

UC Riverside

UCR Honors Capstones 2022-2023

Title

As Seen Through A Black Prism

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4t06v33z>

Author

Konare, Felero

Publication Date

2023-06-16

AS SEEN THROUGH A BLACK PRISM

By

Felero Raphael Konaré

A capstone project submitted for Graduation with University Honors

May 29, 2023

University Honors

University of California, Riverside

APPROVED

Dr. Coleen Macnamara

Department of Philosophy

Dr. Richard Cardullo, Howard H Hays Jr. Chair

University Honors

ABSTRACT

The white gaze is the ideological script imposed by those in authority onto everyone else to promote the white male point of view. The white gaze causes harms to individuals and as a result to society. The aim of my research is to show that Black Spaces, e.g., Black Student Unions, Black graduations, and Black entertainment, are critical to ameliorating these harms. My research methodology includes reading the literature on both the white gaze and Black Spaces, summarizing the insights found within, and drawing on lived experience and the tools of philosophical analysis to advance the conversation.

When the white gaze determines the standards by which all are judged, society and the individuals within suffer. For example, there are clear material harms: those who do not conform to white male standards are ostracized, their freedoms curtailed, their opportunities drastically limited, and their successes questioned. Less visible are the psychological harms. For many, steadfastly conforming to white standards leads to a denial of their true selves – to living an inauthentic life. But even those who reject the master narrative suffer psychologically. Being excluded from constructing the standards of society, can lead to feelings of agential impotence. While combatting the harms of the white gaze will no doubt require a multifront effort, the aim of my project is to show that Black Spaces should be a key element of this effort.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe a great deal of gratitude to my faculty mentor Coleen Macnamara who has been pushy, supportive, and inspiring. Also, to Edward Haven I owe a great deal, for without his suggestion I would not be doing this research or philosophy. I would like to acknowledge Agnieszka Jaworska and Monique Wonderly as engaging with them and their ideas have impacted my research for the better. Finally, I owe a great deal of appreciation to Tuppett Yates, Jamila Stewart, and Eric Bryant for their valuable discussion of the ideas presented here.

And to my family, know whenever I roam, I am always thinking of home.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
I. SARTRE: SUBJECT & AUTHORIZING.....	5
II. SUBJECTHOOD: OTHERING & THE LOOK.....	5
III. FANON: THE WHITE GAZE.....	8
IV. WONDERLY: ATTACHMENT OBJECTS & SECURITY.....	9
V. ATTACHMENT: CORE FEATURES & EFFECTS.....	9
VI. WONDERLY: SECURITY, CONFIDENCE, & AGENCY.....	13
VII. SECURITY: DEFINED & SPECIFIED.....	14
VIII. CONFIDENCE: ACTION & OBJECT.....	16
IX. AFFECTIVE: INSECURITY & WELL-BEING.....	17
X. AGENCY: SELF-ESTEEM & ENVIRONMENTS.....	18
XI. AGENTS: SAFE HAVEN & EMOTION REGULATION.....	20
XII. BLACK SPACES: EXPLAINED & KEY MARKS.....	21
XIII. BLACK SPACES: WONDERLY'S CORE FEATURES SATISFIED	23
XIV. REFERENCES.....	26

[Sartre: Subject & Authoring]

Starting from, “Being and Nothingness” by Jean-Paul Sartre, I utilize two important concepts: 1) Literature on Subjects and the Other provided insight into the power dynamic and consequences of Othering and 2) Understanding “The Look” and its harms. The goal is to outline Sartre’s relevant ideas of Subjects and the Other to explain how the authoring of possibilities are limited to the Subject’s perspective. This will include harm and possible solutions as provided by Sartre.

[Subjecthood: Othering & The Look]

“Being and Nothingness” by Sartre starts the discourse on subjecthood and its effects on "othering" individuals, which Sartre calls "The Look". However, before The Look happens, Sartre points out that human organisms refer to something and this something becomes the foundation and reference for its probability in the future. Sartre claims the problem is that in our everyday reality there is an origin to the Other (and the world) which can be found. Yet in order to truly understand the Other (and the world) individuals must question the origin from their own observation. The Look then becomes the tool to which the Subject utilizes to author the everyday reality of the world around them and/or the Other.

