

DATA FOR BLACK LIVES II

@DATA4BLACKLIVES #DATA4BLACKLIVES || MIT MEDIA LAB || 1/11/2019

keynote address - MEREDITH BROUSSARD @MERBROUSSARD

DATA JOURNALISM

FINDING
STORIES
IN
NUMBERS

USING
NUMBERS
TO TELL
STORIES

What is AI?

A BRANCH OF
COMPUTER SCI.

— not —
SCARY ROBOTS
FROM POP CULTURE

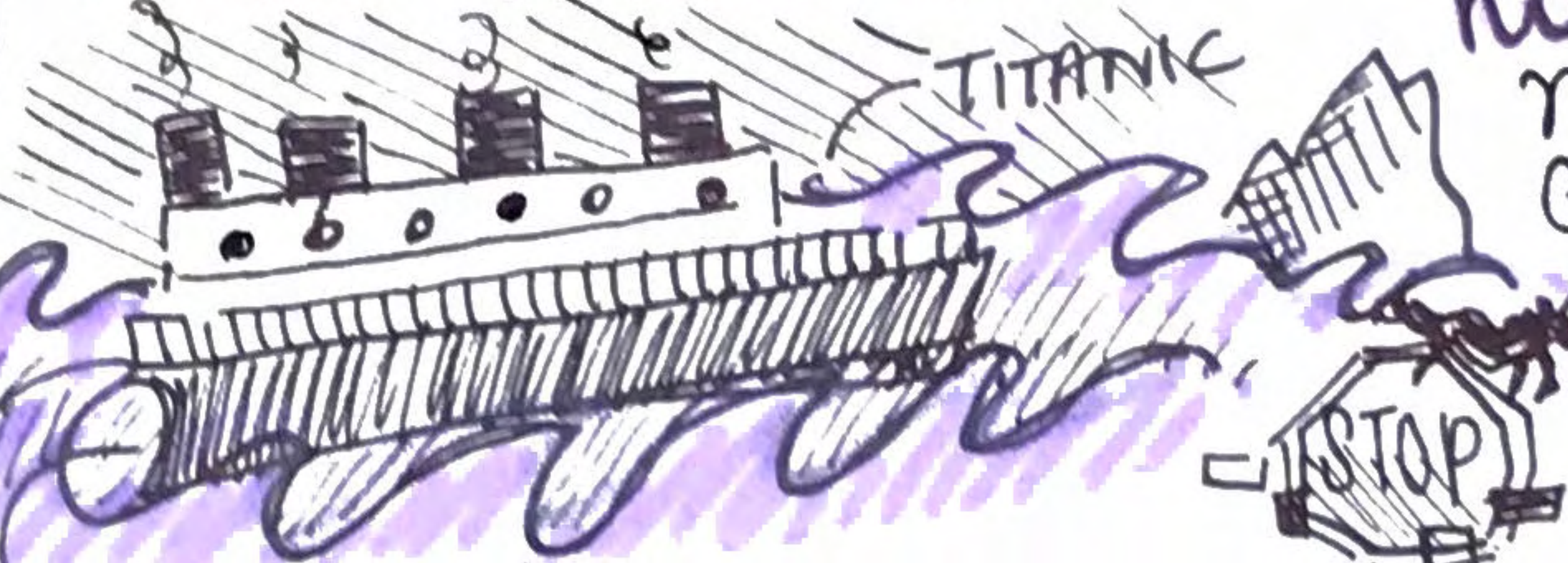
That's GENERAL AI.
NARROW AI is what
actually exists
AND IT'S JUST MATH!

FUNCTION f :

MODEL

social issues + tech spaces

TALKING ABOUT
MACHINE LEARNING



FRIENDLY DATA SET TO TEACH
WITH, ALSO INFORMED BY
POP CULTURE MISCONCEPTIONS

We need to CHALLENGE
people who would
say this (ML) is a
legitimate way of
making every
decision in the world

THERE ARE FUNDAMENTAL
LIMITS TO WHAT COMPUTERS
CAN DO & WHAT DATA REFLECTS

language
gets at
nuance
math
can't!

YET, ALGORITHMS ARE
BASED TOO

DESPITE the **bias**
that math is
infallible + quant
data is superior

TECHNOCHAUVINISM

THE MINDSET THAT
TECH IS ALWAYS
BETTER THAN PEOPLE

WHOSE
MINDSET?

