InVisible Culture • Issue 31: Black Studies Now and the Counter-Currents of Hazel Carby

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IVC Editors

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Will Bridges is Associate Professor of Japanese at the University of Rochester. His scholarship has been recognized by the Fulbright Program, the Japan Foundation, the Association for Asian Studies, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. His first monograph, *Playing in the Shadows: Fictions of Race and Blackness in Postwar Japanese Literature*, was published in 2020 by the University of Michigan Press. He is currently working on two manuscripts. The first is *The Futurist Turn: Anticipatory Aesthetics and Reimagining Possible Futures in Intertemporal Japans*. The second is *The Black Pacific: A Poetic History*. He is also an author of creative nonfiction.

Joel Burges is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Graduate Program in Visual and Cultural Studies at the University of Rochester, where he is also faculty in Film and Media Studies and Digital Media Studies. He is the author of *Out of Sync & Out of Work: History and the Obsolescence of Labor in Contemporary Culture* (Rutgers UP, 2018) and co-editor, with Amy J. Elias, of *Time: A Vocabulary of the Present* (NYU Press, 2016). He is at work on two books. The first is *Television and the Work of Writing*, which focuses on the figure of the television writer from Carl Reiner and Rod Serling to Issa Rae and Michaela Coel; the second is *Late Bourgeois Unities: Class Morbidity and Racial Informality in the 21st Century World*. His writing has also appeared in, among other places, *New German Critique*, *Post45*, *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, and *Cinema Journal*.

Hazel V. Carby is the Charles C. and Dorothea S. Dilley Professor Emeritus of African American Studies and Professor Emeritus of American Studies at Yale University and a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts. She is the author of *Imperial Intimacies: A Tale of Two Islands* (Verso, 2019), which was selected as one of the “Books of the Year for 2019” by the *Times Literary Supplement* and won the British Academy’s Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize for Global Cultural Understanding 2020. *Imperial Intimacies* is a history of British empire, told through one woman’s search through generations of family stories. It moves between Jamaican plantations, the countryside of Devon, the port cities of Bristol, Cardiff and Kingston, and the working-class estates of South London. It is an intimate personal history and a sweeping summation of the violent entanglement of two islands. It charts the British empire’s interweaving of capital and bodies, public language and private feeling. She is also the author of *Cultures in Babylon: Black Britain and African America* (1999), *Race Men* (1998), *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (1987), and a co-author of *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (1982). In 2019 she was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from Wesleyan University and

the Stuart Hall Outstanding Mentor Award from the Caribbean Philosophical Association. In 2016 she received the Jay B. Hubbell Medal for lifetime achievement in American Literature, awarded by the Modern Language Association.

Anne Anlin Cheng is Professor of English at Princeton University and an affiliate of the Programs in American Studies and in Gender and Sexuality Studies. She is the author of *The Melancholy of Race: Assimilation, Psychoanalysis, and Hidden Grief* (2000), *Second Skin: Josephine Baker and the Modern Surface* (2010), and most recently, *Ornamentation* (2018). She specializes in modernism, comparative race studies, and the uneasy confrontation between politics and aesthetics in the diverse fields of psychoanalysis, law, architecture, film, fashion, and other visual cultures. Her writing has also appeared in *Critical Inquiry*, *Representations*, *PMLA*, *Camera Obscura*, *Differences*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *The Nation*, among others.

Jerome P. Dent, Jr. is Assistant Professor of Communication and Africana Studies at Tulane University where he is a Newcomb Core Faculty Fellow and teaches courses on television, film, critical race theory and queer theory. He is co-editor of the New Black Surrealisms series at the African American Intellectual History Society with Tiffany Barber and is currently working on his first monograph, *Of Figures and Failure: Blackness and the Topographies of the Imagination*, in which he interrogates the deployment of figures of blackness in contemporary speculative fiction film, unsettling received understandings of blackness, visual culture, and spectatorship.

