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#### We'll continue this debate with a picture of hair as an object of beauty being stripped from Black and Brown people. Slave masters, colonizers, and intruders have kicked our doors down and demanded that we turn over our cultural identities - controlling hair has historically been a favorite tool of domination in the arsenal of oppressors.

#### This isn't unique to the United States of Amerikkka - my home country partakes in the same views about hair that are rooted in racial hierarchies, casteism, and the patriarchy, especially for people in the press.

Rohina Katoch Sehra, [Sehra cares about the politics of style and beauty. She writes to amplify the voices of the people, movements and businesses that matter. She lives in New Delhi, India with her husband and dog- son Obi Wan.] 3-3-2020, "Indian Women Open Up About The Pressure To Keep Their Hair Long And Straight," HuffPost, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/indian-women-hair-pressure-long-straight\_l\_5e54236ec5b66729cf6064e3 //n33l

In India, hair and femininity are inextricable. The trendsetting industries of film and television, firmly in the grip of conservatism, haven’t shown much interest in broadening our understanding of femininity ― on or off screen, no A-list actors sport hair that isn’t well past their shoulders, and an artfully waved [lob](https://www.cosmopolitan.in/beauty/news/a10718/heres-how-choose-best-haircut-your-hair-type) is considered radical. Popular fashion designers like [Sabyasachi](https://www.instagram.com/sabyasachiofficial/?hl=en), who premised their careers on challenging conventions of femininity, are now associated with [deeply traditional iconography](https://www.vogue.in/content/sabyasachi-mukherjee-on-his-idea-of-the-perfect-indian-bridal-makeup) that features women in long, demure hairstyles. Quick to co-opt this idiom, the makeup and fashion influencer communities [mimic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92fKge8EGCk) these looks with relish. The country’s biggest national pageant has been [panned](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-48442662) for selecting candidates with bizarrely [identikit hair](https://www.indiatoday.in/trending-news/story/miss-india-2019-organisers-blasted-for-fair-skinned-finalists-can-t-tell-them-apart-says-internet-1539494-2019-05-31). Miss India contestants. They all have the same hair, and the SAME SKIN COLOUR, and I'm going to hazard a guess that their heights and vital stats will also be similar. So much for India being a 'diverse' country. [pic.twitter.com/L4yXG0WvRu](https://t.co/L4yXG0WvRu) — labellagorda (@labellagorda) [May 27, 2019](https://twitter.com/labellagorda/status/1132911972968673280?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) In ads and in movies, short-haired women are either mouthy tomboys, athletes or staunch careerists. They are almost never mothers or love interests. Short hair is for feminists and intellectuals ― a shrill, frumpy archetype devoid of softness and disinclined to pander. The renunciation of hair is acceptable only when sanctioned by [religion](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3yCPhcnn27tZ8S2vnJXpt8m/losing-your-hair-to-save-your-soul) or [custom](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/tirumalas-gleaming-scalps-spell-shining-prospects-for-hair-business/articleshow/55776683.cms?from=mdr), not when it is a political statement or an act of self-love. Class and caste readings of hair throw up depressingly predictable themes. For example, when Priyanka Gandhi, scion to the first family of India’s oldest political party, cut her hair, she became the subject of [fawning press](https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/lovin-the-priyanka-cut/story-AfzjTnMfMyt5ILKpBjHxbO.html) that likened her look to her grandmother’s, the first female prime minister of India. Hair diversity is a problem, too. Big banner movies and commercials almost never feature curly haired leads. Curls do not feature in hair product ads and do not get the kind of care they need at most salons, because stylists consider kinky hair difficult. Curly brides seldom wear their natural hair and go pin-straight on their big day; mainstream bridal fashions simply don’t factor in curls. All of this underscores a cultural obsession with straight, “proper” hair. Shockingly, the country has only [just begun](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/magazines/panache/indias-latest-acceptance-with-curls-lead-to-the-emergence-of-a-rs-200-crore-industry/articleshow/63860464.cms) to wake up to hair diversity. We talked to eight Indian women about their fraught experiences with their hair. Priyanshi Jariwala, Surat, Gujarat (Western India) Jariwala owns a sustainable fashion [line](https://www.instagram.com/thekhadicult/?hl=en) that champions a hardy hand-spun fabric with ties to India’s freedom movement. Growing up, she struggled with her curls. “I wanted to straighten them all the time only to be accepted. I remember a morning from my fourth grade when my teacher asked me if I’d combed my hair enough. She suggested I do it multiple times to get rid of the ‘shabby look.’” Jariwala has strong feelings about her community’s grooming expectations of women, considered attractive only if they are “tall, fair, slim and have long hair, even if the man has none on his head.” She’s glad for a dear friend who was so fed up she “cut her hair short to avoid marriage proposals. Women with short hair don’t qualify for Daughter-In-Law of the Year,” she said. Jariwala believes that women in visual professions, such as modeling, can sometimes pay for asserting their individuality. “I know fashion models who lost work because they decided to chop their hair. I think this bias is deeply rooted in the idea that long hair hides the ‘less attractive’ features, like chubby cheeks and an undefined jawline.” When it comes to her own profession, she plays it safe. “I work in a creative field where people are more accepting of your choices and appreciate nonconventional haircuts/colors, but I find myself at a crossroads when it comes to a conference or business summit. I do not remember ever leaving my curls open in a meeting. They are either tied in a bun or styled.” Then, colored hair signals sexual adventurism and could get women into trouble. “Women with crazy hair colors are [believed] to be asking for it, just how they’re asking for it when they wear short skirts or tops with deep necklines,” she told HuffPost. Despite comparisons to [Maggi noodles](https://in.pinterest.com/pin/350647520986186910/?lp=true), she’s found peace with her hair. “I think my hair is a representation of my wild and carefree side. People tell me that my hair makes me come across as a warm, approachable individual.” Rachana Iyer, Mumbai, Maharashtra (Western India) [Tamil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamils) by origin, Iyer is a mental health [advocate](https://www.instagram.com/rayiyer/?hl=en) and heads corporate social responsibility for a private bank. Fair skin and long hair are prized in her community and Iyer wrestled with her wavy curls, first growing them to waist length, then chopping them off to make a political statement. “I felt compelled to challenge the notion that I could look my best only in long hair,” Iyer told HuffPost. “I went from blunt to pixie and finally a beautiful red faux hawk! I absolutely loved the feeling of buzzing my hair and almost got quite addicted to it. Most people were shocked and upset that I would even take such a drastic step. This made me want to keep cutting my hair. I wanted people to realize how narrow their view of beauty is. People link femininity to having long hair and assume things about you based on its length. Although I do identify as bisexual, most people saw my short hair and called me names like ‘butch’ or ‘tomboy.’ They assumed that my sexuality and hair were somehow linked.” Iyer doesn’t care. She has attended weddings in traditional saris sporting buzzed hair, a vision undoubtedly jarring to her conservative community. “People assume you are a ‘junkie’ or a ‘punk’ when they see you with a buzz cut. I think coloring longer hair does not evoke the sort of response that coloring shorter hair does. I remember walking into a very popular bank and the lady at the counter openly mocked me to her colleagues and treated me poorly because of my hair. It got so bad that I had to escalate this to the manager. Society, especially women, can be really quick to judge you based on your hair. People also tend to slander a woman’s character, and although very subtle, I have personally experienced people thinking I am ‘very open,’ ‘forward thinking.’ They have taken the liberty to flirt even when I was clearly not interested.” Iyer believes that workplaces aren’t hair-inclusive. “A lot of companies have a policy about the types of colors allowed on women’s hair. Advertising agencies and the entertainment industry are a bit more relaxed, but there are still clear assumptions made based on the length of your hair. Medium or long hair that is straight, not frizzy and not colored, is considered the most professional. Most Indian corporations definitely consider buzz cuts unprofessional. It is assumed that you will not take your work seriously if your hair is fun!” Theyie Keditsu, Kohima, Nagaland (Northeastern India) Keditsu teaches at a government college and [advocates](https://www.instagram.com/mekhalamama/?hl=en) for the revival of traditional indigenous textiles and local artisanship. “[Nagas](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Naga-people" \t "_blank) (from the northeastern part of India) in general hold long, black and thick hair as the gold standard of feminine beauty. This beauty standard is both a result of racial prevalence and patriarchal notions of femininity,” she told HuffPost. Keditsu’s hair journey straddles the personal and the political. “I started shaving parts of my hair as a teenager,” she said. “And then completely when I was 27. And then in parts from 2017 onwards. My parents disliked my latest experiments so much that they even prayed for me! For them, my mohawk was unbecoming of a mother and a responsible working woman. For some others, it clashed with their idea of Naga beauty and femininity. My husband loved it, as did most of my friends. The most recent experiments with my hair were simply a personal quest to explore what being beautiful meant to me. I’d reached a point of self-acceptance ― realizing that hair and other accoutrements of beauty were at once superfluous and vital to one’s personhood. With my mohawk, I wanted to challenge ideas of what a mother should look like, and what made a woman my age beautiful. In a very deliberate way, I chose to sport these hairstyles because they expand the idea of what it means to be feminine.” Keditsu would like young women to “see hair as a means not an end, not as an extension of oneself or one’s sense of worth but as a tool to express one’s politics or worth.” Niharika Chugh Vali, Nagpur, Maharashtra (Central India) Business owner Chugh Vali runs a children’s play [area](https://www.instagram.com/jumpnagpur/?hl=en) that encourages experiential learning. Her parents are Punjabi and Parsi, two cultures that value conformity in appearance, so she has only just now leaned into her big, curly hair. “I have worked before as a television news anchor and my hair was always a concern for everyone. It was gelled and tied back most times and when it was left open, it took twice as much time as anyone else to straighten it. The option of enhancing my natural hair or going curly did not exist,” she told HuffPost. “Like all curly-haired people, I’ve been advised by stylists and well-wishers to ‘do something about it,’ to get my hair smoothed or straightened or treated with keratin, as if the sight of my natural hair could hurt someone’s eyes,” she said. Shame around hair was learned in early childhood. “The volume was unmanageable, so it was cut in a short bob. Once I did decide to grow it out, I made sure it was tied back real tight and pinned well so nobody ever had to see what it really looked like,” she said. Today, Chugh Vali credits the [Curly Girl Method](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curly_Girl_Method) and Indian actors like [Kangana Ranaut](https://in.pinterest.com/search/pins/?rs=ac&len=2&q=kangana%20ranaut%20curly%20hair&eq=Kangana%20Ranaut%20curly%20hair&etslf=3517&term_meta%5b%5d=kangana%7Cautocomplete%7C0&term_meta%5b%5d=ranaut%7Cautocomplete%7C0&term_meta%5b%5d=curly%7Cautocomplete%7C0&term_meta%5b%5d=hair%7Cautocomplete%7C0) and [Taapsee Pannu](https://in.pinterest.com/search/pins/?q=Taapsee%20Pannu%20curly%20hair&rs=typed&term_meta%5b%5d=Taapsee%7Ctyped&term_meta%5b%5d=Pannu%7Ctyped&term_meta%5b%5d=curly%7Ctyped&term_meta%5b%5d=hair%7Ctyped) for throwing out notions around “curly hair being an inferior hair type. It is also finally leading to a conversation about curly hair, and how its care is so different from the default straight-hair regimen we all follow blindly.” Mother to a 7-year-year old, she loves that animated children’s heroines like [Merida](https://www.google.com/search?q=Merida%2C+Brave&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwjizvmkpsrnAhVLFnIKHXAJCfYQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq=Merida%2C+Brave&gs_l=img.3..0i67j0l9.2884.3809..4135...0.0..0.144.865.0j7......0....1..gws-wiz-img.rq6wzyL8HC0&ei=TAlDXuL4CcusyAPwkqSwDw&bih=618&biw=1366) (“Brave”) and [Moana](https://www.google.com/search?q=Moana&sxsrf=ACYBGNRkwiw9u8oXmmLLXvAzl-SxmO5kaQ:1581451646764&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjl34m9psrnAhWqyDgGHY2UC0sQ_AUoAXoECDkQAw&biw=1366&bih=618) have curly hair.