WHITE
MEN'S
(WHO WENT
TO THE SAME
HANDFUL OF
SCHOOLS)

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS
EMBEDDED IN TECH

POSITIVE ASYMMETRY

WHEN WE'RE IN GROUPS,
WE ONLY TALK ABOUT
THE GOOD.

WE
NEED DIVERSE
TEAMS!

Who is **vulnerable**?
Who is **recognized**?

— ESP. IN A WORLD OF SELF-DRIVING CARS

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opening panel || WE ARE THE LEADERS WE HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR:
ORGANIZING FOR ALGORITHMIC ACCOUNTABILITY || moderator: YESHIMABET MILNER
panelists: TERESA HODGE, JOY BUOLAMWINI, RASHIDA RICHARDSON, TAMIKA LEWIS

WE NEED A VISION
THAT RECOGNIZES
WE ARE AT A TURNING
POINT IN HISTORY
- GRACE LEE BOGGS

INTERDISCIPLINARY
&
INCLUSIVE WORK
changing
PIPELINES -
creating
opportunities
& education

BE SKEPTICAL OF
GOVT + CORPORATIONS

being on the
front lines of
change should
not require
being harmed.

PHYSICS DOESN'T CHANGE;
PRIORITIES DO.

shift
the
focus

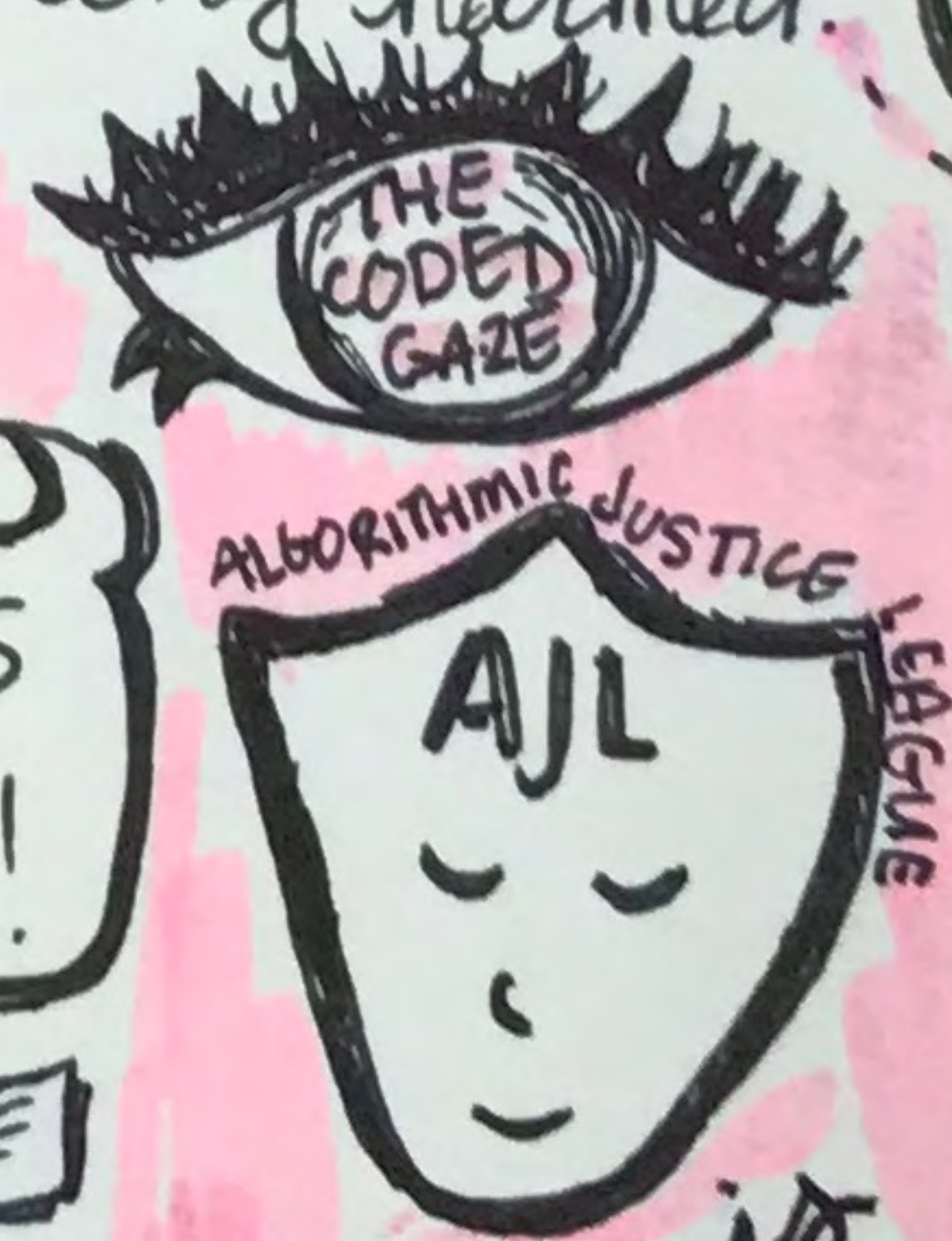
maybe some tools
should not be used.
maybe some problems
are actually symptoms
of something else
- RICHARDSON

