# Afro-Pessimism K

## Example 1NCs

NOTE: Every 1NC you create should be specific to the aff, so cards should all be retagged and highlighted accordingly. These are purely examples of generic templates that you can use to help construct your 1NCs.

### 1NC – Schooling – Policy

#### Blackness constitutes the site of a paradoxical double-bind within the social order – it is both the organizing principle that makes possible the coherence of the world and the object of that world’s gratuitous violence – as such, the aff’s wedding to affirmative potentiality accedes to a form of communicative capitalism which is only capable of modulatively reproducing the anti-black grammar of civil society

Barber 16 (Daniel Colucciello Barber, researcher at the Humboldt University of Berlin, PhD from Duke University, 2016, “The Creation of Non-Being,” *Rhizomes* Issue 29, footnotes 1, 2, and 7 included in curly braces, modified) gz

[1] Anti-blackness operates axiomatically. This is the case, at least, insofar as we speak of what Frank B. Wilderson, III, has called "the world" (Wilderson 2003: 234).[1] {1. "World" here refers not to reality as such, but more precisely to the paradigmatic operations by which reality is structured, positioned, and rendered sensible. Yet this does not mean that one can directly express or pose reality as distinct from the world, for the world governs the very conditions of possibility for expression or position. Even purportedly universal terms, such as humanity, social life, and—to invoke the concern of this essay—being itself, are operations of the world. The Afro-Pessimist thesis, following Wilderson, is that this world constitutes itself and maintains its coherence, at essence, through anti-blackness: the world has being insofar as blackness does not. Since the grammar of this world, or the logic of the aforementioned operations, is so naturalized—enacted and assumed by/from power—that it generally has no need to appear (much less defend itself), the articulation of reality without the anti-black world must begin as an articulation against this world.} The aim of this essay is to address the consequences of this axiomatic operation for some rather classical terms of reference within continental philosophy, such as being, analogy,[2] communication, possibility, and knowledge. {2. Both the reading of Lazzarato I provide below and my general argument, which revolves around the question of negativity and analogy, are deeply shaped by—and only conceivable thanks to—the writings of Wilderson, whose claim about analogy is summarized in the following remark, made in conversation with Hartman: "In my own work, obviously I'm not saying that in this space of negation, which is blackness, there is no life. We have tremendous life. But this life is not analogous to those touchstones of cohesion that hold civil society together. In fact, the trajectory of our life (within our terrain of civil death) is bound up in claiming—sometimes individually, sometimes collectively—the violence which Fanon writes about in *The Wretched of the Earth*, that trajectory which, as he says, is 'a splinter to the heart of the world' and 'puts the settler out of the picture.' So, it doesn't help us politically or psychologically to try to find ways in which how we live is analogous to how white positionality lives, because, as I think your book suggests, whites gain their coherence by knowing what they are not" (Hartman and Wilderson 2003: 187).} Such terms are the means by which the world claims to grant itself coherence; they form the grammatical ground, the structuring condition, of the world. If the "gratuitous violence" of anti-blackness extends into the very "grammar" of the world (Wilderson 2010: 38, 131),[3] then the aforementioned terms—far from providing retreat into a "metaphysical" domain unaffected by the historical and material—serve as points for the articulation of antagonism toward anti-blackness. In fact, the gratuity of such violence—its irreducibility to purposive meaning—entails a refusal of the coherent ground that these very terms claim to supply. This is to say that being—or the possibility thereof—grounds itself not through its own coherence, but through an enactment of power that is staged by anti-black violence. Power precedes grammatical ground.

[2] Maurizio Lazzarato's analysis of contemporary capitalism approaches the anti-blackness analyzed by Wilderson. Lazzarato argues that capitalism is not grounded in any coherent science of economy, but is an enactment of the power to make indebted beings. It is by way of this emphasis on power that he links a purportedly secular capitalism to the theological structure of Christianity—that is, to a being that acts gratuitously, or without ground. Yet Lazzarato, I argue, ultimately wards off an encounter with anti-blackness through reliance on a coherence implicit in "the indebted man" (Lazzarato 2012: 8). I elaborate this argument by drawing on Gilles Deleuze's concept of "difference in itself" (Deleuze 1994: 36-89). This concept, on my reading, ungrounds the purported coherence of being by way of a logically prior differentiality, which is expressed as non-being. Essential to this argument is the task of articulating such non-being without conversion to an affirmation of the world.

