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(Re)Encoding Race: Black World-Sense in Wayne Dunkley's  
*the degradation and removal of the/a black male*

### **I Illusory Body, Illusory Erasure**

In the struggle to define the nature of subjectivity in digital space, an increasing gap is emerging between those theorists who posit that race is irrelevant in the face of new subjectivities arising from digital technologies and those who see this position as highly problematic because it perpetuates inequities that are systemic in western theory. On the surface, it seems that the material body and the multitude of social constructs surrounding and defining its place(s) in culture lie at the heart of the debate. However, beneath discourses of the body lurks an even more critical and pressing question: whose codes are at play and under what conditions are they relevant?

On one side of the race divide stands a strand of new media theory which, for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways, promulgates “a conceptualization that sees information and materiality as distinct entities” that are mutually exclusive (Hayles 12). The recent work of Mark B. N. Hansen offers a case in point. For example, in support of the “generalization of ‘passing’ in online environments,” he argues that “the suspension of the social category of visibility in online environments transforms the meaning of race in a fundamental way” and “if this media transformation does erase a certain institutionalization of race,” then “it also permits a certain play with racial signifiers” that has “positive” elements (108). Central to this argument is the position that when interactors assume online identities, the absence of “the category of visibility and the visibly

marked body” allows for the “deployment of machinic means for facilitating the performance of identity beyond the constraints imposed by physical appearance” (109, 110). In other words, because the user’s physical body is not visible, the user is now free to “pass” and assume any cultural or social identity she/he desires. Furthermore, Hansen takes the position that “by decoupling identity from any analogical relation to the visible body, on-line self-invention effectively places everyone in the position previously reserved for certain raced subjects,” thus arguing that any user can equally access “the resulting abjection of the lived body from the space of intelligibility (visibility)” (112, 113). From this perspective, Hansen is equating the user’s choice of defining her/his on-line identity with the often racist impulse of forcing certain identities or stereotypical constructs on peoples outside the eurocentric dominant.

The difficulty with Hansen’s position, as is the case with other similar constructs such as N. Katherine Hayles’ concept of the posthuman, is that it relies on three key assumptions drawn from eurocentric precepts. First, it presupposes equal access to a neutral subject position by arguing that “on-line interpellation submits everyone – not just a particular subgroup – to the condition of having to pass” and that all cultures experience an equal investment in living “*the erasure of our lived bodies*” (113, 114). Second, the emphasis on visibility and, conversely, on the mechanistic implications of the invisibility of the body, presumes the primacy of vision as a defining drive in the construction of race as a social construct across cultures. This suggests that all cultures share a unified view not only of the body as a social construct, but also the notion that vision,

more specifically its absence, necessarily erases the importance of race as discourse as if seeing the body is all there is to the process of racial identity. Finally, Hansen states that “by severing imitation from visual appearance, on-line passing allows cultural signifiers to appear as what they are, social codings that have no natural correlation to any particular body and are profoundly reductive of bodily singularity” (114). From this perspective, Hansen seems to argue that the mere possibility of assuming an identity on-line somehow severs the user from the implications and discourses encoded by lived experience.

From the point of view of black diasporic and African theorists, all three of these assumptions speak directly to eurocentric histories of colonialism and slavery. In particular, on-line passing, as Hansen describes it, has a distinctly colonial feel as if assuming an identity on-line is the same as living in a racially charged culture: regardless of abstraction, identities assumed on-line are never completely severed from the racialized material body that sits at the computer screen, constructs the identity and manipulates it in real time through mouse and machine. For example, choosing to pass for black on-line might be play, but actually living a black identity is a specific form of reality: the two experiences can, in no way, be equivalent, regardless of the bits and bytes involved in an informational transaction, since in the first, one is *free* to construct and in the second, one *is* constructed by cultural discourse.