To explain The Look, Sartre wants us to imagine a Subject who leans over to look through a keyhole to see the world around them and/or the Other. While Sartre's concept of The Look is elaborate and full of nuance, there are three key elements to be explained, that could be happening at any time, in any order, however Sartre claims the events could also happen simultaneously.

The first element is the Subject *leaning* over to look through a keyhole to perceive the world around them, including the Other. The second element is the keyhole itself, Sartre would have us question if it is designed specifically by and for what the Subject deems ideal to be perceived. The third element is the Other, who at first utilizes the Subject's keyhole but upon gaining consciousness, will design their own keyhole to perceive what they deem to be ideal.

Sartre describes that harms manifest in the psyche first to affect intrapersonal communication; however, Sartre also indicates that issues present themselves in interpersonal communication with substantial symptoms. These harms intersect with real world issues such as alienation, autonomy, authority, inauthenticity, self-determination, social cohesion, and power to name a few.

Sartre's first event and piece of evidence for showcasing the harms begins with the Subject *leaning* over to look through the keyhole to perceive the world around them and/or the Other. Leaning from the Subject's original position to look through the keyhole authors an inauthentic perception of the world and/or the Other. Sartre declares the only way to avoid this harm is to make space for the Other, and their diverse perspectives, to come into their authority as a Subject. The benefit of making space for the Other is an authentic perception of the world and/or the Other and all the possibilities of self-determination within the Other.

Sartre's second event states that when space is not made for the Other to come into their authority, the keyhole maintains the crucial role of subverting the Other and maintaining the Subject's inauthentic ideals. Sartre explicitly describes the keyhole as being the focal point of tension concerning unreflective thought, alienation, and self-determination for the Other. This determination keeps the Other as an object for which the Subject is to author. The keyhole serves as a lens to limit the possibilities the Other could perceive of the world and themselves. Instead, only the Subject's perspective can be had looking through the keyhole because the keyhole is authored by the Subject, for the Subject.

Sartre's third event captures when the Other becomes reflective of their own authority to be a Subject. This causes a tension that can arise when the Subject becomes aware they are also the Other (due to being seen as such by the Other), the Other's apprehension toward the keyhole's lens (due to the leaning/perspective), or when the Other recognizes their limited possibilities of reality. To be clear, limited possibility of reality deals with the Subject authoring from their perspective all the possibilities of everyday reality, limiting the Other. However, from the authentic perspective of the Other, countless possibilities exist for the world and themselves. Sartre details the harms to be anxiety or fear with the world, hostility to either the world, Subject, or self, and inauthenticity. The inauthenticity afflicts the Other where they are aware of the possibilities, but those possibilities are outside the keyhole, outside what the Subject has authored. There is a conflict within the Other to orient themselves vs the self that was authored and given from the Subject.

Sartre explains the suddenness of the last event creates a clash between Subject & Object, power & authority, and subsequently an epiphany of a reflective consciousness dawns upon the Other. A reflective consciousness provides the Other with the revelation that an Object allows the Subject the power and authority, therefore all it simply must do is to allow itself the power to be a Subject and delineate the world around them as they perceive it. I believe it is through allowing multiple Subjects that the truth of humanity and even the world can be revealed. It is through aiding and allying with the Other in their quest for liberation that the often-invisible mechanisms that bars people outside the dominant culture can be dismantled to make tangible connections for equity and a more comprehensible world.

The White Gaze is a species of Sartre's "The Look" and Frantz Fanon help elucidates the correlation between the two.

[Fanon: The White Gaze]

In, "Black Skin, White Masks" by Frantz Fanon, he explores the nature of colonialism, racism, and the psychological damage they cause in colonial people and in the colonizer. Fanon built upon Sartre work, and developed his own variation of, "The Look". According to Fanon, the white gaze was a new species of the look and what made it unique is that it centered white male perspective. The white gaze authored and defined categories such as sex, gender, masculinity, art, justice, music, and even concepts like beauty.