Non-Being: Deleuze Against Affirmation

[3] Deleuze's philosophy has come to be associated with habits of affirmation, where "habits" indicate the practices or operations by which reality is experientially and experimentally enacted.[4] This association could be attributed to Deleuze's invocation of concepts such as the rhizome, which appears to advocate teeming, emergent, multiplicitous movement in excess of all boundaries. In such a landscape of fluidity and flux, Deleuze's notion of creation then becomes associated with the affirmation of alternative possibilities. This association may also be attributed to Deleuze's rigorous refusal of the being of negativity. He contends that negative being plays no role in the determination of reality, that it is in fact an illusion that conceals the force of differential immanence. Given the centrality of this contention, any association of Deleuze's thought with habits of affirmation would have to depend on the following claim: the refusal of negative being entails the refusal of habits of negativity, in favor of habits of affirmation.[5]

[4] Yet it is fundamentally mistaken to conflate the refusal of negative being with the refusal of negative habits. The call for habits of affirmation is theoretically illegitimate: if all habits are real, and if reality has no negative being, then all habits—precisely because they are real—do not involve negative being; the reality that is habituated—regardless of whether this habituation is characterized as affirmative or negative—has no negative being. If the call for habits of affirmation is therefore not entailed by Deleuze's refusal of negative being, then from where does this call arise? If habits of affirmation are imperative, then from where does this imperativity draw its mandate? To begin to answer these questions, one must address the ways in which habits of affirmation are *logically consistent*—and ultimately *politically complicit*—with the contemporary conjuncture of capitalism.

[5] This conjuncture, which has been variously described in terms of "late capitalism," "postfordism," or "communicative capitalism," is marked by an affirmation of mobility, innovation, fluidity, possibility, and creativity. Deleuze analyzed this conjuncture in terms of control societies, which he distinguished from disciplinary societies. Control establishes domination not by setting up in advance strict boundaries, but rather by a kind of unending encouragement, or motivated permissiveness: control establishes and expands itself by establishing and expanding possibilities of communication. Domination "no longer operate[s] by confining people but through continuous control and instant communication" (Deleuze 1997: 174). Whereas discipline names the prohibition of excessive mobility and innovation, control names the "modulation" of the possibilities implied in such mobility and innovation (Deleuze 1997: 179).[6]

[6] With control, domination remains not despite, nor in opposition to, but precisely *as* possibility, which is modulated through a communicability that is ever more fluid and receptive in its listening in order to be ever more innovative in its surveilling.[7] {7. The fundamental insidiousness of control is that it permits and encourages the fluidity, mobility, and possibility implied by the sheer *capacity* to narrate. Communicative capitalism does not work by mandating what can and cannot be narrated, rather it calls for any-narration-whatever, as long as the possibility of narration *is* affirmed.} Following Deleuze's analysis of control, habits of affirmation—of multiplicitous possibilities, or of the possibility of being-otherwise—are not resistant to, but actually constitutive of, control's modulation. Control is marked by "endless postponement" (Deleuze 1997: 179), meaning that the future—as that which breaks with the present—never takes place. The present is extended into the future, and so the future becomes a modulation of the present; an essential incommensurability between present and future remains unthinkable.[8] Given Deleuze's analysis, it is not by accident that he increasingly experimented with habits of negativity. In his last book, *What is Philosophy?* – co-written with Félix Guattari, and published one year after his analysis of control—one can observe, for instance, his attentiveness to "shame" (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 107), which was motivated by his reading of Primo Levi, or his indication of agreement with the negative dialectic of Theodor Adorno.[9]

[7] One finds, in the same book, a polemic against communication and a concomitant positioning of creation as distinct from and incommensurable with the communicative.[10] Simply put, Deleuze's increased attention to control, or communication, directly corresponds to his increased attention to the negative—not as being but as experience and experiment, as habit. Thus it is not only that Deleuze's refusal of negative being cannot be conflated with habits of affirmation, it is also that Deleuze, when attending to control, attempts to articulate habits of *negativity*. *What is Philosophy?* concludes with an articulation of the *No* of chaos, the *non* of thought that enables creation: philosophy must attain "an essential relationship with the No that concerns it"; philosophy does "not need the No as beginning, or as the end in which [it] would be called upon to disappear by being realized, but at every moment of [its] becoming or [its] development" (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 218).