The persistence of the romanticized desire to achieve disembodiment in a race-free environment might well be viewed as an extension of other, older western paradigms. One possible candidate of such a paradigm is the “much-

vaunted Cartesian dualism” of the “binary opposition between body and mind” that emerged in “Western discourse” (Oyěwùmí 3). The process of on-line passing described by Hansen eerily seems to function as the “affirmation of a tradition in which the body was seen as a trap from which any rational person had to escape” (3). Yet, this connection is rarely acknowledged or is disavowed through theoretical positions that emphasize the emergence of so-called new subjectivities. However, as new media subjectivities import and institutionalize visual conventions from other, older media such as print, film and television, they encode both new and old forms simultaneously, suggesting the roots of eurocentric imperatives driving such paradigms may be so deeply preset that they have long since become naturalized. As Stuart Hall argues, when such codes are “so widely distributed in a specific language community or culture,” they often “appear to have achieved a ‘near-universality’” where they are no longer read as “constructed” (132). In other words, concepts seeming to be ostensibly neutral or worthy of universal application, still carry within them naturalized biases that are not easily deconstructed and brought to the foreground. Hall drives this point home when he states these are “the ‘maps of meaning’ into which any culture is classified: and those ‘maps of social reality’ have the whole range of social meanings, practices, and usages, power and interest ‘written in’ to them” (134). It is therefore worthwhile to query who profits from passing/disembodiment in a non-racialized milieu, such as the one advanced by Hansen. In short, the debate surrounding this issue is very much about whose criteria should prevail and why.

For artists, theorists, thinkers and peoples of the black diaspora, questions concerning how race, culture and technology intersect are matters of ongoing importance. Forged against a transnational backdrop that spans continents, black diasporic identities are constructed in a polysemic flow of competing histories and oppressions. As such, they not only resist encapsulation in unified theories but, more importantly, offer a variety of strategies and positions that imbue the body with relations rooted in precepts of race very different from the mind/body separation still affecting some strands of new media. Given this frame, the goal of this paper is to widen the debate around disembodiment and the body by exploring *the degradation and removal of the/a black male*, a moving artwork created in 2000 by black Canadian digital artist, Wayne Dunkley, in which he raises these very issues in a complex new media environment. Incorporating black diasporic theorists such as Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí, Stuart Hall, George Elliott Clarke and Kodwo Eshun, I will interrogate the proposition that “the body has an exaggerated presence in the Western conceptualization of society” and that this presence amounts to a “privileging of the visual” in new media theory (Oyěwùmí 2-3). Through a close analysis of Dunkley’s work, I will argue that the “world-sense” foregrounded in his use of aesthetics and narrative structure offers a view of race that extends beyond the constraints of visibility to encompass a layered, transnational black identity.

## **II *the degradation and removal of the/a black male***

To set the basis for discussion, it is necessary to introduce the particular context of *the degradation and removal of the/a black male*. As a photographer

with seventeen years in the field, Dunkley began the project with the intention of engaging in a debate on racism that embraced dialogue as a means of exposing “the racism that resides in each person.”<sup>1</sup> Inspired by “the pen and ink runaway slave posters” used by slave owners to recapture escaped slaves, Dunkley created four hundred posters featuring his face.<sup>2</sup> The bottom of each poster bears the article “a” or “the” and a blank line, inviting comments from viewers.

The posters were hung over a period of four years all around Toronto and Montreal. As Dunkley notes on the web-based artwork, [www.sharemyworld.net](http://www.sharemyworld.net), created to record the results of this process and its ongoing development, “the posters have been torn down, covered up, defaced and written on,” creating an interactive commentary that motivates users of the project to “consider their own response to the/a black male.” Used as the central visual baseline for the project, the image has several purposes, including serving as a means of hailing the user and initiating engagement. For example, in one of the linked windows that the user must move through to access the project proper, Dunkley digitally manipulates the poster to merge it with a no parking sign bearing a widely recognized international pictograph associated with prohibition: the red circle and slash on a white background. In this instance, Dunkley’s digital composition involved layering the image of his face torn from the poster and placed in the center of the prohibition symbol where the “P” for parking would normally appear. The coupling of the street sign, which invokes social authority through the expression of a regulatory action, and the poster, draws attention to the tension often experienced by African Canadians whose identities are forged in conflict