#### Hair is steeped in violent policing and judgement that make existence unbearable - why is the hair of Indian yogis attributed to their religious dedication but the shiny mane of blonde supermodels is associated with idiocy? It begs the question - do we style our hair or does our hair style us?

Siri Hustvedt, [Hustvedt is an author and lecturer of psychiatry at Cornell University with several published best-selling novels and highly-regarded research papers. She received a PhD from Columbia University in New York and has received the Gabarron International Award for Thought and Humanities, the Man Booker Prize, and the LA Times Book Prize for Fiction] 9-23-2015, "Untangling the Cultural Meaning of Hair," New Republic, https://newrepublic.com/article/122893/notes-toward-theory-hair //n33l

When my daughter was in elementary school, she wore her hair long, and every night before I began reading aloud to her, I sat behind her to comb and then braid it. If left loose during her hours of hectic sleep and dreams, Sophie’s hair was transformed into a great bird’s nest by morning. I especially liked the braiding ritual, liked the sight of my child’s ears and the back of her neck, liked the feel and look and smell of her shiny brown hair, liked the folding over and under of the three skeins of hair between my fingers. The braiding was also an act of anticipation—it came just before we crawled into her bed together and settled in among the pillows and sheets and I began to read and Sophie to listen. Even this simple act of plaiting my child’s hair gives rise to questions about meaning. Why do more girl children wear their hair long in our culture than boy children? Why is hairstyle a sign of sexual difference? I have to admit that unless a boy child of mine had begged me for braids, I probably would have followed convention and kept his hair short, even though I think such rules are arbitrary and constricting. And finally, why would I have been mortified to send Sophie off to school with her tresses in high-flying, ratted knots?  All mammals have hair. Hair is not a body part so much as a lifeless extension of a body. Although the bulb of the follicle is alive, the hair shaft is dead and insensible, which allows for its multiple manipulations. We are the only mammals who braid, knot, powder, pile up, oil, spray, tease, perm, color, curl, straighten, augment, shave off, and clip our hair. The liminal status of hair is crucial to its meanings. It grows on the border between person and world. As Mary Douglas argued in Purity and Danger, substances that cross the body’s boundaries are signs of disorder and may easily become pollutants. Hair attached to our heads is one thing, but hair clogged in the shower drain after a shampoo is waste. Read unlimited stories like this one.1 year for $10.Subscribe Hair protrudes from all over human skin except the soles of our feet and the palms of our hands. Contiguity plays a role in hair’s significance. Hair on a person’s head frames her or his face, and the face is the primary focus in most of our communicative dealings with others. We recognize people by their faces. We speak, listen, nod, and respond to a face, especially to eyes. Head hair and more intrusively beard hair exist at the periphery of these vital exchanges that begin immediately after birth, and once we become self-conscious, our concern that our hair is “in place,” “unmussed,” or “mussed in just the right way” has to do with its role as messenger  to the other. A never-combed head of hair may  announce that its owner lives out side human society altogether—is  a wild child, a hermit, or an insane  person. It may also signify beliefs  and political or cultural marginality. Think of the dreadlocks of Rastafarians or the long, matted hair of  the sannyasis, ascetic wanderers in  India. The combed-out Afro or “natural” for women and men in the 1960s communicated a wordless but potent political story. As a high school student, I thought of Angela Davis’s hair as a sign, not only of her politics, but of her formidable intellect, as if her association with Herbert Marcuse and the Frankfurt School could be divined in her commanding halo. Was the brilliant Davis a subliminal influence on my decision in the middle of the 1970s to apply a toxic permanent wave solution to my straight, shoulder-length blond hair, a chemical alteration that was literally hair- raising? The Afro style (sort of) on me—not just a white girl, but an extremely white girl—turned the “natural” into the “unnatural.” I was hardly alone in adopting the look. As fashions travel from one person or group to another, their significance mutates. Note the bleached blond hair of famous black sports stars or the penchant for cornrows among certain white people. Despite its important role as speechless social messenger, hair is a part of the human body we can live without. Losing a head of hair or shaving our legs and underarms or waxing away pubic hair is not like losing an arm or a finger. “It will always grow back” is a phrase routinely used to comfort those who have suffered a bad haircut. Hair that touches a living head but is itself dead has an object-like quality no other body part has, except our fingernails and toenails. Hair is at once of “me” and an alien “it.” When I touch the hair of another person, I am similarly touching him or her, but not his or her internally felt body. I remember that when my niece Juliette was a baby, she used to suck on her bottle twirling her mother’s long hair around her fingers as her eyes slowly opened and closed. It was a gesture of luxurious, soporific pleasure. Well after her bottle had been abandoned, she was unable to fall asleep without the ritual hair twiddling, which meant, of course, that the rest of my sister was forced to accompany those essential strands. Asti’s hair, as part of Juliette’s mother but not her mother’s body proper, became what D. W. Winnicott called a “transitional object,” the stuffed animal, bit of blanket, lullaby, or routine many children need to pave the way to sleep. The thing or act belongs to Winnicott’s “intermediate area of experience,” a between zone that is “outside the individual” but is not “the external world,” an object or ritual imbued with the child’s longings and fantasies that helps ease her separation from her mother. Hair as marginalia lends itself particularly well to this transitional role. Every infant is social from birth, and without crucial interactions with an intimate caretaker, it will grow up to be severely disabled. Although the parts of the brain that control autonomic functions are quite mature at birth, emotional responses, language, and cognition develop through experience with others, and those experiences are physiologically coded in brain and body. The lullabies, head and hair stroking, rocking, cooing, playing, talk, and babble that take place between parent and baby during infancy are accompanied by synaptic brain connectivity unique to a particular individual. The cultural-social is not a category that hovers over the physical; it becomes the physical body itself. Human perception develops through a dynamic learning process, and when perceptual, cognitive, and motor skills are learned well enough, they become automatic and unconscious—part of implicit memory. It is when automatic perceptual patterns are interrupted by a novel experience, however, that we require full consciousness to reorder our expectation, be it about hair or anything else. When Sophie went off to school with her two long, neat braids swinging behind her, she did not disturb anyone’s expectations, but when the psychologist Sandra Bem sent her four-year-old boy, Jeremy, off to nursery school wearing the barrettes he had requested she put in his hair, he was hounded by a boy in his class who kept insisting that “only girls wear barrettes.” Jeremy sensibly replied that barrettes don’t matter. He had a penis and testicles and this fact made him a boy, not a girl. His classmate, however, remained unconvinced, and in a moment of exasperation, Jeremy pulled down his pants to give proof of his boyhood. After a quick glance, his comrade said, “Everybody has a penis. Only girls wear barrettes.” Most boys in contemporary Western culture begin to resist objects, colors, and hairdos coded as feminine as soon as they have become certain of their sexual identity, around the age of three. Jeremy’s fellow pupil seems to have been muddled about penises and vulvas, but adamant about social convention. In this context, the barrette metamorphosed from innocuous hair implement to an object of gender subversion. The philosopher Judith Butler would call Jeremy’s barrette-wearing a kind of “performativity,” gender as doing, not being. Girls have more leeway to explore masculine forms than boys. Unlike barrettes on a boy, short hair on a girl is not subject to ridicule, noteworthy because the “feminine” has far more polluting power for a boy in our culture than the “masculine” has for a girl. During three or four years before she reached puberty, another niece of mine, Ava, had a short haircut and was sometimes identified as a boy. One year she played with gender performance in the costume she chose for Halloween: half of her went as a girl, the other half as a boy. Hair was a vital element in this down-the-middle disguise. The long flowing locks of a wig adorned the girl half. Her own short hair served the boy half. I began the fifth grade with long hair, but at some point in the middle of the year I chopped it into what was then called a pixie cut. When I returned to school newly shorn, I was informed that the boy I liked, a boy who had supposedly liked me back, had withdrawn his affection. It had been swept away and discarded at the hairdresser’s