[8] The creation named by Deleuze's philosophy is thus in immanence with the No, and it is this No-creation immanence that begins to articulate antagonism toward communication: "Creating has always been something different from communicating" (Deleuze 1997: 175). This divergence between communication and the No of creation is utter, essential, and irredeemable. There is no possibility of emancipating communication, nor is there any affirmative basis for creation—for the base is communication. There is nothing to affirm, and so creation is immanent with the negativity of the non: "The key thing may be to create vacuoles of noncommunication" (Deleuze 1997: 175).

The Reality of Non-Being

[9] My argument, drawing on Deleuze, is that the logic of possibility actually serves to modulatively reproduce the anti-black grammar of the world. Creation, defined as a break with the presently given world, is not a possibility. It is rather immanent with an axiomatic No to such possibility, with habits of negativity.

[10] This thesis concerns a key problematic that stems from the Afro-Pessimist analysis of anti-blackness: if blackness ~~stands~~ [is] both within the habitus of modernity, as an organizing principle, and without this habitus, as a perpetually banished subjectivity, then the very articulation of blackness would seem to depend on and reproduce such a habitus. In other words, both *being*-within and *being*-without are possibilities governed by modernity's dominative positioning of blackness. The articulation of blackness is in fact bound by this problematic insofar as one remains within the ambit of habits of affirmation. In other words, the presumption of affirmation is co-extensive with the reproduction of the habitus of modernity: that which is presently available for affirmation is already governed by modernity and its articulation of blackness, and so habits of affirmation inevitably participate in and reproduce the double-bind in which modernity positions blackness.

[11] Against such reproduction, it is essential to insist on habits of negativity. Such insistence is total: since it is affirmation *as such* that entails participation in the being here indexed by modernity, even a modicum of affirmation mitigates the force enacted by negativity. The power of creation therefore resides entirely and essentially on the side of negativity—and not at all on the side of affirmation. Concomitantly, to invoke such power actually entails an unmitigated refusal of habits of affirmation; affirmation does not name or support, but on the contrary denies, the power of creation. Given the double-bind in which modernity positions blackness, this is to say that the negativity of the non, in virtue of its immanence with a force of creation, indexes blackness as a power of non-being, as that which is without need of—and in fact opposed to—reliance on the affirmative.

[12] It remains necessary to outline the articulation of this immanence of creation and non-being—that is, to theoretically express how an unmitigated insistence on habits of negativity can be both a refusal of affirmation and an enactment of power. This warrants a return to Deleuze's thought by way of some questions: How can habits of negativity, articulated via Deleuze's insistence on the non, gain theoretical consistency with his conceptual refusal of negative being? If negative being is refused, then in what sense can there be insistence on the non?

[13] Deleuze argues that "being is difference itself. Being is also non-being, but *non-being is not the being of the negative* . . . non-being is Difference" (Deleuze 1994: 76-77). This makes clear that negative being is refused in virtue of *difference*; what is essential is difference in itself. Hence difference is articulated not as the affirmation of affirmative being, nor even as the affirmation of being as such. On the contrary, difference is articulated as "non-being": negative *being* is refused, but it is refused in favor of *non*-being. Difference antecedes both positive being *and* negative being, thereby displacing their dialectical or conflictual relation. In other words, difference is not between opposed beings but in itself, autonomous from and antecedent to every being or thing; difference is real, but precisely as a matter of *non*-being. Its reality is not the being of a thing, it is *no*-thing.

