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Hyper-visible Invisibility:
Tracing the Politics, Poetics and Affects of the Unseen

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This article investigates the poetics of the invisible as a tool of analysis, tracing the hegemony of whiteness in architecture. It marks the intersection of power and identity through examples such as the transparent line in Toni Morrison's allegory of the fishbowl, the invisibility depicted in Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man*, and the concept of 'hyper-visibility' introduced by Frantz Fanon, in his phenomenological and psychoanalytical critique, further analysed and 'queered' in critical race and cultural studies theorist Sara Ahmed's work. These authors have inspired the search for a new method in my architectural practice, tracing a poetics produced by 'others' under the working concept of 'hyper-visible invisibility'. Tracing a poetics of the unseen, I seek to go beyond the binary of race, and provide invisibility as an *abstraction* that escapes the usual dichotomies dominating race, class and gender, in order to focus rather on how these perform and materialize.

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Given my initial assumption of the hegemony of whiteness in architecture and my own position as a female architect of colour, at times it feels disobedient, even defiant, to examine the relationship between race and architecture. Although I didn't expect this to be an easy task given the subject matter, it has proven to be extremely challenging, due to the difficult emotions that emerge when dealing with race affect, in my attempt to address the interrelation of race and space. Within this confluence of emotions, language and bodies, it became clear that I was lacking a sufficient or satisfactory vocabulary for addressing the effects of this interrelation. Likewise, the emotions that emerged made it difficult to distinguish what should be considered knowledge production and where that knowledge production takes place.[1] The recognition that I have no language has me wondering whether its absence identifies crucial relations of power in the interrelation of race and space. Do these challenges present themselves as indications of how language regulates or enables, and thereby controls and frames, ways in which we are able to speak and think within the current hegemony of whiteness?

As I examine the interrelation of race and space by questioning the regulation of knowledge-production through language, my aim is to provide a new tool for architectural discourse, as discourse shapes and reflects society's values and beliefs about class, gender and race, through time. As architect and scholar Mabel O. Wilson points out, architecture can be thought of as manifested and materialized ideology. She writes: 'the discourse of modernism gave rise to modern architecture, and … architecture has done very little to address how race, racial representation and racial thinking have shaped its own practices and discourse'.[2] Wilson's concern makes visible a gap in the narrative of architecture, where race represents that absence. She also suggests that the ways in which modernism gave rise to modern architecture, with its perceptions and virtues, correspond with the concept of whiteness. I would suggest that these same perceptions and virtues become central in narratives of domination and imagination by representing ideals of purity, morals, social refinement and progress, while the absence of these ideals works to subordinate and marginalize 'others'. Reading race as narrative, this crucial lack provides a central function to support the fiction of difference. Whiteness defines itself through the identification of 'others', where this difference assigns an order, securing 'others' in place and making race stable through visual or linguistic markers.[3] In this way, language not only controls how we are able to speak of objects and beings, but also how we express relations and distances.

I argue that the interrelation of race and space is crucial in a critical architectural practice. For me, a readily available language within architectural discourse is necessary to challenge the stability of race. However, I do not wish to eliminate the term race entirely by arguing the post-racial, nor do I intend to substitute it with the incommensurable term

1 On affects and race see Sara Ahmed, The *Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), and bell hooks, 'Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination', in *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Ruth Frankenberg (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 167.

2 On architecture and race see Mabel O. Wilson in the symposium*: Critical Dialogues on Race and Modern Architecture,* at Columbia GSAPP, New York, 26 February 2016 https://youtu.be/_nLLhiyN2xc (accessed 30 May 2017).

3 On the concept of the 'Other' see Alison Mountz, 'The Other', in *Key Concepts in Political Geography* ed. Carolyn Gallaher (London: SAGE,), 328–38.

'ethnicity'. Rather, my intention is to outline a language liberated from the dichotomy of race that does not only point to terms of marginalization and oppression, but might become available through the concept of 'invisibility'. For this, I turn to fiction as a tool in the quest for black subjectivity and agency. Is it possible to re-imagine the architect within this frame? Can the politics, poetics and affects of the unseen (or perhaps not seen) be included in an architectural practice?