Fanon cited many psychological harms due to the white gaze but the three I wanted to focus on are: 1) Embedding, 2) Lack of originality, and 3) Undermines security. Embedding is

when an individual has conflict within themselves about which standards they believe in or feel are authentic to themselves. Lack of originality was Fanon's take on how limited the white gaze made the world. Fanon initially used language as an example and explained how in using English as a preferred language limited bilingual people in their desire to express themselves. English as a language just didn't have the capacity for rebellion, celebration, or even for love. Lastly, Fanon asserted that people (especially Black people) that did not reflect and reevaluate on the standards given, were having their security undermined. Because, for example, the standards of beauty ostracized Black people individuals needed to reflect on how that affected self-acceptance, self-esteem, and emotional stability.

[Wonderly: Attachment Objects & Security]

First, utilizing "On Being Attached" by Monique Wonderly, I outline her core features of attachment objects and the impacts they have on an agent's security. Second, I will be using concepts from "On the Affect of Security" by Wonderly to introduce how her concept of security, a kind of confidence, in oneself is integral to agency. The aim is to have a clear understanding of the core features of attachment objects and their relation to a person's sense of security and in turn recognize how security is connected and essential for a person's capacity to act or their agency. Ultimately, Wonderly's research is used to advocate and support helping agents to navigate the world around them.

[Attachment: Core Features & Effects]

In “On Being Attached,” by Monique Wonderly, she provides why attachments are valuable, the core features and benefits of an attachment object, and finally she argues attachments have important implications for one’s sense of security. Wonderly illuminates how valuable and impactful attachment object relationships are, and the role emotions play when it comes to a person’s sense of security.

Wonderly opens with why we should care to examine attachments and our relationships with them, “We often use the term ‘attachment’ to describe our emotional connectedness to objects in the world” (“On Being Attached” 223). Attachments then, are a way to illustrate how objects are linked to people psychologically. Attachment objects could be our career, an idea, an object, a person, a pet, a place, and so on and so forth and they mean a great deal of importance to the person. Wonderly elaborates, “What I will call ‘security-based attachment’ has been largely ignored by philosophers. In this form of attachment, the agent experiences a particular object as a felt need, such that her sense of well-being and general competence suffer without it” (“On Being Attached 224). Because there is a lacuna in security-based attachment, scrutiny of attachment objects offers vast insight into an agent’s needs, understanding well-being, general competence, or a reduced sense of security without it.

Wonderly does loosely describe security, “Drawing on these views, security might be construed, roughly, as a feeling of confidence in one’s well-being and in one’s ability to competently navigate the world” (On Being Attached” 231). Simply stated, Wonderly roughly connects security as a feeling of confidence in one’s well-being and ability to capably navigate the world. Wonderly then is concerned with understanding the particular harms and benefits that impact her description of security.

To better understand how security is reduced, it is best to unpack and fully grasp Wonderly's core features and impacts of an attachment object. Wonderly details what needs to be true for someone to have a security-based attachment:

(I) The attached party has a relatively enduring desire for engagement with a non-substitutable particular. (II) The attached party suffers a reduced sense of security upon prolonged separation from the object or even at the prospect of such separation. (III) The attached party tends to experience an increased sense of security upon obtaining the desired engagement with her attachment object ("On Being Attached" 232).

(1) A person claiming to have a security-based attachment must have a persistent want for engagement with an irreplaceable object (non-substitutable particular). Wonderly utilizes an example about infants to show how unique and necessary an attachment object is to a person. Wonderly declares, "Once attached, even while she accepts some care from others, the infant continues to *need* her specific attachment figure(s) – no substitute will do. Even while being provided for by others, prolonged separation from her primary caregiver typically results in severe distress." ("On Being Attached" 229). Wonderly highlights that even when an infant receives care (increased security) from someone else, they still require their attachment object, and no substitute will suffice. The separation even causes severe distress, leading to the second core feature.

