

## The Breakaway State

---

### phase three

In response to police brutality, <sup>1</sup>Black Lives Matter, Covid 19 and extremist ideology, in December 2020, values forged a new Breakaway State. In this third space, <sup>2</sup>technology moved race away from the biological and genetic historical systems towards questions of technological healing and agency.

In the Breakaway State bonds of love were forged through the understanding that every person had their own thoughts, feelings and ideas based on shared symbols and languages and these symbols and languages were always subject to change.

*"Something has changed within me  
Something is not the same  
I'm through with playing by  
The rules of someone else's game  
Too late for second guessing  
Too late to go back to sleep  
It's time to trust my instincts  
Close my eyes and leap"*

Defying Gravity, Wicked Musical

The toppling of Edward Colston statue was the "valve to alleviate pressure", suggested Marvin Rees; a build-up of resentment regarding unaffordable housing, gentrification, feelings of being left behind by the economy, and a continuing question in Britain regarding national identity. In the Breakaway State, it was understood that we all had a personal perspective on reality. From this basis disagreements became the point of rescue for what became known as the '*fallout phase*'.

The term *fallout phase* was first used in November 2020 following the US elections; a transmigration from the phrase nuclear fallout. This is where radioactive material is expelled into the

---

<sup>1</sup> BLACKLIVESMATTER.UK. 2020. *BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT UK*. [online] Available at: <https://www.blacklivesmatter.uk>.

<sup>2</sup> Coleman, B., 2009. Race as technology. *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies*

air following a nuclear explosion that then descends through the atmosphere; commonly known as radioactive dust. The fallout cluster being dependent on the size of the weapon and the angle, direction and velocity in which it was detonated.

- ♥ While jogging.
- ♥ While sleeping.
- ♥ Walking home.
- ♥ Failing to indicate while driving.
- ♥ Sitting in your car.
- ♥ Having fun.

The *fallout phase* was employed as an analogy to recognise the violence and psychological effects this period in time had on parts of society and different community groups, and that affirmative action played a crucial part in recovery. The Breakaway State in meeting these needs separated itself from disruptive opposition that vehemently failed to recognise the global stage as a collective, where something new could be brought into being.

Hostile individuals and groups in Britain that were powered by nationalist violence were experiencing <sup>3</sup>'postcolonial melancholia'. Where they longed for something great and familiar, clinging to the Second World War as a defining moment of national identity to counterbalance the absence of Empire. Exhibiting historical amnesia to brutal acts of its past that left scars like leylines; invisible to the naked eye, though experienced on a cellular level. Many were anchored in the fixed notion that The Empire and its colonial legacy had civilised other parts of the globe, making itself a supreme Nation. Like a horse wearing blinds only able to see what is ahead, closed to the peripheral misplaced inverted exchange. Paul Gilroy referred to this form of nationalism as <sup>4</sup>'crypto-nationalism'; where groups are unwilling to consider the conditions and varying locations on how race historically has played a role in shaping politics and how individuals and groups behave. Crypto-nationalists, when viewing this point through Gilroy's lens, refute how race and ethnicity embody how our

---

<sup>3</sup> Gilroy, P., 2005. *Postcolonial melancholia*. Columbia University Press

<sup>4</sup> Gilroy, P., 1993. *The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Harvard University Press.

social, economic and political institutions are constructed. During the *fallout phase*, Kemi Badenoch, appointed leader of Treasury & Equality Minister for the conservative party at that time, argued that Critical Race Theory be banned, which in practice would need to exclude an entire civil rights era. In denying a whole black scholarly body of work, the country would have no critical valuation over how race was introduced as a biological and genetic system and as a consequence has been the basis that has informed a contemporary racist society. In the House of Commons speech, she speaks of a topic that "comes close to my heart", referring to Critical Race Theory as, "an ideology that sees my blackness as victimhood and their whiteness as oppression. I want to be absolutely clear that this government stands unequivocally against critical race theory..." In her speech, she deplores Black Lives Matter "exposing" the movement as a political group, as though politics were a crime. She condemns Critical Race Theory as a dangerous trend, ending her speech with a warning that if schools endorse teaching that examines Black Lives Matter and Critical Race Theory without opposing views, they would be breaking the law. Badenoch's announcement demonstrated the complicated extent to which white supremacy dominates European narratives. As a creative departure from Badenoch's speech, a few days following Black Lives Matter registered their organisation as a political party.

