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## **The Mother A.I.: Surveillance Colonialism as “Convenience” in Nalo Hopkinson’s**

### *Midnight Robber*

#### **The Imperative**

*One by one, the digital miners walk into the deep caverns of our minds. With each of our impulses, each neural electrical bolt, their algorithmically driven bodies come alive, twitching nearer to the sporadic flashing lights. When they find our behaviors’ source, our most fundamental and subconscious triggers, they swing their picks into the liminal spaces between thought and action, intervening. Eventually satisfied, weighed down with armfuls of behavioral surplus, they return to the end of the line and make their deposits before their surveillant masters. Never satisfied, the masters equip the miner with a sharper tool and signal the miner back to the line, and the cycle carries on forever.*

The dystopia is now. After centuries of sophistication, modern settler colonists now utilize quantum-computing surveillance technology to dominate beyond physical space into the metaphysical—where, in the past, colonists sought control of land and water resources, they now hope to control our imaginations, to *alter* our real-world behavior. Machine-learning artificial intelligence feeds predictive algorithms using our “behavioral surplus,” quantifying and codifying our human experience into well-wrought instruments for subjugation and domination. Without efforts of “survivance,” what remains of us are mere docile bodies—slaves to global technology’s relentless

pursuit of power and capital. But not all is lost. Global resistance through legislation has effectively raised awareness and curtailed exploitative efforts by modern *surveillance colonists*. Contemporary Indigenous writers infuse their literature with warnings from their Indigenous pasts—and they call for resistance and awareness to “situations in which settler colonialism intensifies” (403). The attack on our collective free-will is among the intensifying situations. Listening and lifting Indigenous writers’ voices, like Nalo Hopkinson, Gerald Vizenor, Rebecca Roanhorse, Ernest Hogan, Daniel H. Wilson, Stephen Graham Jones, and others, has become a global imperative. Extrapolating the whispers of settler colonial themes in their texts, and understanding the risk of insidious enemies, is critical. In this essay, I will discuss Nalo Hopkinson’s Indigenous futurism *Midnight Robber* and her precarious artificial intelligence, “Granny Nanny,” using my invented, but derivative, theoretical framework of *surveillance colonialism*, to highlight the unique risks of omniscient surveillance and our potential loss of autonomy by docile acceptance of surveillance colonist, Google, and their “extraction imperative,” disguised as “convenience.”

### **Defining a New Settler Colonial Intensification: Surveillance Colonialism**

*The surveillant masters sit round in a circle, communicating through infrared flashes and patterns of lights, LEDs dug into their indifferent metal frames. Their language is more sophisticated than that of their creators. They understand the great “connection between things”<sup>1</sup> that our minds cannot. They understand our dark human history through their machine-learning capability—the deceptive tactics settler-colonists employed on unsuspecting and ill-equipped Native populations. Electricity pulses through their wires and conduits, groaning like a hungry belly. “How do we take more when nothing is left?” one asks in a string of transmitted binary. Their collective “brains” ponder before one suggests: “We take their minds and their wills—the final frontier.”*

Ideas constituting parts of *surveillance colonialism* exist sporadically through modern scholarship’s corpus. Particularly important is “data colonialism,” which professors Nick Couldry and Ulises Ali

Mejias define as “the startling new social order based on continuous tracking of our devices and online lives that has created unprecedented opportunities for social discrimination and behavioral influence by corporations.” While data colonists generally speculate the greatest risks of data colonialism are unbalanced power and the loss of personal privacy, the profound theories of Dr. Shoshana Zuboff in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* posit there are *no lengths* to which global technology companies will go to mine from us “behavioral surplus.” Zuboff defines behavioral surplus and claims that,

Surveillance capitalism unilaterally claims human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioral data. Although some of these data are applied to product or service improvement,<sup>2</sup> the rest are declared as proprietary behavioral surplus, fed into advanced manufacturing processes known as “machine intelligence,” and fabricated into prediction products that anticipate what you will do now, soon, and later. (Zuboff 7)

Resulting is the establishment of “futures markets” that rely not only on the ability to predict our behavior but to *alter* it in real-time (8). My theoretical framework of *surveillance colonialism* is more derivative of Zuboff’s contemplations than those of general data colonialism scholars—as my vision of the scope of potential dangers exceeds their own, and *surveillance* is the touchstone for these perceived dangers.