[14] Such theorization enables the delinking of creation (as force of non-being, or no-thing) from affirmation (as possibility of being). Difference, or non-being, marks a real force of creation that is without, and incommensurable with, being. In virtue of this unanalogizability of non-being with being, creation is articulated as a force stemming from negativity, and not at all from affirmation: affirmation is said of being and its possibilization, whereas creation is said of non-being. Habits of negativity, which antagonize every (positively or negatively described) being, or being as such, are thus coeval with an insistence on the real force of non-being.

[15] This argument can be used to negotiate a tension between the Afro-Pessimist emphasis on irresolvable negativity and the concern of Black Optimism to emphasize a power named by blackness: while the former's emphasis on negativity extends to habits of affirmation as such, this negativity immanently involves—and thus does not abandon—an insistence on the power of creation. Consequently, the Black Op concern to speak of the power of blackness may be satisfied entirely within the space of negativity, or social death, on which Afro-Pessimism insists. Such satisfaction does not then require recourse to qualifications that would mitigate the negativity of this space, On the contrary, power is immanent to a redoubled negativity, or a negativity toward both being and the affirmation of the possibility of being-otherwise.

[16] Yet even as Deleuze's philosophical efforts may be deployed by and for the articulation of Afro-Pessimist claims, these claims vertiginously intensify Deleuze's theorization of non-being: Deleuze theorizes non-being in terms of a "vertigo" of immanence (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 48), yet blackness is the historical, material experience of such vertigo. Drawing on a distinction made by Wilderson, this is to say that for Deleuze non-being is a "subjective vertigo," or a vertigo *into which* Deleuze's thought makes an entrance, while blackness is experienced as "objective vertigo," meaning that vertigo is—historically or materially—*always already* there (Wilderson 2011: 3). Immanence, or the vertigo of non-being, remains an object for the thought of Deleuze; blackness is historically or materially the *objective reality of* non-being—the very reality of the vertigo of immanence. Consequently, to think non-being according to blackness entails the reading of Deleuze's theoretical articulation in terms of the operations by which historical, material power is enacted.

#### This debate comes down to a question of starting points – their policies are doomed to failure absent a radical shift in politics that starts at the position of the non-human

**Dumas 16** [Michael J. Dumas, Assistant Professor at the University of California, Berkeley in the Graduate School of Education and the Department of African American Studies, “Against the Dark: Antiblackness in Education Policy and Discourse,” *Theory Into Practice* 55:11–19, 2016, published by The College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University] NN

W. E. B. DuBois, writing about integration of schools in 1935, argued that segregated schools were still needed due to the “growing animosity of the whites” (p. 328). White public opinion, he explained, was overwhelmingly opposed to establishing racially integrated schools. In such a context, he believed, it was impossible for Black children to receive “a proper education,” which, in his view, included “sympathetic touch between teacher and pupil” and the teaching of knowledge about Black history and culture as a group, as citizens. One can read DuBois as seeking an education for Black people that creates spaces to disrupt the exclusion of the Black from the cultural and political regard extended to those who are presumed Human. Most educators would like to believe that modern Americans live in a different time than DuBois—that the animosity of whites against Black people has declined, or is no longer the norm, especially among well-intentioned educators who profess to care about all children and who are likely to have been educated in colleges of education with expressed commitments to equity and diversity. The scholarship on antiblackness insists that the very imagination of all children was never intended to include the Black, and that the Black becomes antagonistically positioned in relation to diversity visions and goals. It is the Black that is feared, despised, (socially) dead. But how is any of this helpful? First, as Wilderson (2010) suggested, it is important for educators to acknowledge that antiblackness infects educators’ work in schools, and serves as a form of (everyday) violence against Black children and their families. This acknowledgement is different from a broad stance against intolerance or racism, or an admission of the existence of white privilege. Teachers, administrators, and district leaders should create opportunities to engage in honest and very specific conversations about Black bodies, blackness, and Black historical memories in and of the school and local community. They all might explore together what it means to educate a group of people who were never meant to be educated and, in fact, were never meant to be, to exist as humans. More systemically, educators might begin to imagine an education policy discourse and processes of policy implementation that take antiblackness for granted. Thus, any racial disparity in education should be assumed to be facilitated, or at least exacerbated, by disdain and disregard for the Black. Differences in academic achievement; frequency and severity of school discipline; rate of neighborhood school closures; fundraising capacity of PTAs; access to arts, music, and unstructured playtime—these are all sites of antiblackness. That is to say, these are all policies in which the Black is positioned on the bottom, and as much as one might wring one’s hands about it all, and pursue various interventions, radical improvements are impossible without a broader, radical shift in the racial order. This is perhaps, however fittingly, a pessimistic view of education policy. However, its possibility is in fomenting a new politics, a new practice of education, committed to Black—and therefore human—emancipation.

