“Flesh like One’s Own”:
Benign Denials
of Legitimate Complaint

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Tout moun se moun, men tout moun pa menm.
[All people are people, but not all people are the same kind of people.]
—Haitian proverb

There is no shortage of known global “bad guys.” They are the racists, the sexists, and the otherwise intolerant. They are the ethnocentrists and the bullies, the fanatical and the profiteering, the close-minded and the cruel. They are easily recognized. Their exploitative, scaremongering, and willfully ignorant tactics can be contested and sometimes even contained by any number of compelling progressive discourses. Less discernibly dangerous are those plat-

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forms and discursive threads that, though cloaked in deracialized scripts, rely on and shore up the foundations of overt bigotry. Tacitly aligned with the divisive attitudes that foster exclusion, these outwardly benign discourses are conditioned by the uncomfortably linked issues of race, space, poverty, and fear. At their core is a long-standing equivalence between blackness, materiality, and alterity: that is, the black body as irretrievably and mindlessly needful other. While this phenomenon is, of course, well known, less evident perhaps are those ostensibly anodyne contexts in which, in this aspirationally postracial North Atlantic moment, blackness and antiblackness persist as specters, even as raciality and racism are repressed.

There are a number of benign denials that at once reflect, sustain, and allay “First World” anxiety in the face of undesired (but increasingly inevitable) proximity to the “Third World.” Tracing a continuum among popular news media, the humanitarian telethon, and the Hollywood film industry, we can see clearly the ways and extent to which obliquely linked sociogenic discourses allow people in the North Atlantic to deny commonality with and accountability to peoples of the global South. How, it is worth asking, are narratives of compassion and amusement contiguous with long-historically racist scripts? “What are the mechanisms, what are the technologies, what are the strategies by which we prescribe our own roles?” (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 34). How, most importantly, do practices of distancing and containment ultimately grant permission to disregard legitimate complaint?

An ideal context within which to consider the strategic discursive denials that underpin a First World sense of security can be found in Haiti. Because to think about Haiti is to think about the whole of the Atlantic world. Haiti has long been the beating heart of an intricate corpus of narratives, ideological setups, forms of visual culture, and affective practices that are deeply and enduringly racialized. Confirmed site of disastrous not-quite-humanity, Haiti is ur-example of the Afro-abject. The head-shaking, finger-wagging commentaries on offer in mainstream North Atlantic media consistently conjure Haiti in a disparaging language and imagery of Afro-alterity, making Haiti a veritable cipher for global articulations of human versus other(ed) being. These narratives point to the “Africanness” of Haitian culture as principal cause of the nation’s economic, political, social, and other perceived deficiencies. Though often claiming to serve humanist aims or to want to “fix” Haiti, such commentaries rely on the notion of an “ontological difference” (Mbembe 2002: 246) that predisposes black Africa and its diaspora to misery and catastrophe.
In thinking through the benign denials that at once silence and depend on the “ever-presence and the phantomlike world of race” (Mbembe 2003: 17), I begin here by looking at a cast of thinly veiled “bad guys”—white men with broad media platforms whose rhetorical gestures of concern and empathy are, quite frankly, not fooling anyone. From there, I give context for the conflation of Haiti and Africa, focusing on the ways in which the North Atlantic at once affirms the impossibility of black sovereignty and maintains a fantasy of its own innocence in the face of Afro-dysfunction. I then take a close look at the visual narrative sustaining this fantasy, the conflation of Haiti and black Africa via the circulation of images of Afro-abjection. I show how the supposedly sympathetic (sympathy-inducing) depictions of global blackness produced by aid discourse and, crucially, the telethon affirm the reassuring material-cum-ontological borders that draw a sharp line between “us” and “them.” Last, I bring in the zombie—in both its Haitian specificity and its global metaphoricity. I argue that the figure of the zombie can give us (back) race in contexts that have made race largely instantaneous of class phenomena or otherwise incidental. That is, while the contemporary zombie makes no explicit reference to blackness, it nonetheless taps into racial fantasies that lead us right back to Haiti and to Africa—to Haiti as Africa in America’s backyard. I lay side by side the pieces of a narrative patchwork that, in their ensemble, form a comfortable quilt—a security blanket shielding the First World from its proximate others.

O Haiti é aqui. Haiti não é aqui.

[Haiti is here. Haiti is not here.]

—“Haiti,” 1993 song by Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso

While the idea of a foundational African identity has certainly marked affirming representations of Haiti, positively inflected constructions of the nation’s African sociocultural foundations are few and far between in the global North.1 More

1. Scholars like Jean Casimir, Carolyn Fick, Laurent Dubois, and John K. Thornton, among others, have noted the demographic factors that had a hand in the success of Haiti’s revolution, emphasizing the “transcultural” nature of the former slaves’ triumphant bid for freedom. Haiti’s “Africanness” is celebrated in the work of early to mid-twentieth-century indigenist intellectuals as well. Jean Price-Mars’s 1928 collection of anthropological essays, *Ainsi parla l’oncle (So Spoke the Uncle)*, condemns the Haitian elite’s shortsighted refusal to acknowledge and valorize the fundamentally African nature of Haitian peasant culture as potential counter to the imperialist agenda of the US occupiers. President for Life François Duvalier’s contributions to the Afrocentric journal *Les griots* (1938–40) and his noiriste (black supremacist) political platform as a whole were based
common (or at the very least more strident) is the idea of Haiti as stunted by its ties to the so-called Dark Continent—a sort of savage misfit stubbornly anchored in the space of the white, Western Americas. Haiti has long been characterized as “the political, economic, and environmental wreck of the Western Hemisphere” (Potter 2009: 226), stuck immutably in a rut of postrevolutionary failure due largely to its refusal—or its inability—to reject its African cultural inheritance and to properly embrace opportunities for Westernization. Casting the republic’s more than 200-year existence as a single, repeating story of bloody coups, political corruption, economic collapse, and demands for international humanitarian aid, Euro–North American media suggest that suffering and violence are essential, endemic “Afro-” conditions rather than contingent sociohistorical realities.2 This perception has colored international discourse concerning Haiti since its population of formerly enslaved blacks established national sovereignty in 1804. Yet the extent to which Haiti-as-Africa circulates as site-sign of pitiable and consumable otherness has been visible in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake more so than ever before.