The politics of invisibility

Invisibility can be found as a theme in literature and texts produced by the African diasporas, in fictional works that theorize black subjectivity as invisibility. The theme of invisibility also makes visible how whiteness remains unmarked when the racial is deployed to organize society and conceptualize spaces. Unmarked, whiteness becomes a 'blind spot', describing a certain unconscious viewing of oneself and others, which results in an unequal distribution of power and privilege associated with skin.[4] Based on the assumption that what constitutes whiteness is that which is normal and neutral, considered to be the universal, it assigns structural advantages allowing cultural norms and practices of whiteness to go unnamed and unquestioned.[5] This makes whiteness both invisible and hyper-visible, existing everywhere and nowhere, on the individual body (through phenotype) and beyond the corporeal simultaneously. Therefore, it is not only bodies considered 'white' that have an investment in whiteness; in order to survive, all bodies do. My point here is to emphasize that whiteness is a learned behaviour based on assumptions, beliefs, values, performance, habits and attitudes that combine to produce a constantly shifting boundary. It becomes a fluid and relational category that affects everyone. Who is considered 'white' changes over time; moreover, whiteness only exists in relation and opposition to 'others', establishing a hierarchy with power over those who do not fit the norm, and those who violate the beliefs, behaviours, values, habits, attitudes that hierarchy produces.[6]

In order to call out the centrality of whiteness, revealing its invisible central position as a site of power in language, knowledge and imagination, I have used racially charged terms, such as race or whiteness. To name this central position is to identify it as a rhetorical construction and to allow for new terms that describe the processes of race with greater accuracy, nuance and complexity. I turn to fiction produced by the African diasporas to raise questions about the relationship between identity and subjectivity, and the relationship between language and experience. The approach in my architectural practice has been to assemble and re-assemble texts, which has become a way to locate a poetics that describes the racial beyond the concept of race, and focuses on the work race performs. Tracing a poetics of invisibility in its performative aspects could also become a way of tracing how the performance of race makes spaces that have not previously been included within architecture.

4 hooks, 'Representing Whiteness', 177.

5 hooks, 'Representing Whiteness', 177.

6 Richard Dyer, *White: Essays on Race and Culture*. (London: Routledge, 1997), 45.

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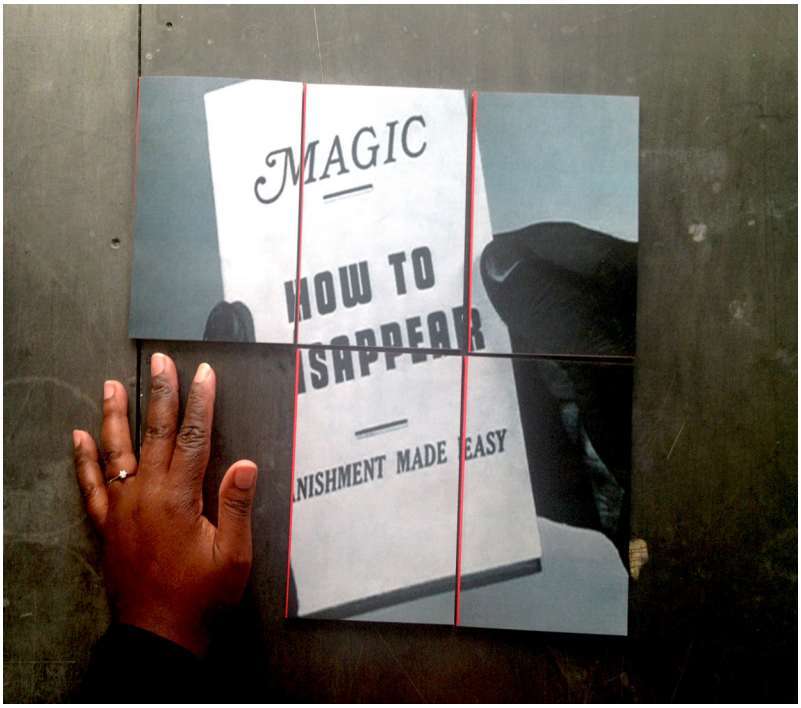

