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Racism in Foucauldian Security Studies:

Biopolitics, Liberal War and the Whitewashing of colonial and racial violence

"The fish does not see the water, and whites do not see the racial nature of a white polity because it is natural to them, the element in which they move" (Mills 2014, 76).

Liberalism has traditionally been associated with the quest for peace, not least in IR scholarship (cf. Doyle 1983a, 1983b; Levy 1988)[1]. More recently 'illiberal' security practices (i.e. torture; indefinite detention) deployed by liberal states as part of post-9/11 wars have called this relationship into question. One common response, on both right and left, has been to decry the liberal claim to use war as a means to end war (cf. Howard 2008) as a hypocritical paradox, and to blame exceptionalist rhetoric or securitization (cf. Aradau and van Munster 2009; Huysmans 2008).

Amidst this clamor, Foucauldian Security Studies (FSS) claims to mount a more fundamental critique. For FSS, the paradox of liberal peace "turns out to be not a paradox at all" (Reid 2004, 74). Instead, liberalism is predicated on the model of war, and relations of war suffuse even its domestic and seemingly benign operations (Jabri 2006; Reid 2010). Building on Foucault's concept of biopolitics, FSS sees the ambitions of liberal war as going beyond the merely territorial (Bell 2011; Bell and Evans 2010; Dillon and Reid 2009; Evans 2011; Howell 2014, 2015; Jabri 2006, 2007a), aiming to transform and improve spaces and populations cast as developmentally backwards (Holmqvist 2016). Contemporary liberal war is therefore a vital force claiming to serve "humanity as species being" (Jabri 2007a, 187). FSS, then, purports to offer new ways of understanding liberalism and war, to "theorize with Foucault beyond Foucault" (Dillon and Reid 2009, 36) in order to understand the biopolitics of security.

Unfortunately, despite these ambitions, contemporary FFS largely perpetuates Foucault's undertheorization of racism. As a result, like the liberal approaches it criticizes, FSS whitewashes the foundational role of colonial and racist violence and exploitation in modernity. FSS overwhelmingly ignores racialized and colonial relations, subjects and spaces subjected primarily or exclusively to punitive sovereign forms of power, and the constitutive role of racial and colonial violence in the genealogy of biopower.

As a result, FSS exemplifies "methodological Whiteness" (Bhambra 2017a, 2017b):

> a way of reflecting on the world that fails to acknowledge the role played by

[1] Jack Levy (1988, 661) famously celebrated the liberal peace thesis as "the closest thing we have to empirical law in the study of international relations."

> race in the very structuring of that world, and of the ways in which knowledge is constructed and legitimated within it. It fails to recognise the dominance of 'Whiteness' as anything other than the standard state of affairs and treats a limited perspective – that deriving from White experience – as a universal perspective (Bhambra 2017b, np).

This methodological Whiteness gives rise to two core propositions in the FSS literature on the biopolitics of security: First, that the reason for the martial character of liberal politics is that human life cannot ever be secured; Second, that everyone is (potentially) dangerous, and vulnerable to the punitive or lethal dimensions of liberal power. Both claims represent spectacular failures to engage with racism and coloniality.

The claim that life cannot be secured, we argue, fails to take account of how – conceptually and materially – the idea of human life is an effect of racism and colonialism. This history has been amply documented in Black studies, Black feminist, and decolonial thought – fields which have challenged Foucault's Eurocentric account of the rise of biopower. These histories have been widely discussed in IR and security studies (Agathangelou and Ling 2004; Agathangelou 2010a, 2010b, 2013; Barkawi and Laffey 1999, 2006; Biswas 2001; Chowdhry and Nair 2004; Grovogui 1996, 2001; Howell 2018; Inayatullah and Riley 2006; Jabri 2007b; Krishna 2001; Muppidi 1999, 2001; Richter-Montpetit 2007, 2014; Sabaratnam 2013; Shilliam 2008). Despite its claim to internationalize Foucault, FSS scholarship on liberal war and the biopolitics of security has not seriously engaged with questions of racism or coloniality. In order to move beyond methodological Whiteness, FSS needs to inquire into subjects who were never understood to be (fully) human in the first place.

Likewise, the claim that everyone is potentially dangerous, potentially a target of violent security practices, we argue, obscures the fundamentally "parasitical nature of white freedom" (Morrison 1997, 57) and White security, which require certain lives to serve as their "literal raw materials" (Agathangelou 2013, 455). If it is to apprehend the raciality and coloniality of contemporary liberal order and war, including the postcolonial and settler colonial present, FSS will have to grapple, not only with the ways subjects are targeted differently for security interventions by virtue of racialization, but, more fundamentally, with the mutually constitutive nature of modernity and colonialism.

To be clear, our argument is not that race and racism are ignored in FSS. Both Foucault and FSS ascribe racism a central role in the martial operations of liberal rule. However, because they rely on White humanist notions of Man prior to racialization, the racism they deal with is a kind of racism-without-colonialism, more an unfortunate cultural artifact than a global system of expropriation fundamental to the conditions of possibility for the liberal way of war and biopolitical security assemblages. This minimization of racism results from a lack of sustained engagement with (feminist) critical race, Black studies, or postcolonial and decolonial perspectives, as documented throughout this article.