The US media in particular took up the narrative of Haiti’s darkness with a vengeance in the period immediately following the earthquake. From mogul and televangelist Pat Robertson’s now notorious claims about Haiti’s “pact with the devil” as quid pro quo for its independence to New York Times editorialist David Brooks’s (2010) depiction of Haiti as irremediably poor and misery-prone due to the “progress-resistant cultural influences” that characterize the “voodoo religion,” Afro-spiritual practices in Haiti have been cast as more and less directly responsible for the country’s perceived social, political, and economic disasters—up to and including its devastation by the earthquake.3 Similarly, in an editorial for the Wall...
Street Journal" tellingly titled "Haiti and the Voodoo Curse: The Cultural Roots of the Country’s Endless Misery," Tufts University professor Lawrence E. Harrison (2010)—incidentally, the director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission to Haiti from 1977 to 1979—claims that "voodoo" is "without ethical content" and that this foundational failing explains the nation’s vulnerability. These degrading mediatizations of Vodou are particularly expedient othering mechanisms—ways of denying Haiti’s proximity via a peculiar turn of the tongue that presents the nation as at once dangerously close and reassuringly far. Speaking from a place of purported sympathy or concern, these kinds of blame-the-victim discourses are all too common. They deploy a multipronged narrative of stasis and ahistoricism disseminated via an ever-repeating set of othering claims and policies, wherein the former justify and support the latter.

Conservative US pundit Bill O’Reilly’s comments to a live audience of thousands (and, after the original broadcast, to an even larger cyber audience) only eleven days after the earthquake offered a dramatic instance of such distorted framings of the relationship between Haiti and the First World. During a stop on his 2010 Bold and Fresh Tour, O’Reilly (2010) made the following off-the-cuff comment to his interlocutor, conservative US pundit Glenn Beck, as part of a broader dig he was trying to make at President Barack Obama: “If you’ve ever been to the South Side of Chicago, I mean, it’s a disaster. All right? It’s like Haiti. . . . I’ve been to Haiti a couple times, and I support some charities there. But Haiti just never gets better no matter how much money you put in there because they don’t have a system.” In these throwaway remarks, in which the topic of discussion is a blighted community in the United States and not Haiti per se, O’Reilly makes particularly revealing use of the Haiti-as-disaster trope. He leans on the essentializing presumption that Haiti can signify beyond itself to evoke other pathologized Afro-spaces. And not unlike Brooks, O’Reilly implies that, despite the best efforts of generous and patient North American patrons, Haitians have proven themselves fundamentally incapable of improving their own condition. If things haven’t gotten any better for Haitians, it is no one’s fault but their own.

Crucially, such claims serve a deculpabilizing function—"a shield,” as Haitian anthrohistorian Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1990: 7) insists, “that masks the negative contribution of Western powers to the Haitian situation”—and imply that con-
temporary reality in Haiti is an isolated outrage in an otherwise well-functioning geopolitical context. The earthquake’s devastating impact in Haiti provided an efficient point of departure from which to confirm this long-standing characterization of the nation’s ontological vulnerability to disaster—both man-made and natural—a characterization that insistently denies the destructive impact of Western intervention in Haiti’s economic and political affairs over the course of the past two centuries. Such tacit denials of complicity and concomitant claims to want to uplift the ill-fated Haitian republic eerily echo First World claims regarding state failure in sub-Saharan black Africa. At work is a narrative of blamelessness that is a further point of conflation between the Haitian state and the African subcontinent. This narrative recalls suggestions that the emergence of neocolonial dictatorship in postindependence Africa was simply a manifestation of the inherently warlike “tribalism” of indigenous black-African culture, as opposed to a direct consequence of the tyrannical model of governance, the reckless border

4. One might mention, among other negative contributions, (1) the 1825 debt whereby, under threat of renewed war, the French state obliged its former colony—a sovereign nation—to indemnify it for the loss of real and human “property” to the tune of F150 million (equivalent to about US$21 billion today) in exchange for recognizing Haiti’s status as a republic, initiating a cycle of debt that persists to the present moment; (2) the twenty-year US Marine occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934 under Woodrow Wilson, during which time Haiti served as a military bulwark against German imperialism while being transformed into an import economy whose primary resource was low-wage labor; (3) the Central Intelligence Agency’s support of the Duvalier regimes of the 1970s and 1980s, during which time Haiti served as a military bulwark against Fidel Castro’s communism while its leaders’ brutal and corrupt governance was underwritten by the United States; (4) US support of the military coup that ousted democratically elected Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004, at which time the United States stepped in to protect its manufacturing interests in Haiti; (5) the devastating mass extermination of Haitian pigs in the 1980s; (6) the rice fiasco in the early 1990s, for which Bill Clinton has apologized publicly, given his responsibility for initiating the trade policies that destroyed Haitian rice farming; he admits to having made “a devil’s bargain” (one cannot make up this kind of irony); and (7) the current UN occupation of Haiti and, specifically, the UN soldiers’ introduction of cholera to the island, a disease that had never before been endemic to Haiti (where contagion is concerned, one might ask, who should be worried about whom?).

In the introduction to Haiti Unbound: A Spiralist Challenge to the Postcolonial Canon (Glover 2010), I offer a detailed discussion of the ways in which Haiti is made exceptional with respect to other former French colonies of the Caribbean region, especially by postcolonial and Haitian studies scholars. See also geographer and anthropologist Amy E. Potter’s discussion of geographer Thomas Anderson, who stated that “aside from Haiti, the Caribbean is not a backward region” (quoted in Potter 2009: 210; Potter’s italics). In their remarks, both Robertson and Brooks make a point to compare Haiti to its more economically prosperous, more politically functional island neighbor, the Dominican Republic.

5. See Barbara Browning (1998: 9): “This country’s [the US’s] capacity for political control creates an illusion of difference, and distance. But of course, Haiti, too, is here—Haiti is not here.”
drawing, and the promotion of interethnic conflict that marked the European colonization of the region.

Thus, whether we are talking about Haiti or Africa, underlying Euro–North American perceptions of both places is a claim about the hopelessness of black self-rule and a corresponding Western refusal to be implicated in contemporary Afro-realities. Ultimately, it is as somehow as if neither Haiti nor Africa is any “historical part of the world” (Hegel 2004: 99). Except, where for G. W. F. Hegel Africa’s ahistorical nature was conceivable due to its presumed literal, geographical, noncontact with Europe, contemporary Haiti has been made ahistorical despite its embeddedness in the very heart of the modern American hemisphere. In both instances, the “Afro-” is rendered forever fixed in dystopian time through a disavowal of historical relationships that implicate nations of the West.