BANKS DENY CAPITAL
TO PEOPLE DEEMED
TOO RISKY - HODGE

filling
a void

HOW CAN YOU
FAIRLY ASSESS
PEOPLE + GIVE
THEM OPPORTUNITY?

ALGORITHMS
≠
NEW SHIT!



data is
destiny

(BUT FACIAL
RECOGNITION
HAS SUPER
HIGH ERROR
+ FALSE POS
RATES FOR
WOMEN + POC)

SAFE FACE
PLEDGE

MOST OF THE
TIME, WE HAVE
CISSET WHITE
MEN TELLING
OUR stories
- Lewis

PARTICIPATORY
COMMUNITY
RESEARCH - TOWARDS
A SHARED LANGUAGE

WHAT IS THE WORLD WE
WANT TO SEE?
WHAT MATERIAL
CONDITIONS ARE
NEEDED TO MAKE
THAT HAPPEN?

visioning

D4BL IS A POLITICAL HOME
FOR FOLKS WHOSE WORK
MIGHT BE PRECARIOUS

→ there is financial
risk involved in
doing this work ←

HOW CAN COMMUNITIES
SURVIVE IN A
SURVEILLANCE STATE?

what data is
being collected?

we cannot lock 1/3
of our population
out of opportunity

BREAKOUT SESSION: ABOLITION IN THE AGE OF BIG DATA

moderator: KADE CROCKFORD // panelists: JANAE BONSU, MARBRE STAHL BUTTS, LAURA HANNA, LAURA MOY

ABOLITION

confronting systemic violence

ACADEMICS & WELL-RESOURCED INSTITUTIONS NEED TO TAKE DIRECTION FROM GRASSROOTS ORGS

THEORY & PRACTICE, POLITICAL VISION OF **DISMANTLING IMPRISONMENT** & BUILDING SOMETHING ANEW

IN & BEYOND THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

narrative shifting

LENDING legitimacy, SHARING information

CHANGING HOW PEOPLE CONCEPTUALIZE **safety**

being in a cage & inherently illegal

DATA BEING USED TO JUSTIFY HARMFUL PRACTICES & LEGITIMIZE WHITEWASHING

if the input is trash, the output will also be trash!



EXISTING DISPARITIES REPRODUCED THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

sanitizing images of control and shackling

TECHNOLOGY IS, WAS, & CAN BE CRUEL

data is often hidden from the people who are most impacted by it. →

ACCESS =

CREDITING AGENCIES & DEBT: **ASYMMETRICAL ACCESS** TO DATA, POWER, INFORMATION

credit scores are a TOOL OF SOCIAL CONTROL

IT'S ALL **relational**

THERE IS NO OVERSIGHT OF DAs - HAVING DIFFERENT FACES IN POWER MEANS NOTHING WITHOUT structural change & data **transparency**!