We focus on the debates in FSS on the biopolitics of security because this literature forms a core of the FSS approach as an intellectual space within which theoretical debates about war, security, biopolitics and liberalism have been significantly elaborated. Situated at the intersection of Security Studies and International Political Sociology, the broader FSS field

has similarly deployed concepts of biopolitics, liberalism, and war more empirically. Indeed, this journal has been a major hub of research on topics situated at this intersection, including mobility, migration and airports (Salter 2007; Chambers 2011; D'Aoust 2013; Frowd 2017); humanitarianism and the development-security nexus (Reid 2013; Abdelnour & Saeed 2014; Ilcan & Rygiel 2015; Pallister-Wilkins 2015); counter-terrorism (Dillon 2007, Debrix & Barder 2009; Neal 2012 de Goede, & de Graaf 2013); technoscience and security (Lundborg & Vaughan-Williams 2011; Thomas 2014; Busse 2015; Allinson 2015); global health security (Howell 2007, 2012, Elbe 2012) and the political economy of security (Lobo-Guerrero 2008; Abrahamsen and Williams 2009; Best 2016). In focusing on the biopolitics of liberal war thesis, we equip readers to judge whether the problems we identify in this approach also underwrite the more empirical FSS literature. This article thus provides a tool to challenge the full breadth of the FSS literature as well as the wider use of the concept of biopolitics in International Political Sociology and International Relations (IR).

Our argument proceeds in three sections. The first provides a précis of Foucault's work on biopolitics and biopower and details (feminist) Black studies, postcolonial and decolonial critiques. The second analyzes FSS scholarship on the biopolitics of security and liberal war, arguing that it consistently underestimates, undertheorizes and misconstrues the raciality and coloniality of liberal modernity. The third explores some of the resulting empirical oversights in FSS, including examples relating to state violence, the molecular and digital 'revolutions', and labour, capital and enslavement.

Foucault, Biopolitics and Racism

One of the core Foucauldian concepts that FSS develops is 'biopolitics'. Yet the concept is not uncontroversial. Any assessment of its shortcomings must begin by admitting its virtues. As Foucault formulated it, 'biopolitics' powerfully challenged common sense understandings of liberalism as increasing human freedom. Foucault locates the origins of liberalism in the rise of capitalism, which required "political investment of the body" (Foucault 1977, 25) in order to "turn peasants into punctual, efficient industrial workers" (Aradau & Blanke 2010, 48, see also Scott 1999, 47-48). Instead of simply promoting "extractive-effects" on workers' bodies, capitalism sought to produce "governing-effects" on the conduct of subjects (Scott 1999, 40, 51-52). As a result, with the formation of the administrative state from the late 16th to the 19th century, government focused on "controlling the mass of the population on its territory rather than controlling territoriality as such" (Jessop 2006, 37). Thus, according to Foucault, modern power came to intervene at the level of the individual human body ("anatomo-politics") and at the level of the population as biological species ("biopolitics") (Foucault 2003, 242-243). Foucault termed this novel technology of power biopower. To him, the shift away from sovereign power towards the seemingly benign modalities of biopower in fact gave rise to more insidious forms of governance.

Foucault also challenged common sense understandings of liberal rule as domestically and internationally peaceful. In a widely cited passage, Foucault (1980, 137) wrote that with the shift to biopower,

> wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who needs to be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of the life necessity, massacres have become vital. It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many men [sic] to be killed.

Biopower casts enemies as threats to the health, wealth and wellbeing of the population (Foucault 2003, 256), and thus "the death of the other – that is, of those deemed dangerous, unfit, or diseased – will make life in general more healthy and pure" (Inda 2005, 16). The biopolitical logic that "[i]n order to live you must destroy your enemies" (Foucault 2003, 255) extends also to domestic sources of danger. Foucault thus argues that liberalism is predicated on the model of war, that "politics is the continuation of war by other means" (Foucault 2003, 15). With the rise of biopower, war is no longer "a violent event 'out there,' but instead a vital presence permeating our everyday" (Nguyen 2012, xi). Likewise, the enemy is "no longer in a 'military relationship of confrontation' but in a 'biological relationship' to the life of the social body" (Medovoi 2007, 60). Foucault refers to this as social warfare (Foucault, 2003, 60; see also Jabri 2006; Howell 2014; Reid 2010).

It is important to note that race and racism are not absent from Foucault's thought (nor from FSS, as we will demonstrate). For Foucault, the sovereign decision over which life is to be protected and which is to be 'rejected in death' was fundamentally informed by racism. In a normalizing society, racism is "the break between what must live and what must die" and "the precondition that makes killing acceptable" (Foucault 2003, 255-256). Society is defended through the improvement and regeneration of the race through such killing.

Despite these strengths, Foucault's narrative of the rise of modernity and the operations of modern power is undermined by his failure to deal with historically specific technologies of subjection centered on race. This led him not only to frequently overlook the ways in which certain subjects within Western liberal states are deemed incapable of self-regulation, making them ineligible for disciplinary or biopolitical governance, but also to two other key oversights. Foucault neglected the constitutive role of (settler) colonialism in the production of modernity, as well as the fundamental role of the Black or Savage Other in the ontological consolidation of Man or 'the human' necessary for biopower.