(2) The person with an attachment suffers a reduced sense of security upon prolonged (or prospect of) separation from the security-based attachment. Returning to Wonderly's characterization of reduced sense of security is where a person's confidence in one's well-being,

ability to navigate the world, and general competence feels diminished without their attachment object. Wonderly begins, “For instance, an adult undergoing extended separation from her attachment object might feel as though she is ‘out of sorts,’ ‘off-kilter,’ ‘no longer all of a piece,’ and so forth” (“On Being Attached” 231). Wonderly is describing the phenomenon that emotions have humans psychologically all the time. An individual without their attachment object may certainly feel like something is missing or they do not feel like they have a handle on life. Engagement with a non-substitutable particular is a benefit to one’s sense of security, leading to the third core feature.

(3) A person experiences an *increased* sense of security when achieving the engagement they wanted with their security-based attachment object. Wonderly provides a positive case, “Likewise, engagement with an attachment object might allow her to feel as though ‘she is on solid ground,’ or more competent” (“On Being Attached” 231). A person with their attachment object could feel assured of themselves and capable. While these expressions may seem abstract, they certainly capture the very real role emotions play in feeling secure. Additionally, attachment objects themselves have value, “And they [infants] use their primary caregivers as secure bases and safe havens in order to mitigate potential or actual threats to their safety” (“On Being Attached” 230). Attachment objects are valuable in and of themselves because they are a secure base to return to and a safe haven to explore the world from.

The core features being present in a relationship between a person and their attachment object promote the relationship to a security-based one as it has considerable impacts upon one’s sense of security.

Turning the focus back to Wonderly's previous concern, reduced security, there are two claims that could use emphasis. First, Wonderly states:

As psychologists have noted, security enjoys a kind of primacy over many other human needs. Consequently, when an agent's sense of security is sufficiently compromised, she will tend to focus solely on restoring it, often to the neglect of other needs and other persons. In other words, security-based attachments are in an important sense, about, or for, *oneself*. We don't need our attachment objects for their sakes, but for our own. And this point is a significant one ("On Being Attached" 234).

While this is Wonderly's only mention of security having primacy over other human needs as cited by psychologists, it seems that this is a critical claim to make. This means attachment objects that establish a person's sense of security *must* be achieved before other needs can be met because they are essential to forming other types of needs and attachments. However, if security is effectively compromised, the person will solely focus on restoring their sense of security at the cost of other needs and attachments because security-based attachments are vital for a person's own sake.

Second, Wonderly writes, "Importantly, depending on the relation in which one stands to the object of loss, one's affects and agency may be damaged in different but perhaps comparably significant ways" ("On Being Attached" 240). Elaborating on proximity and its impact, Wonderly concludes that a person and their agency may be affected differently and yet still significantly when they lose their attachment object. This means a person whose sense of sense of security is reduced may have their agency harmed in various but always substantial ways, and this should be cause for concern.

[Wonderly: Security, Confidence & Agency]

In “On the Affect of Security,” by Monique Wonderly, she expounds on how security ought to be interpreted to rationalize ‘action’ and ‘confidence’ as attributes that are significant and should be considered in the discourse on one’s agency. Wonderly’s methodology reveals how limited the discourse on security has been philosophically. But Wonderly does highlight how the discourse among other various academic intellectuals (like sociologists, political scientists, and psychologists) overlap in their loose characterization of security. This overlap provides Wonderly with a foundation where she can begin her journey in ultimately identifying security as an affective attitude on one’s agency. Wonderly asserts affective security is best understood in positive expressions. Positive expressions of security have the presence of confidence, eagerness, preparedness, and ready for action. Lastly, Wonderly explains how affective security plays a dynamic role in agency, composing identity, and adding to the discourse on attachment.

[Security: Defined & Specified]

Wonderly begins developing the concept of security by using commonalities cited between various academic intellectuals. Wonderly gives her general aim and analysis, “As I am interested in investigating security as an affective attitude, we can helpfully group the extant relevant definitions into two broad, overlapping categories: (1) security as an absence of some mental quality or condition and (2) security as one or more specific positive psychological

states” (“On the Affect of Security”). Going through both general accounts provided by various academic intellectuals supports Wonderly’s goal to find the kind of security she wishes to home in on.