"The Western archive is reaching a state of exhaustion"

Achille Mbembe

During the *fallout phase*, disagreements became the point of rescue. What Beth Coleman calls a <sup>5</sup>"trapdoor". A way out or third space. In her essay *Race as Technology*, Coleman moves race away from the biological and genetic historical systems towards questions of technological agency. <sup>6</sup>Kobena Mercer's in his address, *Framing The Moment: Legacies of the 1982 Blk Art Group Conference*, speaks of this third space as a starting point and what it takes to self-start. The third space to be found as a response to extreme conditions, a cut and mix aesthetic. In the case of the Blk Art

---

<sup>5</sup> Coleman, B., 2009. Race as technology. *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies*: p. 180

<sup>6</sup> Mercer, K., 2012. *Kobena Mercer Keynote Address. October 2012*. [online] Blkartgroup.info. Available at: <http://blkartgroup.info/kmercerarchive.html>.

Group, a "problem-solving activity". Those that felt neglected by the "archaic dullness of institutional inertia" during the 1970's art world in Britain were "orphans of the storm". Mercer draws a comparison to James Baldwin who refers to "blacks" as the "peculiar stepchildren of the west". Mercer situated orphans as self-reliant characters, giving them an initiative as self-starters that are able to seek out radical options. What Coleman calls a "trap door".<sup>7</sup> A paradigm shift concerned with identity and difference. The trap door, where a person can "scoot off to greener pastures" (p:180). She employs this notion to "escape" to move towards an aesthetic grouping of human beings, where an exchange of identity accepts individual agency and the situations of culture have an influence on one another. As a concept, Coleman suggests that race can be used for both good or bad - somewhat like music. Music's underlying structure isn't strict, according to Indre Viskontas. There are measurable regularities and probable beats, and they set up rhythmic expectations. Still, a good musician, she says, feeds us what we expect through repetition, yet at the same time, surprises us - this line between customary and novel, and a space that is different.<sup>8</sup> James Snead speaks of this repetition as being progressive, if positive or regressive, if negative. Black culture observes repetition, often to a call and response to an original linguistic example, by focussing on that action, such as in dance and the rhythmic act of running.

In<sup>9</sup> "'Keep Running Bro": Carrie Mae Weems and the Visual Act of Refusal', LaCharles Ward speaks of freedom found in the act of running. He reimagines the position of "fugitive" as an act of resistance. We see it in the film *Queen and Slim* where Slim, played by Daniel Kaluuya, fights to protect his own life and that of his blind date, played by Jodie Turner-Smith when a road stop by a bad cop goes horribly wrong. A narrative running parallel to real-life injustice. The "trap door" metaphor enters the frame when the film from that point forward tells the story of love that plays out within the structure of resistance. They are fugitives on the run

---

<sup>7</sup> Coleman, B., 2009. Race as technology. *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies*

<sup>8</sup> Snead, J.A., 1981, December. On repetition in black culture. In *Black American Literature Forum* (pp. 146-154). School of Education, Indiana State University.

<sup>9</sup> Ward, L., 2018. "Keep Runnin'Bro": Carrie Mae Weems and the Visual Act of Refusal. *Black Camera*, 9(2), pp.82-109.

free within this third space. LaCharles Ward demonstrates the importance of black visual culture. Viewing work by Carrie Mae Weems that draws on our contemporary era of anti-black racial terror, he considers Weems projects as a way to think differently as a method to "imagine possibilities within the sheer and treacherous space(s) of impossibilities."