Cilas Kemedjio, Frederick Douglass Professor, is a Professor of French and Francophone studies at the University of Rochester with contributions in the fields of Caribbean and African literature and culture, postcolonial theory, and transnational black studies. He is the author of two monographs, one edited volume, and over 60 articles. He is author of *Maryse Condé, Édouard Glissant et la malédiction de la théorie* (1999), *Mongo Beti: le combattant fatigué. Une biographie intellectuelle* (2013), and *Mémoires des années de braise. La grève estudiantine de 1991 expliquée/Remember the Flame: White Papers from the 1990 Yaoundé University Strikes* (2013). His current project seeks to unearth the genealogies of humanitarian interventions in Africa, and their attendant and uneasy connections with the African Postcolonial Condition.

Kathryn A. Mariner is the Wilmot Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Visual and Cultural Studies at the University of Rochester. Dually trained in cultural anthropology and clinical social work, she often integrates art into her ethnographic practice. Her book, *Contingent Kinship: The Flows and Futures of Adoption in the United States* (University of California Press, 2019), explores the visual, temporal, economic, and

affective politics of transracial adoption. Her work also appears in *Cultural Anthropology*, *Public Culture*, *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology*, and *American Anthropologist*. She is currently researching urban hypersegregation in Rochester, New York. Learn more about her work at fertilegroundroc.org.

Miranda Mims is currently the Joseph N. Lambert and Harold B. Schleifer Director of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation at the University of Rochester. She is the co-founder of the [Nomadic Archivist Project](http://NomadicArchivistProject.org), an initiative devoted to documenting and preserving the African diasporic experience. Mims is the co-author of the chapter, “Getting out of the Archive: Building Positive Community Partnerships and Strong Social Justice Collections,” and is co-editing the forthcoming anthology, *The Evidence: Black Archivists Holding Memory*, which will explore the archival experience across the global Black world.

Darren Mueller is Assistant Professor of Musicology at the Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester. With a focus in jazz studies, his research examines how technologies of sound reproduction alter musical performance in jazz and the construction of racial ideologies in the United States. He is co-editor of *Digital Sound Studies* (Duke University Press, 2018), an essay collection exploring the intersection of sound studies, digital technology, and multimodal scholarship.

Matthew Omelsky is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Rochester, where he’s finishing a book manuscript on the experience of time in global African diasporic aesthetics. Before coming to Rochester, he was the Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow for the “Racial Disposability and Cultures of Resistance” Sawyer Seminar based in Penn State’s Department of African American Studies. His work on topics ranging from time-consciousness and theories of black fugitivity to African speculative fiction and climate change aesthetics has appeared in *The Black Scholar*, *Cultural Critique*, *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, and *Research in African Literatures*, among other venues.

Alanna Prince is a graduate student in the English Department at Northeastern University. Her work focuses on contemporary poetry, visual culture, historical resonance of transatlantic slavery, and Black feminist theory— specifically looking into how creatives, particularly women poets, are using archival documents to retell or reimagine history from a decolonial, womanist, and anti-racist perspective. She is also invested in the digital humanities, working particularly with archives and other digital repositories to ensure that they are designed to be accessible and helpful to all people. She serves as the Exhibit Curator and Acquisitions Lead at the Early Caribbean Digital

Archive, and as an Editor for [Insurrect!](#), an online magazine for radical thinking in Early American studies. She is currently beginning to work on a yet-to-be titled dissertation on twenty-first century poetry and art.

Alisa V. Prince is a scholar, artist, and curator of visual arts and artifacts of the Black diaspora. She is a doctoral candidate in Visual and Cultural Studies at the University of Rochester. Based in critical race theory, her work focuses on the history of photography, the roles of race and gender in identity construction, and artistic forms of resistance. Currently, she is researching Black vernacular photography and investigating the spaces in which it is found. She has taught courses on Black identity, feminism, photography, and cultural capital and serves on the Editorial Board of *InVisible Culture*. She is also a visual artist, working in the photographic and printmaking mediums.

Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva is Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the History Department at the University of Rochester. He specializes in the history of the African diaspora to Latin America. His first book, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico* (Cambridge University Press, 2018) is a history of enslaved Africans, Asians and their families in Puebla during the long seventeenth century. His current research project, *In the Wake of the Raid: Freedom, Captivity and the 1683 Pirate Attack on Veracruz*, examines Black Veracruzanos' social networks after their violent dispersal to modern-day South Carolina and Haiti.

Michelle Ann Stephens is a licensed psychoanalyst and Dean of the Humanities at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. She is the author of *Skin Acts: Race, Psychoanalysis and the Black Male Performer* (Duke, 2014) and *Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914-1962* (Duke, 2005); recent essays on race and psychoanalysis in *JAPA*, *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, *Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society*, and *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*; and three recent co-edited collections in archipelagic studies: *Archipelagic American Studies* with Brian Russell Roberts (Duke 2017); *Relational Undercurrents: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Archipelago* with Tatiana Flores (Duke 2017); and *Contemporary Archipelagic Thinking* with Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel (Rowman and Littlefield, 2020).

Patrick Sullivan is a PhD candidate in the Graduate Program in Visual and Cultural Studies at the University of Rochester. He is currently completing his dissertation, *TV Sound in the Network Era*, which explores the role of sound in network-era television and the relationship between creative labor and postwar aesthetics.

Brianna Theobald is Assistant Professor of History and affiliate faculty in the Susan B. Anthony Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at the University of Rochester. Previously, she was a Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellow in American Indian Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is the author of *Reproduction on the Reservation: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Colonialism in the Long Twentieth Century* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019), which received the John C. Ewers Award from the Western History Association and the Armitage-Jameson Prize from the Coalition for Western Women's History.

Jeffrey Allen Tucker is Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of English at the University of Rochester. He is the author of *A Sense of Wonder: Samuel R. Delany, Race, Identity, & Difference* (Wesleyan 2004), editor of *Conversations with John A. Williams* (Mississippi 2018), co-editor of *Race Consciousness: African-American Studies for the New Century* (NYU 1997), and author of scholarly articles on the works of writers such as Octavia E. Butler, George S. Schuyler, and Colson Whitehead.

Heather V. Vermeulen is Visiting Assistant Professor of Feminist, Gender, & Sexuality Studies at Wesleyan University. Current projects include her book manuscript, tentatively titled *Queer Kin-Aesthetics and the Plantation Grotesque*, which reads African Diasporic literature and art with and against eighteenth-century documents from British colonial Jamaica, and a monograph on queer ecologies of Blackness and Indigeneity in Ellen Gallagher's art. She is the author of "Thomas Thistlewood's Libidinal Linnaean Project: Slavery, Ecology, and Knowledge Production" (*Small Axe*, March 2018) and co-author of the exhibition catalogue for *Prospects of Empire: Slavery and Ecology in Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Britain*, which she co-curated with Hazel Carby at Yale University's Lewis Walpole Library in 2014.

Contributing artists

Quajay Donnell is a Rochester, NY based photographer and writer with a passion for public art and capturing the community in action. You can follow him and his work on Twitter [@quajay](#) and Instagram [@qua.jay](#).

Martin Hawk is a Rochester based cinematographer. His upcoming exhibition [Pressure Gradient](#) explores the shades between love, rage, and rebellion as a black person surviving in America.

Erica Jae was born and raised in the 19th ward of Rochester, NY. Out of love and protection, her mother allowed her only to play from in front of her house up to the stop sign that was located two houses down. Naturally, Erica grew curious about the world beyond her parameters and in college, she majored in social sciences with a concentration in mental health. Over the last 8 years, Erica has worked as an assistant manager, a clinical case manager, and a residential counselor in various group homes. Her work has been featured on NBC nightly news with Lester Holt and published in local magazines. From an early age Erica expressed herself through writing fictional short stories, poetry, and blasting hip hop from the stereo in her room. With her camera as an advocate, Erica tells the stories of the people within her community and beyond. Her work seeks beauty in hidden gems, balance with the duality of light and dark, and stillness in the poetic rhythm of the streets. Learn more [here](#) and on Instagram [@jaeera productions](#) and [@ello_yellow](#).