On the first account Wonderly writes, “The person who feels secure is without (significant) worry, fear, or anxiety” (“On the Affect of Security” 167). Simply put, a person feels secure when they are free from negative affective states. Wonderly states the absence of something does not help us clearly understand affective security. She adds, “After all, if the absence of fear or worry has affective content, the relevant content should be articulable in positive terms” (“On the Affect of Security” 167). While informative and useful, this account is not relevant to conceptualizing affective security fully. Wonderly pivots, “A feeling cannot be understood as merely the absence of some other feeling or condition. We must look elsewhere, then, to discern the nature of felt security... (“On the Affect of Security” 167). Having exercised describing the negative account and determining that affective security can be specifically conveyed in positive expressions leads us to the second account.

On the second account Wonderly states, “The person who feels secure in this respect needn’t feel particularly calm, serene, or satisfied. On the contrary, her experience of the relevant type of confidence might be accompanied by a rush of eager anticipation for change. The affect of security in this sense, unlike the first, suggests a readiness for *action*” (“On the Affect of Security” 168). Disregarding particular characteristics that are not relevant to her goal of describing affective security, Wonderly isolates the relevant ideas of ‘confidence,’ ‘anticipation for change,’ and ‘readiness for action’. Wonderly continues, “Security in this sense coheres well with the idea that it is an active feeling with evaluative content and a significant forward-looking dimension. It also affords us a conception on which affective security can elucidate our

understandings of agency and (certain) emotions” (On the Affect of Security” 168). Wonderly reinforces that affective of security is dynamic (‘active’) and can assess (evaluative), and exceptionally progressive or avant-garde (forward-looking). Lastly, Wonderly comments that delineating affective security, which is concerned with the *presence* of confidence, eagerness, and preparedness can give insight to how agency and certain emotions are to be understood. Getting more specific, Wonderly turns her attention to defining and understanding confidence and the positive characteristics that link it to security for a thorough understanding.

[Confidence: Action & Object]

Wonderly’s conception of confidence stems from psychology’s literature, “Confidence is (quite often) infused with both a sense of increased capableness and an inclination to move forward” (“On the Affect of Security” 170). Confidence is akin to enhanced ability and tendency to progress. Conversely, Wonderly does disclose a caveat about confidence, “To my mind, however, it suffices to say that whether or not the relevant form of confidence inclines one toward any particular action, it *facilitates* action” (“On the Affect of Security” 170). The kind of confidence Wonderly is focusing on enables action, not in any particular direction, but enables one to act, nonetheless. Wonderly concludes her thoughts on confidence and observes its connection to security, “Confidence as I’ve described it here, is well suited to capture the relevant sense of security. Security is a positively valenced affective attitude that construes its object (for now, the self) as sound and reliable” (“On the Affect of Security” 170-171). Finally, Wonderly encounters the kind of confidence that is applicable to the kind of security she is focused on. She also notes this kind of security optimistically stays balanced and interprets the self (object) as in good condition (sound) and consistent (reliable). Wonderly does foreshadow

that this relevant sense of security could interpret something other than itself as the object, but first Wonderly directs us to the implications to the self and one's own agency.

[Affective: Insecurity & Well-being]

Wonderly's focus shifts to a more general account of the relationship between security and one's well-being. First Wonderly revisits and incorporates the negative account, "On this picture, we can usefully construe (one kind of) security as confidence in one's ability to competently and effectively exercise one's agency. And here it will be helpful to add that the affect of *insecurity* can be construed as a kind of *anxiety* about one's ability to competently and effectively exercise one's agency" ("On the Affect of Security" (171). Having comprised a comprehensive view of security to confidence, Wonderly reflects on the opposite, insecurity to anxiety. This kind of affective insecurity does not stay balanced and interprets the self as in not capable (competent) and not consistent (effective) to facilitating action (agency).