Fig 1 and Fig 2 Booklets that assemble and re-assemble texts by the African diasporas, performing a script which seeks to explore how whiteness functions (Photo: Marie-Louise Richards)

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The poetics of invisibility and 'hyper visibility'

The poetics of invisibility appears most notably in the work of Ralph Ellison, and in the absences and silences in works of Toni Morrison. The poetics of 'hyper-visibility' appears in the phenomenological and psychoanalytical critique of Frantz Fanon, and is developed in terms of a 'queer phenomenology' by Sara Ahmed. Together, I suggest that these writers offer a poetics of invisibility through both fiction and theory.

Frantz Fanon and Ralph Ellison both published their first works in 1952. Although they differ in geographical and cultural contexts, as well as genre, Ellison's *Invisible Man* is a work of fiction and Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* a collection of essays, both offer invisibility as an abstraction of race, in terms of exclusion and deletion.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon's central metaphor – that black people must wear 'white masks' in order to get by in a white world – refers back to the notion of the investment all bodies have with whiteness. Through the metaphor of the mask, Fanon undertakes a sustained discussion of the dimensions of psychological colonization that a racist phenomenology imposes, while he presents a detailed investigation of how the self encounters the trauma of being categorized as inferior, due to an imposed racial identity. Fanon refers to this process as the 'historic-racial bodily schema' of individual subjects, understanding race as a historically constructed relation to social differentiation, and providing detailed poetic accounts of bodies that constitute race as a historical category of social experience. Asserting that 'being over-determined from without, the black body is hyper-visible and invisible at the same time',[7] Fanon poetically condenses two distinct modalities of race: race as *erasure*, or as a lived invisibility; and its appearance as *matter* in opposition to the universal subject position occupied by whiteness. These two conceptions of race appear in conflict, invisible yet hyper-visible. I suggest that Fanon's contradictory way of understanding and constituting race is mediated by the work of abstraction, and establishes the double function of race. What Fanon is describing is a poetics of race, a relation of form to matter.[8] For him, one of the most pervasive agents of phenomenological conditioning is language. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon analyses language as the bearer and unmasker of racism in culture, using the symbolism of whiteness and blackness in the French language as an example, a point that translates equally well into English linguistic habits. 'One cannot learn and speak this language', Fanon asserts, 'without *unconsciously* accepting the cultural meanings embedded in equations of purity with whiteness, and the lack thereof equivalent with blackness.'[9]

Symbolism and surrealism become central agents in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. The novel was conceived as a critique, rejecting his mentor Richard Wright's naturalistic social-realist writing. Despite their shared artistic goal of interiority – focusing on the characters' thoughts, feelings

7 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 109.

8 David Lloyd, 'A White Song', *Boston Review: A Political and Literary Forum*, 10 March 2015, http://bostonreview.net/poetry/david-lloyd-white-song (accessed 30 May 2017).

9 Fanon, *Black Skin*, 109.

and reactions to a given situation as means of agency within fiction – they held differing opinions of how this would best be achieved in terms of style. Ellison argued that social-realism, the style of which Wright was chief proponent, was insufficient for capturing black experience in the United States. He came to this realization over a period of several years as he wrote a completely different novel, naturalist in style, taking place during World War II, where he found himself distracted by a voice, which was taunting him. One of his characters did not at all fit within the narrative he was writing, and constantly interrupted his process: 'I was confronted by nothing more substantial than a taunting disembodied voice.'[10] After several attempts to ignore this distraction, Ellison finally yielded, noting that 'it now appeared that the voice of invisibility issued from deep within our complex American underground... one who had been forged in the underground of American experience and yet managed to emerge less angry than ironic'.[11] This caution to the *unconscious* dimensions of American society and the irony of the narrator influenced Ellison to adopt the surrealist approach to structuring the novel.