Finish your plate. Don’t you know there are people starving in Africa?

As an adolescent growing up in a bourgeois suburb of New York City in the 1980s and 1990s, my “knowledge” of sub-Saharan Africa was entirely conditioned by images of misery. As far as the US media was concerned, black Africa was famine and flies and outstretched hands—Mother Nature turned against human beings. Suffering—over there—was seemingly without bottom. But I could do my part to help, Sally Struthers and others assured me, “for the price of a cup of coffee.”

In these and other such well-meaning commercials, brown children and women stared either pleadingly or ingratiatingly or numbly—and always silently—into

6. Popularized by Save the Children in the 1990s, this tag still functions in humanitarian rhetoric as a means of soliciting charitable contributions from members of wealthy nations. Highlighting the vast capital disparity between peoples of the First and Third Worlds, such tags are reminders of the unchanging power hierarchy that frames the relationship between more- and less-human humans. The website for the UN news agency Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN 2011) currently features an article titled “Saving Lives for the Price of a Cup of Coffee.” The article is an extended pat on the back for the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization that lists the various European and North American donors, led by America entrepreneur Bill Gates, who contributed monies to fund vaccination programs in nineteen of “the world’s poorest countries.” The article is accompanied by several photographs leading to other news items, the majority of which feature women or children, or both, and captions such as “Children involved in Mali fighting,” “Combating child malnutrition in Madagascar,” “Haiti’s homeless hotel,” and “Women without men vulnerable in South Sudan’s refugee camps.”
the camera, while the voice of a presumably First World narrator reminded me that “for just pennies a day” I could make things less bleak for those anonymous and faraway (i.e., nonproximate) bodies.

Little distinguishes those mid-1980s and 1990s representations of brown, especially African, personhood from depictions of Haitians during the period following the 2010 earthquake. At work in both contexts are phenomena of categorization and devaluation that operate in tandem with humanitarianism. In both contexts, it is suggested that disaster is a state of being, as opposed to an event. It is implied that Afro-bodies are at once essentially prone to and built for suffering, a narrative that echoes, of course, slavery-era claims regarding Africans’ racial “fitness” for enslavement. Overtly bigoted contentions like those made by Robertson, Brooks, Harrison, and countless others have been buttressed by a widely disseminated and graphic narrative of Haitian bodily and environmental abjection: listless mothers cradling malnourished children; dusty half-clothed men and women bleeding, screaming, sweating; tent cities teeming—hordes of sufferers, fixed at once in and out of time and space. In an online photo essay published by *Time* magazine (2010a), for example, a series of forty-three photographs offer gruesome images of immediate postearthquake Haiti. Indiscreetly depicting vacant-eyed and traumatized survivors, the limbless bodies of both the living and the dead, and literal truckloads of nameless corpses, these photos breach tacit and explicit journalistic codes. *Washington Post* staff writer Philip Kennicott (2010) asks, “Is Haiti simply an exception? Is there something about the essential status of the entire country and its people that gives the media new license?” He continues:

The Post ran a picture of a young girl, seen from behind, her torso crushed by the weight of fallen concrete. The New York Times ran a picture of a dead man on a makeshift stretcher, covered in the white dust that makes so many of the bodies—living or dead—look sculptural. The BBC’s website featured a warning about the graphic nature of its image gallery,

7. I am grateful to Darlene Dubuisson for bringing my attention to this series and look forward to her essay “Haiti’s Earthquake: Photojournalism and the Uncanny Return of the Haitian Zombie Motif,” currently in progress.

8. It is worth noting that *Time* (2010b) went on to put together a hardcover volume of photographs and commentaries, *Time Haiti: Tragedy and Hope*, which it released via its publishing branch *Time Home Entertainment*—a decidedly unsettling (or perhaps revealing) moniker, given the context. An online description of the book reads: “Dozens of vivid photographs document the pain and grief of the victims and the heroism of the rescuers. In a personal essay, former President Bill Clinton also offers his assessment of Haiti’s most urgent needs. Because those needs are so great, *Time* will donate a share of its proceeds from this book to Haitian relief efforts” (Barnes and Noble 2016). What “share” of the proceeds will be allocated to which “relief efforts” is not specified.
which included a young girl looking up imploringly at the camera while a man, half buried in rubble and his face turned away, bled profusely down his back. Old ladies are seen disheveled and almost naked; the bandages on children don’t hide the gore. (Ibid.)

These internationally circulating visual representations of an abject Haiti are very much of a piece with journalistic and humanitarian constructions of sub-Saharan Africa; they “[recall] images from Biafra in the late 1960s or Ethiopia in the 1980s” (Kennicott 2011: 13). They are so many “visual conventions” that reassure by the completeness of their subjects’ abasement. Relegated to the status of “mere, bare, naked, or minimal humanity” (Malkki 1996: 390), the mass of sufferers these images fix in the time-space of their misery “help define what section of the population rightfully forms part of the city” (De Ferrari 2007: 71). They affirm the boundaries of global citizenship.

The insistent representation of Haitians and black Africans as exemplars of debased otherness have everything to do with the establishment and maintenance of borders. They reflect, albeit subtly, repressed North Atlantic anxieties around Western complicity in the impoverishment and immiseration of global South peoples. As Sibylle Fischer (2007: 4) rightly asserts, “The most urgent issue in contemporary political theory [is] the dehumanization entailed by the exclusionary transformation of citizens and political subjects into subjects of management and control.” This phenomenon is realized starkly by the physical relegation of brown bodies to dehumanized spaces the world over and the consequent inference that survival in such inhuman spaces proves the nonhumanity of their inhabitants.9 The ideological and logistical similarities between the Haitian internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, US immigration detention centers, and refugee camps in Kenya, Chad, Congo, and Guinea, to name a few, are telling in this respect.10 Places of containment like these both generate and sustain basic ideas about black and brown separateness, distinction, and difference. Aggressively, yet obliquely, they concretize the notion that Haiti and places like it can—and, more importantly, should—only ever be understood as literally and metaphorically outside, excluded, and beyond what Sylvia Wynter names the “cartography of humanness” (Ansfield 2015: 128). If it can be argued that “intimate inter-bodily

9. See Bench Ansfield’s (2015: 125) compelling reflections on the fact of “the always already defiled status of black geographies” via “discourses that link blackness to dispossession.”