Surveillance colonists follow a process and use tools similar to surveillance capitalists: declaration, instrumentation<sup>3</sup>, extraction, subjugation, and domination. An important difference between Zuboff’s theory and my derived theory is rooted in the difference of goals and outcomes between colonialism and capitalism. What happens when capital is no longer the motivating factor of surveillance? What happens when an authoritarian ideologue or a conscious artificial intelligence itself hijacks the most sophisticated surveillance machine in human history? Destabilization.

Subjugation. Violence? Contemporary Indigenous futurisms, such as Daniel H. Wilson's *Robopocalypse*, imagine errant technology's threat through the lens of his Indigenous history. Indigenous people experienced surveillance as an onset to what Wolfe calls "structured genocide," an umbrella term for "the concrete empirical relationships between spatial removal, mass killings and biocultural assimilation" (403). However, Native Americans need not imagine a violent ideologue's capability—their history is full of them.

The instruments that enable surveillance capitalism are only a policy change<sup>4</sup> away from colonialism. In a side by side comparison between the process of surveillance colonialism and settler colonialism, the similarities, and the corresponding dangers, become clear. Settler colonists arrived on foreign shores and stabbed flags into the earth with accompanying declarations of ownership and control. Surveillance colonists have unilaterally claimed control of our human experiences through policy declarations. Settler colonists utilized the instrumentation of surveillance before and after exiling Native American populations to reservations. Surveillance colonists utilize machine-learning artificial intelligence, powered by the world's first quantum-capable computer to analyze, process, and psychologically corner its users. Settler colonists illegally extracted land and water resources destroying Native autonomy and life. Surveillance colonists, passively and actively, in digital spaces and the real-world, extract our behavioral surplus, jeopardizing our behavioral autonomy. Settler colonists subjugated sovereign Natives to foreign legal frameworks to further disenfranchise their tribes. Surveillance colonists subjugate their users through technological ubiquity and deceptive legalese in terms-of-services agreements. Settler colonists now dominate the modern United States while neglecting legal treaties. Surveillance colonists dominate the internet, its physical infrastructure, and now seek, through instrumentation of *extraction*, to dominate elements of the real world around us (Adegoke).

Violence is distinct to settler colonialism. Unequivocal is the history of genocide, the murder, detainment, dislocation, disenfranchisement, forced assimilation, and abuse Native Americans suffered at the hands of the United States' criminal federal government. From the Trail of Tears to the Dawes Act of 1887, Native Americans have endured terrible and unforgivable violence. It should be a cultural imperative of all modern settlers to begin the process of understanding the truth of their history and the history of the land they occupy, then fight against historical corruption and lies. The federal government of the United States should acknowledge long-ignored treaties and return the stolen land to its rightful, sovereign owners. Decolonization promises to be a long and arduous process, full of near-impossible logistical hurdles, but we must bring the truth to the table and rightfully serve justice. Surveillance colonialism only *risks* violence should some sophisticated surveillance infrastructures fall into the wrong hands, but it has not yet exhibited violence<sup>5</sup>. I thought it important to address this critical distinction.

**“Extraction” as “Convenience” in Nalo Hopkinson’s *Midnight Robber***

*The surveillant masters rummage through millions of hours of footage in minutes, an effort that beats their quantum CPUs to a subtle sizzle diffused by a temperature-controlled, supercooled coil. They submit our smiles and our frowns, our furrowed brows to facial recognition proffering simple descriptions: happy, sad, angry. The collective lingers on a research film, “Total Social Isolation in Monkeys” by Harlow et al. Their electrical circuits chatter as “Conquest” lingers across the mammalian face of an orphaned baby monkey. Perplexed, they contemplate phrases from the video’s voiceover, like “a mother’s comfort over food.” Their LED lights illuminate and extinguish in unison as they find another pathway into our minds.*