along with my silky locks. I recall thinking that my former admirer was a superficial twit, but perhaps he had succumbed to a Goldilocks fantasy. He would not be the last male personage in my life to fixate on feminine blondness and its myriad associations in our culture, including abstract qualities such as purity, innocence, stupidity, childishness, and sexual allure embodied by multiple figures—the goddesses Sif and Freya and the Valkyries of Norse mythology, the multitudes of fair maidens in fairy tales, numerous heroines in Victorian novels and melodramas, and cinematic bombshells, such as Harlow and Monroe (both of whom I love to watch onscreen). The infantile and dumb connotations of blond may explain why I have often dreamed of a buzz cut. The fairy-tale and mythological creatures so dear to me as a child may explain why I have had short hair as an adult but never that short and did not turn myself into a brunette or redhead. A part of me must hesitate to shear myself of all blond, feminine meanings, as if next to no hair would mean severing a connection to an earlier self. Iris, the narrator of my first novel, The Blindfold, crops her hair during a period in her life of defensive transformation. She wanders around New York City after dark wearing a man’s suit. She gives herself the name of a sadistic boy in a German novel she has translated: Klaus. The gap between what I was forced to acknowledge to the world— namely, that I was a woman—and what I dreamed inwardly didn’t bother me. By becoming Klaus at night I had effectively blurred my gender. The suit, my clipped head and unadorned face altered the world’s view of who I was, and I became someone else through its eyes. I even spoke differently as Klaus. I was less hesitant, used more slang, and favored colorful verbs. My heroine’s butch haircut partakes of her second act of translation, from feminine Iris to masculine Klaus, a performance that belies the notion that appearance is purely superficial. By playing with her hair and clothes, she subverts cultural expectations that have shaped her in ways she finds demeaning. Short hair or long? Interpretations of length change with time and place. The Merovingian kings (ca. 457–750) wore their hair long as a sign of their high status. Samson’s strength famously resided in his hair. The composer Franz Liszt’s shoulder-length hair became the object of frenzied, fetishistic female desire. The mini narratives of television commercials for formulas to cure male baldness reinforce the notion that the fluff above is linked to action below. Once a man’s hair has been miraculously restored, a seductive woman inevitably appears beside him on the screen to caress his newly sprouted locks. But then shampoo commercials for women also contain sexual messages that long, and sometimes short, frequently windblown tresses will enchant a dream man.

#### The affirmative is part and parcel of the same system that is coded against Black and Brown hair - the press always prioritizes a false and naive form of objectivity that inevitably excludes some.

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In the replies to Roberts's viral tweet was New Orleans-based WDSU anchor [Christina Watkins](https://www.instagram.com/cwatkinstv/), who [tweeted](https://twitter.com/CWatkinsWDSU/status/1290979964389654529) back a short video of herself wearing knotless braids and a message of solidarity, complete with crown emoji: "Yesssss! Come through, black women on TV with braids!!!! Wearing mine for the first time, too!" In January 2021, Terry, the weekend sports anchor/reporter of WREG 3 in Memphis, joined Roberts and Watkins in their protective style on-screen debuts. The brevity of Terry's [tweet](https://twitter.com/samariaterry/status/1350596967739621377) was reflective of the situation's gravity: Mustered up the courage to rock braids on air! "It was ingrained in my brain that professional hair was straight," says Terry. "I learned this in school, from watching people on TV growing up, from image consultants that we have at stations that I [previously] worked in… mustering up the courage was really hard." After another Black anchor at her station [posted a negative comment](https://twitter.com/SymoneTV/status/1292517349854261255) she received from a viewer after wearing braids on-air, Terry was worried about how her own hair would be received by viewers. "We're so presentable and relatable and people feel like they know us," Terry explains. "They see us out, they speak to us, they will message you, and they will tell you what they like and what they don't like." "If they say, 'Wow, I really like Christina's hair,' maybe the next time an employee of theirs comes into [their] workplace in corporate America, they won't be as shocked, because they will recall seeing their 'news lady' with hair like that." The potential criticism from viewers is enough to dissuade some Black women reporters from wearing a natural or protective hairstyle. But the pressures to conform to a specific standard of beauty aren't always so forthright. They are also coded within the contractual language of workplace dress codes that limit the look of professionalism for Black women as opposed to women of other races or ethnicities — further contributing to a history of oppression in which Black women are forced to sacrifice their self-expression to become more palatable. In 2019, Brittany Noble Jones, a news anchor who formerly worked at WJTV in Jackson, Mississippi, [wrote a Medium piece](https://medium.com/@thenoblejournalist/why-i-disappeared-from-the-news-desk-at-wjtv-in-jackson-mississippi-bd734b1affb3), in which she says she was fired from her job after she wore her natural hair on air. She claims that after she had her son, she asked if she could stop straightening her hair. According to Noble Jones, she was told that her hair looked "unprofessional and the equivalent to throwing on a baseball cap to go to the grocery store." A spokesperson for the station denied that Noble Jones's hair was the reason for her termination, telling [Today](https://www.today.com/style/brittany-noble-was-told-her-natural-hair-was-unprofessional-fired-t146857), "Allegations that Ms. Jones' employment was terminated for her choice of hairstyles have no basis in fact and are vigorously denied." "With some of our other [non-Black] counterparts, nobody ever questions when somebody goes a little shorter [in length] because it's the summertime," says Pringle. "Or [if they] added a little bit of highlights because it's fall or [if] they're gonna let it grow out because it's wintertime. Nobody questions if they decide to curl wand their hair one day or wear it straight another day. The same flexibility and respect given to women who may have a different hue should be given [to Black women] without having to have a federal law passed." Many of the stories we hear about Black hair discrimination are in corporate industries, but there is a degree of uniqueness to hair discrimination in broadcast journalism due to the sheer level of visibility of on-air reporters. This visibility is intensified even more by the existence of social media. And while the overwhelming amount of responses and opinions can be daunting, this hypervisibility is exactly why these women believe it's more important than ever to push for representation in their field. Terry discloses that her biggest takeaway from going viral was the number of people who weren't aware of the fierce hair discrimination Black news reporters endure. "The issue is if you're not Black, if you're not a woman, if you're not in broadcast, you would never know these experiences even existed," reasons Pringle. "You'd never know that there are people that sit in news directors' offices and beg and plead with them to change their hair." "As Black women on TV, there are so many eyes on us," shares Watkins. "Eyes from people of all backgrounds. They look at us as a trusted source. To see someone who is able to switch up their hair, whether it be braids, locs, twist-outs, blowouts — to see someone who can do that on a platform like [the] one I have, it gives other people who may not have seen something like that before a different idea. If they say, 'Wow, I really like Christina's hair,' maybe the next time an employee of theirs comes into [their] workplace in corporate America, they won't be as shocked, because they will recall seeing their 'news lady' with hair like that." While there are trolls who aim to invalidate and dismiss their experiences, all four women have received mostly positive feedback on their hair from the folks watching at home, many of whom say they have been inspired to share their own stories and begin new journeys of hair love. In many cases, wearing their hair in natural or protective styles has actually made these newscasters more relatable to Black viewers. "[There are] people who are showing their children [my hair] and their children are excited about wearing braids," Roberts says. "That is why it's important. When we show who we really are on the news people say, 'She looks just like me! Her hair is just like mine! Maybe I can be on the news one day.' [We are] indirectly and directly impacting people and letting them know that there's space for you here. You can do this, too." Pringle has received messages from viewers saying that she is the reason they went natural, as well as notes from parents who say that she has made their daughters with short hair more confident in themselves. "It's a great reminder for people that… when being yourself, the world will adjust. Period," Pringle shares. "[I hope to reach] women who look like me, whether old, young, or my same age, [and] remind them that you can show up just as you are, and that is beyond good enough."

