Dear 20th/21st Century Workshop Participants,

Thanks so much in advance for helping me workshop this paper. The paper uses a Chester Himes novel to theorize a process of racial subject formation during WWII. I intend both to provide a historical context that can enrich our understanding of the novel, and to interpret the novel as an intervention in that context. These two aims have led me to develop the paper’s two central concept: “racial military Keynesianism,” and “the war-bound-subject.” I am happy to hear any thoughts you have about the clarity, persuasiveness, or lack thereof of these two concepts, as well as any thoughts about how they interact in the paper. I am interested in questions of conceptual clarity and structure. In particular, the paper attempts a historiographical intervention that may feel a bit underdeveloped. I am struggling to balance attention to the text itself and the larger historiographical and theoretical claims I want to make. In addition, I am struggling to incorporate the model that inspired the war-bound-subject, Abdul JanMohamed’s “death-bound-subject,” into the paper: while JanMohamed was important in my early thoughts on this topic, I no longer seem to be able to bring his book into my own paper in a way that helps move the argument forward. So I’m happy to hear any thoughts you have on these questions—but I am also open to critiques, queries, and qualms of all kinds. Thanks again!  
  
Noah

The War-Bound-Subject: Racialization as Military Preparation in Chester Himes’ *If He Hollers Let Him Go[[1]](#footnote-1)*

In a scene close to the end of Chester Himes’ *If He Hollers Let Him Go*, Robert Jones, a black crew leader in a Los Angeles naval shipyard, engages in some casual lunchtime conversation with two female white coworkers. “‘Lotta coloured boys working in’dustry nowadays, right ‘long with white people,’” observes Elsie. “‘I always says it ain’t no more’n right. Coloured folks got much right to earn these good wages as white while we fighting this war. It’s partly their country too, I always says.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Elsie here concurs with the liberal consensus around racial inclusion that prevailed during World War II, when the primacy of economic productivity and social unity militated against segregationist labor policies. As she continues to descant on race relations, however, it becomes clear that the erosion of the racial division of labor has produced no fundamental reconsideration of longstanding anti-black beliefs. In seeming contradiction to her previous gesture of inclusion, Elsie blames riots in New York, Detroit, and Chicago on “all this mixing up,” and adduces the example of Texas as a model of Jim Crow harmony:

We love coloured folks in Texas, and I bet you a silver dollar coloured folks love us too. I even know coloured folks what’s educated. There’s a coloured doctor in Amarillo went to school and graduated. It’s just that white people is white. We’re different frum coloured people. The Lord God above made us white and made you folks coloured. If He’da wanted to, He coulda made you folks white and us people coloured. But he made us white ‘cause he wanted us the same colour as Him…And the sooner you coloured folks learn that, the sooner you understand that God made you coloured ‘cause he wanted to, ‘cause when He made us in His Image He had to make somebody else to fill up the world, so He made you. Not that I say coloured folks should have to serve white people, but you know yo’self God got dark angels in heaven what serve the white ones…[[3]](#footnote-3)

What is striking about this series of claims and observations is the degree to which they seem, at least for Elsie, to constellate a coherent worldview. Coloured folks can be simultaneously loved and regarded as a kind of human refuse. Coloured folks should not have to be subordinated in the temporal economy, but they ought to recognize their theologically allotted role as servants of whiteness. Elsie, speaking to Bob as a coworker, citizen, and legal “equal,” qualifies the ideology of inclusion with an insistence on untranscendeable difference. Her racist discursus, moreover, is intended as more than abstract philosophizing: her rhetoric functions to “place” Bob, to situate him as the proper object of racial insult regardless of the relations of formal equality now presumed to constitute public space.

Elsie’s assertion that blackness can be valued only as a secondary order of humanity that “fill[s] up the world” may seem like an aberration from the ideological imperatives of a state waging war on behalf of “democracy” and the preservation of a liberal world order. Nonetheless, Elsie’s double interpellation of Bob as assimilable-but-superfluous crystallizes Himes’ account of black “inclusion” within the war effort. Several chapters later, in a scene that this paper takes as a paradigmatic moment of mid-20th century racial subject formation, Bob is transferred against his will from the defense industry to the military itself. This administrative decision is devised to avoid litigating a false rape accusation: faced with the specter of riots both in the case of conviction and acquittal, Atlas Shipyard simply sends Bob off to war, presenting its commuted sentence as an act of benevolence. The president castigates Bob for failing “his people” and confirming racist stereotypes that undermine the U.S. wartime experiment with racial integration.[[4]](#footnote-4) The exigencies of war, however, provide a military solution to a Jim Crow problem: army conscription replaces the lynch mob. Bob thus ultimately finds his subjectivity and civic status rearticulated at the convergence of two “states of exception,” two regimes of extrajudicial violence that jointly produce an intermediary zone between the beneficiary and the casualty, the citizen and the enemy.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Bob’s induction to the military undoubtedly provides protections that would have been unavailable to a black man in his position only a few years earlier. The architecture of causality undergirding Himes’ account of military conscription, however, suggests a dissident intervention in conventional integrationist narratives of war as the pathway to black citizenship. War, in Himes’ rendering, appears not as a means of salvation but instead as the culmination of an entire process of sanctioned racial violence.

“Looks like this man had has a war,” exclaims a fellow inductee observing Bob’s wounds and bruises in the novel’s final paragraph.[[6]](#footnote-6) Himes thus uses the political rhetoric of analogy to draw racial subjection into symbolic proximity to war itself. As I argue in what follows, however, Himes’ use of this analogy exceeds its conventional deployment amongst WWII-era black activists who sought to link military service and the struggle for citizenship rights.[[7]](#footnote-7) Indeed, the collapse of metaphoric into literal war in the novel’s closing pages raises the question of war’s historical temporality: what is the “war” that Bob has “had” and how has it led him, perhaps even *prepared* him to take part in a literal war? If war is both what Bob has “had” and that upon which he is about to embark, what is the future war augurs?