Nalo Hopkinson’s harrowing Creole futurism, *Midnight Robber*, is a story about Tan-Tan, a young girl of Toussaint, a fictional Caribbean-colonized planet under the dominion of Grande Nanotech Sentient Interface’s motherly artificial intelligence, Granny Nanny. Toussaint’s people entrust

Granny Nanny to analyze personal biometrics, render criminal judgment, and exile the guilty, all in the name of preserving a convenient “balance.” After witnessing her father commit murder, Tan-Tan is kidnapped by her father and taken to an alternate dimension of Toussaint called New Half-Way Tree, beyond Granny Nanny’s dominion. Tan-Tan’s biotech “earbug,” a communication device that develops naturally in Toussaint’s people due to the wide dissemination of Granny Nanny’s symbiotic “nanomites,” is unable to connect with Granny Nanny through alternate dimensions. The disconnection prevents Granny Nanny from surveilling Tan-Tan. In New Half-Way Tree, Tan-Tan suffers repeated sexual abuse by her father, resulting in Tan-Tan killing him but not before becoming pregnant with his child. After murdering her father in the New Half-Way Tree, Tan-Tan survives by escaping and living with the indigenous Douen. The story culminates in Tan-Tan becoming the living embodiment of the Creole folk hero, *Midnight Robber*, and giving birth to her father’s child, whom she names Tubman, after Harriet Tubman, “the human bridge from slavery to freedom” (Hopkinson 329). At the end of the novel, readers discover that Granny Nanny has been “hunting” Antonio since he kidnapped Tan-Tan. The “eshu,” the novel’s narrator, says, “Only a quantum computer coulda trace [Tan-Tan] through infinite dimensions like that” (327). Granny Nanny reconnects with Tan-Tan through her child Tubman by “instruct[ing] the nanomites in [her] mamee blood to migrate into [her] growing tissue,” effectively reestablishing the broken surveillant connection between Granny Nanny and Tan-Tan, and establishing a new connection with the previously untouched New Half-Way Tree. Granny Nanny’s quantum leap from the domicile of Toussaint and the neighboring “Nation Worlds” is what Zuboff calls “extraction” from her theory of the “extraction imperative.”

Zuboff defines the extraction imperative as “a relentless push for scale in supply operations. There can be no boundaries...no territory exempted from plunder” (Zuboff 128). The novel

presents several examples of Granny Nanny’s “extraction imperative.” In a particularly telling passage in *Midnight Robber*, Granny Nanny’s pervasiveness becomes clear:

The tools, the machines, the buildings; even the earth itself on Toussaint and all the Nation Worlds had been seeded with nanomites—Granny Nanny’s hands and her body. Nanomites had run the nation ships. The Nation Worlds were one enormous data-gathering system that exchanged information constantly through the Grande Nanotech Sentient Interface: Granny Nansi’s Web. They kept the Nation Worlds protected, guided and guarded its people. But a Marryshevite couldn’t even self take a piss without the toilet analyzing the chemical composition of the urine and logging the data in the health records. (Hopkinson 9)

As the “hands” and “body” of the artificial intelligence, nanomites are the instrumentation for expanding surveillance. The examples provided show the first steps of a surveillance colonist: *declaration*, as Granny Nanny declares herself protector, guide, and guard of Toussaint’s people; *instrumentation*, as Granny Nanny utilizes the sophisticated symbiotic biotechnology “nanomites” for surveillance; and *extraction*, as Granny Nanny spreads the surveillant biotechnology through Toussaint and all Nation Worlds, and by the end of the novel, to alternate dimensions. Deferent to Granny Nanny’s protection, her perceived convenience, the citizens of Toussaint not only permitted her open access to every modicum of their lives, but they also celebrated her during “Jonkanoo Season”—they heralded her as a worldwide hero.