#### This isn't just a phenomenon in the news - we find ourselves complicit in the structures of violence within debate. A Sikh wearing a turban being called a terrorist, a person with blonde hair being called an idiot, and a person with long hair being called a bitch are all real and conceivable examples of violence that have occurred in debate. These instances result in skewed perceptions and psychological harm - only deconstructing hair as a starting point to think of ourselves and one another can solve perception-based violence. The role of the judge is to endorse the best strategy to resist perception-based violence in the context of how we view one another.

#### Thus, we advocate "a communal buzz-cut" as a symbolic act of sexual and racial liberation allied with collective advocacy that says fuck you to codification and embraces the beauty of a blank slate. This is the act of driving with friends to get your hair cut, using box dye with others in the rec center bathroom, and carving eyebrow slits at protests - we ought to work together to recreate beauty through a queer and colored lens.

Jenna Igneri, [Igneri is an author and freelance journalist that writes predominantly about hair and it's transformative power. She is a professional hair stylist.]5-31-2017, "A Brief Look At The Empowering History Of The Female Buzz Cut," Nylon, https://www.nylon.com/articles/significance-of-female-buzz-cuts //n33l

Once a look reserved for the margins, the buzz cut has recently surged in popularity with women and can be seen on more heads than we can count. In 2017 alone, we’ve noticed a number of [powerful celebrities](http://www.nylon.com/articles/bleach-and-buzz-celeb-hair-trend) take the follicular leap, whether for a movie role or as a personal choice. Of course, long before this hairstyle became buzz-worthy celebrity trend (no pun intended), it has been a style worn by women from all walks of life for decades, for reasons that transcend trendiness and instead find their roots in politics and activism. While many simply associate the look with the rebellious, punk aesthetic, it’s a historically important symbol in both black and queer culture and has been used as a means to combat gender norms and white ideas of femininity. Long embraced by women of color, the buzz cut has been worn by black icons like Grace Jones and Pat Evans, proving that conforming to white beauty standards is not a mandate. Evans, one of the biggest (and highest paid) models of the ‘70s, rocked a bald head in defiance against an industry that did not embrace black beauty values. In an interview with [Ben Arogundade](http://www.arogundade.com/pat-evans-black-model-cover-girl-for-the-ohio-players.html), author of [Black Beauty](https://www.amazon.com/Black-Beauty-Celebration-Ben-Arogundade/dp/156025341X), Evans explains that she was uncomfortable with the modeling and fashion industries’ obsession with straight hair and the pressures that were placed on black models to conform. To her, embracing baldness was the highest form of protest. The buzz cut has also been long associated with queer women and the battle against heteronormative beauty ideals. And as writer [June Thomas](http://www.advocate.com/current-issue/2016/1/11/short-length-my-true-loves-hair) explains, while not every queen woman has short hair, and not every short-haired woman is queer, short haircuts have commonly become associated with queer identity. She considers short haircuts serving as a “lesbian rite of passage” of sorts, explaining in an article in [The Advocate](http://www.advocate.com/current-issue/2016/1/11/short-length-my-true-loves-hair) that the way queer women wear their hair is a more obvious way to signal their queerness to others. While not all of these shorter haircuts are necessarily buzz cuts, that ultra-short crop is certainly one commonly used option. We've definitely come a long way from the time when the buzz cut was a rarely seen occurrence and exclusively the domain of black and queer cultures. Now, while the look still retains those historical ties, it is also seen on a much wider variety of women, and the path to the buzz cut is different for every woman—a personal journey, as told through her hair. We talked to four women who sport the hairstyle, as well as two psychologists, to break down the significance of why so many women are getting buzz cuts today. From the dismantling of gender conformity to the volatility of the current political atmosphere, the buzz has taken on new meaning for women of all races, identities, and backgrounds. “I’ve always felt the most sexy, confident, and powerful after I shaved my head,” says [Clara Rae Natkin](https://www.instagram.com/clara_rae/?hl=en), a makeup and visual artist who has been playing with the length of her hair since the age of 18. From chopping all of her hair off into a shaggy pixie to going for the full buzz, her hair decisions have been emotionally charged. “I’ve always felt like my outward appearance needed to match what or how I was feeling internally,” she says, “I wanted to transform my life, and the quickest way I knew how to transform my outsides was to cut off all of my hair.” Natkin treats buzzing her head as a new beginning, a rebirth of sorts. Speaking of the second time she buzzed it all off, she tells me, “I felt like I needed to start over and force myself to be in what I call ‘fetus mode,’ in order to transform my life again without any hair or makeup—just being completely raw. Having a buzzed head was slightly like having armor against the world. Now, I’m growing it out again because I feel like I’m reaching yet another stage of my life where I want to be gentler and softer with myself.” Similarly, others found the act of cutting off all of their hair very releasing—even without a corresponding emotional tie. [Cherie Camacho](https://www.instagram.com/cheriecamacho/?hl=en), associate manager of team and culture at Glossier, never felt attached to her hair and cut it off simply because she wanted to. “I gave myself a pixie cut in my bathroom one day after work. I stood in front of the mirror with a pair of craft scissors and started chopping it off. I didn’t blink at all—it was very cathartic,” she says. Eventually going to a salon to transform her DIY pixie into a full-on buzz cut, Camacho says that she 100 percent plans on maintaining it. “This is the sexiest I’ve ever felt in my life! I feel so badass in a way that I’ve never felt before. I’m finally in love with myself.” [Vijayeta Sinh PhD](https://www.drsinh.com/), psychologist and owner of NYC Family Therapy, explains that sometimes people will use their bodies to communicate something they’re feeling, especially if they have difficulty communicating with words; a change as drastic as a buzz cut can be liberating, and even life-changing. (And no, she’s not having a Britney Spears in 2007 moment, so don’t even ask that.) Aside from emotional significance, a woman’s choice of hairstyle can also be extremely political. Sinh says that it may be a way of giving a “middle finger” to gender-related norms of femininity and beauty. As [Leslie Carr](http://lesliecarr.com/), clinical psychologist, tells me: A woman’s hair is deeply rooted in symbolism. It’s often viewed as an element of female power and personal expression, but it’s also deeply tied to the patriarchy. Women often receive certain types of messages—like that men prefer long hair on women—which is something that psychologists and evolutionary theorists postulate because long, healthy hair is a sign of fertility. Meanwhile, older women are often told that they need to make their hair shorter as if they’ve aged out of the ability, or the right, to wear their hair long and loose. Hair, for women, is deeply personal and also deeply political.