Sandra Bloom, continuing with the embodiment of running, <sup>10</sup>tells us that "If a person can master the situation of danger by successfully running away, winning the fight or getting help, the risk of long term, trauma-induced, physical and emotional/psychological changes are lessened." Contrary to Kemi Badenoch's assertion of victimhood, the Breakaway State recognised that from this position of "fugitive" during the *fallout phase* groups, and individuals were in a position of power. Here, our ancient<sup>11</sup> consciousness was cherished as a source of true knowledge.

" For each of us women, there is a dark place within  
where hidden and growing our true spirit rises,  
'beautiful/and tough as chestnut/stanchion against your  
nightmare of weakness.'<sup>12</sup>

Audre Lorde

In the Breakaway State, black feminist thought and black queer theory were deemed an essential source in the creation of the state. Not as a prescribed framework that set boundaries restricted by authoritative principles, but appointed as if a spring. Always flowing, changing; a source of nourishment to call upon like a favourite film or book. Marking a page and learning a script to repeat and reuse as a familiar tool until a new rhythm or beat affects our <sup>13</sup>"mammalian heritage" and evolution legacy.

Drawing on Audre Lorde,<sup>14</sup> poetry became the architecture to the lives lived here. It helped the citizens of the state to reconsider how the environment and landscape enhanced well-being

---

<sup>10</sup> Bloom, S.L., 1999. Trauma Theory Abbreviated.

<sup>11</sup> Audre Lorde, *The Master's Tool Will Never Dismantle The Master's House*

<sup>12</sup> Audre Lorde, *The Master's Tool Will Never Dismantle The Master's House*

<sup>13</sup> Bloom, S.L., 1999. Trauma Theory Abbreviated. p.2

<sup>14</sup> Audre Lorde, *The Master's Tool Will Never Dismantle The Master's House*

where holistic measures helped support human behaviours. It was accepted that past trauma created coping mechanisms that were adapted to survive and that each body reacts in its unique way. New buildings were designed shaped around third space principles creating sanctuaries; a safe environment that promoted healing and sustained human growth. In the space of sanctuary,<sup>15</sup> "What is wrong with you" changed to "What happened to you". Our feelings and authentic openness became a place for radical and bold concepts moving us towards compassion. As a consequence, the figurative notions of scars like leylines, the state understood that injuries intersect and create energy and magnetic fields that provide us with the latitude and longitude to engage, harness and heal. With this in mind, the Breakaway State recentered its focus on the prime meridian at the Giza Plateau, instructing its citizens of other parallel states where individual trauma and collective trauma were geographically located, enabling a relocation focus.

A new way of thinking.

A new planetary space.

And a place that seriously contemplates our connectivity with the rest of the world.

<sup>16</sup> Breakaway State Is funded by Future's Ventures courtesy of [Parallel State](#)

<sup>17</sup> Phase one and two [https: to view VIDEO FOOTAGE](#)

<sup>18</sup> Credits

---

<sup>15</sup> Bloom, S.L., 1999. Trauma Theory Abbreviated.

<sup>16</sup> *Breakaway State* is produced in three parts. Phase one and two arrive as a performance art video piece created in May in response to a global pandemic and Black Lives Matter. The video responds to binary locations and its emerging "trap door". The third phase arrives as a form of fictional academic writing - the month is November, and the year is 2020.

<sup>17</sup> *Breakaway State* is produced in three parts. Phase one and two arrive as a performance art video piece created in May in response to a global pandemic and Black Lives Matter. The video responds to binary locations and its emerging "trap door". The third phase arrives as a form of fictional academic writing - the month is November, and the year is 2020.

<sup>18</sup> "Blue Sky And Yellow Sunflower" written and performed by Susumu Yokota appears courtesy of Lo Recordings. Published by Hub 100 Publishing