with, and defiance of, dominant society. The image, suspended on the left side of the screen against a black background, is intended to augment Dunkley's intention "to provoke thought on the subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which the black male is acknowledged or ignored," as expressed in words appearing in white print above the image. More to the point, because Dunkley's face is portrayed in direct address, the user's look at Dunkley is always returned, forcing her or him to confront the gaze of a black man as both a humanized subject and a socially-constructed object. Far from creating a universalized user position, so necessary to initiate Hansen's notion of on-line passing, the tension between subject/object and user serves to undermine the notion of the gaze: by virtue of the repetition and restatement of the poster image, so often physically debased and marked by racist commentary, the user must negotiate one or more responses to Dunkley as an individual, and to the poster as a symbol of social discourse.

Dunkley's posters may be symbolic of the racist gaze, but they also go beyond the visual by invoking a notion of racist action through their defacement from the physical alterations they undergo, the words appended to them, and the user's response. As is the case with many black digital artists, Dunkley displays a world-sense which recognizes that the gaze or the visual appearance of a black body serves as a mask for justifying othering. In a striking composition that appears on the left side of the project's main navigational page, Dunkley combines an extreme close-up of a black man's screaming mouth with a minuscule image of the poster inside it. The image suggests that all the social

probation and degradation implied by the poster are internalized in African Canadian identity, linking the visual image of the body ingesting the poster to the psychological disjunction and alienation created by racist impulses. Thus, although the posters have a visual component, they also serve as a portal for the exploration of social codes obstructed by a narrow focus on the physical body. From this perspective, race is not only a physical property expressed through skin color, it is also a psychological experience that escapes encapsulation within a purely material milieu.

### **III Black Histories, Black World-Sense**

Othering, as a social practice, can be viewed as one of the most complex activities undertaken by cultures. However, as a discourse, othering is also culturally and historically specific to time, place and nation. Hence, the codes of othering can be viewed from very different perspectives depending on the set of parameters used to determine its boundaries. It is at this juncture that it becomes necessary to recognize the importance of contextualizing experiences of race within maps and histories that are culturally specific. This is not to suggest that digital art created in the black diaspora must necessarily be ghettoized by being viewed through the lens of black histories: rather, the construction of primarily eurocentric historical frames for analysis without reference to specific black histories results in a cultural distortion of privileging the very discourses these works often seek to resist. Furthermore, as Kodwo Eshun points out, “understanding and intervening” in dominant cultural codes “constitutes a chronopolitical act” by “laying bare, manipulating, mocking” and

generally resisting the “historicizing framework” of such eurocentric constructs (292). Thus, to incorporate black histories into discussions surrounding theoretical configurations of new media “is to force together separated systems of knowledge, so as to disabuse apparatuses of knowledge of their innocence” (297). Such conflict thus engenders debate and resistance as a means of exposing hidden naturalized cultural codes, and is an interrogative process demanding polyvalent subjectivities.

As the introductory section of *the degradation and removal of the/a black male reveals*, one of Dunkley’s goals is “to provoke thought on the fact that if we look deep enough we have all felt the pain of being the other.” On the surface, this seems to be an invitation “to link this fundamental singularity of the self with the fundamental singularity of the other (of all others),” thus confronting “us with this incongruity *in the other* – the other’s incongruity with itself – in a way that compels us to recognize it in ourselves” (Hansen 123). In other words, if the pain of being the other is a common event, then the user’s confrontation with her/his own experience creates a universal subject position of other that is equivalent to that held by the black male subject in Dunkley’s project. The user, therefore, is given the opportunity to “pass” as black regardless of race.