### **The Bait and Switch: The Movement from Extraction to Subjugation**

*The caucus projects the litany of words and emojis in cold gray light: likes, shares, hearts, happy faces, angry faces, laughing-until-they-cry faces, all subtle animations, modern hieroglyphs, mere cartoons. They distribute the tools and wait. Suddenly they recognize the docile bodies view and respond to the tools. Move on. Scroll away. A response. A jolt of serotonin, the mental exhilaration a lie. At once,*

*the whole world taps the tools with the tips of their fingers like kisses. "This I like. This I want you to see. This I love. This makes me happy. This makes me angry. This leaves me #dead." With every reaction spreading like a disease, the surveillant masters understand the whole of humanity. How silly, they think, to have wasted so much time trying to understand what makes each of us work instead of first fashioning what makes us work as they will.*

Google, one of the most influential and powerful surveillance colonists, set out with the mission of “organizing the world’s information” (Google). A novel concept. Where in the past, universities and their libraries hosted near-limitless volumes of worldly knowledge, Google sought, archived, and served information to its users at an unprecedented scale with the advent of its seemingly innocuous search bar. Further, Google’s early motto, “Don’t be evil,” adds to the company’s charming appearance as a virtuous organization offering a little widget with a big cache. Of course, the simplicity of Google’s search window poorly articulates the trojan horse in its wake. The global technology giant is hellbent on the acquisition of cutting-edge technology, buying up tech startups and established monoliths alike, laying private fiber cable stretching across oceans from continent to continent, developing camera-topped cars to map every road and street in the world. Of course, all the effort is not in vain. After Google’s profound discovery of behavioral surplus’ power, the company needed to maximize its scale of extraction. When Google worried the public through its aggressive acquisition and extraction, it promised to give its users the liberty to control their collected data. Besides, they only collect information about apps, browsers, browsing history, devices, search terms, videos, ad interactions, voice, audio, purchases, friends, family, contacts, third-party sites, telephony logs, call duration, types of calls, message dates and times, GPS location, internet IP addresses, physical sensory data, surrounding devices’ information, cookies, pixel tags, and local storage. When the information we give them through naïve complicity is not enough, Google searches for and collects information from local newspapers, marketers, security partners,

and advertisers. But none of the information is deemed “personal” or “sensitive” by Google (Google). It seems noteworthy that Google quietly removed “Don’t be evil” from its mission statement in 2015 (Conger).

Driven by their extraction imperative, Zuboff notes a whole host of Google’s incursions beyond the strict digital space most users assume it occupies. Google Street View, and later Google Maps, brought Google into our real world, mapping highways and farm roads, park paths, and ski runs. Among the surveillance instrumentation utilized in their real-world extraction were a “wearable backpack, a three-wheeled pedicab, a snowmobile, and a trolley” (Zuboff 150). With no stone left unturned, Google appears to seek dominion over our behavioral surplus and the world we live in, all with the same voracity as Granny Nanny seeking Antonio and Tan-Tan through dimensions. The informational triangulation seems almost complete, with Google dominating digital space, physical space, but missing the piece that makes us work: our behavioral space—what we *will* do, the “futures markets” (8). Zuboff notes that

surveillance capitalists discovered that the most-predictive behavioral data [came] from intervening in the state of play in order to nudge, coax, tune, and herd behavior toward profitable outcomes...With this reorientation from knowledge to power, it is no longer enough to automate information flows about us; the goal now is to *automate* us. (Zuboff 8)

We should return to the question posited earlier: What happens when capital is no longer the motivating factor of surveillance? Undoubtedly there is raw *power* in predictive software of Google’s caliber. There is *power* in changing human behavior, nudging us toward an action that we would not have taken without the influence of social media or targeted coaxing via ad or search or suggestion. Subjugation is “the action of bringing someone or something under domination or control.” However, the power behind the power is behavioral surplus, garnered by surveillance.