Exploring race as erasure, *Invisible Man* begins with the end of the story. With a prologue narrated in first person by a protagonist who throughout the novel remains nameless: 'I am an invisible man... I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me.'[12] Speaking from a 'hole in the ground' at the borderlands of Harlem, the invisible man has gone into hibernation. The end of his journey marks the beginning of insight, and of resistance. It is important here to emphasize that the protagonist's only opportunity to tell this story with sincerity arises precisely because he is nameless and invisible. Anonymity assigns him the freedom to speak freely. In hibernation the invisible man withdraws from the outside world, to reflect without external interference, and describes how he came to realize his invisibility, to write it down, so that we, the readers, can take part in it. This production of knowledge is his first step in taking control of his own identity. Literary scholar Anne Anlin Cheng notes:

> *By locating cultural and racial exclusion as loss, Ellison's text offers a theorization of identity that recuperates that loss, not as presence but as invisibility. Or more specifically, Ellison revalues invisibility as a strategy to identify that absence without denying that absence's constitutive power for the formation of the racialized subject.*[13]

Ellison's attention to language and surrealism, and his subversive use of the symbolism of light and darkness, express this revaluation of absence and loss, Cheng emphasizes:

> *Beyond the standard reading of invisibility as a metaphor for exclusion (that the black man is invisible because white society refuses to see him) the text offers us invisibility*

10 Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Random House, 1952, Second Vintage International Edition 1995), xiv.

11 Ibid., xviii.

12 Ibid., 3.

13 Anne Anlin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation and Hidden Grief* (New York University Press, 2000), 226.

> *as a critical strategy: a metaphysical, intellectual meditation that explores the power of abstraction, disembodiment and illusion. As the inadmissible phantasm configuring (not just configured by) social visibilities, the narrator's invisibility is not just an effect of social reality but also affects it.*[14]

[14] Ibid 229

With her attempt to recover lost history and the voices of the unheard by combining myth, realism and the fantastic, Toni Morrison explores the impact the past has on the present, and arrives at what she calls 'imaginative resistance'.[15] Transforming subjectivities into forces, and in making 'difference' self-evident not deviant, Morrison extends some criticism to her male predecessors. 'What I'm interested in is writing about the gaze, without the gaze'.[16] She implies that the works of Wright, Ellison and others, especially male novelists before her, were preoccupied with explaining inequality, marginalization and oppression. Instead of explaining 'the problem', Morrison is interested in exploring it, as she wants to reveal and raise questions. 'I was inspired by the silence and absences in literature. What was driving me to write was "the silence", so many stories untold and unexamined.'[17] The kinds of narratives that form the identity of a person becomes, for Morrison, a political question. In a conversation with activist Angela Davis, Morrison describes her writing mission:

[15] Toni Morrison, 'Ghosts in the House - How Toni Morrison fostered a generation of black writers', interview by Hilton Als, *The New Yorker*, 27 October 2003.

[16] Toni Morrison, 'The Radical Vision of Toni Morrison', interview by Rachel Kaadzi Gahnsah, *New York Times Magazine*, 8 April 2015.

[17] Morrison, 2003.

> *So that all of this is my trying to figure out not just the consequences of race, which I did in the first book I wrote, but other things around it, since it seems to have a hole, you have to be ferociously against it, or apologetic about it or the victim of it or the perpetrator of it and I just wanted to get rid of that discourse which doesn't go anywhere, and find out what the origins are, what its purpose is, not just the scapegoat purpose, but it has a real function.*[18]

[18] Toni Morrison, 'Angela Davis and Toni Morrison: Literacy, Libraries and Liberation', in conversation with Angela Davis, Live in The New York Public Library, 27 October 2010, https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2010/10/27/angela-davis-toni-morrison (accessed 20 August 2017).

Morrison identifies the affective restraints and limited positions in discourses of race, and expresses her desire as a novelist to transcend these. According to Morrison identity is not so much a question of what something *is*, but rather a question of what it *is not*.[19] By this she means that we should not become preoccupied what it *is* to be black, but rather direct attention towards the ways in which being black is inscribed within whiteness. In other words, what 'white' *is not* – 'black' as absence, negation and as negativity.