10. Ironically (or, rather, fittingly), immigration detention in the United States began relatively recently—in 1981, to be precise—as the response of Ronald Reagan’s administration to the mass migration of Haitian asylum seekers.
relations are the fundamental basis for human dignity and thus for freedom in its widest sense” (Sheller 2012: 22), the cordoning off of these nonwhite bodies serves to visually isolate what’s happening in poor places from the policies and practices of wealthier parts of the world. Their spatial positioning echoes and facilitates their exclusion, “both de facto and de jure, from the sphere of full and complete human citizenship” (Mbembe 2002: 246). Far from being neutral administrative boundaries, the parameters of the camp are policed by state agencies in service to an exclusive and excluding First World. The very fact of the camp as a confined area—an area of demarcated nonbelonging whose borders are guarded by armed forces—suggests the subtle transformation of “a humanitarian crisis into a law-and-order crisis” (Fernando 2010: 4) and emblematizes what anthropologist Jude Fernando (ibid.) calls “a criminalization and militarization of civilian society.”

The camp is thus a distancing strategy that feeds into preexisting popular conceptions of nonwhite peoples as threatening.

In the case of Haiti, especially, media portrayals of life in the IDP camps have tended to depict them as barely contained spaces of extreme violence. It is particularly important to note that the violence most often discussed since the earthquake—most emphatically mediatized, that is—has been sexual violence. Haiti’s “epidemic of rape” has been placed at the center of international aid discourse, and a clarion call has been sounded to address the atrocities perpetrated against women “forced to live in constant fear” (New York Times 2011). Yet, while it is undeniable, yes, that sexual assault is a horrifying and persistent reality of life in the tent cities, media portrayals of this “epidemic” have slyly exceptionalized the phenomenon, conveniently eliding the reality of a wider, First World denigration of the humanity of women and girls. The very usage of the evocative term epidemic makes that evident, playing directly as it does on our fears of contagion—of catching whatever it is they’ve got. Disingenuously decontextualizing, these media portrayals fail to situate in any way sexual violence against women as a global phenomenon. Instead, Haitian women “are made to bear out assumptions about non-white womanhood—and personhood, more broadly” (Glover 2015: 76). Naturally, this is “consistent with the imperial portrayal of Haiti as a country that cannot rule itself, as well as the veneration of Americans as rescuers” (Rendón

11. Fernando offers these useful formulations in the context of his reflections on the pathologizing characterization of starving disaster victims looking for food and other necessaries as “looters.”

12. Most recently, the “rape epidemic” tag attaches overwhelmingly to populations of Muslim women in European cities. This is, of course, yet another iteration of the phenomenon Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1994: 93) has described famously as the white Western project of “saving brown women from brown men.”
Black women’s suffering is particularized, then, as it is subtly claimed that there can be no universal to the experience of the most marginalized. Just one example of the many contrived discourses of nonproximity that currently surround Haiti, this issue of the so-called rape epidemic reflects an Afro-exceptionalizing tendency that reposes on and buttresses an equally persistent idea of North Atlantic exceptionalism. Far less discussed are, for example, the sexual terrorizing of black women in European and American slave society, the concept of “legitimate rape” brought to the fore in US electoral politics, and, of course, allegations of sexual abuse in the Haitian camps that have involved UN personnel. Such realities are placed in a separate sphere of consideration, and the reading and viewing public is left with the ultimately reassuring intimation that gender-based violence is most rampant in poor, foreign, brown spaces—capital “O” Other spaces. The First World is led to believe, more importantly, that this violence can be contained.

How, though, do we “good guys” get away with keeping the suffering hordes outside the gates? How do we “sell” internment and military usurpation of sovereignty to ostensibly postcolonial, postracial First World citizenries? How, in reality, do we counter anxiety about the certain fact of proximity and the inevitable contagion of misery and poverty without becoming the “bad guys” we decry? One of the most expedient ways has been to more and less subtly focus on the bodies of those who suffer. Not only have we erected physical barriers and borders between self and (Afro-descended) others, but body-based narratives of noncommonality that reject the incontrovertible fact of common human being are in wide circulation. Beyond the overtly racist commentaries of pundits, the transparent condescension of missionaries, or even the readily available images of mass brown suffering, an extensive “aid narrative” has long served as the sweet public face of First World border drawing. The telethon, in particular, is arguably one of the most


14. In 2012 US Republican congressman Todd Akin introduced the concept of “legitimate rape” into public discourse on sexual violence against women as related to the debate surrounding abortion, implying/claiming that women could only become pregnant through consensual sexual intercourse.

15. Faced with an avalanche of public outcry in the wake of Robertson’s outrageous statements, a spokesperson for the Christian Broadcasting Network defended the pastor’s comments, arguing, “If you watch the entire video segment, Dr. Robertson’s compassion for the people of Haiti is clear. He called for prayer for them. His humanitarian arm has been working to help thousands of people in Haiti over the last year, and they are currently launching a major relief and recovery effort to help the
pernicious ways in which the pathetic pitiability—the abjection—of the Afro-other has been constructed and sedimented. If, as Guillermina De Ferrari (2007: 184) argues, a globalized understanding of what is “truly human” humanity is premised on a denial of “corporeal need,” the telethon spectacularly cements oppositions that provide a powerful measure of security. A highly effective humanitarian fund-raising tool, the telethon solicits charity on a massive scale. Its beneficiaries are either the First World ill and disabled or the Third World brown and poor. “Inherently political,” it is a “pedagogic public space” (Longmore 2016: xiv). It brings us and them into a place of temporary and hierarchized false intimacy in which the categories of human being are demarcated for all the world to see.

