have been 1979 Southall, 1981 Brixton, 2011 Tottenham. The film seems eerily (un)timely. Mark Fisher said in the wake of the 2011 riots: "The continuities between the 80s and now impose themselves on the contemporary viewer with a breathtaking force: just as with the recent insurrections, the events in 1985 were triggered by police violence; and the 1985 denunciations of the riots.

Handsworth Songs are Songs of refusal. Just as dub re-imagines the song, and explores the peripheries, Trevor Mathison's dubbing, echoing, creaking, industrial chugging, and welding of corrugated iron, creates a melancholic soundscape which disrupts the comfortable hegemonic narrative of the state and media sponsored archive to suggest that riots were in fact new ways of political becoming.

Dub is like a riot, or an uprising, or an insurgency, or an insurrection. And like dub, these events take place on the periphery of a story; 'there are no stories in the riots, only the ghosts of other stories' (*Handsworth Songs* 1986). A series of memories; displacement, dispossession, colonialism, state repression, policing, tell the stories of a riot, as they do a dub.

One of a few *Handsworth Songs* which the paper explores is *Jerusalem* by Mark Stewart; a song reimagined, reworked, reconfigured. It is set to dubbed out bass and percussion, and a Jamaican voice reinterprets Blake's original to his own speed and style. Kudwo Eshun describes it as a "dub-refracted cut-up version... which makes a bid for an

account of Englishness from which 'Blackness', far from being something that can be excluded, becomes instead the only possible fulfilment of the millenarian promise of Blake's revolutionary poem." Trevor Mathison's dub found a way in which to detach the archival fragments from the ways in which they have been framed and determined in the past and allow them to say something else, allowing 'the ghosts of other stories' to be heard.

Figurations of Refusal in Édouard Glissant's Thought

David Ventura (Newcastle University)

Recent years have witnessed calls for a form of "abyssal" critical theory that takes as its starting point the brutal historical experience of transatlantic slavery and its afterlives. Drawing inspiration from Édouard Glissant's varied reflections on that experience and key interventions in Black studies (e.g. Sharpe 2016; da Silva 2022), recent scholarship has argued that theory must not only seek to rethink subjectivity in terms of what Glissant calls the "abyss" of the Middle Passage (Drabinski 2019; Chandler and Pugh 2023), but must also seek to adumbrate alternative practices of decolonial resistance, such as *refusal*, that aim towards the *desedimentation* and *destruction* 'this' world, rather than towards the creation of *future* worlds and imaginaries (Chandler and Chipato 2023). This paper returns to Glissant, and to two distinctive figurations of refusal in his work (namely, "the silent walker" in *Poetics of Relation* and "the nameless person" who speaks only in the past tense in *The Overseer's Cabin*), to challenge this latter suggestion that decolonial resistance should posit no future orientation. I suggest that while Glissant's refusing figures certainly highlight the necessity of desedimenting the colonially scripted world and its epistemes, they also index a unique *temporality of refusal* that does not separate the task of desedimentation from the imaginative beckoning of alternative worlds and imaginaries. With such poetic figurations of refusal, that is, Glissant is not only insisting on the desedimentation of this world, but is also prophetically signalling future ways of living beyond the ongoing dehumanizations of coloniality.

Organization

Temporalities of Refusal is collaboratively organized by members of [Newcastle University's School X](#) and the University of Brighton's [Centre for Applied Philosophy, Politics and Ethics](#), and generously supported by the Leverhulme Trust.

Lead Organizers

[David Ventura \(Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in Philosophy, Newcastle University\)](#)



David is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at Newcastle University currently working on a post-doctoral project titled *Thinking the Racialisation of Time with Édouard Glissant*. Drawing on Glissant's theoretical and literary corpus, and other thinkers who explicitly think time in relation to the history of transatlantic slavery, David's current research seeks to diagnose and challenge the main temporal configurations that effectuate and sustain systems of racism in today's world.

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Cover design

The programme cover was designed by [Lo Moran \(Artist based in Berlin\)](#), using [The Redaction typeface](#) produced by Titus Kaphar and Reginald Dwayne Betts, which seeks to highlight the redactive violence to which racialized and marginalized peoples continue to be subjected across the world today.



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