[19] Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

Affects, sensory thresholds of control

To recognize race as what 'white' *is not*, Morrison centres on how our affective selves, our thinking, feeling and judging selves are constructed in this political world. Through an allegory of a fishbowl, Morrison defines race as a barely perceptible threshold:

> *It is as if I had been looking at a fishbowl – the glide and flick of the golden scales, the green tip, the bolt of white careening back from the gills, the castles at the bottom surrounded by pebbles and tiny intricate fronds of green, the barely disturbed water, the flecks of waste and food, the tranquil bubbles traveling to surface – and suddenly I saw the bowl, the structure that transparently (and invisibly) permits the ordered life it contains to exist in the larger world.*[20]

[20] Ibid, 17.

In identifying this *structure* Morrison writes an allegory of whiteness as a *sensory* threshold. The moment the boundary created by this structure is identified is the moment when race fails to sustain its stability. This moment frames how bodies are constructed. Architect Jennifer Bloomer points out, in reference to the fishbowl as a container of social and cultural significance, 'this line is as interesting an architecture as the environment that is shaped and contained by it'.[21] Whiteness as sensory threshold mirrors the politics and affects of race as a social relation, in Mabel O. Wilson's definition of 'race as the controlling of space, controlling where people are able to go'.[22] This raises the question of how control manifests itself and recalls the notion of whiteness as learned behaviour. The repetition of habits, beliefs etc. performs a boundary, barely perceptible, but perceptible as a 'liminal' condition, as in-between, only possible 'to pass' through learning to *erase* 'difference'.

[21] Jennifer Bloomer, 'Nature Morte', in *The Architect Reconstructing Her Practice*, ed. Francesca Hughes (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1998), 241.

[22] Mabel O. Wilson, 'Design & Racism 2: Can the Master's Tools Dismantle the Master's House?', interviewed by Leopold Lambert, podcast recorded in New York on 1 May 2016, https://thefunambulist.net/podcast/mabel-o-wilson-design-racism-2-can-the-masters-tools-dismantle-the-masters-house (accessed 30 May 2017).

In perceiving 'passing' as a (sensory) threshold, Sara Ahmed argues for the importance of acknowledging how whiteness is not reducible to skin colour or to something one can have or be:

> *When we talk about a 'sea of whiteness' or 'white space' we are talking about the repetition of the passing by of some bodies and not others. Non-white bodies do inhabit white spaces; we know this. Such bodies are made invisible when spaces appear white, at the same time as they become hyper-visible when they do not pass, which means they 'stand out' and 'stand apart'. You learn to fade in the background, but sometimes you can't or you don't. The moment when the body appears 'out of place' are moments of political and personal trouble.*[23]

[23] Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 135.

What Ahmed proposes is to think of 'passing' through the lens of phenomenology, to conceive of 'passing' as a field of perception, referring to whiteness as a background one has the ability to fade into or not: 'To pass is to pass into a background.' [24] In doing so, Ahmed suggests 'passing' as camouflage or mimicry, invisibility as performance, as means to 'blur' into 'backgrounds'. Her attention to negation frames the sensory threshold of whiteness in how its liminality frames the affects and performativity of race. Ahmed stresses:

[24] Sara Ahmed, transcript of lecture 'Some Striking Feature: Whiteness and Institutional Passing', presented at *Disrupting Visibility: The Politics of Passing*, Friday, 12 June 2015, Goldsmiths. https://feministkilljoys.com/2015/06/14/some-striking-feature-whiteness-and-institutional-passing/ (accessed 30 May 2017).

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> *The matter of race is very much about embodied reality; seeing oneself or being seen as white or black or mixed does affect what one can do, even where one can go, which can be re-described in terms of 'what is and is not within reach'. If we begin to consider what is affective about the 'unreachable' we might even begin the task of making 'race' a rather queer matter.*[25]

[25] Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 112.

Ahmed challenges the notion of race as stable, in extending Fanon's critique of phenomenology through a queer lens. 'To pass' disrupts and re-orders power relations through ambiguity, in its failure to serve the function of race- the desire to determine difference in order to control space, whether enabling, limiting or controlling, establishing a position that is either *within reach* or *unreachable*. In this sense, queer refers not only to the non-normative, but also to the moment when norms fail to be reproduced.