As Black studies, post-colonial and critical race studies scholars have shown, Foucault's account of the operations of modern power within Europe replicates White fantasies of a self-generating 'Europe' that uphold White innocence. Foucault seeks to account for how corporeal domination made possible capitalist accumulation, but his refusal to place "metropole and colony in a single analytic field" (Stoler and Cooper 1997, 4) means he cannot describe how (settler) colonial land theft, chattel slavery and indentured labour, and the related financial innovations around insurance and investment, produced the material conditions for the rise of capitalism (cf. Baucom 2005; Byrd 2011; Williams 1944). Foucault's origin story for biopower remains sanitized of colonial domination and violence (Mignolo 2015, 107, see also da Silva 2015; Stoler 1995; Weheliye 2014a; Wynter 2003). As a result, while Foucault acknowledged a racial economy of life to be protected versus life to be

eliminated, he could only see race as a sorting process *after* the fact of the establishment of biopower.

In contrast, Black, Indigenous, Decolonial and Postcolonial studies scholars have pointed out that racism is fundamental to the idea of the human that formed the basis for biopower. People indigenous to the Americas and the African continent not only supplied unpaid land and labour, but also acted as foils against which the meaning of 'humanity' emerged (Wynter 2003, 291; see also Byrd 2011; da Silva 2007; Hartman 1997; Spillers 1987; Wilderson 2010). Racist, colonial discourses constructed Europeans as racially 'pure' and cast Black people as the "bottom marker" of a "human scale of being" (Wynter 2003, 308-309). Racial chattel slavery should be acknowledged as "infinitely more severe than exploitation and alienation" (Wilderson 2010, 9) since the Master/Slave relationship is not 'simply' characterized by theft of labour but by *fungibility* and *gratuitous* (not merely instrumental) violence (Hartman 1997; Wilderson 2010).

In sum, the Middle Passage turned people from the African continent into *things*. Ontologically speaking, the slave is socially dead, mere *flesh* and thus structurally defined out of subjectivity (Patterson 1982, Spillers 2003, Wilderson 2010; in IR, see Agathangelou 2010b, Richter-Montpetit 2014a, 2014b). The significance of this is not merely that some racialized subjects are deemed ineligible for biopolitics and thus subject to gratuitous, sovereign or necropolitical violence. Rather, it is that the political ontology of 'humanity' that sits at the core of the birth of biopower is "parasitic on the Black" (Wilderson 2010, 22). Foucault's oversight in this regard is not only to misconstrue the history of biopower, but also its present expressions. These dynamics are not merely a thing of the past. Rather, racial chattel slavery animated "a measure of man and a ranking of life and worth that has yet to be undone" (Hartman 2007, 6).

In this context, Foucault's reliance on the idea of an unspecified (White) body (Holland 2012, 11) or 'human' limits his ability to analyse, not only the colonial sphere, but also the internal power dynamics of the West. Foucault influentially claimed that, under biopolitics, torture and spectacular corporeal punishment had become superfluous. However, state practices of violent cruelty, including in public, remain critical to the production and management of populations deemed to lie outside the category of 'human' and the reach of rehabilitation. In particular, when dealing with (racialized, colonized, sub-human) populations subjected to detention or incarceration, state-administered spectacular forms of corporeal punishment, such as police beatings, rape, shock treatments, and death row, remain common (James 1996, 34; as cited in Rodríguez 2006, 160; see also Ben-Moshe 2014; Davis 2002; Gilmore 2007; James 1998, 2000, 2007; Khalili 2012; Nadesan 2008; Puar 2017; Richter-Montpetit 2014b; Tanis et al, 2018; Rodríguez 2006, 2007; Vargas and Alves 2013; Wadiwel 2017). It is precisely Foucault's bracketing of the racial constitution of the human that made it possible for him to sanitize state repression in his account of modern biopower (James 1996, 28).

Foucault's failure to engage with these histories cannot be dismissed as mere oversight. As Heiner (2007) has traced, significant elements of Foucault's reconceptualization of modern power came out of his anti-prison activism and engagement with the Black Panther Party

(BPP). BPP political thought described the US domestic social fabric as shot through with inter-national relations of war. Conceptualizing the US state's relationship to Black people as one of internal colonialism ("a stolen people on stolen land"), the BPP theorized the concomitant continuities between politics and war for Black people and the central role of the prison in this White supremacist order. The writings and speeches of Angela Davis, George Jackson and Huey P. Newton led Foucault towards conceptualizing power through the analytic of war. Yet Foucault failed to ever cite or make explicit reference to the BPP in his published works (Heiner 2007, 343).

In sum, while racism and colonialism are not absent in Foucault's work on biopolitics and war, he fails to comprehend "the colonial global" (Bhambra 2013, 309) - the entwined, co-constitutive relations between social, political and economic processes and actors in Europe and the colonies, and the concomitant fundamental raciality and coloniality of the modern subject. He whitewashes not only the role of racial-sexual terror, plunder and occupation in the making of 'modernity/coloniality' (Quijano 2000), but also the stubborn persistence of racialized relations in the postcolonial/settler colonial present. Foucault's Eurocentrism is not incidental to 'biopolitics', and cannot be remedied by adding colonial or racialized subjects. Foucault's reliance on an unspecified human as the object of biopolitics causes him to fundamentally misapprehend the constitutive and continuing role of genocide and enslavement in modernity/coloniality. We turn now to an assessment of whether these problems are overcome or replicated in the FSS literature on liberal war.