THE PERPETUAL LINEUP REPORT GEORGETOWN LAW

MORE THAN **HALF** OF US ADULTS ARE IN A LAW ENFORCEMENT DATABASE

OFTEN BY VIRTUE OF HAVING A DRIVER'S LICENSE

laundering inequity

RACIST TOOLS

importing inequity

USED IN RACIST WAYS

LAW ENFORCEMENT NOT ALWAYS TRAINED IN USING TOOLS; INFO INTENTIONALLY OBSCURED & LEFT OUT OF COURT

layers of **BIAS**

BREAKOUT SESSION: RISING ABOVE THE GATHERING

STORM: EDUCATION JUSTICE + MATHEMATICS

Moderator: JAMELLE WATSON-DANIELS || Panelists:
JITU BROWN, CLIFF FREEMAN, NICOLE M. JOSEPH, TARIK WARD

YOUNG PEOPLE WHO
ARE NOT IN SCHOOL
STILL DESERVE ACCESS
TO RESOURCES

the only way to KILL THE
PRIVATIZATION MOVEMENT
is through PEOPLE POWER

education researchers
often see identity as
mutually exclusive,
when they are actually
intersectional

THIS WORK IS HARD!

WHY MATH EDUCATION?

- ▶ MATH HAS BEEN WEAPONIZED AGAINST BLACK AMERICANS
- ▶ LOGIC + RATIONALITY ARE TIED TO PERCEPTION OF HUMANITY
- ▶ BLACK PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SYSTEMICALLY DENIED ACCESS TO MATHEMATICS

WHITE COMFORT IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS BLACK SELF-DETERMINATION.

HATRED IS THE
belief system
WE'RE UP AGAINST

nothing is inherent

it all takes PRACTICE

SHARECROPPER EDUCATION
makes black youth
disposable.

NO MORE.

MATH LITERACY AS AN
ORGANIZING
TOOL

DISRUPTING
ERASURE

esp. of black
women

MATH IS AT
THE CORE OF
EVERYTHING

We have not even approached
equality, let alone
EQUITY - journey for justice

RESEARCH WHERE
COMMUNITIES ARE
SUBJECTS SERVES
WHITE SUPREMACY

need to
incorporate
community
knowledge

community
organizers
are social
scientists

IT'S ALL
CONNECTED!

CULTURAL FLUENCY -
music + computer
sci are connected;
can help build skills +
confidence

EDUCATORS
NEED CULTURAL
SKILLS TO TEACH
THE LANGUAGE
OF MATH

MATH IS NEEDED TO
PARTICIPATE IN
DEMOCRACY.

stereotype
threat harms
black + brown
people

WE NEED ALT.
TEACHING
METHODS, +
LESS HIGH-
STAKES TESTING

[CULTURAL
CAPITAL]

math + music are UNIVERSAL
→ NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE! →

WORKSHOP: LOCAL ORGANIZING + MOVEMENT BUILDING-WHO COUNTS?

Presenters: DEJUANA THOMPSON + DEANNA REED (THINK RUBIX)

ALL OF THE WORK WE'RE DOING IS THROUGH A LIBERATION LENS

the most important tool we have is our **integrity**

WHO GETS TO DECIDE WHICH DATA ARE LEGITIMATE + WHICH ARE NOT?

→ HOW WE ASSIGN **VALUE** WILL HELP US ADVOCATE THROUGH DATA.
PROJECTS + SYSTEMS DETERMINE WHO IS CONSIDERED HUMANITY.

? WHAT STORIES ARE OUR DATA TELLING?

people can be quick to align with **narratives** of fear.

everything impactful has to be rooted in **culture**

COMMS. I MAY NOT MATCH IMAGES BASED ON THE DATA COLLECTED



EVEN THE RAT WAS WHITE

representation + access [ACCESS=\$\$]

CONTEXT + POWER MAPPING

YOU CAN'T MAP WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW - YOU NEED TO INCLUDE YOUR COLLABS. → community self-determination = priority