We can begin by adapting Carl von Clausewitz’ famous formulation of war as “the continuation of politics by other means” and note that, in the process outlined above, war operates as the continuation of racialization by other means.[[8]](#footnote-8) Conversely, we might suggest that racialization represents a conduit for the internalization of war as a regulative principle of social life within the borders of the U.S.[[9]](#footnote-9) As Michel Foucault argues in a provocative inversion of Clausewitz’ maxim, “the role of political power is perpetually to use a sort of silent war to reinscribe that relationship of force, and to reinscribe it in institutions, economic inequalities, language, and even the bodies of individuals.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Bob’s post-lynching/pre-military position at the end of the novel is defined by the interaction of these two possibilities, the coarticulation of a militarized racism and a racialized war. This paper calls the racial subject position that emerges at this juncture the “war-bound-subject.”[[11]](#footnote-11) In theorizing this figure, I intend to pursue an account of the structural relationship between racialization as the manufacture of internal enmity and the ultimate horizon of warfare in the nationalization of death. Himes’ use of “war” as a rubric through which to understand black life in the U.S. reflects, I argue, not only a political grammar of analogy (war is “like” racism), but an understanding of racialization as socially productive for military purposes. His account of the war-bound-subject reveals a new mode of racial subject formation that subtends the rise of the Warfare-Welfare state and the U.S.’s ascendance to global hegemony.

To construe military induction as a logical extension of racial violence, rather than a rite of citizenship, is already to combat a formidable ideological arsenal developed by the U.S. Warfare-Welfare State from the eve of war to the dawn of the “American Century.” This proposition inverts the temporalities of causality undergirding liberal and imperial-statist stories of emancipation, stories in which freedom marches to the beat of a military drum. Bob’s two wars in the novel’s climax are also, in the canonical national narrative, two eras: his passage from one to the other marks a movement from the unrestrained racial violence of Jim Crow to the (still hedged and qualified) protections of an incipient state-sponsored racial liberalism. To equate the latter with the former under the sign of “war,” rather than regard war as the threshold between the two, is to posit repetition where others see difference, continuity over and against rupture. However, the form of this resonance cannot be reduced to the static persistence of a transhistorical anti-blackness anymore than it can be inscribed in whiggish mythologies of progressive racial uplift. Instead, the analogy offers the lineaments of a black radical historiography that considers the modular echoes and resonant inversions of black labor exploitation across the times and spaces of racial capitalism.[[12]](#footnote-12)

As I will argue below, the war-bound-subject emerges through a coordination of long-term processes of capital accumulation with the militarized imperatives of the state during WWII. This figure is not legible within conventional left accounts that take the early 1970s as the watershed moment in the expansion of what Karl Marx called “surplus populations.”[[13]](#footnote-13) From the “multitude” to the “precariat,” theorists have asked us to equate the contracting social safety net and rising unemployment of the 70s with a wholesale structural transformation in labor relations. In one particularly pervasive version of this narrative, it is not the capitalist mode of production itself but instead “neoliberalism” that accounts for the rise of disposable populations untethered to reliable work; it is only with the depletion of the Welfare State that we begin to see the intensification of disposability as a general logic of capitalist accumulation within the current limits of the world system.[[14]](#footnote-14) Himes asks us to see, by contrast, that disposability as a general logic of capitalist accumulation was also a logic immanent to the Welfare State, that totalizing political-economic formation to which the Communist Party of his own day capitulated and whose demise present-day liberals so frequently mourn.[[15]](#footnote-15) Indeed, Himes’ image of a black man fired from his job and drafted to the military does not only subvert a mystified liberal historical memory; it anticipates the increasing militarization of racial discipline in the present.[[16]](#footnote-16) The future Himes projected from the good state of the fabricated liberal past is the reality of our present, a reality bound to proliferating theaters of war.[[17]](#footnote-17)

**Racial Military Keynesianism**

The double-war conjuncture at the end of *If He Hollers* is defined in part by a blurring of firing and hiring. The close institutional relationship between the shipyard and the military makes it almost seem as if Bob has simply been shuttled from one branch to another within a single multipronged industry. If the military and the factory are, in Althusserian terms, distinct Ideological State Apparatuses, war forces their continuity within the capitalist system to the point of near convergence.[[18]](#footnote-18) Thus the two zones of war labor become simply the two hats of the state, who says, while wearing the first hat, “you’re fired!” and then immediately, while wearing the second, “you’re hired!” In this movement, the warfare state schizophrenically disposes of and internalizes black labor in a single stroke. War appears as a *deus ex machina* resolving a crisis of race relations in the workplace at the same time that it become rhetorically available as a symbol of that crisis (the “war” that Bob has already had).

This whole process can be seen as an explication of the military Keynesianism that became the U.S. government’s modus operandi during WWII. Antonio Negri observes that, in the Keynesian theory of the capitalist state, “society itself is cast in the mold of the factory.”[[19]](#footnote-19) Having been forced to recognized the autonomous existence of the working class and the relations of class antagonism in the wake of the October Revolution of 1917 and the Wall Street crash of 1929, the bourgeois science of capital begins to develop an account of the state as an economic agent:

The State was now prepared, as it were, to descend into civil society, to re-create continuously the source of its legitimacy in a process of permanent readjustment of the conditions of equilibrium. Soon this mechanism for reequilibrating incomes between the forces in play was articulated in the form of planning. The new material basis of the constitution became the State as planner, or better still, the State as the plan.[[20]](#footnote-20)

The central and most commonly known tenet of the Keynesian “state plan” was intervention through manipulation of aggregate demand to reach full employment. As Massimo De Angelis has argued, however, the Keynesian program was defined not only by fiscal stimulus, but also by socially and intuitionally embedded attempts to maintain a “dynamic balance” of different interests within a regime of capitalist accumulation.[[21]](#footnote-21) Negri and De Angelis concur that Keynesianism implied a recognition of the law of labor value.[[22]](#footnote-22) Negri thus affirms that the Keynesian “social State equals State based on labor.” De Angelis extends this formulation into an historical account of the U.S. Keynesian state, examining the social and political practices that sought to affect a balance between necessary and surplus labor (and thus between labor productivity and the wage rate). By managing the process of capital accumulation, the state aimed to curb capital’s anarchic propensity to produce imbalances between labor productivity and social wealth. In the realm of ideology, the state would mystify the precariousness of this equilibrium by conjuring the chimera of a “‘political miracle’ capable of reuniting the various necessary but opposing elements of the capitalist system—socialization of the mode of production and the socialization of exploitation; organization and violence; organization of society for the exploitation of the working class.”[[23]](#footnote-23)