Although this constitutes one way of reading *the degradation and removal of the/a black male*, it does not adequately account for the specificities of black experience within African Canadian histories. In terms of its mainstream historical annals, Canada is frequently held up from the outside (and the inside) as a model society of racial tolerance. However, this is a mythic construct: as

African Canadian theorist George Elliott Clarke notes, Canada's position "as a tolerant, peaceable kingdom" begins with its reputation for being "the promised land, or Canaan, for fugitive African Americans" racing towards freedom on the Underground Railway (6, 2). This romanticized vision not only obliterates the nation's own early participation in the Mid-Atlantic slave trade, it also signifies the "perpetual erasure" of the histories of its black communities from the national imaginary (5, 2). Most importantly, despite the fact that African Canadians share with African Americans "histories of slavery, colonialism, and segregation," as "minorities within white majoritarian (and white supremacist) contexts", the disparate make-up and relative isolation of African Canadian communities have resulted in a very different and sometimes divisive sense of just what constitutes blackness in Canada (16). As Clarke notes, the multiple "African-American emigrations to British North America/Canada" and the contemporary migration of individuals from the Caribbean and Africa result in "the maintenance of ethnic and 'homeland' bonds" that undermine "the primacy of racial identification" (8,19).<sup>4</sup> Compounding this difficulty is the fact that African Canadians only "account for roughly two per cent of the population," creating an "African-Canadian polity" that is not only "variegated" but also dispersed in terms of distance and geography (11, 28).<sup>5</sup> As a result, African Canadians evidence multiple black identities, each with its own set of histories, roots, routes and cultural inscriptions.

As a nation, Canada has wrapped itself in the flag of racial tolerance, frequently expressed as a "moral superiority vis-à-vis Euro-American culture" and

“the blood-splattered, gunslinging republic” of the United States (5, 6).<sup>6</sup> It is precisely this state of “perpetual white denial” concerning Canada’s racist heritage that Dunkley seeks to confront throughout the course of his artwork (10). Perhaps more to the point, Dunkley’s exploration of othering serves to underscore how African Canadians strategize “a divided being” as they cope with weaving their own identities against the grain of a social structure seemingly determined to pick and choose only those historical engagements that support the imaginary of a non-racist nation (17). For example, Clarke notes that W.E.B. DuBois’s concept of “double consciousness,” in which he describes the alienation that results from the tension between the “two unreconciled strivings” of being black and American, has resonance in the lives of African Canadians (DuBois qtd. in Clarke, 17). However, as Clarke continues, the specific historical unfolding of African Canadian cultures in Canada, “possess, then, not merely a double consciousness” in which their blackness collides with the racist imperatives of a white majority, “but also a poly consciousness” based on disparate histories of black migration, exile and long-established black communities that reach back beyond the birth of Canada as a nation (17). As a result, African Canadians experience a “quality of (in)definition” that demands a theoretical framework accounting for the process of negotiating a many-layered existence (25). Furthermore, African Canadians are “divided severally” as “adherents to a region, speakers of an official language (either English or French), disciples of heterogeneous faiths, and related to a particular ethnicity (or

national group)” as a complex weaving of cultural forces “all of which shape” African Canadian identities (17).

To solve this particular problem, Clarke turns to Edouard Glissant’s theoretical work on the Caribbean and his concept of “*antillanité*, or Caribbeanness” which conceives of identity as a “cross-cultural” or creolizing process responding to “a multiple series relationships” engendered by the myriad historical flows of slavery, indentured labor, colonialism and migration that characterize Caribbean cultures (Glissant 221, 139). As J. Michael Dash argues, “in Glissant’s vision of ceaseless Creolization, it is the synchronic relations within and across cultures that matter more than the rigid diachrony of orthodox historicism” (xxviii). Perhaps more to the point, it is Glissant’s refusal of static or universalist moorings for identity that proves most useful for Clarke, who, in turn, argues that “it is the quality of (in)definition [in African Canadian identities] that Canadianizes Glissant,” making this approach suitable for coping with the “complexity” of “the fractious African-Canadian identity” (Clarke 25). Describing this state as “*African Canadianité*, a condition that involves a constant self-questioning of the grounds of identity,” Clarke argues that “African Canada replicates a Caribbean-like diversity” and hence resists static definitions of experience and culture (25). In Dunkley’s work, this self-questioning is very obvious in the narrative structure of the website. As described above, the main navigational page of the project is anchored by a striking digital composition located on the left side of the screen, of an open mouth seemingly consuming the poster. On the lower right is a diminutive poster, which serves as an icon for