Race, Coloniality and Foucauldian Security Studies

The above critique of Foucault's Eurocentrism is well established. It is even acknowledged in the FSS literature, though usually solely through a citation to Ann Stoler's 1995 book, or Mbembe's concept of necropolitics. 'Acknowledged', however, is not the same as 'taken up'. Even as it claims to internationalize Foucault's thought, FSS refuses to pursue the full implications of his Eurocentrism, or to take seriously the rich and expansive post-colonial, critical race, and Black (feminist) literature on war, liberalism and biopolitics (ironically, this scholarship has been taken up and developed elsewhere in IR, including in war and security studies (see Agathangelou and Ling 2004; Agathangelou 2010a, 2010b, 2013; Amar 2013; Barkawi and Laffey 1999, 2006; Biswas 2001; Chowdhry and Nair 2004; Grovogui 1996, 2001; Inayatullah and Riley 2006; Jabri 2007b; Khalili 2012; Krishna 2001; Muppidi 1999, 2001; Sabaratnam 2013; Shilliam 2008). Instead FSS doubles down on Foucault's conceptual reliance on an unspecified human body, and his failure to engage with the ongoing colonial histories that rendered enslaved people into things.

Again however, before engaging with FSS's shortcomings, it is important to assess the ways in which it is valuable. FSS powerfully demonstrates how liberal peace continues to rely on war, both domestically and internationally, pointing to liberal nations as amongst the most belligerent actors in inter/national politics (Dillon 2004, 76; see also Hindess 2004). It rejects the assumption of an innocent domain of 'normal politics' that underwrites other prominent critical approaches to contemporary liberal war, including Securitization theory (Wæver 1995; Wæver, Buzan and De Wilde 1998). Instead it shows how, in pursuing the

peace and prosperity of 'the biohuman', liberal rule finds itself compelled "to make war on whatever threatens it" (Dillon and Reid 2009, 42). In this understanding, war is "less a periodic phenomenon than the very optimization of the state of living" (Dillon and Reid 2009, 108). FSS thus provides a powerful challenge to simplistic binary liberal ontologies of norm/exception and war/peace, and to liberal internationalism's façade of benignity.

Despite these virtues, FSS's lack of serious engagement with (feminist) post-colonial, Indigenous, critical race, and Black studies scholarship places hard limits on the analytical purchase it can achieve. These limits are made conveniently clear in two core propositions of Dillon and Reid's seminal 2009 book *The liberal way of war, Killing to make life live*. The book's foundational theoretical claim is that the liberal order, domestically and internationally, is necessarily suffused by relations of war because *human life is not securable*. This first core claim retains and builds on Foucault's methodologically White axiom that at the core of biopolitics is an unspecified human (Holland 2012, 11). As a result it too fails to account for the raciality and coloniality of the Humanist subject and the ways in which "the very idea of life itself has been and continues to be… a significant modality through which racial difference has been constructed in both scientific and humanist discourses" (Weheliye 2014b, 6).

With the role of racialization and coloniality in constituting biopolitics thus occluded, Dillon and Reid are left with the question of how, faced only with undifferentiated insecure life, biopower could ever mark anyone for death. They conclude that, to choose which lives to foster and which to kill, liberal rule engages in continuous sorting of life:

> As a biopolitical form of rule, the liberal way of rule has to educate itself […] into discriminating between which life forms are good and which life forms are bad […] What was once benign can readily also become malign. Biopolitics of security and war therefore find themselves dealing with a moving, mutable, metamorphosing target (Dillon and Reid 2009, 43).

Here, processes for discriminating between good and bad forms of life are an *effect* of biopolitical liberal rule, rather than *constitutive* of it. As a result, and despite passionate references to the role of racism in these vetting processes and the uneven distribution of vulnerability, they claim that under the associated "strategic calculus of necessary killing" (Dillon and Reid 2009, 44) *everybody is (potentially) dangerous*.

In this second core claim, the full consequences of Dillon and Reid's conceptual failure to engage with the positioning of Blackness and Indigeneity outside of "humanity" become visible. They assume that violence must be occasioned by some perceived transgression — that liberal violence is *instrumental*. This does not fit with the historical record. To claim that everybody is understood to be potentially dangerous is to shockingly underestimate the ways in which 'dangerousness' and openness to gratuitous violence is attached specifically to Black, Indigenous and other people subject to racist and caste oppression. As a result, FSS discussions about the practices involved in assigning value (as lives worth making live, and lives to be abandoned or excised) in the liberal management of life and death remain highly abstract. Again, despite numerous references to the central role of racism, despite acknowledgments of the differential impact of liberal rule, there is little

concrete engagement with the racialized logics, rationalities, and desires that animate modern liberal power or biopolitical security practices.