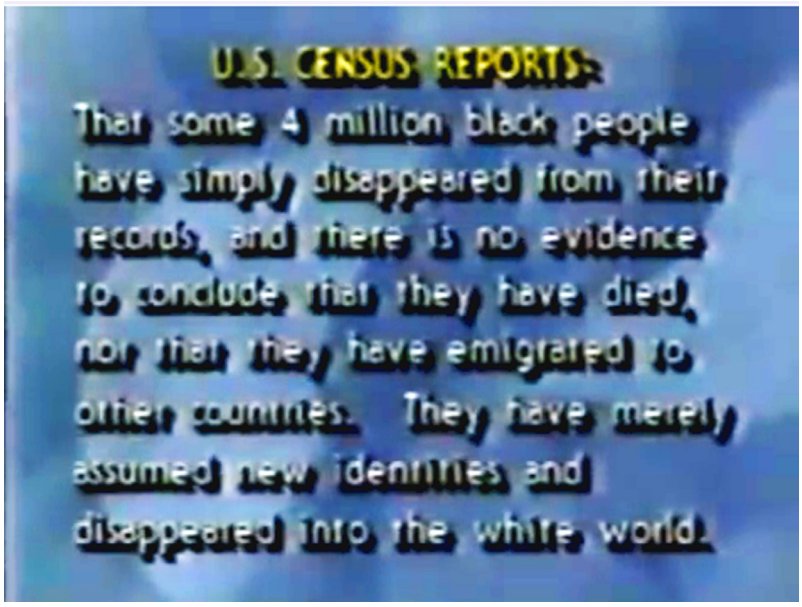

Fig. 3 Film still from video-montage 'Thresholds' with clip from *The Phil Donahue Show* 1990. (Photo: Marie-Louise Richards)

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Fig. 4 Video-montage 'Thresholds' that explores how the threshold of race performs and corresponds with the racial spatial divide in Detroit. (Photo: Marie-Louise Richards)

To think of race as the controlling of space, in the sense of that which is or is not within reach, has been helpful in my work. In the example 'Thresholds', clips from American newscasts, TV talk shows, and real estate promotions are assembled using video montage into a non-explicit narrative, examining segregation in the Detroit metropolitan area. My aim was to explore how the threshold of race performs and corresponds with the spatial divide between the predominantly black city of Detroit and the surrounding affluent white suburban neighbourhoods, a spatial division which is replicated in many, if not most, American cities.

On the border between the inner city and its suburbs, where homes on 8-Mile Road in Detroit lay too close to a black neighbourhood to qualify for positive rating from the Federal Housing Administration, the program that subsidized housing after World War II for all American citizens, the residents built a 6-foot wall between themselves and those neighbours. Once the wall went up, mortgages were approved. This was in 1941, and between 1943 and 1962 the federal government underwrote $120 billion in new housing, of which less than 2 percent went to black families.[26] The Fair Housing Act, that prohibited racial discrimination in housing, was not implemented until 1968. I don't think it is unfair to assume that these policies put the non-white population at a disadvantage that is still present spatially to this day.

[26] PBS documentary series *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, episode three, 'The House We Live In', 2003. http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-about-03-01.htm (accessed 20 August 2017).

When analysing architecture, the tendency has been to look for what can be seen; and when examining race and space, only to examine non-white spaces. I wish to direct attention to the policies that made segregated suburbia in America possible in the first place. To argue for the queering of race in architectural discourse, in line with Ahmed's arguments above, proposes to consider race as relational and to identify how norms are reproduced, in order to locate what values, etc. we, as architects, must examine and challenge.

The poetics of invisibility provided a strategy for uncovering the processes hidden in policy, laws and attitudes that led to the effects visible in Detroit today. In this way, this approach has been a helpful tool to challenge the ways in which white spaces are typically examined as non-racialized, and how the phenomenon described as 'white flight' makes spaces unreachable for those who fail to pass into the background of the normative practice of whiteness.