Nonetheless, Wonderly claims insecurity is not entirely detrimental or without its purpose, "To start, feelings of insecurity can be quite valuable under the right circumstances. To be sure, it is *unpleasant* to feel insecure. Felt insecurity, when warranted, tracks (actual or potential) threats to things *about* us that matter *to* us" ("On the Affect of Security" 172).

Wonderly validates that affective insecurity has a purpose, and that is to track threats to things regarding oneself or what one cares about. Wonderly extends this idea further, "The negative valence of the affect reflects the significance of the object and motivates us to act to protect it or to restore it" ("On the Affect of Security" 172). The lack of balance (valence) created by this

kind of affective insecurity to anxiety is proportional to the importance of the object, which in turn facilitates action (to protect or restore).

Wonderly does warn that not all action is good action, even when one is secure, “Feeling secure facilitates action, but it might blind one to the particular type of action that is called for, given one’s actual situation” (“On the Affect of Security” (172). Put simply, an agent who feels secure may be motivated to action, but not know what kind of action is most fruitful in a given situation. This may be understood when flight attendants instruct passengers to secure their own breathing mask before others. An agent, in the heat of danger, may help others before themselves because they are misguided by their own sense of security that they are fine. Wonderly expounds on affective security and affective insecurity’s effect on agency, “The point is that security and insecurity construe their objects in particular ways, and those construals may or may not be veridical” (“On the Affect of Security” (172). Wonderly affirms that security and insecurity interpret (construe) their objects (like the self) in certain ways, and those ways may not always be genuine.

[Agency: Self-esteem & Environments]

Besides affective security and affective insecurity, Wonderly does expand that there are other factors to consider when it comes to agency. Wonderly first mentions the environment, “My ability to competently exercise my agency might be impaired, not so much because of my own constitutional inadequacy, but due to adversarial environmental factors that are understandable beyond my control” (“On the Affect of Security” 173). Wonderly is explaining how a sound or capable person might be impaired and cannot utilize their agency competently

due to conflicting environment. It is not clear on the bounds of ‘beyond my control,’ but nonetheless environment could play a crucial role when it comes to impairing or facilitating agency. Wonderly elaborates, “It might be possible for one to lack attachment bonds while still feeling secure, supposing that one has supportive environmental structures in place and a healthy perception of oneself – shaped by, for example, positive mental health practices, (such as meditation and exercise), resilience and/or similar personality traits, and a history of past achievement” (“On the Affect of Security” 176). Wonderly is defending that it may be possible for a person to have no attachment security, and yet still feel secure due to the supportive environment *and* healthy perception of oneself.

However, Wonderly does pivot back to what she foreshadowed previously, security interpreting something other than the self:

On some interpretations, ‘attachment security’ refers to a positive feeling about the quality of one’s attachment relationship(s) or simply, the feeling of being loved. In fully developed agents (as opposed to infants), attachment security impacts one’s experience of, or feelings toward, one’s own agency, and it reflects and shapes one’s attitudes not only toward threats from other agents, but to threats more broadly. (“On Affect of Security” 176).

Wonderly introduces the concept of attachment security, which is akin to a positive feeling about attachment relationships or the feeling of being loved. The security Wonderly defined previously now interprets attachment relationships as the object. This pivot means the attachment relationship (object) optimistically stays balanced, is in good condition (sound), consistent (reliable), and confident. Additionally, attachment security influences how one experiences and feels toward their own agency, and reflects and shapes one’s attitude toward threats, either from

agents or more generally. Ultimately, attachment security is fundamental because it is rooted in interpersonal attachment, which impacts one's agency.

[Agents: Safe Havens & Emotion Regulation]

Advancing her position on the importance of environmental support and attachment security, Wonderly begins to build from the concept of safe havens. Wonderly reiterates, "Attachment figures, our primary caregivers also regulate our emotions via the security-enhancing roles described in section 4 – that is, they act as 'safe havens' and 'secure bases' for us" ("On the Affect of Security" (177)). She develops further, "As secure bases, our primary caregivers not only facilitate our willingness to explore new environments by making us feel safe (thereby removing a potential barrier to exploration), but their emotional cues actively encourage us to explore by exciting an array of action-oriented positive affects" ("On the Affect of Security" 177). Simply put, secure bases provide agents with a safe environment as well as a kind of security that promotes eagerness, preparedness, and readiness for action through emotional cues.

