A Book Review

"Distributed Blackness - African American Cybercultures" written by André Brock Jr.. New York University Press: New York, 2020 (ISBN 978-1-4798-2996-5).

With "Distributed Blackness – African American Cybercultures" André Brock JR., researcher and Associate Professor at Georgia Tech University delivers a prime example of interdisciplinary research. By developing a theoretical framework for studying Black online cultures and infrastructure, Black online identities, and digital technoculture, Brock defines new standards for the discourse of Black online Cyberculture.

While at the beginning, the internet has to be considered a white male space, that has changed dramatically with the rise and visibility of black daily life online. Looking at this shift in the demographics of online spaces, Brocks seeks to understand whiteness and blackness in digital technoculture and, based on his analysis of the same, rethink and reimagine digital spaces. In "Distributed Blackness", Brock provides the reader with an in-depth overview of the history of the internet, as well as—crucially—the history of Black digital culture and infrastructure. Brock corroborates his findings by providing examples such as Blackbird, one of the first platforms launched to create a Black experience online, and #BlackTwitte tweets. Since Black Twitter is one of the largest digital spaces for Blackness online, Brock consequently makes this large body of online discourse the foundation for his analysis and research on Black digital spaces and black digital practice.

By defining, information technology, operationalizing digital technologies and the mediating artifacts through which one perceives or creates information technology, as Text, Brock lays the foundation for his main tool for analysis, the Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis (CTDA). CTDA is, in varieties, applied throughout "Distributed Blackness" is to be understood as a theoretical framework to analyze

Black and other online cultures and digital practices. Brock puts forward the idea that "technology as text", "identity as the tension between the self and the social", and "blackness as a dynamic" lead to Blackness as an informational identity. He further demonstrates how Black digital practice can be theorized through three interrelated framesets: *racism*, *ratchetry*, and *respectability*.

Based on the analysis and theorization of these interrelated frames, Brock develops a Black technocultural matrix which consists of seven categories: Blackness, Intersectionality, America, Invention/Style, Modernity, and Future. Through this approach, Brocks seeks to theorize "a black cultural relationship with technology, drawing on the black experience in the West – an experience that is shaped by relationships with whiteness and technology from a social and political subject position".

In comparison to concepts such as antiblackness or Afro-pessimism, "Distributed Blackness" veers more towards a form of Afro-optimism, highlighting creativity and achievements of Black presence in digital spaces.

For his novel approach, Brock's "Distributed Black – African American Cybercultures" can be considered a milestone in the discourse analysis of Black and other online spaces. It is undoubtedly a must read for anyone interested in Black Twitter and other Black spaces.

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