These Eurocentric and ahistorical core propositions (that 'life' is not securable, that everybody is potentially dangerous) are echoed and developed in the broader FSS literature on liberal war. For instance, in a recent piece on resilience, Evans and Reid note that liberalism "is a security project" (2013, 85), and thus will "always be an incomplete project because […] life is not securable. It is a multiplicity of antagonisms and for some life to be made to live, some other life has to be made to die" (Evans and Reid 2013, 86). Elsewhere, in a similar vein, Evans argues that liberal security assumes that "everybody is now possibly dangerous and nobody can be exempt" (2010, 425). The conclusions Evans draws represent a particularly striking example of the shortcomings of this line of thinking:

> Nothing and nobody is necessarily dangerous simply because location dictates. With enmity instead depending upon the complex, adaptive, dynamic account of life itself, what becomes dangerous emerges from within the liberal imaginary of threat. Violence accordingly can only be sanctioned against those newly appointed enemies of humanity – a phrase that, immeasurably greater than any juridical category, necessarily affords enmity an internal quality inherent to the species complete, for the sake of planetary survival (Evans 2010, 424).

Evans describes violence as "inherent" to the "species complete" and as targeted against constantly "newly appointed enemies". This account of the global distribution of violence asserts sweeping and continual change without being able to account for the continuities in racist and colonial violence. But it represents only an extreme example - in varying degrees, most mainstream FSS literature shares this narrative.

This is not to say that FSS fails entirely to deal with race, sovereign power, or necropolitics. However, FSS usually continues to rely on theorizations of unspecified life as foundational to biopolitics even when explicitly addressing race and racism. Take, for instance, Dillon's account of the death-making operations of liberal power in "Security, race and war" (2008):

> Where life simply exceeds biopolitical rationalization and technological governance – wherever life proves itself biopolitically unclassifiable or incalculable – biopolitics terrorizes life and, in many varied ways, specifies death […] Not every conceivable kind of life, is biopolitically suitable life. It always turns out that in biopolitics some life has to die in order for some other life to live […] Some life is inimical to life and has to be exterminated if it cannot be corrected and reformed. *Life is like that.* To be precise species life is like that and so we have to clarify this basic classification of what it is to be a living being because it is foundational to biopolitics and how, as such, it has need of the sub-division of species life into more of less functionally utile categories of human life to which the term race applies (Dillon 2008, 166-177; our emphasis).

This abstract account of the intimate connection between life and death under biopower fails to interrogate concrete mechanisms, processes, subjects/objects or objectives. Despite references to Mbembe's (2003) concept of necropolitics, it avoids engaging actual necropolitical practices and orders, preferring to discuss race only at the level of the "category". It characterizes the death-making operations of biopolitics as inherent/in-built ("It always turns out") and gives the impression that liberal politics responds to genuinely misperceived threats. Most strikingly, where Mbembe draws attention to subjects governed by social and physical death in conditions of colonial subjugation (chattel slavery and the Israeli settler colonial occupation of Palestine) it limits the operations of necropower to letting die, pitching 'extermination' as fundamentally passive, brought on by the incorrigibility of 'some life'. Dillon elides the (colonial) violences of racial-sexual terror, and treats racially-targeted death, not as a constitutive element of the vital operations of biopower, but merely as a by-product.

Other FSS scholars working on the biopolitics of war and security do engage with race and coloniality in a more sustained and detailed fashion but even here, the commitments of the tradition in which they work limit their effectiveness. For example, Vivienne Jabri's (2006, 2007a) work on liberal war provides a concrete, detailed account of how racism shapes liberal security practices, and explores how Islamophobia fuels US and UK counter-terrorism measures. Jabri goes beyond generic declarations about the importance of racism to pay close attention to particular racialized security logics and practices, and their differential impacts. However, although she rightly argues that securitization theory lacks an analytic of war (Jabri 2006: 51), her own analysis hangs on the notion that "liberal wars of the present" (Jabri 2007a, 9) are characterized by "a state of exception" and the targeting of subjects rendered "bare life" (Jabri 2006, 52). As a result she is unable to capture the ways racist security practices are endemic, and not exceptional to liberal rule. Her analysis is ultimately in keeping with the FSS literature in that it reduces race to a matter of (instrumental) targeting after the fact of the establishment of biopolitical security, rather than seeing racialization and coloniality as constitutive of (biopolitical) security apparatuses.

Andrew Neal likewise commits to thinking through "politics as war" (2008, 44) from the perspective of subjects for whom the norm/exception and politics/war divides are (powerful) fictions, and moreover challenges modern political theory's assumption of "pacified universality" as silencing "ethnic and racial exclusion" (Neal 2008, 59): "the law may not be considered a guarantor of justice, liberties, rights and legal equality, but rather as the institutionalization of ongoing relations of hegemony or domination" (Neal 2008, 57). However, he cannot completely follow through on this claim. His example of political subjectivities that experience the law as "the sedimented outcome of historical injustices" is "America's deep south *before* the civil rights era, the specific legal inequities [of which] were so elegantly captured by Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*" (Neal 2008, 57; our emphasis). Notably, Lee's book notoriously centers White agency, and relegates Blackness to childlike helplessness. Although Neal's work challenges analytics of exception, here racism – specifically antiblack racism – is seemingly relegated to the past. Similarly, throughout the chapter, Neal appropriates 'colonization' and 'decolonization' as mere

metaphors: “the UK government has attempted to decolonise the discourse of ‘war on terror’ and to recolonize the principles of liberal legitimacy” (Neal 2008, 61). This replicates the broader pattern in the FSS literature on liberal war and the biopolitics of security of not accounting for concrete practices of (de)colonization. The result is that while Neal critiques “pacified universality”, the constitutive nature of racialization and colonization in his genealogy of “politics as war” is left unaccounted for. Meanwhile, works in the FSS tradition that do more substantively engage with global racism and colonial legacies (Bell 2013) are infrequently cited by other FSS scholars.