In the summer of 1985, the first-of-its-kind sixteen-hour dual-venue concert Live Aid was broadcast to raise funds for famine victims in Ethiopia. The concert logo was a stylized representation of the African continent as a guitar and, in the bottom right corner, featured the photographic image of a naked black child standing back to the camera, ribs visible. That photograph was an attenuated iteration of the then more widely distributed images of Ethiopian children—skeletal, big-eyed, hair red from malnutrition, ludicrous distended bellies. These were human creatures, yes, but barely recognizable as such. The Live Aid concert closed with what was then the fastest-selling American pop single in history, “We Are the World,” recorded by supergroup United Support of Artists for Africa (USA for Africa). A quarter century later, in 2010, a remake of the song—“We Are the World: Twenty-Five for Haiti”—was released during the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics by a new supergroup, Artists for Haiti. Though it was recorded after the official Haiti Relief telethon “Hope for Haiti Now: Global Benefit for Earthquake Relief,” elements of the song’s lyrics and its accompanying video participated in the construction of a similar narrative of hierarchized intimacy—a narrative that suppresses “the political, or political-economic, connections that link television viewers’ own history with that of ‘those poor people over there’” (Malkki 1996: 389). It is also a narrative that echoes humanitarian representations of sub-Saharan Africa twenty-five years ago and since. As Elizabeth McAlister (2012: 26, 37) has pointed out, “Haiti has arguably come to occupy a similar position to that of the mythical ‘Africa’ of celebrity humanitarianism . . . a kind of ‘metonym for Africa’ in terms of both representation and celebrity response.” While this mode of humanitarianism is an unquestionably expedient means of victims of this disaster. They have sent a shipment of millions of dollars[...].
soliciting the sympathy needed to open wallets, such representations necessarily reduce the represented. They rely on the immutable imperfection of the other and maintain what Wynter (1992: 243) dubs a “semantic closure principle,” inscribing and reiterating subordination and thus producing a “locking in, at the level of empirical reality,” of particular populations of the socially subhuman; they inextricably “link blackness to dispossession” (Anfield 2014: 125). Achille Mbembe (2002: 246) explicitly identifies the connection between the body-based, discursive derationalizing of Africans and Afro-descended peoples and tangible, political obstacles to global citizenship:

This school of Enlightenment thought—as exemplified by positions taken by Hegel and Kant—identified in the African sign something unique, and even indelible, that separated it from all other human signs. The best testimony to this specificity was the black body, which was supposed not to contain any sort of consciousness and to have none of the characteristics of reason or beauty. Consequently, it could not be considered a body composed of flesh like one’s own because it belonged solely to the order of material extension and of the object doomed to death and destruction.

In the Live Aid concert and the “Hope for Haiti Now” telethon, the beings that flashed across television screens in Europe, Canada, and the United States certainly seemed “doomed to death and destruction.” Presented as little other than their bodies’ needs, in the visibility of their hunger and their pain they were desirable. Their will—their willingness—to (still) live in their degraded and disabled bodies presented tacit affirmation of what is perhaps an unspoken (unspeakable) First World belief in the lesser humanity of a certain type of being. Because the fact of the matter is, insofar as Enlightenment paradigms pervade our understandings of the human, the physical body is a testament to limitation—in contradistinction to the limitlessness of the mind—and is to be shunned and devalued. There is, then, something less than human about hunger. About starving toward death. Visible hunger alludes to the material indignity required for survival. It prompts the sated to imagine what the hungry may have had to do in order to not die, what they still might be capable of doing in order to not die.

The final words before the closing chorus of “We Are the World: Twenty-Five

16. “What happens when we rhetorically, philosophically, or photographically reduce human beings to their mere physical being, to their suffering, to their mortality?” asks Fischer (2007: 4), in her essay on the making-other of Haitians by Bruce Gilden in his mid-1980s photo series. “Compelled to return” to Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, Gilden (2016) says, he published a second photo series, which he narrated, titled revealingly “Haiti: Now and Every Day.”
for Haiti” declare: “Like Katrina, Africa, Indonesia, and now Haiti . . . they need us, they need us, they need us.” But as important—perhaps even most important—is what we need. If bodies are what we see, what is it we get? I would argue that we, in fact, get relief—the “Phew! Thank God that’s not me or my kids!” kind of relief. We are granted permission “to believe that no matter how bad things are here, they are worse elsewhere” (Alexander 2009: 2). The drive to consume disaster and the implication that disaster is an ontological reality for the other is, then, a comfort.

There is no question but that telethons reinforce and contribute meaningfully to this separating out of the “Afro-” world from the rest of the human—what De Ferrari (2007: 11) has eloquently described as “the dissymmetry by which ‘one’ has a body while the ‘Other’ is a body”17—and that they do so with some measure of intentionality. While aid for Ethiopia, Haiti, and New Orleans was solicited against a backdrop of bloated corpses, sick and injured bodies lying unclothed on the floors of emergency clinics, and babies on the brink of death, the 9/11 telethon, “America: A Tribute to Heroes,” was a reserved and poignant affair put together by Hollywood producer Joel Gallen, the same man who also produced “Hope for Haiti.” On television screens for “A Tribute to Heroes”: a dark room, lit only by hundreds of candles, where performers sang and celebrities delivered brief messages. Beyond this event, one would have been hard-pressed to find in the wider media any of the explicitness that so thoroughly marks the disaster porn generated in the wake of Third World catastrophe. One was more likely to find footage of candlelight prayer vigils, flowers deposited at makeshift shrines, flyers with individual faces—individuals smiling, holding beloved pets, arms wrapped around friends or family, full of life. The tone and the tenor were different. The implications were different. And no American bodies were subjected to the indignity of abject display.18 The American tragedy was exceptional and temporary,

17. See also De Ferrari’s discussion of Paul Farmer on the deployment of the AIDS narrative as a means of stigmatizing Haitians in what amounts to a pathologization of poverty. I would nuance slightly or extend Farmer’s and De Ferrari’s argument to suggest that the pathologization of poor Haitians is a subtly layered phenomenon. Lurking behind the fear of the disease, AIDS, and of Haitians’ “(literally bloody) voodoo practices” (De Ferrari 2015: 208) was and is an anxiety around the conditions under which the impoverished, diseased Haitian body has been brought into a common sphere of existence with First World US-American bodies, notably, as a direct consequence of “the poverty that promotes homosexual prostitution among Haitian heterosexual unemployed men in the context of gay sex tourism” (ibid., 78, 79).