The U.S. economy only became identifiably “Keynesian” under the political and economic pressures of the Second World War. Indeed, in the U.S., war and Keynesian economics are so intimately bound up that the former has frequently been conceived as the precondition of the latter. Keynes himself foresaw as much in a 1940 article for *The New Republic*: “It seems politically impossible,” he wrote, “for a capitalistic democracy to organize expenditure on the scale necessary to make the grand experiment which would prove my case—except in war conditions.”[[24]](#footnote-24) Hofstadter accordingly argues that “only the war itself could consummate the fiscal revolution that the New Deal began.”[[25]](#footnote-25) It was, however, not only the Keynesian fiscal revolution that the war enabled, but also the Keynesian labor revolution: it was in the context of the war that the U.S. state came closest to a “state based on labor.” Thus in his famous 1940 radio address on the “arsenal of democracy” President Franklin Delano Roosevelt assigns a noble role to the working class in an emergent war of production: “The worker possesses the same human dignity and is entitled to the same security of position as the engineer or the manager or the owner. For the workers provide the human power that turns out the destroyers, the airplanes and the tanks.”[[26]](#footnote-26) FDR thus defines the dignity of the worker in terms of a value beyond the wage, a value measured in weaponry. Capital accumulation becomes the accumulation of the means of destruction. In exchange for their unqualified submission to these operational imperatives, FDR promises “to maintain stability of prices and with that the stability of the cost of living.” The manipulation of aggregate demand, the quest for full employment, the equilibrium of labor, industry, and state: it is all here. FDR even demands a cessation of strikes and walkouts, as though federal intervention itself could supplant the labor struggle to set the price of labor power. National emergency thus becomes the occasion to pursue the political miracle of a pacified working class.

It is telling that in this 1940 address FDR makes no mention of “the negro problem.” One might expect the ongoing disenfranchisement and racial terror of southern Jim Crow, as well as pervasive discrimination in the North, to undermine the U.S.’ claims to an “arsenal of democracy.” However, this ideological contradiction only received its hegemonic articulation as a national political problem *after* FDR officially declared war in 1941.[[27]](#footnote-27) The U.S.’s entry to the war qualitatively shifted the terrain on which black social movements interacted with federal racial policy. Indeed, the black struggle for citizenship rights reached its militant fever pitch in dialectical counterpoint to the escalation of national emergency. May and June of 1941 are the pivotal months. As FDR followed Hitler’s invasion of Denmark and Norway, he was also faced with a burgeoning racial crisis at home. Civil Rights leader Asa Philip Randolph, recognizing the opportunities that come with the centralization of power in the hands of the president, planned a march on Washington demanding the integration of the defense industry and armed services. A military operational logic increasingly shaped FDR’s response to civil rights demands. In late May, FDR warned that “Singleness of national purpose may be undermined…*The unity of the state can be so sapped that its strength is destroyed.*”[[28]](#footnote-28) After FDR declared an unlimited national emergency on May 27, Randolph’s efforts proceeded full-throttle. In June, Germany launched its assault on the Soviet Union at the same time that a crime wave threatened to embroil Washington in a full-blown racial crisis. Fearing a race riot, the administration entered into negotiations with Randolph and drafted an executive order prohibiting discrimination in the defense industry. Just days before the scheduled march, FDR issued Executive Order 8802 and Randolph canceled the march.

Executive Order 8802 attempted to provide an institutional framework in which to balance the competing, ultimately irreconcilable, interests of distinct racial constituencies. The order prohibited discrimination in federal government and defense industry employment and established a Committee on Fair Employment Practice (FEPC) to “receive and investigate” complaints of discrimination. In addition to instructing federal agencies to administer labor without discrimination, it required all defense contracts to include a provision “obligating the contractor not to discriminate against any worker because of race, creed, color, or national origin.”[[29]](#footnote-29) While activists celebrated the order, in the words of the first FEPC chairman Mark Ethridge, as a “second emancipation proclamation,” the implementation of its directives were ultimately circumscribed by the efficiency and social order imperatives that had motivated its establishment in the first place. “It is obvious,” wrote Ethridge, “that Negroes have been led to believe a good deal more than the truth by their own leaders.”[[30]](#footnote-30) Equilibrium is distinct from equality: In a Jim Crow society, maintaining the former means deferring the latter. In a widely reported hearing in Birmingham, Ethridge clarified that the FEPC was agnostic with regards to segregation, as “no power in the world” could force southern whites to give it up. He clarified that EO 8802 was “a war order, not a social document.”[[31]](#footnote-31) FDR, in a letter to the president of a philanthropic organization, admitted the structural incompatibility of racial progress and war policy: “In …[long-range] planning, consideration of the color and race problem is of first-line significance. But there is a danger of such long-range planning becoming projects of wide influence in escape from the realities of war. I am not convinced that we can be realists about the war and planners for the future at this critical time.”[[32]](#footnote-32) War both fostered unprecedented abdication to demands of organized black activists and collapsed the pursuit of civil rights into the militarized logic of efficiency and order.

If Keynesianism develops out of the attempt to pacify class antagonism, U.S. Keynesianism is equally defined by the attempt to pacify racial antagonism. Although the liberal intelligentsia would later develop normative ideological discourses about an inherent connection between the pursuit of racial justice and “American values,” these must be understood as retroactive justifications of policies pursued under the concrete material pressures of war.[[33]](#footnote-33) Negri writes that the Keynesian science of capital “concealed the violence that was required to maintain this precarious controlled equilibrium as the new form of the State. Indeed, it even powerfully exalted the new society and its violent sphere of action as the realization of the Common Good, the General Will in action.”[[34]](#footnote-34) Negri makes two claims here, one about the repression of violence and one about the exaltation of violence. Yet he does not specify the concrete modality of this violence. In our context, we could do worse than name the concealed violence as persistent racial terror and the exalted violence as war. World War II, the “Good War,” provides a framework in which to both pursue racial equilibrium and legitimize the racial violence required for that equilibrium.