moving through various layers of the project. As the user moves the mouse in the icon's vicinity, a bar is activated, revealing that the project is divided into six books of stories: the first three, according to information included above the bar, are books of Dunkley's own personal stories. The last three are dedicated to stories submitted by users. Taken collectively, Dunkley's personal stories along with those of the project's past users, serve to create a cumulative experience that not only demonstrate the isolation of the/a black male in Canadian society, but also demonstrates how othering can be internalized.

For example, clicking on Book One of the project, leads the user to an area consisting of a black background layered with a series of four window areas, three of which feature different versions of the poster. The fourth takes the form of a television and features a rapid montage of different poster versions alternating with the words, "From this hope must grow." The way in which the windows, each of which leads to a different story, are set in discrete areas, gives a sense of the isolation and separation often experienced by disparate African Canadian communities, but also suggests a connection through race.

Furthermore, these story spaces extend beyond the parameters of the pop-up window: if the user scrolls right, she/he discovers two additional live windows. By placing some of the live areas out of immediate view, Dunkley invites users to explore beyond the frame to seek out hidden, or concealed elements, and by doing so, uncover hidden histories.

Dunkley frames his personal stories in neutral language, often restricting his recollections to merely descriptive language that leaves the user to fill in

details or emotional consequences. For example, one of the live areas features one of the posters pasted against a brick wall on which the word “sorry” is scrawled in red spray paint. Clicking on this composition leads the user to a story where Dunkley reveals how, while in a friend’s home, the friend’s husband remarks during a conversation on politics, “Goddam turban twisters. All bloody immigrants.” What is most evocative about the story is what is not said: there is no clue as to the race of the friend’s husband, nor any indication of how Dunkley responds to the slur. Furthermore, the image of the poster remains present on the right side as the story unfolds, as a means of prompting the user to make an association between the word “sorry” and the actions, or inactions, undertaken by Dunkley. The ambiguity in the story thus provides the user with space to interact with its content, in effect filling in the blanks with his or her interpretation of its consequences. This way, the user must bring to the fore privately held beliefs, thus exposing them to internal scrutiny.

Another way Dunkley creates debate is by contrasting story elements and types of othering. When clicking again on the poster icon to move to the next part of the story, the image of the poster that accompanies the story is virtually obliterated by weathering. The folds that run across the image almost suggest a series of slashes that remove any sense of personal individuation. The visual image supports the sense of erasure of identity implied by Dunkley as two men and a woman he encounters on the street call him a “fucking nigger.”

Furthermore, Dunkley’s ambiguous closing line, “the three followed and wanted

to get to know me,” forces the user to interpret the phrase according to his or her own context, as well as within the framework of the poster image.

In another example, Dunkley does not exempt his own race from scrutiny, an act that demonstrates the fractured nature of black identity in Canada. In this case, the posters are arranged in a single line along what appears to be a fence. They are placed over a collage of digitized media images, creating a relationship between the poster and the visual nature of the media images that shape our perception of the world. Portrayed in long shot and thus deprived of individuating facial details, the posters seem to symbolize the tension between their ready recognition as black men and the homogenizing impulse of a dominant society unable to distinguish between black cultures. The story that accompanies this image concerns an incident where Dunkley is almost run over by a cab while crossing an alley between two buildings.

