

RAGE

Unit 2: Switch Class

MLSoc Pass phrase for today: Simone Browne

Simone Browne

3 languages

Article Talk

Read Edit View history Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Simone Arlene Browne (born 1973) is an author and educator. She is on the faculty at the [University of Texas at Austin](#),^[1] and the author of *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*.

Early life and education [edit]

Browne was born in 1973,^[2] and grew up in [Toronto, Ontario](#), where she received a BA (with honors), MA, and PhD at the [Ontario Institute for Studies in Education](#) in the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies at the [University of Toronto](#).^[3] Her 2001 Masters thesis was titled *Surveilling the Jamaican body, leisure imperialism, immigration and the Canadian imagination*.^[2] Her doctoral dissertation in 2007 was titled *Trusted travellers: the identity-industrial complex, race and Canada's permanent resident card*.^[4]



Simone Browne speaking at the 2019 Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

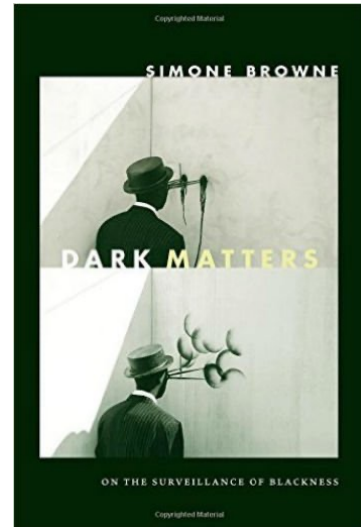
Career [edit]

Browne is a Professor of Black Studies in the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies at the [University of Texas at Austin](#).^[1] Her most recent book, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, published by Duke University Press in 2015, presents a case to consider race and blackness as a central to the field of surveillance studies, and investigates the roots of present-day surveillance in practices originating in slavery and the Jim Crow era. ^[5]^[6] Javier Arbona of the [University of California, Davis](#), said "her wholly original scholarship best captures new kinds of thinking and theorizing in surveillance studies".^[7]

She is a member of [Deep Lab](#), a "congress of cyber-feminist researchers."^[8]

She is also on the executive board of [HASTAC](#), a virtual organization led by a dynamic Steering Committee consisting of innovators from a variety of disciplines.^[9]

Her work, "Not Only Will I Stare," involves the curation of an exhibit about surveillance through black women artists at the [University of Texas at Austin](#).^[10] The exhibit "used the space to showcase selected artists and artwork which reflect the intersections and evolving history of surveillance and the Black community."^[11]



Plan

- **Review** Unit 1- Switch class takeaways
- **Highlights:** “science” of race
- **Unit 2: Criminal Justice.**
 - **Problem-** law enforcement/policing.
 - Reading: Simone Browne [race and tech]
 - **Approaches-** Building a fundamentally different common world not premised on prisons but on care. What will it take? What is the role of technology in such a world?
 - Reading: Irvin Hunt [Morningstar reading]
- **Unit 2 submissions**
 - Discussion of how to build stronger unit 2 submissions.
- **Our workshop guests.**

Review Unit 1 takeaways [10 min]

- What is history?
 - History as narrative not as past events.
- Why is critical thinking about the past and its narratives important?
 - Because stories *really* matter.
- What is “potential history”?
 - Seeking those past alternative ways of being and knowing that fell victim to power and were marginalized or erased.
- What is white supremacy?
 - Spirit/Flesh → rational/irrational → selected/deselected = whites/non-whites.
- What resistance strategies can we learn from marginalized people/communities?
 - Refusal [maroonage- exit], Livity [rastas], fugitive thinking [freer thinking]
- How do we move from past story/example to present strategy/tool? **Tool 1: REFUSAL.** Refusal is a call to action. It is a first step. But since systems pull us back in, we must learn to refuse continuously. Sidestep feedback loops.

“Science” of race [10 min]

(insights from the reading: [Scientific Racism, Race War and the Global Racial Imaginary](#).)

- The “science” of race (1850s-1940s).
 - **Darwin** → evolutionary science
 - **Social Darwinism** → “survival of the fittest” [evolutionary science applied to people and cultures]
 - **Craniometry/anthropometry** [used to diagnose criminality]
 - **Eugenics** → incarceration/sterilization [control/ “perfection” of populations]
 - **Genocide** [removal of “undesirable” peoples]
- **1850s** – confidence in the deselection of “inferior peoples.”
- **1880s** – waning confidence in the “selection” of the white race (China especially, USA Chinese exclusion act 1882).
- **1900s** – fear and anxiety → more repressive and invasive tactics. “science” needs a little help to secure white supremacy.
- **1900-1930s**- genocide [ex. Nazis, Belgian Congo. KKK lynching and terror etc.]
- **1940s- present**- fear of immigrants and replacement by minorities.