We can now make a series of broad claims about the U.S. economy during war, claims that will lead us back to Bob and the double-war conjuncture. In the U.S., Keynesianism pursues racial dimensions.[[35]](#footnote-35) Furthermore, the militarization and racialization of U.S. Keynesianism are mutually imbricated processes. Finally, the tendencies toward militarization and racialization are so intimately linked as to produce the former in the image of the latter, to make each appear as the mold in which the other is formed. The U.S. economy during WWII thus develops along the lines of what may be called a *racial military Keynesianism.*

**The War-Bound-Subject and the Surplus Horizon**

To consider the nexus of war, political economy, and racialization during World War II through the framework of a “racial military Keynesianism” is to abjure both liberal narratives of racial “progress” and any misguided moralization over the tactical decisions of mid-century black social movements. Just as the class struggle itself impelled the Keynesian fine-tuning of bourgeois science, so did the agitation of black social movements force the Keynesian state to further develop its racial protocols. Racial military Keynesianism names the multivalent conjuncture of racial, economic, political, and world-systemic pressures that determined the limits and possibilities of anti-racist struggle after the victory of 1941. It is this conjuncture that constitutes the conditions of possibility for the war-bound-subject. However, the war-bound-subject does not simply serve as an index of the historical moment in which they become legible. Chester Himes develops this figure as a specific intervention in the racial military Keynesian conjuncture. In so doing, he reveals the contradictions immanent in the Keynesian equilibrium, transforming the present into a lever with which to pry open the movement of history.

*If He Hollers* narrates four days in the life of Robert Jones, a black leaderman working in a Los Angeles naval shipyard in the early 40s. Bob’s ascendance in the labor hierarchy, from unemployment in Cleveland to his position as a leaderman in L.A., parallels the U.S. march to war. As Bob tells it, however, this trajectory of upward mobility coincides with a downward spiral into paralyzing fear. Bob experiences the morning alarm buzzer as a daily death knell: “I groped for it blindly, shut it off; I kept my eyes shut tight. But I began feeling scared…It came along with consciousness…For a moment I felt torn all loose inside, shriveled, paralyzed, as if after a while I’d have to get up and die.”[[36]](#footnote-36) Bob immediately links these morbid sensations to 1941 and the official U.S. entry into war: “Every day now I’d been waking up that way, ever since the war began. And since I’d been made a leaderman out at the Atlas Shipyard it was really getting me. Maybe I’d been scared all my life, but I didn’t know about it until after Pearl Harbour. When I came out to Los Angeles in the fall of ’41, I felt fine about everything.”[[37]](#footnote-37) While discerning a precise chronology is difficult, Bob here draws a series of geopolitical, economic, and affective developments into close association. We can deduce that after Pearl Harbor, Bob simultaneously found employment and fell under the thrall of a new kind of terror. Through Bob, then, Himes provides a subjective profile for the political and economic transformations we above defined as the development of a racial military Keynesianism. The same shifts that led to EO 8802 lead to Bob. Moreover, despite the new job, Bob’s consciousness appears to be more profoundly determined by developments at the national-political than those at the economic level. Even while racial discrimination prevented him from finding employment before the war, Bob was able to “put it out of [his] mind, forget about it.”[[38]](#footnote-38) Now that he works for the defense industry, however, he fears that the new state of emergency makes him appear as an internal enemy akin to interned Japanese Americans. Racial animus fills the air: “All that tight, crazy feeling of race as thick in the street as gas fumes. Every time I stepped outside I saw a challenge I had to accept or ignore. Every day I had make one decision a thousand times: *Is it now? Is now the time?*”[[39]](#footnote-39) Bob’s affective hypertension, a kind of continuous fight-or-flight paralysis, suggests in the opening chapter what his fellow military inductee confirms in the novel’s closing paragraph: to be a racialized subject in the U.S. after 1941 is already to be at war.

In other words, the concluding invocation of war as a metaphor for racial subjection only makes explicit the structure of feeling that organizes Bob’s subjectivity from the opening paragraph. It is not only interior consciousness, however, that defines what I am calling war-bound-subjectivity. The catalyst for the events that unfold across the novel’s four-day timespan is the refusal of Madge, a white southern woman, to work with Bob. Like the death of Bigger Thomas in Richard Wright’s *Native Son*, Bob’s military conscription is a fate sealed by a white woman. Similarly to Wright in his representation of Mary Dalton, moreover, Himes conscripts white femininity to a specific kind of symbolic labor whose politics can only be called misogynistic in spite of the real racialized libidinal economy that made such fantasies available in the first place. When Bob, technically Madge’s superior in the labor hierarchy, tries to enlists her help as a tacker, she says: ““‘I ain’t gonna work with no nigger!’” Bob immediately responds: “‘Screw you then, you cracker bitch!’”[[40]](#footnote-40) Racism and misogyny, in this exchange, are reflexive outbursts but also speech acts with material force: they become socially intelligible as demands for and refusals of labor. These dueling weapons of denigration reflect the mutually constitutive processes of race and gender formation that took place in the WWII defense industry, which employed both African Americans and women in unprecedented numbers.[[41]](#footnote-41) The agonistic and erotically charged relationship that develops between Bob and Madge reflects, on one hand, what Robyn Wiegman calls “the transformation of the economic into the sexual.”[[42]](#footnote-42) However, this sexual-economic nexus enters a third layer of institutional mediation when Bob and Madge attempt to leverage the operational imperatives of the defense industry to their respective interests.