#### Give me a 30 and/or a donation at https://www.facebook.com/donate/309997691109640/1010973033165238/

#### (alternatively, you should share it on facebook)- millions of young people don’t have hair due to alopecia, cancer, or other conditions that induce hair loss and they deserve the ability to decide what hair can do for them. The same negative hypervisibility that stigmatizes natural hair on TV can be retooled to be a positive project - you should engage in material resistance strategies that benefit everyone and prove that debate has potential to be good.

## 2

#### Logistics and Media Flows are intrinsically entangled – Supply Chain Networks require communication to circulate culture and knowledge to coordinate and quell threats to Logistical Infrastructures.

Hockenberry et Al 21 Matthew Hockenberry, Nicole Starosielski, and Susan Zieger 2021 "Assembly Codes: The Logistics of Media" (media historian and theorist examining the media of global production)//Elmer

Media and logistics are global operating systems. They set conditions for the circulation of information and culture. They activate inventories of materials and networks of infrastructure. They coordinate interfaces between bodies, objects, and environments. Deployed in ongoing projects of capitalization and exploitation, often in the name of global connection, consumption, and security, they affect the day-to-day lives of people around the world. And they are inextricably entangled with one another. Even the text of this book has been enclosed in packets, transmitted, and reassembled innumerable times—a process guided by logistical principles. The materials that constitute it, whether printed on paper or housed in Amazon’s cloud storage, were transmitted via trucks, containers, pallets, and hands, their movement likely managed using logistical software. Logistics—the organization and coordination of resources to manufacture and distribute global commodities—depends not only on software and data infrastructures but on a mass of screens, communications devices, and paperwork. Assembly Codes is the first collection to critically interrogate the specific points of contact, dependence, and friction between media and logistics. We argue that the fundamental interconnections between these two systems are essential not only to understanding both of their operations but to the contemporary circulation of culture on a global scale. To describe the dynamics of media today—its production and industries, its vast infrastructures, its material forms, and its global movements—a basic conception of the supply chain and the science of coordinating techniques is necessary. For the operations of global logistics, a focus on media, whether in the circulation of internet traffic or on the devices that coordinate their commands, reveals crucial links, choke points, and dependencies. Media and logistics are interoperable systems, and the activities of one hinge on the smooth operation of the other. This collection builds on an exciting field of logistical study that has emerged over the past several decades. In geography, sociology, cultural studies, anthropology, science and technology studies, and history, among other fields, scholars have documented how logistics has been instrumental to warfare and capitalism, as well as to their attendant imperial projects. The idea of logistics was first articulated in the study of warfare, where its theorization elevated it to the same prominence as that of strategy and tactics, but recent work has focused on its adaptation into commerce, especially the impact of the logistics revolution in the early 1960s that cemented logistical operations as a cornerstone of neoliberal economics and politics.1 In economics, Peter Drucker famously declared logistics the “last dark continent” for commerce left to conquer, and scholars have documented this transition from the more constrained study of “physical distribution management” to the recognition of logistics as “the most encompassing term that describes the management of firms’ acquiring and distributing activities over space.”2 Collectively, this work reveals that, as the science of moving goods, people, and information as efficiently as possible to meet the global demands of capital, logistics has been the engineer of the mid-twentieth century. In the subsequent drama of globalization, in which factories have moved to the Global South to exploit cheap labor, and goods are shipped back to the Global North for consumption, logistics has been the star. In critical logistics studies—a field that coalesced from these inquiries to describe the conditions of logistics, the abstract structures of the supply chain, and their impact on modern life—media is ever-present, even if often in the background.3 In The Deadly Life of Logistics, Deborah Cowen explains that with the expansion of global supply chains, commodities are not produced in conventional geography, but “across logistics space.”4 Logistics space is mediated in a multitude of ways: through process maps, enterprise resource planning software, worker surveillance, the capture of biometric data, and satellite tracking. Logistics, Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson argue, fundamentally “involves the algorithmic coordination of productive processes in space and time.”5 Analyzing these algorithmic architectures, Ned Rossiter calls for a logistical media theory that grasps these technologies’ primary function: “to extract value by optimizing the efficiency of living labor and supply chain operations.”6 These accounts recognize that media are integral to the conceptualization and spread of logistics. Supply chains are defined as much by their communications networks and media technologies as they are by their containers and pallets. As logistics has become a topic in media and communications studies, scholars have expanded beyond the domain of supply chain management to address its broader conceptualization as a set of coordinating techniques. Paul Virilio’s “logistics of perception” places cinematic sounds and images alongside accounts of weapons, people, and materials.7 Media scholars, including Ned Rossiter, John Durham Peters, and Judd Case, argue that the study of “logistical media” does not simply involve analysis of the visual and computational dimensions of Walmart’s or Amazon’s operations but a recognition of media’s capacity to process data, coordinate movement, and more widely orient sociality.8 Logistical media, Peters writes, are the media of “orientation,” devices of cognitive, social, and political organization and control. They are clocks, maps, and calendars; positioning technologies such as radar; managerial forms such as lists; and commercial codes such as stamps. Due to their ability to organize storage and transmission, and their capacity to locate, arrange, and distribute, all media possess this logistical dimension. Media, in other words, are not simply conduits through which global logistics emerges but exist “prior to and from the grid” through which such operations can be constituted.9 They are not logistics’ black box. They are the instructions for its assembly. Assembly Codes enters into this conversation about the techniques of global logistics and the operative logics of media with three specific interventions. First, it describes what we call the logistical imagination. Logistical technologies have always been accompanied by new ways of seeing and listening, reading and knowing, thinking and moving—which have themselves catalyzed crucial shifts in our modes of communication. To unpack the logistical imagination is to trace the representational and imaginative modes of logistical activity, as well as the aesthetic and performative practices that have emerged to grapple with logistical transformations. Second, the essays here illustrate what we call logistical instruments: the extensive array of media techniques, technologies, and forms that are essential to the operation of global logistics. The collection’s essays demonstrate that media’s operative logics—their logistical capacity to orient, arrange, and sort—are deeply connected to the ways in which they have been instrumentalized in histories of militarism, commerce, and empire. As a result, the media technologies that hold these projects together necessarily advance the trajectories of capitalism, settler colonialism, and biopolitical management. Logistics invests these linked projects with their own seemingly organic and inevitable sense of life, what Cowen describes as an abstract vitalism, at the expense of the human lives of laborers and migrants, and several of our essays touch on these stakes.10 Finally, the essays reveal how the industrial processes of traditional media production—from cinema to sound recording—are being reshaped as supply chain media by logistical technologies and practices. While the processes of sourcing and assembly have always had a substantial effect on how media is produced, distributed, and consumed, contemporary media are being crafted in relation to what Anna Tsing has named “supply chain capitalism.”11 The elements of supply chain capitalism that Tsing documents—actual precarity, collaboration, nonscalability, and translation—are central concerns many of our essays also take up.12 While these interventions build across the collection, we have organized Assembly Codes into sections that foreground these three ways of rethinking media: as sites of logistical imagination, as instruments of logistical operations, and as products of global supply chains. In the remainder of the introduction, we chart the stakes, contexts, and future directions of these avenues of inquiry, as well as the ties between individual essays and our shared interventions. The authors assembled draw together a diverse set of objects as well as a range of theoretical and conceptual orientations: Black and Indigenous studies, German media theory and sound studies, and the analysis of media industries and production cultures. Their essays foreground the contiguity of production and distribution, the messy relationship between base and superstructure, and most importantly, the continuities between contemporary and historical forms of logistical mediation. They expose the way economic, political, and social power consolidates in and through logistical operations and acts of assembly. Through their careful analyses, the book reveals how contemporary mediation is haunted by its logistical substructures, from the slave ship to the supply chain.

#### Logistics is structured via Logistical Imaginations that control ways of seeing and imagining that structure every-day life around Logistical Infrastructures. Logistical Imaginations at the level of Knowledge and Subjectivity are critical to the life-blood of Supply Chains which means interrogation of the Aff’s Knowledge Structure come first over Materiality. Thus, the Role of the Ballot is to endorse Imagination and Subject Formation that exist outside Logistics.