Emotional cues from others or our secure bases are not the only sources of confidence Wonderly discusses. From ourselves, there is also pride she writes:

Pride in turn validates or confirms confidence in oneself and promotes feelings of security. In this way, pride and affective security are mutually reinforcing. Affective security, however, is primary and serves to regulate experiential pride. Absent sufficient confidence in one's agency and self-efficacy, one will be unable to experience pride in one's achievements ("On the Affect of Security" 178).

While pride cannot replace affective security, it does support confidence by providing feelings of security in oneself. Affective security is necessary in order for an agent to have pride, and without it, confidence will be at a deficit. The outcome then is an agent who takes no satisfaction in themselves or their achievements. Again, Wonderly has another caveat, “Of course, as adults, most of us are skilled *self*-regulators of emotion, but external sources can aid or disrupt this process” (“On the Affect of Security” 177). External sources still play a crucial role in regulation emotions, even for skilled adults.

Wonderly’s final remark, “Affective security, in turn, also shapes how one loves. Unless one feels sufficiently secure, one will typically be unable to competently engage in certain other-directed activities that are partly constitutive of love, such as caregiving, affiliative pursuits, and sex. Conversely, affective security facilitates a kind of trust, openness, and active engagement that can foster and enhance interpersonal love” (“On the Affect of Security” 179). Affective security influencing how one loves and being a requirement for engagement is radical. Yet, security as Wonderly has covered so far has positive and negative implications and is fundamental to the perception of self. It is not unlikely to consider how agents without supporting environments, safe havens and secure bases do not have affective security and cannot competently engage in other-directed activities that require love. Because that would require agency, and for agency, confidence is key.

[Black Spaces: Explained & Key Marks]

Black Spaces come in many forms such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), Black Student Unions (BSU), Congressional Black Caucus, Black departments in

academia, churches, graduations, clubs, fraternities, sororities and much more. Additionally, Black Spaces may be created spontaneously when Black people come together. Black Spaces, by definition, eschew the white gaze and generate an opportunity for Black creativity and products. Some examples of creativity and products are slogans (Black Girl Magic or Black Boy Joy), language (AAVE and dapping), music (Jazz and rap cyphers), or just expression (durag wave reveals and protests). Successful, Black Spaces create a secure base from which Black people can explore, a haven to provide shelter from hostile environments to return to and create new possibilities that only exist for individuals who are outside the dominant narrative and free to explore beyond it.

One key mark of Black Spaces is that Black people are the authority of Black Spaces. This key mark is essential for advocating and supporting Black people toward recognizing their Subjecthood and being secure within themselves. Because the White Gaze defaults to centering white male authority and standards, Black agency and security becomes undermined and even attacked when deviating beyond the White Gaze. An example of this can be understood by presenting Black people with the dilemma to cut or shape their hair to fit within professional standards. However, Black people never had the chance to author what is or is not professional. Black Spaces are a haven which support Black people to be free from external interference and with recognizing they are Subjects and author of their perspective and standards. Failure to recognize this key mark leads Black people to become (and stay) objects of the White Gaze. Authority within Black Spaces and the products they create are necessary for the second key mark.

A second key mark is the re-evaluation and experimentation of standards for authenticity. This key mark is crucial for assessing the authenticity of our current standards and experimenting

beyond them if not. Because the White Gaze defaults American standards to center white male perspective, the input from Black perspectives and values may be missing. Black Spaces remedy this by providing an environment that is free to experiment with standards outside the White Gaze. A testament of the second key mark is seen with Black people and their experimentation of English, the default language for America. Whether knowingly or unknowingly and for whatever reason, the default language did not satisfy Black Americans and instead they had to come up with adaptations to meet their standards. African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is a product of Black Spaces which was created through experimentation, which many Black people, consider as authentic if not more than English to them.

