

Reading group TBD Autumn 2020 – Winter 2021

FIRST MEETING: November 11, 2020, 14:15 h (online)

Zakiyyah Iman Jackson

# Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World



In what ways has animality, humanity and race been co-constitutive of each other? How do our understandings of being and materiality normalize humanity as white, and where does that leave the humanity of people of color? How can alternative conceptualizations of being human be found in the African diasporic cultural tradition? These questions and other questions are raised in **Zakiyyah Iman Jackson's book *Becoming Human* (2020, NYU Press)** that we will read during our TBD reading group 2020/21 autumn/winter session.

Rewriting the relationship between blackness and animality in the history of Western science and philosophy, this book breaks open the debate between black critical theory and posthumanism. Through the cultural terrain of literature by Toni Morrison, Nalo Hopkinson, Audre Lorde, and Octavia Butler, the art of Wangechi Mutu and Ezrom Legae, and the oratory of Frederick Douglass, Jackson both critiques and displaces the racial logic. In so doing, *Becoming Human* demonstrates that the history of racialized gender and maternity, specifically antiblackness, is indispensable to future thought on matter, materiality, animality, and posthumanism.

**TBD ('to be defined')** is a reading group at the intersection of Science and Technology Studies (STS), feminism, queer studies, posthumanism and new materialism. We are interested in engaging with works - both contemporary and otherwise - that engage relationships between technology, sexuality and culture.

TBD is hosted by the research group **Gender/Diversity in Informatics Systems** and the department of the **Soziologie der Diversität** at the **University of Kassel**. The first meeting this semester will take place on Wednesday, November 11, at 14:15. **!! Due to Corona Virus, the meetings will be online.** To join, please email Jennifer Stoll ([jennifer.stoll@uni-kassel.de](mailto:jennifer.stoll@uni-kassel.de)) and Goda Klumbyte ([goda.klumbyte@uni-kassel.de](mailto:goda.klumbyte@uni-kassel.de)).

For **University of Kassel students**, there is also an **accompanying course "Critical Theory for Technology and Diversity"** that you can subscribe to. In the course we will be reading Jackson's book as well as African diasporic literary texts that Jackson analyses. Please email Jennifer or Goda for more details.