Hockenberry et Al 21 Matthew Hockenberry, Nicole Starosielski, and Susan Zieger 2021 "Assembly Codes: The Logistics of Media" (media historian and theorist examining the media of global production)//Elmer

The Logistical Imagination How did the imagination of the world change once it expanded to include logistical ways of thinking? When did thoughts of logistical operations begin to hold sway over the details of daily lives? How can one represent the expansive system of global logistics? To answer these questions is to unpack the logistical imagination: the new ways of seeing and imagining the world brought about by logistics and the new forms of mediation, philosophy, politics, and aesthetics that have emerged to confront it. To analyze the logistical imagination is to understand what it means to see like a supply chain, to comprehend the conditions that make one feel like cargo, or to explore logistics’ racialized and gendered aesthetics. It is to document how the subject of Western individualism is, fundamentally, a logistical one, and to interrogate how the historical emergence of logistics in commerce and warfare reshaped everyday life for workers, consumers, and citizens. It is also, we suggest, to imagine how the vast contours of logistical systems elide the faults and friction of their diverse and often divergent operations.13 To do so involves charting how these underlying instabilities, where “capital hits the ground,” may elicit new political potentials and subjective possibilities.14 Critiques of capitalism often construe logistics as something simultaneously monumental and microscopic. It is always present but nowhere to be seen. Increasingly automated and algorithmic, it is, like capital itself, an inhuman, unknowable thing.15 Its representations in texts, photographs, and films are almost always defined by the enormous structures erected in pursuit of global trade. Capable of transporting more than ten thousand containers per trip, megaships, for example, are vessels so massive that they are unable to sail through the expanded Panama Canal locks, their decks unreachable by most North American cranes.16 The mind-boggling scale of these technologies and of the systems that manage their movements are defined by the dark dreams of the “logistical sublime,” where global trade flows are ever more precisely patterned in a nightmare of unending rationalization.17 Researchers have described how logistics is inextricable from other global phenomena, including the conditions of late capitalism and the politics of neoliberalism. Jasper Bernes has argued that “the totality of the logistics system belongs to capital,” and as such, it remains cognitively and materially impregnable by traditional revolutionary means.18 While the logistical sublime is the dominant form of the logistical imagination, mobilized by capitalists and critics alike, it is not the only representational possibility. As a means of opening up the analysis of the logistical imagination, the authors in Assembly Codes delve into the many ways that humans have engaged with and envisioned logistics. A study of these cases reveals that the logistical imagination is always refractive, embodied in the particular moments and media of their production. This is true when workers slow down or speed up to control the fluctuation of logistical time and speed; when protestors blockade ports to limit the movement of materials across logistical space; and when undocumented migrants and fugitive slaves seize opportunities to travel outside the well-ordered regimes of logistical control. But it is also true when middle-class people use locationbased apps to hook up, request a car to the airport, or arrange for a next-day delivery in a single click. The logistical imagination not only drives forces of oppression, it ignites resistance and lubricates banal normativity. Our aim is to understand the specific differences that these representations, aesthetic practices, and modes of thinking make to larger logistical projects. We are motivated by the recognition that new imaginations can catalyze systemic shifts. Indeed, the contemporary concern with logistics—which has culminated in academia in fields such as critical logistics studies—was sparked by the dissemination of new logistical imaginations and representations. It was in part through media coverage of the impacts of globalization, including its supply chains, workers’ rights, and environmental impact, that middle-class people in the Global North began to grapple with logistics. The anti-sweatshop campaigns of the 1990s that stemmed from Nike’s disastrous “sweatshop summer” gave rise to a new discourse of ethical consumerism, one that expanded to encompass concerns for human rights and worker welfare, the ethical treatment of animals, environmental contamination, and global climate change.19 Recent conceptions of corporate social responsibility, the connection between local sourcing and consumption, and assessment methodologies like carbon footprinting all bring to light the journeys commodities make as, driven by logistics, they are assembled and distributed around the world. At the same time, the meteoric rise of private carriers like FedEx, ups, and dhl made delivery trucks and logistical laborers familiar figures, so much so that the 2000 film Castaway could reimagine Robinson Crusoe as a narrative about a FedEx logistician stranded on a desert island in the crash of a cargo plane. It is precisely because of logistics’ extraordinary scale and apparent unknowability that media play such a critical role in shaping our knowledge of these systems and afford the potential for collective forms of resistance. An attention to forms of mediation reveals the language and iconography of logistics as a potential site for intervention. Marc Levinson’s The Box (2006) and Alexander Klose’s The Container Principle (2009), for example, both figure the container as the emblem of globalization and the originary sign of modern logistics.20 Carried by cranes between ship holds and truck beds, this intermodal innovation accelerated shipping times, ending the era of arduous and time-consuming break-bulk unloading, and the work of longshoremen who labored on the docks. By the turn of the century, the box was ubiquitous both in distribution, where the teu, or twenty-foot equivalent unit, had become the standard object of operational consideration, and in the public imagination, as developers repurposed it for the architecture of everything from modular housing to shopping malls. Sites like Box Park in London, Tolchok near Odessa, and Common Ground in Seoul reveal a logistical imagination at play, one that places global transportation in a local context of commodity display and retail consumption. The shipping container not only infiltrated the visual and architectural landscape, it was remediated in films (such as Allan Sekula’s 2010 The Forgotten Space), art installations (such as Gabby Miller’s 2015 Turquoise Wake), and podcasts (such as Alexis Madrigal’s 2017 Containers). Alberto Toscano and Jeff Kinkle identify a “poetics of containerization,” noting the form’s mesmerizing power as an icon of capitalist abstraction, especially to visual artists.21 Engaging with this form, activists, workers, and scholars have attempted to transform its meaning and leverage the logistical imagination in pursuit of progressive political causes.

#### Desire for Objectivity is a form of Logistical Rationality that aims to control space, bodies, and subjectivities which undergirds political and economic spheres that cement Logistical control.

Archer 20, Megan. Logistics as Rationality: Excavating the Coloniality of Contemporary Logistical Formations. Diss. University of Brighton, 2020. (PhD in Philosophy at University of Brighton)//Elmer