FSS research rightly argues that liberalism’s promise to remove “war from the life of civil society – the political revolution of the seventeenth century – did not entail the end of war” (Dillon and Reid 2009, 106). Yet their discussion of this reconfiguration of political violence sanitizes its fundamentally racist – antiblack and anti-Indigenous – structure. It occludes how White capitalist modernity is “a formation of terror” (Mbembe 2003, 24) for which certain lives are “raw materials” (Agathangelou 2013, 455). These lives are vulnerable to gratuitous violence not for instrumental reasons, but simply for *being* (Agathangelou 2010b; Fanon 1967; Hartman 1997; Wilderson 2010). Importantly, while various subjects can experience terror and gratuitous violence, for the Black subject gratuitous violence has ontological status (Wilderson 2010, 18). Always already positioned as enslaved, denied even the right to self-defense, the Black subject is also always already marked as dangerous, subject to gratuitous violence independent of any perceived transgression.

FSS is engaged in a project of critiquing the instrumentality of liberal biopower, but in doing so it erases subjects and spaces exposed primarily or exclusively to punitive or gratuitous violence. It claims to extend Foucauldian analysis of biopolitics to security, war and the international, but it does so without seriously engaging Foucault’s many critics. It not only reproduces Foucault’s reliance on the idea of an unspecified human: it deepens it. As a result, while this body of FSS claims to be genealogical, it cannot seriously historicize the biopolitics of the racial (settler) colonial projects that underpin modernity.

White Genealogies in FSS

FSS’s undertheorization of racism isn’t only a problem of theory: its theoretical problems both draw on and compound errors in its empirical genealogies. In this section, we draw out three illustrative examples. First, we show how FSS’s Eurocentrism results in inadequate genealogies of state violence; second, how FSS accounts of developments in digital and molecular concepts of ‘life’ falsely posit a ‘post-racial’ biopolitics; and third, how FSS sidelines ongoing histories of global labor exploitation, capitalism, and enslavement. In each case, we show how an inadequate framework for addressing racism produces major empirical oversights in FSS.

State racism/violence

The first empirical failure of FSS we examine relates to state violence. Both Foucault and FSS largely elide ongoing practices of sovereign and gratuitous violence, maintaining a Eurocentric account of the rise of biopower, in which Europe is treated as 'self-generating', and (settler) colonial violence is disappeared. In prominent FSS scholarship on the biopolitics of security (cf. Dillon and Reid 2009; Evans 2010; Reid 2006), as in Foucault's own work, the sole substantive engagement with racist state violence is with the Nazi holocaust.

For Foucault, Nazism is the paradigmatic example of a biopolitical society committed to the "regeneration" of its "race" (Foucault 2003, 258-260). While Foucault does admit briefly that "[r]acism first develops with colonization, or in other words, with colonizing genocide" (2003, 257), his discussion of genocidal biopower considers only Nazi death camps, which he views as "the complete conflation of war and politics" (Mbembe 2003, 18). "E(race)d" (Moore 2012) from Foucault's account of the rise of forms of power which "no longer recognize death" and in fact "literally ignore death" (Foucault 2003, 248) are the brutal acts of mass violence and White supremacist terror that made (settler) colonialism possible. This includes pre-Nazi Germany's racist, murderous, often genocidal projects in its African and other colonies (cf. Lindqvist 1996; Traverso 2003; Weheliye 2014a; Zimmerer 2011).

FSS follows suit in treating Nazism as paradigmatic, and as empirically divorced from actual histories of colonialism. For instance, as Reid approvingly quotes Foucault:

> [W]e see the emergence of new practices of colonization justified on racial grounds. Subsequently, we witness the emergence of fascist states and societies in which the power over life and death, adjudicated on explicitly racial criteria, is disseminated widely, to the point where everyone has the power of life and death over his or her neighbours, if only because of the practice of informing (Foucault 2003, 259; cited in Reid 2006, 148f.)

Evans (2010, 426), citing Agamben, echoes this analysis:

> Auschwitz arguably represents the most grotesque, shameful and hence meaningful example of necessary killing – the violence that is sanctioned in the name of species necessity… The camp can therefore be seen to be the defining paradigm of the modern insomuch as it is a 'space in which power confronts nothing other than pure biological life without any mediation'

Dillon and Reid (2009, 49) similarly focus on Auschwitz as the pinnacle of "necessary killing", though they briefly list "the seventeenth-century plantations of Ireland, the destruction of indigenous peoples in the Americas and the colonization of Africa and Asia" as well. Their book never mentions chattel slavery, nor are pre-Nazi Germany's colonial projects, including the Herero and Nama genocide, accounted for.