As Bob complains to his manager about Madge’s slur, Madge taps into latent reservoirs of racial hatred. “‘You gonna let a nigger talk to me like that?’” she asks two white mechanics, who reflexively raise their tools in gestures of defense.[[43]](#footnote-43) Madge thus raises the specter of a lynch mob, reminding Bob of the omnipresent potential for white supremacist patriarchy to intercede on her behalf. However, there is also a deeper strategic element to Madge’s negotiation of racial and sexual mores. Her determination to put Bob in his place rests on a calculation about the relative weight of black male and white female prerogatives under EO 8802. The FEPC did not include women as a separate category in its anti-discrimination clauses. However, as Eileen Boris has demonstrated, anxieties around contact between black men and white women continued to shape the enforcement of anti-discriminatory policy in the defense industry.[[44]](#footnote-44) Moreover, the agencies charged with implementing EO 8802 remained hampered by the efficiency imperative: “the WMC [War Manpower Commission, which subsumed the FEPC] and other agencies usually placed a higher priority on wartime efficiency over non- discrimination, fearing the consequences of white walkouts in protest over black hires.”[[45]](#footnote-45)

Madge correctly assumes that the defense industry’s primary interests in efficiency will override its commitment to equality, and that this prioritization will translate into an allocation of blame upon the black man rather than the white woman. Indeed, the altercation between Bob and Madge leads to the former’s demotion. A manager asks Bob if he knows about EO 8802, only to insist on its irrelevance: “But your case doesn’t come under that. There’s no discrimination involved in you demotion whatsoever. People who want to agitate might tell you that, but it isn’t so.”[[46]](#footnote-46) When Bob complains about Madge’s insult, his supervisor reframes racist treatment as a test of the black worker’s capacity to integrate:

You know as well as I do that part of your job was to help me keep down trouble between the white and coloured workers…That was one of the reasons I put you on that job. I figured you’d have sense enough to get along with the people you had to work with instead of running around with a chip on your shoulder like most coloured boys…You know how Southern people talk, how they feel about working with you coloured boys. They have to get used to it, you gotta give them time.[[47]](#footnote-47)

This response evidences not only a refusal to include racism within the realm of punishable workplace behaviors, but a policy that places the burden of integration on the black worker. In addition to cooperating with his racist peers, Bob himself is made responsible for “keep[ing] down trouble.” Bob is thus paradoxically asked to adjust to a culture that refuses to incorporate him, to accept “niggerization” in the name of integration.[[48]](#footnote-48) The Keynesian equilibrium, in Himes’ account, internalizes anti-black racism as a de facto necessity, indeed as the inviolable condition of possibility for the internalization of black labor itself.

Himes thus critiques the legislative achievement of EO 8802 as a mechanism of Keynesian cooptation that fails to deliver substantial change, a false pretense of equality whose real effect is to subjugate black labor to the state’s operational imperatives. One could deduce from his depiction of racism in the defense industry that Himes, like the vast majority of the black intellectuals and activists during WWII, means to advocate the Double V line of “victory on two fronts,” connecting the struggle against fascism abroad to the struggle against racism a home.[[49]](#footnote-49) Indeed, in his journalistic wartime writings Himes reproduced the basic argument of the Double Victory campaign, insisting that black citizens must simultaneously participate without reservation in the national war effort and the fights against our “native American fascists.”[[50]](#footnote-50) In *If He Hollers Let Him Go,* however,Himes writes his way into a political critique that exceeds the principles he articulates in his wartime essays. As the plot of the novel progresses, the geopolitical context of war transforms from a horizon of unrealized emancipatory potential into a master sign for domestic racial terror. Thus, directly prior to his final induction, Bob dreams of a decorated Marine who reminisces fondly about friends killing black people for sport. After boasting about medals of honor that he got for “killing a lot of sonofabitches I ain’t even seen,” the marine tells Bob: “I ain’t killed a nigger yet.”[[51]](#footnote-51) This nightmare conjures incidents, widely reported in the black press at the time, when military servicemen effectively morphed into vigilante prosecutors of racial discipline on the home front.[[52]](#footnote-52) Paradoxically, however, this imagined collapse of military into racial violence directly precedes Bob’s own conscription to the U.S. army. The sequence speaks to the larger paradox of Bob’s *bildung*, if was can call it that: Bob’s movement from defense industry to military coordinates ostensibly opposed policies of militarized integration and militarized racial violence into relations of complementarity and productive interplay.

Through this process, “war” morphs from a solution to social conflict to into the sign of that conflict in its irresolvable antagonism. In other words, “war” expands from an event into a kind of theory of history. Here it becomes necessary to move from the synchronic conjuncture of racial military Keynesianism to the diachronic processes of capital accumulation that underlie it: only by making this transition can we understand the full implications of Bob’s transition from metaphoric to literal war in the novel’s conclusion. The dynamics of capitalist accumulation, as Karl Marx argued, inevitably yields “surplus populations” that fall beyond the purview of capital’s need for self-valorization. Capitalist accumulation produces, in “direct ratio of its own energy and extent, a relativity redundant population of labourers, i.e., a population of greater extent than suffices for the average needs of the self-expansion of capital, and therefore a surplus-population.”[[53]](#footnote-53) Surplus populations are by turns in excess of and intrinsic to the needs of capital. Even as they are produced through expulsion from capital’s need for self-valorization, they become necessary at certain critical moments for the system’s continuation: “It forms a disposable industrial reserve army, that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost.”[[54]](#footnote-54) The black population in the U.S., largely excluded from the economy on the eve of the war, formed an industrial reserve army—in Marx’s words, “a mass of human material…ready for exploitation.”[[55]](#footnote-55) Marx’s use of the word “army” to describe the surplus population takes on a pronounced salience in context where a sharp rise in employment reflects the exigencies of a literal war. This particular usage suggests that combat labor is an inexorable result of the dynamics of capital accumulation, and that capitalism produces and depends on war-bound-subjectivity.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Himes’ war-bound-subject emerges at a stage of capital accumulation when capitalism, under the pressure and aegis of war, internalizes black labor on an unprecedented scale. However, in Himes’ representation, this internalization appears less as social and political “inclusion” than as an attempt to manage and regulate a black industrial reserve army. It is from this recognition that one can speak of black disposability as a kind of paradoxical preparation for military service. When one of Bob’s white coworker’s threatens to “cool the nigger,” his response catalogues an almost schizophrenic shift from fear, to violent pleasure, to an odd inverted patriotism: “I felt weak, scared…If I could just stop thinking; every time I thought of trouble I thought of death…I wanted to kill the son of a bitch and keep on living myself…I wanted him to feel as scared and powerless and unprotected as I felt every goddamned morning I woke up.”[[57]](#footnote-57) Bob never acts on these impulses. Instead, he preserves the possibility of violent reciprocation as a fantasy that resolves psychic tension: “I was going to kill him if they hung me for it, I thought pleasantly. A white man, a supreme being. Just the thought of it did something for me…All the tightness that had been in my body, making my motions jerky, keeping my muscles taut, left me and I felt relaxed, confident, strong. I felt just like I thought a white boy ought to feel.”[[58]](#footnote-58) Bob’s visceral pleasure in anti-white violence parallels, particularly through the language of muscular release and its notion of racial role reversal, aspects of Frantz Fanon’s anti-colonial dialectics. Here, however, the fantasy of violence is never actualized; instead, it allows Bob to affectively invest in the national project: “I felt the size of it, the immensity of the production. I felt the importance of it, the importance of the whole war…I felt included in it all; I had never felt included before. It was a wonderful feeling.”[[59]](#footnote-59) By describing black national feeling as mediated through the fantasy of revenge, Himes registers the double bind of the black citizen’s relationship to the war effort. Bob’s capacity to experience the feelings of membership requires, paradoxically, a reciprocation of the racist violence that regulates and informs national belonging. By representing Bob’s affective investment in the nation as conditional upon such violence, Himes implicitly suggests that “black” patriotism can only take shape as a negative aspiration premised on the destruction of the very world the war is being fought to uphold.