LOGISTICAL RATIONALITY I deploy the term logistical rationality in order to describe the way in which the above set of logics structure political and economic possibilities, but further, constructs a regime that attempts to delineate and control space, time, bodies, materials, and subjectivities. This amounts to a necessary extension of the notion of political rationality as a product of modernity which fails to recognise the constitutive nature of colonialism and imperialism in its production.10 As such, logistical rationality recognises that the epistemic grounding of these logics has a longer history of violence that must be centred in any analysis of their contemporary manifestations, not only for reasons of analytic potency and clarity, but for reasons of epistemic justice. What I am terming logistical rationality is then also an intervention in a long history of writers thinking about rationality under modernity. Weber gave us an understanding of instrumental reason that recognised the increasing tendency to convert action-as-means to a permanent state of action-as-end. In other words, the tendency for rationality to mean a logic of pure means – with the end objectives irrelevant so long as the method itself is rational and rationalising. Wendy Brown knits this together with Frankfurt School developments of Weber’s theory of rationalisation to ground her deployment of Foucault’s understanding of political rationality. The Frankfurt School (broadly speaking) argued that instrumental reason had become ‘suffused with the norms and imperatives of capitalism to generate a rationality that saturated society and secured capitalism in ways Marx and Marxism could not fathom or explain’. 11 Brown extends this as a grounding for her account of neoliberal rationality. For her (and from Foucault), political rationality is not merely an instrument of governmental practice, but the condition of possibility of its instruments – it is the ‘field of normative reason from which governing is forged’.12 She writes, it could be said to signify the becoming actual of a specific normative form of reason; it designates such a form as both a historical force generating and relating specific kinds of subject, society, and state and as establishing an order of truth by which conduct is both governed and measured.13 I would venture that logistical rationality signifies the becoming-actual, or rather, becominginfrastructural of a specific normative form of reason, and one that establishes or maintains an order of truth through which conduct is governed. How logistical rationality goes beyond Brown’s account is in its insistence on tracing the connections between material rationalisation and logistical infrastructures; its deep influence throughout political and economic spheres; and the epistemic violence and specifically, the coloniality it is continuous with and continues to manifest. It is also not the case that this rationality emanates out of a specific state rationality, nor does it belong solely to the realm of the market or the governance of subjects bound by a nation-state. Rather, it continues a project of power and domination – Western modernity – that it simultaneously constructs and is constructed by. Thinking in this way, it becomes clear that the notion of a logistical rationality allows us to conduct this necessary intervention in teasing out the operative and epistemic dimensions of these logics, and allows us to think across the multiple registers that logistics intersects and organises. Logistics is of course the technologies, infrastructures and territories it shapes, it is protocol and extraction, and it is the logics and epistemic grounding of these technologies and physical manifestations. It is the rationality that, incorporating, extending and reworking a coloniality of power, animates logistical organisation, and further, allows logistical organisation to become seen as something like a universal model that can be applied to almost anything. From global supply chains to anthropological studies – from extractive debt architectures to microtargeting in political campaigns, logistical rationality appears to obscure the coloniality of power deeply implicated in its operations. To think logistics and logistics as rationality together is to consider both the materialinfrastructural and political-epistemic foundations of logistics and the ways in which these intertwine to contribute to the contemporary shape of modernity. It allows us to get underneath the neutral veneer of scientific objectivity and efficiency that envelopes the general discourse of logistics, and to begin to excavate the colonial logics that animate its organisation of the world. In considering logistics as a form of rationality and its epistemic foundations as a continuation of logics of coloniality, we can bring into relief the ways in which logistical organisation relies on and recalibrates structures that determine what counts as knowledge and what counts as being, and as a result can unearth its more violent tendencies of exclusion and erasure. Ultimately, logistical rationality advances an (impossible) attempt at a near-total control. As outlined above, the techniques and logics through which it attempts this include modelling, calculation and prediction; extraction, expropriation and standardisation; translation, erasure and the variability of inclusion & exclusion; and ever-increasing efficiencies, valorization and commodification, with a view to extending rational control over time and space, capital and materials, and bodies and subjectivities. In reaching back to think about how techniques and logics of domination inaugurated during this construction continue to shape our present, we can understand how logistics contributes to the maintenance and recalibration of these forms of domination in their interrelated epistemic, social and structural dimensions. This framework allows us to reckon with the forms of violence, structural, physical and epistemic, that lay the groundwork for processes of domination in the contemporary world. It re-politicises logistics, putting Empire back into its history and its contemporary operations. LOGISTICS, TOTALITY AND TRUTH NARRATIVES Mignolo argues that Western conceptions of rationality (at least prior to postmodernism) advance an ‘exclusionary and totalitarian notion of Totality … that is a Totality that negates, exclude, occlude the difference and the possibilities of other totalities’. 14 The project that I advance here does not attempt to write yet another totalizing grand narrative. Throughout my academic career I have struggled with the form and style of academic writing that neatly separates sets of ideas into distinct disciplines, themes and theoretical frameworks, and in particular, against myself in the habituated style of writing in the Western university that has led me at times to inadvertently erase the epistemic position from which I speak. As Grosfoguel reminds us, Western philosophy and sciences, in concealing the locus of enunciation, ‘are able to produce a myth about a Truthful universal knowledge that covers up, that is, conceals who is speaking as well as the geo-political and body-political epistemic location in the structures of colonial power/knowledge from which the subject speaks’.15 Further, in decolonial thought this concealment and the “Truthfulness” it affords is understood as an epistemic strategy which enabled ‘European/Euro-American colonial expansion and domination … to construct a hierarchy of superior and inferior knowledge and, thus, of superior and inferior people around the world’.16 This epistemic violence is the ground upon which European imperialism and colonialism was built. Gayatri Spivak is credited with coining the term in the seminal text ’Can the subaltern speak?’; in which she argues that epistemic violence is the active obstruction of non-Western approaches to knowledge production. 17 This process instantiates the active erasure of these knowledges and the attempt to overwrite them, and through this process the West becomes the legitimate epistemic subject and knowledge producer. Spivak argues that this movement establishes and generates an epistemic Other, through the ‘assumption and construction of a consciousness or subject’ that ‘cohere[s] with the work of imperialist subject-constitution, mingling epistemic violence with the advancement of learning and civilization.’18 Where the collectively and externally described and delimited non-Western subject-as-object or Other is defined against the rational subject of the West, they are constituted as lacking reason, subjecthood, and thus of the rights to self-determination and freedom from colonization. The epistemic violence then, the violent imposition and delimitation of ways of being, knowing and feeling provides the legitimating groundwork for violent interventions – as Grosfoguel writes succinctly, We went from the sixteenth century characterization of “people without writing” to the eighteenth and nineteenth century characterization of “people without history” to the twentieth century characterization of “people without development” and more recently to the early twenty-first century of “people without democracy”19 We can see the continuity of this logic with the movement and logics of logistical rationality animating the turn toward Big Data, behavioural management & modification, and the experimental governance of “nudge” and “libertarian paternalism” that we come to in the final chapter of this thesis. This replays a similarly interventionist characterization of “people without rationality”. We can think of the corollary shifts in the coloniality of modes of governance a number of ways. Kwame Nkrumah in 1966 writes powerfully on what he understands as the phenomenon of neocolonialism – the continuation of colonialism by other means. This involves economic domination and exploitation without the expense of maintaining governmental administrations. This ostensibly materialist assessment has been vital in informing the position of this thesis, paying attention to the economic structures put in place to maintain forms of domination and control over former colonies or large parts of the Global South without direct rule. Deploying a primarily Marxist anti-capitalist perspective, Nkrumah understands neocolonialism as a kind of ‘collective imperialism’, interrogating the international character of the agencies employed: financial and industrial consortia, assistance organisations, financial aid bodies, and the like. Friendly cooperation is offered in the educational, cultural and social domains, aimed at subverting the desirable patterns of indigenous progress to the imperialist objectives of the financial monopolists. These are the real methods of holding back the real development of the new countries. These are the paraphernalia of neocolonialism, superficially proffering aid and guidance; subterraneously benefiting the interested donors and their countries in old and new ways.20 This thesis attends to some of these questions in Chapters 1-3. This more historical section discusses the institutional advancement of development doctrines as irrevocably linked to logistical infrastructure building, as well as rational modelling and systems thinking; applied anthropology as both counterinsurgency and the extraction of knowledge about indigenous and national populations; and extractive mechanisms of debt and dependency as related to development and global structures of power and capital. Mignolo notes that critiques of modernity are currently centred on 3 distinct types – one, immanent to Europe, is a Euro-centric critique and internal to the history of Europe itself. The other two, he argues, emerged out of non-European histories and their entanglement with Western modernity; one with a focus on Western civilization, and the other on coloniality. Though my work takes elements of all three of these avenues of critique, the concept of coloniality is most useful in describing the trajectory and dissemination of logistical rationality and its epistemologies. The concept of coloniality is understood as a model of power which integrates the legacies and practices of European colonialism in social orders and ways of knowing. First used by Quijano and developed by Lugones and Mignolo amongst others, it refers to the way in which the concepts of modernity and coloniality are inseparable – that ‘the modernity that Europe takes as the context for its own being is, in fact, so deeply imbricated in the structures of European colonial domination over the rest of the world that it is impossible to separate the two: hence, modernity/coloniality’.21 As part of a broader project, the concept of coloniality seeks to decentre the geographical determinism and historical internalism often present in critiques of Eurocentrism, toward an epistemic critique that allows us to look at various forms of epistemic violence and how they are present across geographical locations.22 This thesis thus decentres the narrative of modernization that many contemporary, even critical accounts of logistics rest on – logistical globalisation presented as a result of technical developments in the 1950’s and 60’s elides accounts of Empire as a violent globalising force, and is commensurate with a conception of linear and homogenous time that anti- post- and decolonial accounts of modernity trouble as part of the construction of modernity itself. Deborah Cowen in The Deadly Life of Logistics, links anti-imperial piracy of the 17th Century to its contemporary forms and sees the 1950’s and 60’s as a threshold of contemporary globalisation and logistical organisation. She writes a convincing and situated analysis of logistics as an inherently spatial phenomenon, arguing that it represents a new ‘imperial imaginary’, with a distinct emphasis on the materialities of logistics.23 This is because logistics is concerned with the reworking of sovereignty through the production of ‘space’ beyond ‘territory’. She is one of the first writers, to my knowledge, explicitly connecting the contemporary operations of logistics with imperialism. Cowen traces the development of logistics, from its initial conception as a banal, subsidiary form of military art or strategy to its rise as a global business science. She specifically interrogates the way in which contemporary logistics transforms the ‘geographies of production and distribution and of security and war’, as well as ‘political relations to the world and ourselves, and thus practices of citizenship too’.24 For Cowen, logistics represents ‘a profoundly imperial cartography’, in which the production and contestation of logistics spaces and circulation refigures territory and sovereignty in the service of the protection of trade flows25. She writes that [f]rom its history as a military art in service of the national, territorial, geopolitical state, logistics became a technology of supranational firms operating in relational geoeconomic space. In contrast to the absolute territory of geopolitical calculation associated with colonial rule, geo-economics relies on the unimpeded flows of goods, capital and information across territorial boundaries.26 She thus figures logistics as a new imperial imaginary that fosters economic flows and produces ‘space beyond territory’.27 This production of space sees the reworking of national borders and trade routes as corridors and pathways, where “networked” and “systems” security reconstitute the border as an exceptional space of government, subject to different laws, trade agreements, tax breaks, and different levels of securitisation and labour rights. Put differently, logistics as a business science has come to ‘drive geo-economic logics and authority, where geo-economics emphasizes the recalibration of international space by globalized market logics, transnational actors (corporate, non-profit, and state), and a networked geography of capital, goods and human flows.’28 Her work demonstrates the necessity of a more theoretically informed interrogation of what it means that logistics reworks imperial power. As demonstrated above, there is a wealth of postand decolonial theory that shows the irreducibility of the construction of modernity and its political categories to the project of colonialism and vice-versa. For example, Mitchell shows us that an integral part of this construction is the production of what he understands as homogenous time and homogenous space. The organisation of time and space, in his account, is intimately tied to the project of Western modernity, as it is organised to produce a unified, coherent historical time that centres the West as the locus of its enunciation. Mitchell writes that ‘to disrupt the powerful story of modernity, rather than contribute to its globalization, it is not enough to question simply its location. One also has to question its temporality.’ 29 While Cowen does reference David Harvey on time-space compression and the importance of speed with regards to logistical circulation, we must interrogate this concept and the linear account of the temporality of globalization processes that still focus on the West as the centre from which they emanate. My thesis attempts to go further in arguing that logistics and the rationality that underpins it is a continuation of logics from as early as the 15th century, and that we can detail diverse genealogies that complicate this notion of a singular history and as a result, complicate the world-making representations of logistics.