CENTER THE IDEA OF **BLACK POWER**
- BLACK VOICES
- BLACK ORGANIZING

HOW DO WE

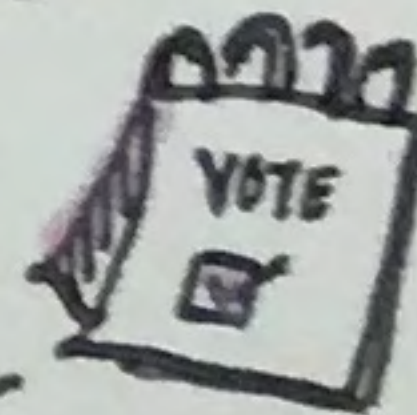
DEAL WITH DREAM

THE CYCLE OF HOW PEOPLE PERCEIVE **safety?**

ABOUT COMMUNITY
≠
WITHIN COMMUNITY
||

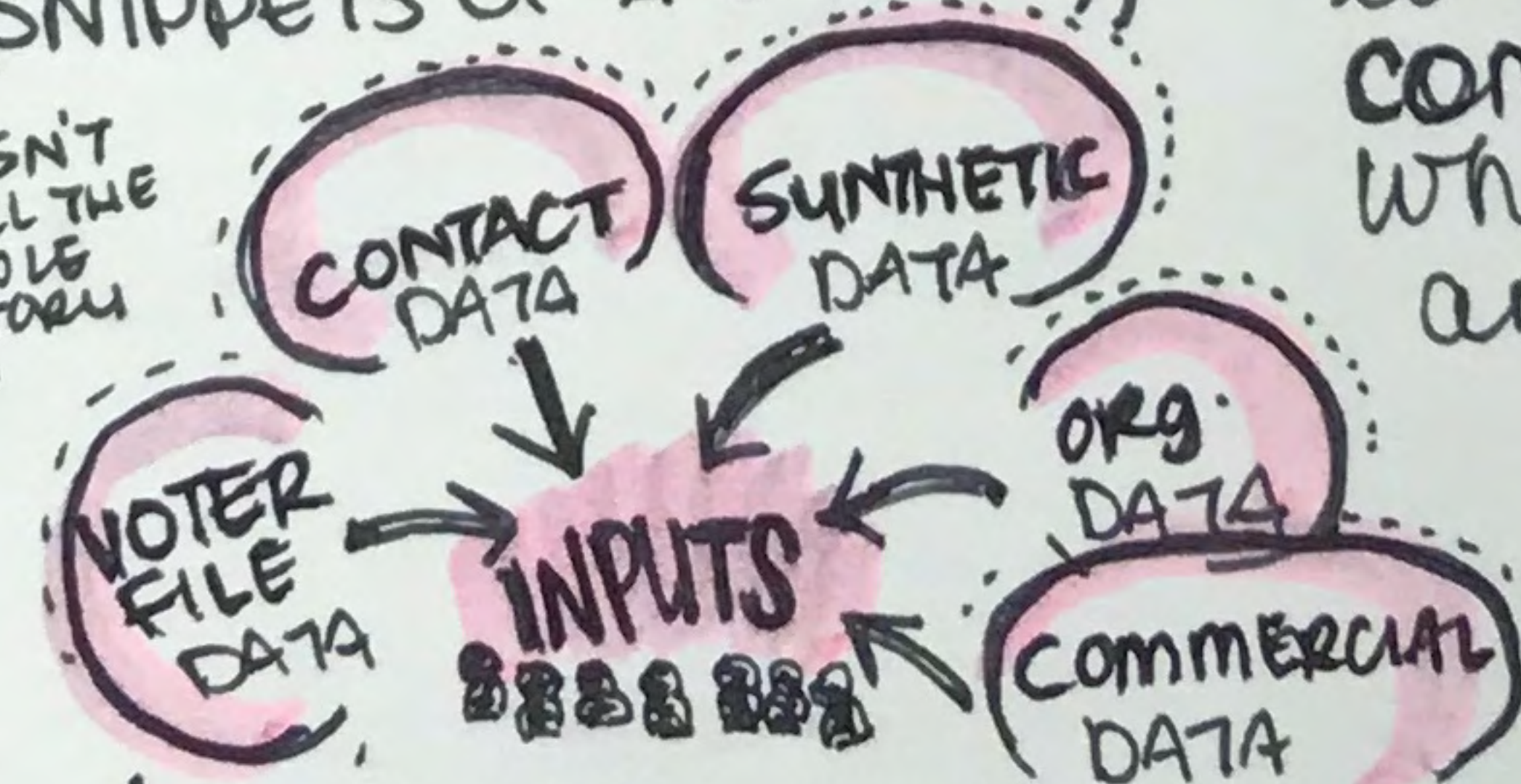
INVEST IN YOUR INTERESTS

you still need to motivate communities when it's not an election or convenient ||



DATA MODELS = FLAWED IF BASED ON SELECT SNIPPETS OF A LIFE

DOESN'T TELL THE WHOLE STORY



if you don't validate org. data, you'll miss your population.