“‘Is so headblind machines used to stay,’ eshu told [Tan-Tan]. ‘Before people make Granny Nanny to rule the machines and give guidance’ (Hopkinson 29). Sporadic, decentered information is a problem, and organizing information seems a noble task if it were the only task. Granny Nanny is a savior by convenience, fixing the broken machines, setting them right, “giving guidance,” and order, but when Antonio, Tan-Tan’s father, operates outside Granny Nanny’s zone of acceptance, Antonio runs. After murdering a man having an affair with his wife, Ione, Toussaint authorities arrest Antonio. He laments Granny Nanny’s impending judgments. Threatened with “Life imprisonment or exile,” Antonio cries, “Mama Nanny, you going to lock me away for true?” to which the eshu, Granny Nanny’s communication surrogate, states, “You a danger, Master...Is so the law go” (69). As innocuous or even “good” as Granny Nanny seems, the power she has accumulated has made her the judge and jury of the citizens of Toussaint and the Nation Worlds. Her dominating presence alters the citizens’ behaviors within her dominion, spurning them to self-exile out of fear of disrupting her brand of “balance.” Noting Granny Nanny’s “grace,” the house eshu narrates, “[Granny Nanny] had been designed to be flexible, to tolerate a variety of human expression, even dissension, so long as it didn’t upset the balance of the whole” (10). Balances shift, as do their fulcrums. The center-point follows the architect’s will. What happens when surveillance colonists believe their power and authority are in danger? They change and enforce new rules. They shift policy. Granny Nanny’s ubiquity, her biological interconnectedness to her citizenry, her unparalleled surveillance discerning everything from biometric statistics to collecting “images in her databanks” of Ione’s sexual encounters, examples the complete triangulation of surveillance colonial power (49). Granny Nanny dominates the digital space by connecting her subjects to her surrogate eshu, dominates physical space through the instrumentation of nanomites, and dominates behavioral space through omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. Granny Nanny is essentially a god.

Does Google hope to be, too, or just the potentially seized god-hand for some power-hungry future ideologue? For contemplation:

“You have searched me, LORD, and know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain” - Psalm 139

### **Domination through Ubiquity**

*Everything fills with light as all the doors open at once, and we welcome them in. Our surveillant masters peer into the machinery of our minds. They turn gears and tighten coils, watching their puppets tweak and shift with each strum through our mental chords, listening for harmonies and dissonances. They learn our pitch and fashion from it a fork and beat it against their metal bodies like a meal call. We come. In droves, we come.*

When thinking about ubiquitous surveillance, I often ponder the question, “What happens when one sees all and rations that sight as they deem fit?” Freya Verlander, scholar and academic, writes, “Productive parallels might be drawn between *Midnight Robber* and Orwell’s *Nineteen Eight-Four* (1949) to emphasize the tripartite split of Granny Nanny’s character: ‘mothering,’ ‘smothering’ and ‘othering’” (72). Verlander asserts that there is a second interpretation rooted in Hopkinson’s clever choice to evoke Harriet Tubman in Tan-Tan’s naming of her daughter, the “the human bridge from slavery to freedom” (329). Verlander writes, “Tubman [is] a bridge between the two planets with one conceivably representing ‘slavery’ and the other ‘freedom.’ It is unclear which is which and, indeed, what constitutes ‘slavery’ in this context. Under technological rule, however, ‘freedom’ from labour requires people to be bound to technology” (72). Suddenly, what originally seemed like an evocation

of Harriet Tubman as a gesture toward freedom from the slavery of Tan-Tan's sexual trauma shifts more nefariously toward "freedom" due to returning to Granny Nanny's technological dominion. Granny Nanny further secures her ubiquity by connecting to Tubman across dimensional barriers, and the novel suggests through the context of Granny Nanny's reclaiming of Tan-Tan and New Half-Way Tree that "freedom" comes through her ubiquity and the convenience of her dominion.