As the novel reaches its climax, Bob continues to oscillate between a kind of Nietzschean will to destroy white civilization and a desire to assimilate to its governing terms. Ultimately, however, the narrative suggests that these competing desires are two sides of the same coin: black socialization in the U.S. is socialization into maladjustment. It is not surprising, then, that Bob provides one of the case studies in Frantz Fanon’s classic study of racial subject formation, *Black Skin, White Masks.* Fanon writes: “It’s the character in *If He Hollers Let Him Go* who does precisely what he did not want to do. That voluptuous blonde who is always in his path, succumbing, sensual, sexually available, fearing (desiring) to be raped, in the end becomes his mistress.”[[60]](#footnote-60) Fanon slightly misdescribes the plot of the novel here, but in a way that is pertinent to his larger point: in the climactic scene, Madge falsely accuses Bob of rape, deliberately inciting a lynch mob. This false accusation leads to Bob’s termination as shipyard employee and his induction into the war. Rather than prosecute Bob or Madge, Atlas Corporation funnels Bob into the military, recusing itself of an investigation that might inflame racial tension. In the closing scene, a fellow inductee—a “Mexican youth”—observes that Bob is “not doing well at all”: “Looks like this man has had a war.”[[61]](#footnote-61) This analogic link between the violence Bob has already experienced in the wartime workplace and his new position as black soldier highlights a causal link between racial and military discipline. In other words, the causal chain that the novel depicts is one in which racialization becomes socially productive for military purposes: by *scripting* Bob as “black aggressor,” Madge catalyzes a process that leads to his *conscription* into the military.

The concluding pages of the novel narrate a movement between distinct institutional scales of racial subjection that operate separately but also in coordination.

The procedure begins, significantly, on the superstructure of the ship to which Bob’s former gang has been assigned. Bob has agreed, under the pressure of his girlfriend Alice, to adjust himself to the racial mores of the shipyard. He now faces what could be called his final integration test. As Bob notes, the superstructure assignment “was a plum job—cool, airy, with a good view of the harbor.”[[62]](#footnote-62) He concludes that the unusual assignment has been granted as a gesture of benevolence that strategically demonstrates the benefits of a white leaderman, thus reinstituting racial hierarchy in the desegregated workplace. Kelly, the manager, essentially plays a racial bargaining game: the black workers will be stationed in a “white” section of the ship as long as they renounce their desire to work under a black supervisor. This tactic suggests, in other words, precisely the forms of workplace racism that were able to persist under EO 8802 while simultaneously claiming to work in the spirit of integration.

The superstructure, then, is the metaphoric zone of racial ascendance and inclusion, the “top” of the spatial division of labor to which the black workers are finally invited: “The superstructure would be the last place to be outfitted—start at the bottom and work up.”[[63]](#footnote-63) It is precisely in this space of putative inclusion, however, that the tragic denouement cited by Fanon plays out. Before descending to the engine room to complete his inspection, Bob, as if by some ineluctable racial fate, discovers a sleeping Madge in a deck cabin. The whole scene unfolds with an aura of crushing inevitability. Madge calls for “some white man” to come help her, screaming “stop nigger!” Deploying an immemorial racial script, she activates the always-already-present potential for white supremacist violence and provokes Bob into familiar affective territory: “Now I was moved by a rage, impelled by it, set into motion by it, lacerated by it.”[[64]](#footnote-64) Bob’s racial interpellation is thus also a subjection to the overwhelming rage described by Baldwin as the dominant affective fact of black existence.[[65]](#footnote-65) I use affect in contrast to emotion deliberately, to emphasize that Bob’s rage in this scene—as elsewhere throughout the novel—is described precisely in opposition to his personal-subjective desires. Bob’s rage is not a feeling but an objective force that “impels” and “sets [him] into motion,” re-coordinating his embodied movement with the scripted role of black criminality. “Affect,” writes Brian Massumi, “is as infrastructural as a factory.”[[66]](#footnote-66) In *If He Hollers Let Him* Go, the “superstructure” of the war machine—officially imagined as a zone in which contradictory interests are balanced in the service of national unity—remains irreducibly determined by affective infrastructures of a Jim Crow libidinal economy.