Towards an architectural strategy of hyper-visible invisibility

In considering what is affective about the 'unreachable', I must admit to my own anxiety in putting forward my conclusion on how the theories introduced throughout this paper translate into architecture, poetics and practice. Whereas 'anxiety' might appear to be an exaggerated

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and dramatic term, it seems only fitting in light of the premise that the discipline and practice of architecture have done little to address how race, racial representation and racial thinking have shaped their own practices and discourse. This endeavour of tracing a poetics of invisibility reflects a desire to put a discipline and practice of architecture 'within reach', and to inhabit this subject as a black feminist, but also to include 'other' spatial practioners, both historically and in the present. Surely, my anxiety stems from an unease to claim what *I do* as architecture; yet insistently a practice has emerged, experimental in character, ranging from a more conventional practice to exploring artistic practices, across and between disciplines, that explores 'other ways of doing architecture', utilizing queer feminist methods and theories.[27]

Nevertheless, this is a premise that brings uneasiness, insofar as it seeks to recognize the challenge in addressing the interrelation of emotions, language and bodies as mechanisms that regulate or enable power. What does this recognition do? It becomes a question of definition: Rather than perceiving effects of whiteness as an action, I follow Ahmed in considering the effects of whiteness as an 'inaction', by tracing how the effects of whiteness can be perceived simply as the failure 'to provide' for 'others' who do not 'pass' into whiteness *because* of their 'difference'.[28] With this definition, it becomes important to emphasize that the utility of addressing the effect of whiteness does not lie in the ability to assign moral blame, or even to focus on the oppression that inevitably follows. But rather to make visible that which affects *what* we define as problems and *how* we formulate them. Here, the question of the subject of knowledge, in discourses of race, racism and space, is immediately put at issue. Therefore, my concern at a lack of vocabulary is one of agency.

To not remain anxious in the inadmissibility of the subject of architecture I wish to claim, I have chosen to embrace the unreachable or unseen, with support of the power of abstraction, disembodiment and illusion, imagining 'invisibility' as a feature of a (black) feminist figuration.[29] In this way the poetics of invisibility traced from the writings of Ellison, Morrison, Fanon and Ahmed has not only served as tool for thinking through how race operates as invisibility, but has also been mobilized into a form of architectural practice. Reading race as narrative, reviewing the literature of black writers, becomes a crucial part of my approach, as a form of knowledge production in how theories introduced in this paper offer invisibility as a form of black subjectivity that challenge the optical regime of race, or 'the desire to determine difference', as a critical strategy. More importantly, as critical strategy, a poetics of the 'unseen' allows for an exploration of a *black feminist poetics*,[30] which seeks to frame whiteness as invisible for those who inhabit it; whereas for others, making visible what already is, but doing so in other ways.

27 In insisting that feminist critical practices are architectural, I refer to the discussion in chapter one of Brady Burroughs, *Architectural Flirtations: A Love Storey*, PhD Dissertation (Stockholm: ArkDes, 2016), 46. See also Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider, Jeremy Till (eds), *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2011).

28 Sara Ahmed, 'Declarations of Whiteness: The Non Performativity of Anti-Racism', *Borderlands* e-journal 3, no. 2 (2004): 4.

29 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

30 Denise Ferreira da Silva, 'Toward a Black Feminist Poethics: The Quest(ion) of Blackness Toward the End of the World', *The Black Scholar* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 81–97.

How we imagine spaces also depends on who is doing the imagining and what traditions, history, languages and mythologies they have inherited. All of these aspects form identities that are embedded in the stories told, so we should be aware of who is telling them. Exploring fiction through various media opens up new worlds and introduces new thoughts and possibilities. Through the practice of assembling and re-assembling narratives, *hyper-visible invisibility*, as a concept, allows me to consider invisibility as embodiment, critical strategy and spatial category, to explore approaches to the production and reproduction of social and spatial relations. In following how Morrison argues the centre as dependent on the margin, I examine spatial practices considered normal and neutral. With the intent of complicating borders, surfaces, embodiment and boundaries, I explore how whiteness performs through an appropriation of texts, contexts and images, as well as through video-montages. By re-working the conventional, mediated, iterative and citational to dissolve the binary of race, I blur and disturb that which is perceived as stable, to make space for something 'other' to emerge.

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