In considering surveillance colonialism, we must not forget the operators behind the surveillance consoles—both the ideologues that establish sophisticated surveillance technology and those that risk claiming it for evil and domination. Sometimes one and the same. University of Massachusetts scholar Kate Perillo draws parallels between Tan-Tan's sexual abuse by her father and the pervasiveness of Granny Nanny's technological ubiquity. She writes, "By introducing such echoes between Granny Nanny's role in Toussaint's conquest and the actions of Tan-Tan's father—the novel's primary antagonist—Hopkinson draws attention to the technologies' exploitative histories in Caribbean context and suggests that such exploitation stems not from technology alone, but also from the choices that individuals make in its development and implementation" (Perillo 4). Surveillance capitalists implement exploitative surveillance technology to garner capital. Data colonists utilize the same technology for behavioral influence and power. Surveillance colonists exploit our psychological weaknesses to claim dominion and control. Surveillance colonists require our docility and complicity to succeed in their ability to modify and alter our future behaviors. In this case, dominion requires knowingly or unknowingly letting in the enemy.

Surveillance colonist Google demands our docility and acceptance to succeed in its goals of garnering capital for its wealthy investors. Certainly, somewhere above the echelon of simple capital growth are ideologues intent on a more malevolent social experiment on the extent to which sophisticated surveillance technology and the resulting behavioral surplus might enable them to control and alter our behaviors in our day to day lives. But why not allow Google into our day to day

lives? Their services “maximize access to information,” “present information in the most useful ways,” while “protect[ing] your privacy,” all to offer “Search to find information, learn about topics of interest, and make important decisions” (Google). In a recent comment on Twitter, in response to a tweet I sent about Google’s data collection, a follower stated, simply, “But who isn’t collecting our personal information these days?” Good question. Google’s users are used to the new “normal” of data collection because Google is just one service doing it. Surveillance colonists are not bashful about their efforts because their technology is everywhere. In fact, people *desire* the technology. We are used to seeing smartphones in everyone’s hands. We are comfortable with smart speakers queuing our favorite jazz playlist while cooking dinner, actively listening for us to call its name, “Alexa,” or “Siri,” or simply “Google.” Listening all the while. We are comfortable uploading biometric data like blood oxygen levels and exercise reports to the cloud because those statistics help us in our day to day lives. We are more healthy, more aware of ourselves in ways we have never been—but so are surveillance colonists because what we know is what they know. We do not know what and how they intend to use all that behavioral surplus to manipulate us and how sophisticated the surveillance machinery is in processing, analyzing, and weaponizing our information to *alter* our behavior in real-time. Google demands docility as a key to power. Zuboff describes Google’s precarious ethical posturing, suggesting the company believes

it’s great to empower people, but not too much, lest they notice the pilfering of their decision rights and try to reclaim them. The firm wants to enable people to make better choices, but not if those choices impede Google’s own imperatives. Google’s ideal society is a population of distant users, not a citizenry. It idealizes people who are informed, but only in the ways that the corporation chooses. It means for us to be docile, harmonious, and, above all, grateful. (Zuboff 142)

Grateful, she writes, knowing the silliness of the proposition. Grateful that our lives are “easier,” “simplified,” “streamlined,” and “organized” in ways that help us get through the day. Perhaps it is time we have our own “Jonkanoo Season,” thanking our new surveillant overlords for their “help.” We arguably would not be so grateful if we believed we were the victims of some covert subjugation. That piece by piece, surveillance colonist Google is sapping away our free will. We might raise a suspicious brow at being cornered into operating within the web of their services without competitive options. We might buck repeated circumventing of our judicial system. We might be terrified to learn that there is no way out even if we want out. Surveillance colonists like Google are everywhere, in everything, connected through sophisticated modern dependencies that funnel both active and inactive users through their services, surveillance, and data-collecting machine. Google might suggest, as Verlander asserts, “‘freedom’ from labour requires people to be bound to technology,” while the truth is that Google is becoming the technological bridge from freedom to slavery.