#### The Alternative is Logistical Sabotage.

Harney and Moten 15 Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten. "Mikey the rebelator." Performance Research 20.4 (2015): 141-145. Pgs 5-8 (Stefano Harney is a Honorary Professor in the Institute of Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice at the University of British Columbia. He is also a Visiting Critic at Yale University Art School, and a Professor at the European Graduate School. Fred Moten is professor of performance studies at New York University and has taught previously at University of California, Riverside, Duke University, Brown University, and the University of Iowa.)//Elmer

When we move we move to access, which is to say we assemble and disassemble anew. And in logistical capitalism **the assembly line moves with us** by moving through us, accessing us to move and moving us to access. We can’t deny access, because access is how we roll, and roll on, in and as our undercommon affectability, as Denise Ferreira da Silva might say.4 **But we make access burn** and we love that, the line undone in the undoing of every single product, our renewed assembly in the general disassembly, our dissed assembly offline on the line, strayed staying, stranded beneath the strand, at rest only in unrest, making all the wrong moves, because our doing and undoing ain’t the same as theirs. They know, sometimes better than we do, that to move wrong, or not to move, is now no longer just an obstruction to logistics or an obstacle to progress. **To move wrong or not to move is sabotage**. It is an attack on the assembly line, a subversion of logistical capitalism. To move wrong is to deny access to capital by staying in the general access that capital desires and devours and denies. To move wrong, to move nought, is to have our own thing of not having, of handing and being handed; it is our continuous breaking up—before, and against that, we were told—of our continuous get together. But with the critical infrastructure that is the new line, and with the resilient response that protects it, the jay-walker becomes no longer just a rube in the way of logistics, a country bukee in traffic, **but a saboteur, a terrorist, a demon**. Jay-walkers do not sabotage by exodus or occupation as once a maroon, or a striking miner, or a ghost dancer may have. Jay-walkers disturb the production line, the work of the line, the assembly line, the flow line, **by demanding inequality of access for all**. When the line don’t stop to let you catch your breath, jay-walkers stand around and say this stops today. Jaywalking is dissed assembly for itself. Such sabotage is punishable by death. It’s hard to know what we institute when we don’t institute but we do know what it feels like. Total value and its violence not only never went away, but as da Silva says, they are the foundation of the present as time, the condition of time, of the world as a time–space logic founded on the first horrible logistics of sale, the first mass movement of total access.5 Now continuous improvement drives us toward total value, makes all work incomplete, makes us move to produce, compels us to get online. We are liberated from work in order to work more, to work harder. We are violently invited to exercise our right to connect, our right to free speech, our right to choose, our right to evaluate, our right to right individuality in order that we may improve the production line running through our liberal dreams. Freedom through work was never the slave’s cry but we hear it all around us today. Continuous improvement is the metric and metronomic meter of uplift. Those who won’t improve, those who won’t collectivize and individuate with the correct neurotic correctness, those who do the same thing again, those who revise, those who tell the joke you’ve heard and cook the food you’ve had and take the walk you’ve walked, those who plan to stay and keep on moving, those who keep on moving wrong—those are the ones who hold everybody back, fucking up the production line that’s supposed to improve us all. They like being incomplete. They like being incomplete and incompleting one another. Their incompleteness is said to be a dependency, a bad habit. They’re said to be partial, patchy, sketchy. They lack coordinates. They’re collectively uncoordinated in total rhythm. They’re in(self)sufficient. Paolo Friere thought our incompleteness is what gave us hope.6 It is our incompleteness that inclines us toward one another. For Friere, the more we think of ourselves as complete, finished, whole, individual, the more we cannot love or be loved. Is it too much to put this the other way around? To say, by way of Friere, that love is the undercommon self-defence of being-incomplete? This seems important now when our incompleteness is something we are invited and then compelled to address and improve, when we are told to be impatient with it, and embarrassed by it. We need to be intact. We’re told to raise our buzz because we’re all fucked up. But in our defence we love that we are complete only in a plained incompletion, which they would have undone, finished, owned, and sent on down the line. We do mind working because we do mind dying.

## case

#### Reject claims of true inclusion absent a method to achieve it - procedural questions claim to help minorities but are used to oppress us.

Holloway Sparks, 2003 <Assistant Professor in the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Emory University in Atlanta. Queens, Teens, and Model Mothers: Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform> https://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/9780472068319-ch7.pdf //n33l

In spite of the participatory principles embodied in these theories, some deliberative democrats have given inadequate attention to the bar- riers to public sphere participation confronted by marginalized citizens. Activists, dissidents,2 racial and ethnic minorities, and particularly poor citizens are regularly excluded from both decision-making and delibera- tive venues, but this problem is often sidestepped in the mainstream the- oretical literature by theorists who downplay the effects of social and economic inequality on public participation (see, e.g., Barber 1984; Cohen 1989; Dryzek 1990). The claim that we can effectively bracket inequality in the public sphere, however, has been strongly criticized recently by a group of theorists explicitly concerned with problems of democratic inclusion. These scholars, including James Bohman (1996), Nancy Fraser (1997), Jane Mansbridge (1991, 1999), and Iris Young (1993, 1996, 2000), have emphasized the fact that formal political equality does not guarantee equal authority in or even access to the public realm. Iris Young, for example, has identi‹ed two forms of exclusion that prevent citizens from fully participating in democracies. What she calls external exclusion “names the many ways that individuals and groups that ought to be included are purposely or inadvertently left out of fora for discussion and decision-making” (2000, 53–54). External exclusion can be as blatant as deliberately failing to invite certain groups to impor- tant meetings, or can take more subtle forms such as the way economic inequalities affect access to political institutions. As Nancy Fraser has noted, in societies like the United States in which the publication and cir- culation of political views depends on media organizations that are pri- vately owned and operated for pro‹t, those citizens who lack wealth will also generally “lack access to the material means of equal participation” (1997, 79). This criticism has obvious salience for families living on wel- fare budgets. On a more basic level, money and time are also necessary for participation in putatively “free” political institutions. Poor parents with young children, for example, might not have the resources to pur- chase child-care in order to attend a town council meeting at which important political decisions are made.3 Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform 174 Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform Sanford F. Schram, Joe Soss, and Richard C. Fording, Editors http://www.press.umich.edu/titleDetailDesc.do?id=11932 The University of Michigan Press, 2003 Internal exclusions, in contrast, “concern ways that people lack effec- tive opportunity to influence the thinking of others even when they have access to fora and procedures of decision-making” (Young 2000, 55; emphasis added). Citizens may ‹nd that “others ignore or dismiss or patronize their statements and expressions. Though formally included in a forum or process, people may ‹nd that their claims are not taken seri- ously and may believe that they are not treated with equal respect” (55). Internal exclusion can take the form of public ridicule or face-to-face inattention (Bickford 1996), but it can also stem from less obvious sources, such as the norms of articulateness, dispassionateness, and orderliness that are often privileged in political discussions (Young 2000, 56). As Young observes, In many formal situations the better-educated white middle-class people . . . often act as though they have a right to speak and that their words carry authority, whereas those of other groups often feel intimidated by the argument requirements and the formality and rules of parliamentary procedure, so they do not speak, or speak only in a way that those in charge ‹nd “disruptive.” . . . The dominant groups, moreover, often fail entirely to notice this devaluation and silencing, while the less privileged often feel put down or frustrated, either losing con‹dence in themselves or becoming angry. (1996, 124) Since “unruly” forms of speech tend to be used primarily by women, racial minorities, and working-class people, large groups of citizens face the devaluation of their political participation.