18. These reflections call to mind the international outcry surrounding the desecration and display of the body of white American soldier William David Cleveland by Somalis hostile to the US-UN “peacekeeping mission.” What strikes me in particular is the outrage generated by the fact of the
whereas what happened in Haiti looked familiar—was part of a continuum of the relentless suffering implicit in its Afro-alterity. If perhaps we can today find more grisly images of death at the World Trade Center, these images fall well outside the realm of mainstream news sources. Images of diseased or bloodied brown bodies in the aftermath of global South tragedy, however, consistently make the front page. Thus Frantz Fanon (2004) had it exactly right: the spatial division of human beings is premised absolutely on a moral partitioning of human being.¹⁹

This is the crux of it. That is, while on the surface it may seem as if “the Haitians in the tent cities just don’t matter much” (Dayan 2016: 108), in certain ways they matter enormously. Beyond the physical and infrastructural demarcation that happens on military and other maps, the borders surrounding these and other such geographical sites of dehumanization and marginalization are critical to maintaining First World psychosocial fantasies of distance in the midst of proximity. These borders are meant to allay collective “One Percent” anxieties regarding an imminent “becoming-abject.” They are meant to hold at bay the specter of radical decapitalization, dramatic market downturns, and other looming financial crises. They are meant to calm fears of disease, of terrorism, and of irreversible environmental destruction. They are testaments to the real stakes of the First World’s efforts to constitute itself in opposition to those it maintains in a state of imperiled nonbelonging—“inseparable, contaminated, condemned, at the boundary of what is assimilable, thinkable: abject” (Kristeva 1982: 18). But, of course, the “problem” is that borders insufficiently contain abjection. They bring that which they divide into the very closest proximity. As Julia Kristeva makes clear, abjection “does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it—on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger” (ibid.: 9). Modern First World political life and the visual narrative of difference on which it relies is, then, a dedicated work of disallowing Relation with the Third World. It “entails the constant negotiation of the threshold between itself and the bare life that is both included within and excluded from its body” (Norris 2005: 8). Because, as Barbara Browning (1998: 13) convincingly asserts, “black politicization, of course, was the real scary ‘disease’ that the U.S. has always feared.” Thus it is the ricketiness of the insufficient abjection of Somalian bodies, an attitude pithily expressed by US senator Phil Gramm: “The people who are dragging American bodies don’t look very hungry to the people of Texas” (quoted in Neuman 1996: 14).

¹⁹. Writing in “On Violence” of the stark differences between the colonist’s sector of the colonial space and “the colonized’s sector . . . the ‘native’ quarters, the shanty town,” Fanon argues, “This compartmentalized world, this world divided in two, is inhabited by different species” (2004: 4, 5).
fences separating nervous “haves” from hungry “have-nots” that explains in large measure the media saturation with images of Afro-misery. Such images work to counter the ambiguity of difference we wish were real—to protect us, that is, from the encroachment of “life that fails to achieve humanity—the remains, as it were, of our becoming moral, just, and political” (Norris 2005: 4). While we tend to attribute our obsessive literal and metaphorical wall building to xenophobia, that is, an irrational fear of the foreign, it is perhaps more accurate to understand the effortful dissociation of the First World “self” from the Third World “other” as a perfectly rational fear of the same.

Here we are very much anchored in the fraught space of the biopolitical. And as such, one might be tempted to engage the best-known European interlocutors on the subject, Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben, and to leave it at that. Yet as Alexander G. Weheliye, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Mbembe, and others have noted, Foucault’s and Agamben’s reluctance to fully admit race as a foundational epistemological category limits their usefulness to thoroughly grappling with the fate of the postcolony. Both Foucault and Agamben interrogate the parameters of human rights primarily via reflections on the space of the (World War II Nazi) internment camp and, for Agamben, via the particular figure of the Muselmänner. Agamben characterizes Muselmänner (literally “Muslims”) as those detainees who, in addition to suffering from starvation and debilitating physical weakness, were notable (and despised) for their apparent resignation to their degraded state and impending death. Pushing against this frame, however, Weheliye (2008: 327) argues that Agamben renders the Muselmänner one-dimensional symbols of absolute abjection, rather than “actual, complicated, breathing, living, ravenous, desiring beings.” Weheliye (2014: 53) contends that Agamben “founds a biological sphere above and beyond the reach of racial hierarchies”—that he elides the question of race-qua-racism couched within the designation “Muslim,” focusing on the degeneracy of the Muselmänner as merely biological and thus profoundly apolitical. This perspective, Weheliye maintains, effectively discounts those historically racialized subjects who have long been consigned to a space of abjection located well outside the polis, but who nevertheless stubbornly demand recognition as human beings.
The camera was asking one of the most fundamental and perennial questions of photojournalism: Is this a thing, or a person?
—Philip Kennicott, “Codes of Exposure”

There remains another media valence of this narrative of the Afro-abject that I would like to consider now—another context in which media functions to tell those of us situated in the North Atlantic world what we want and need to hear. Picking up on Weheliye’s and others’ concerns regarding the way in which race can end up evacuated from the sociogenic constructs that determine our collective being, I want to look at the revealing alignment of a particular being—the zombie—with discourses of Afro-abjection. Like Agamben’s Muselmann, the contemporary zombie has been smoothly unraced. In its filmic iterations it is not phenotypically coded black or brown. But race is here. Race is not here. The zombie is an inherently racialized assemblage that functions generatively vis-à-vis the phenomenon of Afro-alterity and, in particular, twentieth- and twenty-first-century refugeeism. On the one hand, yes, as cultural studies scholar Roger Luckhurst (2015b: 167) notes, the zombie has “entered the global bloodstream to become an instantly recognized metaphor around the world . . . a paradigmatic allegorical mode for imagining the multiple disasters that threaten human society and the planet.” Yet, whereas the zombie is excessively protean in its metaphorical potential, I want to freeze-frame on the specific, racialized valence of its North Atlantic pop-culture purchase. My aim is to situate the zombie within the collage of ostensibly benign denials whereby unease regarding race, space, and poverty is at once reflected and relieved.