PEOPLE DON'T HAVE MAGICAL TIME TO GIVE YOUR CAUSE BC YOU WANT THEM TO

DATA IS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS - JUST SYNTHESIZED DIFFERENTLY?

data ≠ trust
data ≠ security

NOTES @LIZSETTO

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BREAKOUT SESSION: BLACK PEOPLE VS. ROBOTS - REPARATIONS + WORKERS' RIGHTS IN THE AGE OF AUTOMATION || Moderator: JESSICA FULTON || Panelists: NICOL TURNER-LEE, ERICA SMILEY, ANNE PRICE, KATRINELL DAVIS

shifts in automation + job opportunities are not new.

WE ARE BEING SENSITIZED TO ACCEPT THIS.

WHERE ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES?
this affects legacy industries where african americans have historically worked: "NEGROMATION"

OCCUPATIONAL CROWDING

What do you do for adult workers who will be displaced?

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: NEW MANAGEMENT SKILLS

PEOPLE WHO ARE STRUCTURALLY UNEMPLOYED DESERVE FREE COLLEGE EDUCATION!

→ social safety nets

dignity work

WE SEE AFRICAN-AMERICANS AS BEING ON THE OTHER SIDE

OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE - ALREADY STARTING BEHIND

"PEOPLE IN POWER ARE REALLY GOOD AT NOT PAYING BLACK PEOPLE FOR THEIR WORK"

What can we look forward to??

→ THIS IS NOT INEVITABLE
→ WE ARE NOT AFRAID OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

WHO BENEFITS FROM INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY?

When workers unionize + organize, they can benefit

NEW TECHNOLOGY CAN BE SAFER FOR THE WORKERS WHO OPERATE IT, BUT THEY NEED TRAINING.

some jobs shouldn't be automated!

who has seat at the table?

TRUTH + RECONCILIATION

UBI - PROBLEMS

OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYERS SEE THE HOOK

WHEN YOU SEE AUTOMATION COMING, YOU CAN NEGOTIATE & BUILD POWER!

one way we exercise power changes w/ automation cycles

WORKER POWER = WORKSITE GOVERNANCE

- ABILITY TO STOP PRODUCTION
- MARKETPLACE POWER
- ASSOCIATIONAL POWER - AMALGAMATING A WORKFORCE

DECENTRALIZED ECONOMY

NOTES @ LIZSETTO

ARE closing panel: WHAT IS A MOVEMENT SCIENTIST?

moderator: RUHA BENJAMIN || panelists: TIMNIT GEBRU, JERICA COPENY, TANANA PETTY, AL BARRENTINE

THE FACTS ALONE WILL NOT SAVE US

community voices are data

WHO HAS ACCESS TO INFORMATION + WHO DOESN'T?