In determining its response to the false rape accusation, the state faces the limits of its own efforts to achieve a suspension of racial tension through a balancing of white supremacist and black interests. Madge’s accusation impels a need for prosecution of a kind, regardless of its veracity. Bob suspects that the president of Atlas Corporation would “cover for her till hell froze over and make himself believe he was doing it for the best.”[[67]](#footnote-67) The company’s logic is presented as follows: To convict Bob of rape and to accuse Madge of falsely accusing rape would both represent potential threats to the imperatives of efficiency and unity. The company makes a deal with Madge to drop charges so that they can avoid a blatantly false conviction while providing her the satisfaction of false heroism. The president thus reports: “She realizes that, should she press charges against you, it might in all likelihood create racial tension among the employees and seriously handicap our production schedule, so she has consented to withdraw her charge against you….It is a patriotic gesture comparable only to the heroism of men in battle, and I have the highest admiration for her.”[[68]](#footnote-68) The arbiters of wartime justice thus transform the false rape accusation into an opportunity to reproduce a racialized and gendered script of black disloyalty and white female patriotism. Madge becomes a national hero for “withdrawing” charges of rape: the layers of mendacity, jingoism, and misogyny become difficult to delaminate. White womanhood here enters a deeply ambivalent nexus of legal impunity, patriarchal overprotection, and sexual availability *on behalf* of the war effort. Meanwhile, Bob is tacitly positioned as a rapist not only of a white woman, but of the nation.[[69]](#footnote-69)

Of course, the whole premise of a “withdrawal of charges” is a ruse designed in accordance with the needs of the racial military Keynsian equilibrium. This charade elevates Madge’s racist interpellation of Bob into an official “public script” while simultaneously unburdening the state of the need to determine the truth in a court of law. The dejuridicalization of the accused black subject keeps him simultaneously outside the law and inside the labor pool. Thus, in his final appearance before the disciplinary apparatus of the war corporation, Bob embodies the contradictions of the warfare state itself. The shipyard president proclaims sanctimoniously:

You were given every opportunity to advance. You were the first Negro to be employed in a position of responsibility by our corporation and you were in a position to represent your race, to win for them advantages heretofore denied….To do a thing like this, at a time when Negroes are making such rapid progress, when Negro soldiers are earning the respect of the nation, and when Negro workers are being employed in all braches of industry is more than a disgrace to yourself, it is a betrayal of your people.[[70]](#footnote-70)

This speech calls to mind Negri’s assertion that Keynesianism “conceal[s] the violence that [is] required to maintain this precarious controlled equilibrium.” The president, in claiming that Bob has betrayed the liberalizing norms of the warfare state, in fact carries out a crucial task of the racial military Keynesian order: the mystifying reduction of racial antagonism into liberal conceptions of free will and individual responsibility. As black labor is internalized, the modalities of racism become more insidious and cunning. The trial of Bob is thus tremendously productive for the new racial order: it presents the state with an opportunity to suture the conflicting imperatives of racial unity and black subordination, to preserve an equilibrium based on the tacit affirmation of racial hierarchy. The “state of emergency” allows the state to incorporate black labor into the war effort, on the condition that blackness is represented as the negation of that very effort. The military becomes the relief valve into which Bob is funneled in order to manage his excess to the system: a literalization of the “industrial reserve army.” Bob’s final words suggest that he has been reduced to the bare sentience required of an object of instrumentality: “I’m still here.”[[71]](#footnote-71)

Military conscription thus seems to bring the itinerary of the war-bound-subject to a point of completion. However, when the Mexican youth observes that Bob “looks like he’s had a war,” he disrupts war’s referential stability, and by extension its claim to historical and narrative resolution. Mexican Americans were also subject to racial discipline during the war: Himes covered white soldiers’ vigilante attacks on Mexican Americans, known as the Zoot Suit riots, in his wartime journalism.[[72]](#footnote-72) It therefore wouldn’t be a stretch to interpret the “war” analogy as a statement of solidarity from one subject of extralegal racial violence to another. A kind of temporal inversion occurs in this analogy: as the industrial army is literalized, war itself is metaphorized. Bob is asked to interpret the war into which he has been inducted through the lens of the racial violence he has already experienced. Marx’s account of the surplus population is animated by a similar dynamic of inversion. He thus writes:

Just as the Heavenly bodies always repeat a certain movement, once they have been flung into it, so also does social production, once it has been flung into this movement of alternate expansion and contraction. Effects become causes in their turn, and the various vicissitudes of the whole process, which always reproduces its own conditions, take on the form of periodicity.[[73]](#footnote-73)

This “periodicity” designates the tumultuous itinerary of the industrial reserve army when seen from the longue durée of capitalist accumulation. The surplus population is always an internalized labor force in latent form; this labor force is always a surplus army in training. The Mexican youth’s casual observation opens us out onto this longue durée: the sublation of present war into past “war” via analogy becomes, conversely, a projection into the future. The metaphoric war of racial antagonism is, as Himes’ own later novels will testify, precisely the future for which literal war prepares. Thus, in the unfinished *Plan B*, Tomsson Black will complete the task for which Bob prepares, distributing U.S. military weaponry to the black surplus population of the Harlem Ghetto, reappropriating the arms of the state for race war on the street.[[74]](#footnote-74) The war-bound-subject is still here; history continues to reinvent and multiply the wars for which they are bound.