Aimé Césaire (1955) and Frantz Fanon (1967) famously diagnosed the racist calculus underwriting the selective Western grief extended to European victims of the Nazi holocaust and territorial expansion. Other racialized and disabled populations, homosexuals, sex workers, and others targeted by eugenic practices are typically excluded from this grief. The deployment of the holocaust in FSS on liberal war clearly follows this pattern. By obfuscating Nazism's derivation, not only from German colonial techniques, but

also from eugenics programs and Jim Crow legislation developed in the US, the FSS account pitches Nazi politics as exceptional, rather than as emerging from widely shared White supremacist and colonial ambitions and techniques. As a result of its persistent Eurocentrism and systematic undertheorization of racism, FSS fails to locate the genocide of European Jews[2] and Nazi eugenics within a transnational analytic, and within histories of European (settler) colonialism and White supremacy. This in turn results in a thin and ahistorical conceptualization of modern state violence.

Molecular and digital revolutions and the Whiteness of post-human life

FSS's undertheorization of racism and colonialism also produces inaccurate genealogies of (life) sciences and technologies, most strikingly regarding the so-called digital and molecular revolutions. FSS scholars of these revolutions purport to update Foucault for "the age of life as information" (Dillon and Reid 2009, 106) and to describe epochal breaks in scientific understandings of life, corresponding with an equally epochal shift from a biopolitics of scientific racism to a new post-racial form of biopolitics. However, they do so without any serious attention to Foucault's post-colonial critics, or any serious inquiry into lines of continuity between White supremacist scientific racism and these digital and molecular 'revolutions'.

Thus for instance Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero (2008, 273) argue that "biopolitics is critically dependent, epistemically and ontologically, on what the sciences of life say that species life is". As such, "[i]n the molecular age life is no longer simply the life of population as Foucault documented... because molecular science has transformed what we understand a living thing to be" (Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero 2008, 286). Dillon and Reid similarly claim to trace shifting notions of life. They assert that over the past five decades "the very ontology of biological life has shifted to the ground of 'information'" (Dillon and Reid 2009, 22) and that distinctions between animate and inanimate, biological and non-biological "have been newly construed and problematized" (Dillon and Reid, 2009, 22). Though much of this is derivative of Ian Hacking and Nikolas Rose's work, attention to the digital and molecular has particular impacts in the international and security fields. According to Dillon and Reid (2009, 22), digital and molecular 'reproblematizations' of life have impacted the biopolitical strategies of liberal internationalism: "[t]he very space of enmity is itself re-problematized. Who is dangerous, what is dangerous, how things become dangerous are all transformed" (Dillon and Reid 2009, 107). This has apparently resulted in a shift from scientific racism to 'new racism' with an emphasis on cultural difference rather than biological hierarchies.

FSS's ability to examine how science has shaped the biopolitical strategies of security and liberal internationalism is limited by its persistent Eurocentrism and undertheorization of race. Societal notions of 'life' are treated as interchangeable with the life sciences' supposedly post-racial understanding of life as generic data. This fails to engage with either the ingrained (settler) coloniality of technoscience or the stubborn (and institutionalized)

[2] As well as those deemed Jewish under the racist Nuremberg 'race' laws.

persistence of broader structures of White supremacy and antiblackness. This has serious empirical implications.

For instance, Dillon's discussion of 'new' risk analysis and biometrics does not consider how these security technologies have been designed to police enslaved populations and surveille Black people (cf. Browne 2015), as part of a long-standing legacy of colonial techniques of 'identity dominance' (Bell 2013). Similarly, FSS discussions of the molecular fail to engage with the contemporary racial politics of genetic science (Duster 2003; Nelson 2016; TallBear 2013), how molecular life sciences were and are fueled by experimentation on the bodies of racialized and indigenous people (Dudley 2012; Mosby 2013; Washington 2006), including the movement of pharmaceutical clinical trials from US prisons to the Global South (Petryna 2009), or the neo-eugenic functions of genetic reproductive technologies (Roberts 2013) and related racialized economies of labour in the global surrogacy industry (Twine 2011), to name just a few examples.

Instead, highly abstract formulations stand in for historically specific forms of power. Dillon and Reid write that "[p]ower is palimpsestuous. New forms and relations of power become superimposed on older ones. Previous relations and accounts of power are rubbed out but may not be entirely effaced" (Dillon and Reid 2009, 124). This statement comes with no serious empirical engagement with the persistence – and modulation – of scientific racism into the 21st century. Instead we are to believe that racism is now cultural, not scientific – and for that matter, that science isn't cultural itself. The result is an e(race)sure (Moore 2012) of the ways that racialized subjects continue to always already signify violence that once again shores up the foundational White FSS mythology that everyone is (potentially) dangerous and therefore vulnerable to the punitive and/or lethal dimensions of liberal power. Ironically, FSS discussions of post-WWII biopolitical liberal internationalism thus reproduce, rather than challenge, the promise that liberal war will transcend the global colour line (Richter-Montpetit, 2014b).