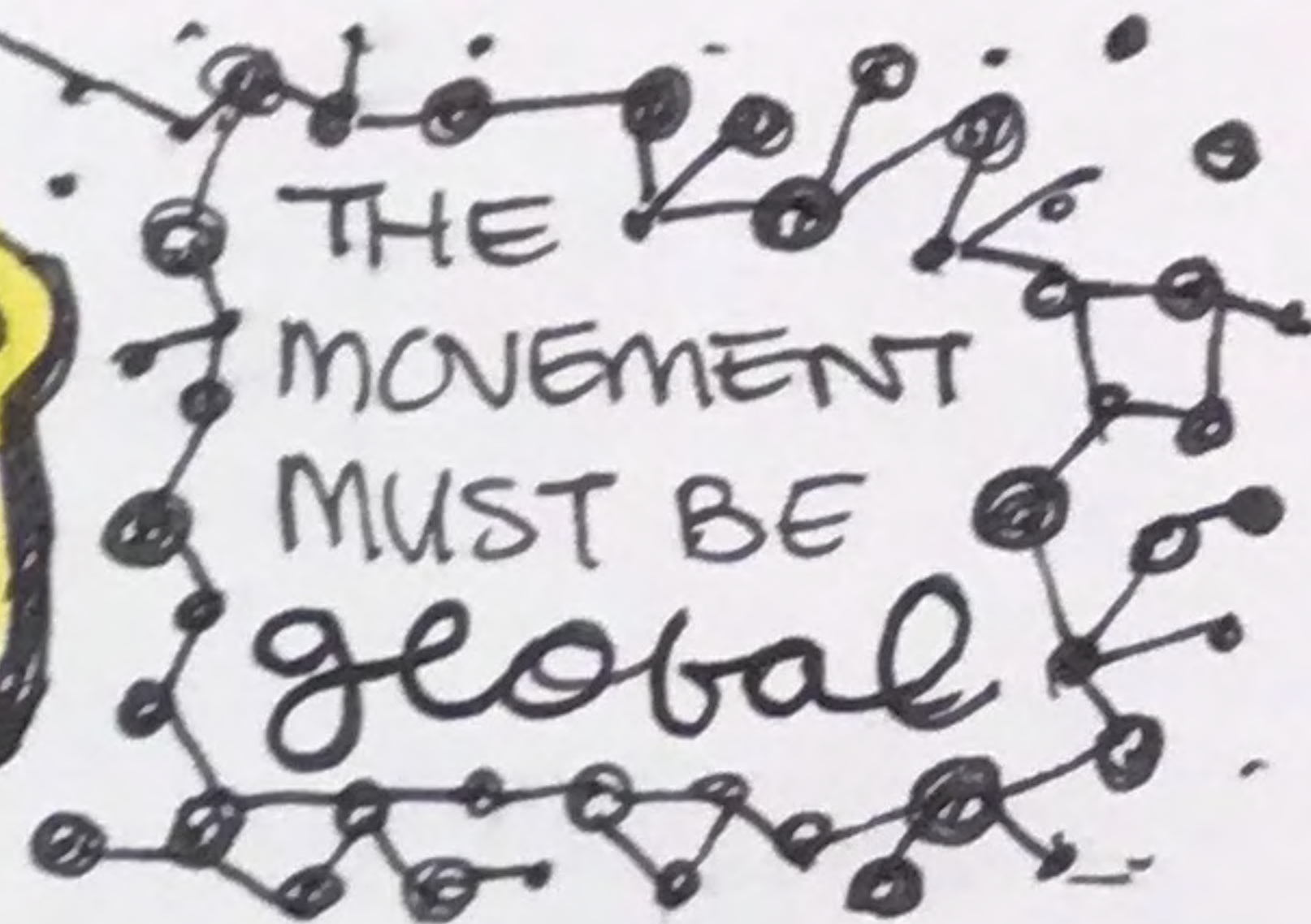
whose voices are hidden? by whom?

SAFETY ~~SECURITY~~
UNLIT
SECURITY MINDSETS

representation - you CAN'T BE WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE

not all speed is movement
- TONI CADE BAMBARA

THE MOVEMENT MUST BE global



THIS IS NOT A SINGULAR MODEL OR MOLD WE ARE TRYING TO FIT OURSELVES IN

OPERATIONALIZED DEFINITIONS OF MOVEMENT SCIENTISTS

▶ BLACK IN AI - PROVIDING CONNECTION VISIBILITY, + PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

▶ OUR DATA BODIES, DETROIT DIGITAL JUSTICE COALITION, SURVEYS, OPEN DATA RECOMMENDATIONS → ZINES, DISCO-TECHS, CONSENT WORKSHOPS

▶ DOCUMENTATION, LIBRARIES, LITERACY, COMMUNITY OUTREACH, ON THE GROUND DATA COLLECTION, STRUCTURE

▶ EMPOWERING RETURNING CITIZENS IN FLORIDA BY USING PLATFORMS / DATABASES USED TO HARM THOSE COMMUNITIES IN WAYS THAT ACTUALLY HELPED → REAPPROPRIATING

“organic intellectual”

EDUCATION ≠ SCHOOLING

{apofuturism involves planting seeds}

you CAN MAKE FOIA REQUESTS WHILE WAITING FOR DATA TO BE RELEASED

“EXPERTISE” IS A PROBLEMATIC CONCEPT (EXCLUSIONARY)

problems come from multiple sources, you need to listen to multiple voices

ORGANIZING IS AS IMPORTANT AS TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

YOU CAN'T COUNT BLACK BODIES W/O LISTENING TO BLACK VOICES

include the less privileged

COMMUNITIES WANT TO BE SEEN, NOT WATCHED

watch the intentions of planners

AUTHORITY + LEGITIMACY

UNEVEN DISTRIB. OF MATERIAL SUPPORT

PARTS OF IDENTITY LESS VALUED

PEOPLE DO DATA SCIENCE EVERYWHERE