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1. I am indebted to Kenneth Warren, Christopher Taylor, Heather Keenleyside, and my colleagues in the University of Chicago Article Writing Workshop in winter 2018 for helping to guide this paper into its current form.   
    [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Chester Himes, *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2002), 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid., 133. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid., 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).   
    [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Himes, *If He Hollers*, 124.  
    [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. This analogy underwrote the Double Victory campaign, which linked the war against fascism with the demand for black equality in a struggle for freedom on “two fronts.” See Kimberley L. Phillips, *War! What Is It Good for?: Black Freedom Struggles and the U.S. Military from World War II to Iraq*, The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).  
    [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Abdul R. JanMohamed, *The Death-Bound-Subject: Richard Wright’s Archaeology of Death* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2005).  
    [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This entire paper, and this insight in particular, has been deeply influenced by Nikhil Pal Singh’s *Race and America’s Long War*, in which Singh suggests that “American war craft remains perennially bound to race craft as the politics of fear and lineaments of enemies without and within morph together, intertwine, and mutually inform and at times reinforce each other.” See p. 31.   
    [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Michel. Foucault et al., *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, 1st ed. (New York: Picador, 2003). It was N.P. Singh that drew me to this relation of inversion between Foucault and Clausewitz. *Race and America’s Long War*, 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The war-bound-subject is inspired by Abdul JanMohamed’s account of the “death-bound-subject” in the works of Richard Wright. A full explication of JanMohamed’s philosophically and methodologically rich study is impossible here. It must suffice for my purposes to state that the crucial underlying premise governing JanMohamed’s theorization of the death-bound-subject is the continued relevance of a Pattersonian model of social death as a rubric through which to understand early to mid-20th century black subjectivity. Jim Crow society, JanMohamed argues, is organized around the same conditionally commuted death sentence that Patterson famously interpreted as the fundamental condition of the slave. As will become clear in my argument here, the war-bound-subject emerges through historical changes in the coordinates of racial subjection. These changes, I suggest, demand different models for explaining black disposability and (de)valuation than the Pattersonian theory of social death.Abdul R. JanMohamed, *The Death-Bound-Subject: Richard Wright’s Archaeology of Death* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).   
     [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See, for example, Nanni Balestrini, *The Unseen* (London (England): Verso, 1989). Joshua Clover, *Riot. Strike. Riot.: The New Era of Uprisings* (London: New York, 2016). Michael. Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Nikhil Pal. Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Phillips, *War! What Is It Good For?*   
     [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Singh, *Race and America’s Long War*.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Louis Althusser, *On Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Labor of Dionysus: A Critique of the State-Form*, vol. 4, Theory out of Bounds ; (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 43.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Hardt and Negri, 4:29. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. M. De Angelis, *Keynesianism, Social Conflict, and Political Economy* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 2.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. For Negri, this is a theoretical recognition that derives, almost against Keynes’ will, from his attempt to maneuver interest rates downward toward “that point relative to the schedule of marginal efficiency of capital at which there is full employment.” This theoretical maneuver leads Keynes to redefine the state as the realization of the labor theory of value. See pp. 46-47.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid., 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.*, [1st ed.] (New York: Knopf, 1955), 307.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Ibid.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. “Franklin D. Roosevelt: Fireside Chat.,” accessed April 11, 2018, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15917. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. My account of this pivotal period draws mainly on Daniel. Kryder, *Divided Arsenal: Race and the American State during World War II* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000). See also Phillips, *War! What Is It Good For?* and Singh, *Black Is a Country* 101-133.   
     [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Qtd. in Kryder, *Divided Arsenal*, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ibid., 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ibid., 76.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ibid., 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Qtd. in Kryder, *Divided Arsenal*, 53.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. See Gunnar Myrdal, Richard Sterner, and Arnold. Rose, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944). See also Singh’s brilliant deconstruction of *An American Dilemma* in *Black Is a Country* 134-151.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Hardt and Negri, *Labor of Dionysus*, 4:29. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. It can thus be seen as a particular stage in the historical development of racial capitalism that Cedric Robinson tracks in *Black Marxism*. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Himes, *If He Hollers* 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Ibid., 3.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Ibid.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ibid., 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Himes, *If He Hollers* 27.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Eileen Boris, “‘You Wouldn’t Want One of 'Em Dancing with Your Wife’: Racialized Bodies on the Job in World War II,” *American Quarterly*, no. 1 (1998).  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Robyn. Wiegman, *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Himes, *If He Hollers* 27.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Eileen Boris, “‘You Wouldn’t Want One of 'Em Dancing with your Wife,'" 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Ibid., 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Himes, *If He Hollers* 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Himes, *If He Hollers*, 29.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Cornel West defines “niggerization” as the “the wholesale attempt to impede democratization—to turn potential citizens into intimidated, fearful, and helpless subjects.” West, “Niggerization,” *The Atlantic* (November 2007), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/11/niggerization/306285/. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Kimberly Phillips, *War! What is it Good For* 21-63. Singh observes that “nearly every major black intellectual and activist advocated black participation in the war effort after 1942.” See *Black Is A Country*, 123.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Chester Himes, “Now is the Time! Here is the Place!” [1942] in *Black on Black: Baby Sister and Selected Writings* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc, 1973), 213-220.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Himes, *If He Hollers* 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Phillips, *War! What is it Good For?*,32.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume I: The Process of Production of Capital* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1887), trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, 474.  [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Marx, *Capital*,474and Stanton, Intro to *Fighting Racism*, 20. For another discussion of African Americans as a surplus population see Roderick A. Ferguson, “Introduction: Queer of Color Critique, Historical Materialism, and Canonical Sociology” in *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*, edited by Donald E. Hall et al (London: Routledge, 2013), 129.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Kimberly Phillips provides statistical confirmation for this thesis, demonstrating that “Federal Officials [have continuously] calculated African Americans’ exclusions from American economic and civic life into the episodic need for combat labor.” See Phillips, *War! What Is It Good For?*, 6. For other accounts of this dynamic as it relates to WWII in particular see Ulysses Grant Lee, *The Employment of Negro Troops*, U.S. Army in World War II. Special Studies (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1966), http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/cat/bib/3976291., Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (New York: Free Press, 1986). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Ibid., 34-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Ibid., 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox(New York: Grove Press, 1952), 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Himes, *If He Hollers*, 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Ibid., 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Ibid., 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Ibid., 181.   
     [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. James Baldwin, et al., "The Negro in American Culture" in *CrossCurrents* 11.3 (1961): 205.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Himes, *If He Hollers,* 201.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Phillips discusses the ways in which sexualized portrayals of white woman became integral to the U.S. culture industry during the war. See *War! What is it Good For* 46. See also Sherri Tucker on “sexual patriotism.” See *Swing Shift: “All-Girl” Bands of the 1940s* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).   
     [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Ibid., 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Himes, *If He Hollers* 203.  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Chester Himes, “Zoot Suit Riots are Race Riots” [1942] in *Black on Black: Baby Sister and Selected Writings* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc, 1973) [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Marx, *Capital* 786.   
     [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. *Plan B: A Novel*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993.) [↑](#footnote-ref-74)