As the user moves through the story, a second image appears paralleling the visual content of the first image. Dunkley’s final comment in which the black taxi driver calls him a “fucking Jamaican,” underscores what Clarke has described as the “balkanization” of African Canadian cultures, a process that “threatens its coherence” (Clarke 26). Vulnerable on one hand to “psychological evisceration” by the pressure of negotiating multiple racist environments, and on the other, to the “fissures and disjunctures” of competing histories, African Canadian black identity is clearly polyvalent in culture and fractured, at times, in outlook (22, 17). Thus, by creating a digital space where both the user and the

artist must confront the mechanisms of othering, Dunkley seeks to open debate by positing multiple positions from which to view racism.

#### **IV Multiple Interpolations, Multiple Engagements**

Given this context, Dunkley's own stories offer a point of connotative intersection and diversion with the user as a receiver of the narrative. However, the significant difference between past modes of media and new media, is that the user is enabled in many circumstances to enter into the creative unfolding of the narrative through interactivity. User choice thus often assists in defining the way in which the narrative is understood by determining order or depth of experience. In *the degradation and removal of the/a black male*, for example, the user not only can access the project's books in any order, she/he is also offered the opportunity of submitting her/his own stories for inclusion in the work through a button located on the main navigational page. It is in fact this process that demonstrates the project's capability of generating polyvalent subjectivities and offers support for the position that far from creating a universal subjectivity, Dunkley's use of othering serves to open a discursive space where a variety of contestations of race are generated.

Reception theory rooted in film and television can be of assistance in considering the complexity of user/artwork interactions in digital media, particularly as many visual conventions established in these media have converged with new media. Stuart Hall, for example, argues that reception of a media message can result in a range of audience responses, including the following: a "*dominant-hegemonic*" reading where "the viewer *is operating inside*

*the dominant code;*” a “*negotiated*” reading where the viewer evidences “a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements;” and an “*oppositional*” reading in which the viewer refuses the message’s validity on its face (136, 137, 138).<sup>7</sup>

This type of structure, which views consumers of media products as bringing to the process their own internalized social values (including race), is apropos to Dunkley’s artwork precisely because it invites users to actively express an opinion or contribute to the narrative debate grounded in the encoded racism in Dunkley’s personal stories.

The second story segment in Book Six of the projects illustrates this procedure. In this section, the user encounters a poster of Dunkley. In the blank space at the bottom of the poster is a live space featuring a rapid loop of jumbled letters. The instructions invite the user to click on the poster icon at the bottom of the screen to reveal the names Dunkley has been called. As the user complies, a series of names resolve from the jumbled letters, including: nigger, spook, oreo, pathetic, jungle bunny, boy, shit brown, monkey and white. Each word is then moved from the blank and is scrawled across Dunkley’s face on the poster, suggesting that such epithets become superimposed over his identity. However, with the last word, the user transitions to a new space where the racial slurs generated transform into the statement, “never will these names hold power over me. never.” The statement, which appears above a gray bar with a scattering of posters on it, offers a declaration of resistance to the many forms racism takes in Canadian society, and is an oppositional decoding of dominant stereotypes that undergird the words themselves.

As the user clicks on the poster icon, she/he is instructed to “help complete the row of posters” by clicking on and dragging a poster located on the right into an empty space on the bar. Each time the poster does so, a user’s story is triggered, providing a wide range of readings of Dunkley’s artwork from laudatory to critical, and each is expressed against a variety of poster compositions. For example, lianna’s story reveals that she lives in Oshawa and is the daughter of a black father and white mother.<sup>8</sup> She notes that because she favors her mother, she is frequently taken for white and must endure comments made at her workplace against minorities that make her “blood boil” and “heart weep.” Taking place against the backdrop of a virtually obliterated poster, Liana’s experience speaks to the deliberate dehumanization and erasure of minority subjects. In this sense, her story supports Dunkley’s own revelations and may be considered an oppositional reading in terms of the social dominant.