A half-alive, half-dead creature from the sub-Saharan African and Haitian folk imagination, the zombie is a pitiable being—a shell of its formerly human self. In its Haitian iteration, arguably better known than its African forebear, the individual so transformed becomes an apathetic nonperson, condemned to wander aimlessly or to serve the interests of the evil sorcerer responsible for its degradation. Metaphor for the enslaved, for the socially alienated, for the politically disenfranchised, among other suffering beings, it “survives as the remnant of loss and dispossession” (Dayan 2011: 21)—“the ultimate example of unprotesting servitude” (Dash 1997: 139). As such, the Haitian zombie is a victim: it inspires dread, yes, but only insofar as no one wants to become one. Also, the Haitian zombie is a creature with potential: it is as much alive as it is dead—it can be reanimated with salt and so retains, albeit barely, a measure of humanity.20

20. A very useful and politically astute analysis of the zombie in Haitian culture is sociologist and historian Laënnec Hurbon’s Le barbare imaginaire (The Imaginary Barbarian) (1988).
The Haitian zombie is, in these respects, specific to its context. It occupies a particular place in the insular imaginary. For the nation’s writers, it has functioned as an autoethnographic touchstone and vector for self-theorization, “an ideal metaphor through which to condemn Haiti’s social and political ills” (Glover 2005: 107), and for the nonelite the zombie is a pariah and an embodied cautionary tale. Over the course of the past ninety or so years, however, the US film industry has reappropriated and significantly retooled the Haitian zombie, to the point where there remains little by way of explicit link between the contemporary Hollywood creature and Haiti. The zombie entered into US popular entertainment during the period of the Marine occupation of Haiti between 1915 and 1934, and it was refigured in that moment into something revealing of America’s unique social and political preoccupations of the time. A symbol of all that was to be feared and subdued in the “voodoo” islands of the Caribbean, zombie tales contributed importantly to rhetorical justifications for the US usurpation of Haitian political sovereignty. Terrifying exemplar of the savagery and barbarity of Afro-diasporic spiritual practices and of unknowable blackness in general, the early Hollywood zombie served as a reminder of the stakes of American juridico-military control over its dark southern neighbor.21 This early mid-twentieth-century Hollywood version of the “voodoo” zombie subsequently gave way to a monster far removed from the sorcery-born victims of island black magic featured in films like White Zombie, released in 1932; King of the Zombies, 1941; and I Walked with a Zombie, 1943, among others. Since the late 1960s, the creature has been most often depicted in its multiplicity—as part of a threatening horde of living-dead beings.

Since the release of George Romero’s Night of the Living Dead in 1968, zombies have been represented most often as infinite and undifferentiated protagonists of the apocalypse. In video games, movies, and television shows, they are central characters in the scenario wherein civilization is suddenly overwhelmed and almost entirely devastated by a swarm of mindlessly predatory reanimated human corpses whose sole objective is to eat other people’s brains—or at the very least bite people a lot. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the filmic zombie pointedly engaged Marxist and antifascist critiques of sociocultural and political realities in the United States and Europe. Zombies were the dead-eyed consumers of mall culture, the stunned detritus of the postwar. Dazed and hungry, they shuffled aimlessly about in search of meat to eat. This phenomenon of what Luckhurst (2015b: 21. In the third chapter of The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti, Kate Ramsey (2012: 174) offers a fascinating analysis of “the relationship between the image of the zonbi and capitalist development” during the American occupation, focusing specifically on events concerning un(der)paid Haitian wage workers and the Haitian American Sugar Company in 1918.
calls “zombie massification” persists into the later twentieth and twenty-first centuries, often attaching allegorically to apocalyptic or postapocalyptic narratives in which, despairing of actually destroying the zombies, uninfected human survivors must devise ways to live with—yet protected from—the contagious ruinedness of the undead. A “result of the translation of [the] exotic zombie from the colonial margins to the imperial centre” (Luckhurst 2015a), these modern-day monsters appear very different from their Haitian avatars as well as from the zombie’s initial Hollywood iterations. First, today’s zombies appear all of a sudden and out of nowhere—they are totally unexpected. Second, these zombies are highly contagious—if they bite someone, that person is infected and either dies or contracts “zombie disease” and promptly joins the horde, biting and infecting others in turn. Third, and most significantly, modern-day zombies devour and devastate but do not actually desire anything. Or, rather, they do not desire anything reasonable. They simply want everything to be destroyed. Like them.

Yet, while the zombie horde might seem at first to be distinct from the individual, passively laboring social outcast of the Haitian folk imagination, this contemporary creature is in fact very much linked to Haiti—to “Haiti,” that is, as stand-in for the wider, browner, poorer Third World. As Sarah Juliet Mauro (2015: 99) has argued, “The zombie’s origins speak despite the myth’s reconditioning and . . . the Haitian element survives and even resists the myth’s abduction and acculturation.” Contemporary zombies draw, that is, on past and present associations of Haiti, and Afro-adjacent places like it, with abjection. In blockbuster productions like the 2010 television series The Walking Dead and the 2013 feature film World War Z, the zombies are, literally, violently ill. They are diseased and contagious beings who, though not defined by race, are nonetheless haunted by it. For, as Luckhurst (2015b: 182) notes, the “medical outbreak narrative fantasizes primitive and savage origins, such as Haiti or Africa for AIDS or the jungles of West Africa for Ebola—just as zombie fictions always have.” In other words, such narratives draw on what is ultimately a fear of contagious blackness.

Their potential humanity completely disavowed, these zombies-as-symbols are social pathogens. Negative mirrors of “those capable of intent” (Dayan 2011: 191), zombies are incapable of reason (or of feeling pain). Between their relentless drive to destroy and their status as “presumed unthinking recipients of punishment” (ibid.), they can be repudiated with all manner of great and guiltless violence. Thus do today’s entertainment zombies present us with the right to refuse and deny abjected human kin; they allow us—the uninfected—to remain innocent as we ignore, condemn, or even kill. In this, late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century filmic iterations of the zombie—speechless, infectious, purposeless,
and expendable—very neatly align with media images of camp dwellers in Haiti, throughout the African continent, and elsewhere in the global South. They justify North Atlantic methods for contending with the not fully human survivors of empire.\textsuperscript{22} Although cloaked in ostensibly deracialized scripts, their reliance on evocative visual narratives of separation and containment is nonetheless the stuff of racism.