[Black Spaces: Wonderly's Core Features Satisfied]

I argue that Black Spaces satisfy Wonderly's core features and are a security-based attachment for Black agents. Wonderly's core features are as follows:

(I) The attached party has a relatively enduring desire for engagement with a non-substitutable particular. (II) The attached party suffers a reduced sense of security upon prolonged separation from the object or even at the prospect of such separation. (III) The attached party tends to experience an increased sense of security upon obtaining the desired engagement with her attachment object ("On Being Attached" 232).

(1) An attached person claiming to have a security-based attachment must have a persistent want for engagement with a non-substitutable. I do not believe I have to satisfy this feature as the second and third features are much more compelling, even for a few Black agents.

First, there will be a case of Black people who do not desire Black Spaces as a non-substitutable particular. Whether it be because of a healthy perception of self or a supporting environment, some Black agents will not desire Black Spaces. However, other Black agents still do or will need Black Spaces. There can be an argument made that Black Spaces have always endured, even throughout America's violent and dangerous history against them. Still, I do not think satisfying this core feature is necessary nor as significant as the next two.

(2) A person with an attachment suffers a reduced sense of security upon prolonged (or prospect of) separation from the security-based attachment. There are two arguments that Black agents suffer reduced security. First, because the default for American society is from a white male perspective, this ostracizes Black agents from much of the world around them. Initially an agent might feel, 'off-kilter,' or 'out of sorts,' without their security-based object but I argue Black agents never had a solid place to start from to begin with. Rather, Black agents are foreign to the American world around them most if not all the time and have no way about orienting themselves. Even the language Wonderly uses to describe the feeling may not resonate with Black agents' description. Second, much of American society (and the world) is anti-Black, meaning the severity of a reduced sense of security is not enough. Again, the example of Black Spaces having to endure through America's history of burning, sinking, bombing, destroying, and claiming much of Black Space is evidence of anti-Blackness. Yet, what I am arguing is that Wonderly's concept of reduced sense of security is still a level above what Black agents feel in a *hostile* environment. The notion that an agent separated from Black Spaces may feel like they do not have a handle on life, or their general competence feels diminished is arguably above a Black agent who has never had or has been constantly separated from their security-based attachment.

(3) A person experiences an *increased* sense of security when achieving engagement with their security-based attachment object. First, it is important to bring up language again. The way many Black agents describe how they feel when in Black Spaces is vastly different and exclusive to the individual. Some say, ‘I am with my village,’ or ‘I am in my bag,’ so on and so forth. My point here is that Black Spaces *increases* the security of the individual to a degree that expressing oneself becomes handshakes, head nods, slight smiles, jokes, and even compliments. I do not think words like ‘competent,’ or ‘on solid ground’ even does the level of security justice. Second, reiterating from the previous core feature, having a world that is neutral to your perspective at best is not desirable. Having a world that is hostile to you at worst is unimaginable. Black Spaces are a safe haven and a secure base for which is necessary to Black agents’ security. Without Black Spaces, Black agents are at a much higher risk while exploring, experimenting, and creating. Because absence of suffering or reduced security is not enough, Black agents need a level of security that is positive, supportive, and confidence building.

References

- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans Charles Lam Markmann. Grove Weidenfeld Press.
- Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans Constance Farrington, Grove Weidenfeld Press.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Being and Nothingness*, trans Hazel E. Barnes. Washington Square Press (1956).
- Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am*. Directed by Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, performances by Toni Morrison, Hilton Als, Oprah Winfrey, Perfect Day Films, 2019.
- Wonderly, Monique. "On the Affect of Security." *Philosophical Topics*, Volume 47, Number 2, Fall 2019, pp. 165-181 (Article)
- Wonderly, Monique. "On Being Attached." April 22, 2015. Springer Science + Business Media Dordrecht, 2015.
- Yancy, George and Alcoff, Linda. "Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race in America." *PhilPapers*, philpapers.org/rec/YANBBW-2.