The user story offered by p. k. heath, offers a more negotiated reading. In this instance, heath “wishes” he had a story to offer, but recognizes that, as a product of a “whitemiddleclassprofessional family in the subs,” he has only a “vague” understanding of the challenges faced by Dunkley and other contributors of color. Although this may be regarded as a negotiated reading because heath is not openly racist and does at least recognize the privilege and limitations of his position in society, he is not openly accepting of the reality of racism in Canada. In effect, by stating that he has no story to offer, he refuses the premise that society is systemically racist: instead, this is an event that happens to others. The story thus falls into the category of white denial, and demonstrates the power

of Canada's mythic image of itself as a non-racist society. In stark contrast, "a letter from addict," challenges the validity of the artwork by stating, "Typical sorrow story from a black male, encapsulated (sic) in shit HTML/Flash and a low class interface. well done. you wasted 5 minutes of my time." Here the user begins by belittling Dunkley's position as a subject and then completes this process by denigrating the artistic merit of his work. Both these attacks are personal in nature and intended to diminish Dunkley's accomplishments as a black individual. Although the race of the individual is not apparent from her/his statement, the means of expression strongly evidence a racist attack, and the poster image that accompanies this story features scribbled lines across Dunkley's face, tying it in visually to the segment focused on racist epithets. Like the more specific racist slurs, the dismissal of Dunkley as a black man and an artist are representative of the racism present in Canada's dominant.

## **V Decoding Race in Cyberspace**

Although Hansen argues that the absence of visual signifiers "suspends the very force of the image" and thus "forms the precondition for a reinvestment of the body *outside* the image" in digital media, the fact remains that new media is in no way operating completely outside existing social codes (110). As user responses to Dunkley's artwork indicate, race remains an operational code within cyberspace, with or without immediate reinforcement of the material body. Each story within the work represents a chronopolitical digital act that both connects race in cyberspace to past social discourses as well as generating future possibilities: taken in context with African Canadianité realities, the polyvalent

subjectivities created by Dunkley and the users of *the degradation and removal of the/a black male*, demonstrate that it is well worth considering how specific black diasporic histories and theorists impact on the use of new media as a tool for creative expression.

### **Acknowledgement**

Special thanks to D.L. McGregor for her creative assistance with this essay. Thanks also go to Wayne Dunkley for providing access to his artwork. I also gratefully acknowledge the University of Regina President's Scholar programme as well as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which sponsored the research for this paper.

### **Endnotes**

1. Dunkley made this comment in an interview in About.com, available at: <http://racerelations.about.com/weekly/aa021000a.htm?once=true&>.
2. Dunkley made this comment in an interview in About.com, available at: <http://racerelations.about.com/weekly/aa021000a.htm?once=true&>.
3. The artwork, "the degradation and removal of the/a black male" is available at: <http://www.sharemyworld.net/>.
4. As Clarke notes, "major African-American emigrations" to Canada "occurred in 1783 (the black Loyalists), 1812-15 (the black refugees), 1850-65 (the fugitives), and at the end of the nineteenth century (the prairie settlers)" (8). For example, there was an established black community in Halifax, Nova Scotia as

early as 1783 (1). Despite this long-term commitment to Canada as a nation, the contributions of African Canadians to the building of Canada are routinely overlooked in national dominant historical narratives.

5. Clarke compares the African Canadian population with that of African Americans who “account for thirteen percent of the American whole” (11).

6. The power of this illusion reaches beyond Canadian borders. As Clarke argues, both Martin Luther King and Malcolm X “exempt[s] Canada from prejudice,” primarily because of the nation’s role in the Underground Railway ferrying runaway slaves from America to Canada (3).

7. Hall originally applied this system as a means of quantifying how television viewers decoded program content, but it has potential for describing the relationship between users and digital media content (135-138).

8. Where possible, Dunkley identifies users by the names they include in their stories.

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