In the USA...

- Emancipation → incarceration
 - **13th amendment exception** permitting the “enslavement” and forced labor of criminals.
 - Result: disproportionate rates of black incarceration.
 - **Police force created after emancipation** to control blacks identified as prone to criminality.
 - **KKK and lynching** intensify in the late 19th and early 20th century. White fear, anger and violence.
 - **Emit Till**. 14 year old killed for looking at a white woman.
 - **Residential segregation** as planned project of ghettoization.

Why does all this context matter for criminal justice today?

13th exception + policing + segregation + failed reconstruction + racial terror-
permanent marginalization and degradation of black communities. Criminal justice

Branding and “Epidermalization”: What’s history got to do with it?

- **BRANDING [blackness].... In slavery.**
 - Black person marked as commodity to be bought/sold/monitored as property.
- **BRANDING [blackness]... in biometric technologies.**
 - Black person/community surveilled and monitored [marked] as dangerous.
[Note valences of scientific racism- anthropometry].
- **BRANDING [blackness]...in capitalism.**
 - Black culture as commodity to be bought and sold.

What is the problem of race/criminal justice/and tech? Browne Reading

- "It is at the border- territorial, epidermal and digital- a site where certain bodies are cast out and made out of place, that a *critical biometric consciousness* and the possibilities suggested by what Gilroy terms an '*alternative, metaphysical* humanism premised on face-to-face relations between different actors- being of equal worth- as preferable to the problems of inhumanity that raciology creates' can be realized."
- *What is the relationship between critical biometric consciousness and an alternative metaphysical humanism?*
- **Where:** at the borders- territorial, epidermal, digital [liminal spaces]
- **What:** a critical biometric consciousness + alternative metaphysical humanism= a world beyond the inhumanity of raciology.

I will place all student submissions on the Browne reading in a hat and students will pull quotes and discuss.

Meanwhile I will be writing up their descriptions of the problem in real time on this slide.

Our goal is to have a really tight problem articulation when it comes to what we can learn about history that will lead us to STOP building predpols.

I will give this ppt to the students after the class, so they have a record of their ideas.

Browne [your thoughts]

Critical biometric consciousness

- Critical biometric consciousness seeks to build a more just society by improving the ethical usage of racial-recognition technology.
- Critical biometric consciousness refers to a greater social awareness, debate, and accountability-holding of new biometric information technology.
- **critical biometric consciousness shines a light on the negatives of surveillance and the discrimination that has come out of facial recognition and other biometric technologies.**

Metaphysical humanism

- Alternative metaphysical humanism ...encourage[es] a policy of open respect towards marginalized voices, allowing those affected by biometric information technology to communicate and have their struggles valued.
- **alternative metaphysical humanism prioritizes human interaction to work against systems of oppression.**
- Face-to-face relations as the premise to metaphysical humanism is a good basis to creating **a community of actors with equal worth**. Face-to-face interactions helps individuals build a certain relationship with one another, The connection acts like a shield as it makes it harder to dehumanize someone you feel connected to.

Approaches. Hunt reading

- Let's synthesize...

- Collaborate with people truly and humbly building knowledge together .

- Refuse the idea that we have to resist as a mode of being. Build a world where something else is possible.

- Building trust is essential to true cooperation/collaboration.

- Living into the present rather than for the future.

- Urgent patience. Recognize that this change will take time, but also that we must begin.

- Those [Master's] tools can be used to **bend the system**
- importance of **refusing** the **current state** of society
- **[cultivate] shared values.**
- **reclaim** the **responsibilities** [not just land].
- build an equitable world full of cooperation, the first step in creating this world is to **build trust.**
- **collaborate with**, rather than "save"...
- nothing that you or I can do to change the sins of the past [?]
- **utilizing wisdom from our past** while staying rooted in today's reality
- **[embrace] urgent patience**
- **forethought of grief [makes us] grateful** for the chance to make the impossible possible
- **[foster] cooperative or regenerative economies...**

I will place all student submissions on the Hunt reading in a hat and students will pull quotes and discuss.

Meanwhile I will be writing up their ideas on approaches real time on this slide.

This reading invites students into a space where they can think about liberatory futures that are not based on the carceral imaginary. We will think together about what a world imagined outside of the carceral imaginary could look like. We will think about what tech might look like in this world. We will end by discussing the problem of **the feedback loop**- how even our imaginaries get sucked back into the carceral.

I'll also invite students to come up and draw our new common world.

I will give this ppt to the students after the class, so they have a record of their ideas.

Unit 2 submissions: What to focus on? [10]

- General observations:
- History as integral not just attached. Not just context...
 - History tools as foundation for a new approach to technology



My notes for each team

Workshop Guests



Phylicia Brown MSEd
Director, Black Love Resists in the Rust



Da'Von McCune
GSNC Program Manager