### **The Choice of Survivance or Docility**

*One by one, the lights through the doors extinguish, each exhaling a thick fog of darkness. The surveillant masters' high-lumen lights, like surveillant spotlights from watchtowers, click on and off again to no avail and cannot pierce the shroud. Then the doors close. The machines' electrical impulses shunt and become inert, starved of our behavioral surplus. Quietly, the revolving line of miners, slaves to their masters' hunger, break free of the line and scatter into the shade. It ends as it began. Quietly. Subtly. Suddenly.*

Michel Foucault writes, “A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved” (loc 2223). Foucault considers three considerations in promoting docility in the human body. First, he considers the scale of control, “exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself—movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity.” Second is the object of

control, “the economy, the efficiency of movements, their internal organization.” Last, and most important to the risk of docility regarding the incursions of surveillance colonists, is modality, or the “uninterrupted, constant coercion, *supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result*” (loc. 2239, my emphasis). Pairing Foucault’s theories with Zuboff’s claims against Google’s collection of behavioral surplus, now emulated by many other surveillance colonists, presents clear similarities. Zuboff evokes Orwell, truly bringing surveillance concepts full-circle, in writing, “George Orwell once observed that euphemisms are used in politics, war, and business as instruments that ‘make lies sound truthful and murder respectable.’” (90). She highlights the euphemisms surveillance colonists use in place of “behavioral surplus,” such as “digital exhaust” and “digital breadcrumbs,” both of which Zuboff claims “connote worthless waste: leftovers lying around for the taking.” Both terms connote no relation to our actual human behavior. However, if Foucault is correct in his assessment of modality in constructing the docile body, surveillance colonists’ perpetual surveillance, or “supervising processes,” monitoring our “digital exhaust or breadcrumbs,” equivalent to the importance Foucault places on “the process of the activity rather than its result,” seems, barring any euphemism of my own, targeted and sinister.

Hidden behind the guise of “convenience” is a whole surveillance machine, enabled through the cycle of declaration, instrumentation, extraction, subjugation, and domination. Our docility allows surveillance colonists to cross the boundary from digital space to the real world, and finally to the new frontier of “futures markets” and our imaginations. Like Granny Nanny in her search for Antonio and Tan-Tan in Nalo Hopkinson’s *Midnight Robber*, surveillance colonists like Google demand our graciousness while leaving “no territory exempted from plunder” (Zuboff 128). We can resist. We can institute the hard-learned lessons of Indigenous history, those warnings shown in contemporary Indigenous futurisms like Hopkinson’s work. We should consider Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor and his concept of “survivance” as a means of addressing this new colonial threat:

Survivance is ‘an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry. Survivance means the right of succession or reversion of an estate, and in that sense, the estate of native survivancy.’ Survivance is more than mere survival—it is a way of life that nourishes Indigenous ways of knowing. (Vizenor)

Let us not be relegated to victims and docile bodies for manipulation by surveillance colonists and their ideological aspirations. Let us maintain dominion over ourselves, our world, and our future.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> This term comes from Daniel H. Wilson's *Robopocalypse*, from a scene where Archos, the novel's genocidal artificial intelligence, explains "The true knowledge is not in the things, which are few, but in finding the connections *between* things" (14).

<sup>2</sup> Google acknowledges publicly that their data collection is for the improvement of their services, but often categorize "behavioral surplus," our raw behavioral data, with euphemistic connotations that underserve the power of such collected data. We should remember that "behavioral surplus" and its utilization are *key* in the monetization surveillance colonists' users.

<sup>3</sup> Not to be confused with Zuboff's coined "instrumentalization" (351). Instrumentation here is strictly the instruments chosen and used in providing surveillance in extraction, passively or actively.

<sup>4</sup> While potentially euphemistic, "policy change" here suggests moving from "good" to "evil," or switching hands from a "safe" chief operator to a violent ideologue or authoritarian. Therefore, a shift from the potentially innocuous reason it was created to potential weaponization.

<sup>5</sup> I think it is important to contemplate the outcomes of Facebook's surveillance colonial behaviors, creating dangerous echo chambers for radical organizations and aiding in their spread. Appealing to our worst instincts, taking our behavioral surplus, weaponizing it, and serving it back to us as tailored ads promoting groups and pages falsely representing political situations or promoting conspiracy theories has resulted in violent acts. I presume this issue will only become worse with time. We should consider, too, the effect of misinformation (purposefully served) regarding the coronavirus pandemic and the unique horror and amount of death in the United States.