Slavery, capitalism and violence

Finally, in assessing the 'strategic calculus of killing', FSS fails to address political economies involving gratuitous violence, and avoids considering the relations between capitalism, enslavement, and global racial violence. Even Foucault, despite his Eurocentrism, powerfully connects the rise of biopower to the rise of capitalism. Scholars in IR have analysed how capitalism relies on extra-economic forces, including brute acts of mass violence (see Agathangelou 2010a, 2010b, 2013; Barkawi 2016; Neocleous 2014; Vrasti 2013). FSS however, pays strikingly little attention to questions of political economy and labour in the constitution of biopower. Instead it elides both the foundational and ongoing roles of colonial theft and settlement of land (cf. Byrd 2011; Coulthard 2014; Kauanui 2008), of suppression of Indigenous sovereignty (Tadiar 2013) and of transatlantic chattel slavery, and with the abolition of the slave trade, indentureship, in the development and contemporary functioning of biopolitics.

Even when FSS literature does mention chattel slavery, it misrepresents its character, extent and consequences. For instance, in their Introduction to *Foucault on Politics, Security and War*, Dillon and Neal (2008) connect the rise of biopower to the rise of capitalism and stress the political, strategic and commercial significance of racism and the slave trade in the making of "the new world" (Dillon and Neal 2008, 7). Yet while they mention the exploitation of "men and things" (2008, 11), they do not consider *men as things*. They understand slavery as nothing more than an extreme form of labour exploitation, thus e(race)ing the commodification of African people's lives, not 'just' their labour, and the role of this commodification of Black life in the constitution of the idea of the 'Human'.

Similarly, Dillon in "Security, race and war" (2008), discussing the political thought of a eugenicist scholar-activist, writes that, under certain racial logics of biopolitical governance, "politics becomes husbandry" (Dillon 2008, 186) and that eugenicists advocate a form of "human husbandry which could learn from animal husbandry" (ibid. 186). At no point does Dillon connect this to the first and paradigmatic historical example of human husbandry, the lived experiences of enslaved people treated as chattel, subjected to forced reproduction ('breeding') while being denied the right to basic kinship ties with their offspring. Dillon's only mention of slavery is a brief reference to British advocacy *against* the transatlantic slave trade (Dillon 2008, 190). Similarly, Duffield's widely cited 2007 book on the security-development nexus features dedicated chapters and sections on racism, slavery and imperialism, yet his discussion of the slave trade is limited to British involvement in its *abolition*.

These three examples show the kinds of empirical problems FSS's undertheorization of racism produces, but these problems are not only empirical problems: they cannot be remedied solely by further empirical study. Ultimately, for all its critique of liberalism, FSS scholarship on liberal war and the biopolitics of security reproduces (humanist) notions of liberal violence as a response to a perceived transgression. It assumes that first biopolitics is established and only then, later, a process is carried out to assess who is dangerous. This misses the foundational raciality and coloniality of biopower. Defining racialized people as outside of humanity has always already been central to biopower and biopolitics. If we want to meaningfully capture the ways in which biopower operates through racist categories, it is not enough to view biopower as producing racism. Instead we must trace the ways in which racism is constitutive of biopower, and acknowledge that certain racialized lives always already signify openness not only to instrumental, but also gratuitous violence, such as chattel slavery.

Conclusion

"[O]ur life is a war." (Black protagonist in Ralph Ellison's (1990/[1952], 15-16) *The Invisible Man*)

Extending Foucault's concept of biopolitics to theorize security and the liberal way of war, FSS powerfully challenges readings of the martial face of liberal rule and liberal peace as

paradoxical. However, while much FSS literature seeks to 'theorize with Foucault beyond Foucault', Foucault's Eurocentric account of the birth of biopolitics is largely perpetuated. Like the liberal approaches they criticize, FSS analysis of the biopolitics of security, liberal war and the martial character of liberal rule more broadly obfuscates the fundamentally "parasitical nature of white freedom" (Morrison 1997, 57) and White security.

At the heart of the FSS literature on liberal war are two core propositions: first, that the reason for the martial character of liberal politics is that human life cannot ever be secured; and second, that everyone is (potentially) dangerous, and thus vulnerable to the punitive and/or lethal dimensions of liberal power. Both claims demonstrate a fundamental disregard for actual racialized and colonial relations and practices, and for subjects and spaces subjected primarily or exclusively to punitive sovereign forms of power. Concomitantly, FSS shows a profound lack of intellectual curiosity towards the vibrant and diverse bodies of scholarship in (feminist) Black and Indigenous studies, postcolonial, decolonial and critical race theory that (1) have demonstrated how the raciality and coloniality of modern power is inscribed in the Humanist subject and the very idea of human life, (2) have established rigorous critiques of Foucault's genealogy of biopower, and (3) offer radical reconceptualizations of the political and of political subjectivity.

To move beyond "methodological Whiteness" (Bhambra 2017a), FSS and (IR) scholarship on liberalism and war more broadly need to grapple with the mutually constitutive role of modernity and colonialism. This is not only a matter of theory, but also of the empirical genealogies that Security Studies and International Political Sociology are able to offer. Relegating racism to an unfortunate cultural artifact keeps us from apprehending the raciality and coloniality of war, security, and the contemporary liberal order, including the postcolonial and settler colonial present, and thus upholds "White fantasies of racial innocence" (Farley 1997, 514).

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