Insofar as “reason is the truth of the subject and politics is the exercise of reason in the public sphere” (Mbembe 2003: 13), to declare the irrationality (progress resistance, superstitiousness, stubborn unsavability) of the other is to deny the political validity of that other’s right to the benefits of inclusion among the fully human. It is also to ignore the historical rootedness of the obstacles to these benefits, to pretend (fantasize) that these misery-marked beings have, like zombies, “come out of nowhere.” This denial of the legitimacy of reasoned complaint links the zombie horde most profoundly to the contemporary brown migrants, refugees, and camp dwellers who assert their status as human beings. The category of the human is jealously guarded and politically bound—and race is, of course, the social fiction most critical to maintaining this boundary. It is the last hold of visceral desire for difference enfleshed, visible difference that allows for the denial of relation and of proximity. The discomfort produced by the zombie and other others is not their difference but their disturbing sameness—their irrefutable recognizability. It is not so that “their existence is completely alien” (Stratton 2011: 192). On the contrary, they are so many “shattered mirrors” (Mbembe 2002: 268) in which we see our own distorted image. Zombies are like us enough to turn us into them. Before we know it, they can be our parents, our siblings, our neighbors, our friends. That is, if we fail to protect “our own.”

The entertainment scenario whereby we run away from and guiltlessly slaughter packs of stupid, vicious brutes is a thinly veiled psychic outlet for our fears of what the Third World wants, why it should be despised, and how it must be contained—at all costs and by any means. Allowing deprivation to signal deprivation, we suggest that to admit others into our category (to allow them to cross our borders) would lead not to their uplift but to our dissolution.\textsuperscript{23} The zombie

\textsuperscript{22} Whereas Luckhurst (2015b: 109) writes of the “nightmare of engulfment by the mass” that emerges after 1945 in a world forced to encounter the survivors of the German camps, faced with the aftermath of atom-bombing the Japanese, and steeped in post–Korean War recycled military invasion fantasies born in the late nineteenth century (ibid.: 120–21), I would argue that it is the beginning of the end of colonialism and the emergence of the Third World that must be foregrounded in thinking the zombie horde.

\textsuperscript{23} “Depravation: Pornotropes” and “Deprivation: Hunger” are the titles of chapters 6 and 7, respectively, of Weheliye’s \textit{Habeas Viscus} (2014).
horde evinces a “perception of the existence of the Other as an attempt on [our lives], as a mortal threat or absolute danger whose biophysical elimination would strengthen [our] potential to life and security” (Mbembe 2003: 18). But again, it is in its liminality that the zombie truly unsettles—in the fact that it “is not so much an ‘other’ . . . but an indication, a dark index, of what is already happening or about to happen” (Commentale 2014: 277). The zombie instantiates the inevitable violence of the earth’s most wretched, those who, because of this abject state, are evacuated of political worth and of revolutionary intent in what has become a perfectly vicious circle. Tapping into such First World fears of the inexorable vulnerability of all modern beings to the fragile world order that is our collective human present—fears that “the refugee, the political prisoner, the disappeared, the victim of torture, the dispossessed are not only constitutive of modernity but its emblematic subjects” (Downey 2009: 109)24—the zombie horde makes our case, insidiously (at the movies!), for the high fences and barbed wire, the detention centers and naval patrols that are the bulwarks of privileged modernity. It also reveals the repugnance embedded so sneakily in the notion of resilience, a label often affixed to Haitians and other, poorer peoples of the global South. For in the end, resilience can only mean a capacity for suffering combined with a refusal to lie down, to stay down, and to die. Is there anything more resilient—more despicably resilient—than a zombie? Anything more frustrating than the life that persists despite its designation as no more than bare, depraved, and abject flesh? The literally degenerate zombie horde thus scares us into accepting (frees us to accept) the premise that the degenerate creatures at our borders—the othered and the damned—must be kept from getting to us, from ruining our stuff, from infecting us with their misery, from making us as destroyed as they are. Putting race, and Haiti, squarely back into the sociogenic equation, zombies remind us that the most elusive human right remains the right to be counted as human.

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24. “In Agamben’s eyes,” Anthony Downey (2009: 110) continues, “we are not only all potentially homo sacer (homines sacri) and the de facto bearers of ‘bare life’ but this exceptional figure augurs a ‘coming community’ that is based not on rights as such but the suspension of rights.” Might the ambivalent solidarity of this “coming community”—rendered coherent/cohesive by its time spent languishing in the IDP/refugee camp, the detention center, or the New Orleans Superdome—represent the awakening of Aimé Césaire’s (1960: 74) “foule qui ne sait pas faire foule” (throng that does not know how to throng)?
One of the habits of privilege is that it spawns superiority, beckoning its owners to don a veil of false protection so that they never see themselves, the devastation they wreak or their accountability to it.

—M. Jacqui Alexander, Pedagogies of Crossing

We want, in principle, to be good people. We want to believe we are not racist, sexist, or otherwise intolerant. We want to believe we are not ethnocentric and bullying, fanatical and profiteering, close-minded and cruel. We want to believe also, though, that we are safe. And it is in the tenuousness of that desired security that we allow ourselves to be reassured by the insecurity of others. Along with actual, physical fences, we construct discourses and universal figures of Afro-abjection that we keep at a comfortable distance via “well-meaning” intercessors and our television screens. Be it in the postdisaster news cycle, the Hollywood film industry, or the business of humanitarian aid, stories of the immiserated other are meant to attenuate deep-seated industrial-world discomfort with the raced body and its material needs. We consume that which confirms and even rationalizes the precarity of human existence outside the fortifications of Western citizenship. We do not challenge the sweeping narratives of a media machine whose brazenly presumptive accounts of global human reality have come to stand in for truth.

While some of these narratives are blatant in their bigotry and can be reckoned with as such, other, less egregious storytelling practices also maintain our innocence with respect to the conditions of degraded existence that are the by-products of globalized modernity. We narrate and we legislate distinctions between those who have bodies and those who are bodies. Hungry, relentless, contagious, unthinking bodies. Teeming, swarming, excessive, barely human bodies. Zombies. For although the zombie’s black, Haitian origins are no longer at the forefront of its cultural value, blackness and Haitianness are still very much—obliquely, insidiously, meaningfully—the creature’s roots and its echoes. Positing the zombie as pivot point, I have attempted here to illustrate how exclusion from the category of the human relies on an uncanny collage of persistent, mutually echoing narrative tropes that, on the surface, might appear perfectly distinct from one another. From the flattening and dehumanizing representations of “Afro-” culture to infinitely killable throngs of grotesque nonhuman beings, our insidious practices of distancing and confinement are so many benign denials. Speaking in the voice of assistance or entertainment, they nourish the fantasy of proximity denied.
References


Benign Denials