#### We must theorize slavery as maximum captivity in order to produce a structural analysis capable to think of the resistance necessary to disrupt that system.

Sexton 8 (Jared Sexton, Director of African American Studies at UC Irvine, 2008, “Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism”, pages 111-114)

FYI: Randall Kennedy is “one of the first black scholars in this generation to pen a sustained argument advocating what he terms ‘a cosmopolitan ethos that welcomes the prospect of genuine, loving interracial intimacy’ ” (page 107-108)

In response to the last question, we examine several comments from Kennedy’s opening chapter, “In the Age of Slavery.” As noted, Kennedy is at pains to counter the claims of a certain black feminist history regarding the “extremity of power” exercised by the slaveholder and “the absolute submission required of the slave” (Hartman, quoted in Kennedy 2003, 532fn11). He is, in other words, attempting to demonstrate, or at least to speculate upon, the limits of the slave system’s power of domination. Beyond this limit—whose locus proves frustratingly obscure—the agency of the slave herself was, we are told, able to affect significantly the conditions of captivity to alternate ends. Kennedy, in other words, proffers a narrative in which evidence of agency (evidence, that is, confirming an assumption of agency), however circumscribed or practically ineffective, is taken as a sign of resistance. More properly, this is a narrative of resistant affection, an insistence that the dehumanizing social order of racial slavery was unable to achieve its ultimate goal—“the absolute submission of the slave”—because it could not overcome the irresistible force of affection between men and women, “regardless of color.” When all is said and done, a human is still a human, as it were, and the family romance of normative heterosexuality persists “even within” hierarchies that preclude for the captive all of the recognizable (social, political, economic, cultural, legal) trappings of “human being” in the modern sense. Here is Kennedy: The slave system failed, however, to perfect the domination that [ Judge Thomas] Ruffin envisioned. It failed to bind the slaves so tightly as to deprive them of all room to maneuver. It failed to wring from them all prohibited yearnings. Slavery was, to be sure, a horribly oppressive system that severely restricted the ambit within which its victims could make decisions. But slavery did not extinguish altogether the possibility of choice. (43) We might ask, what is the minimum ambit of decision making? What sort of system, if not slavery, would bind one so tightly as to deprive one of all “room to maneuver”? Need a system of domination be “perfect” in order for it to be legally binding or socially effective or politically determinant? Need the captive body be deprived of all room to maneuver for the situation to be considered one of extremity? Need the yearnings of slaves be wrung entirely from them for their prohibition to be considered a constitutive element of life? At what point does the quantitative measure of the slave’s bondage become difference of a qualitative sort? What precisely is the “choice” available under slavery, and is it one worthy of belaboring, one whose sphere of influence is to be considered newsworthy? To put a finer point on it, why is the categorical discrepancy refused between the free and the enslaved, or more specifically, between the slave and the slaveholder? Is such refusal not tantamount to denying the very existence of slavery as a system that produced slaves rather than free people whose freedom was simply “severely restricted” or whose power was simply “severely limited” or who simply faced “difficult situations”? Kennedy continues: Bondage severely limited the power—including the sexual power—of slaves. But it did not wholly erase their capacity to attract and shape affectionate, erotic attachments of all sorts, including interracial ones. In a hard-to-quantify but substantial number of cases, feelings of affection and attachment between white male masters and their black female slaves somehow survived slavery’s deadening influence. The great difficulty, in any particular instance, lies in determining whether sex between a male master and a female slave was an expression of sexual autonomy or an act of unwanted sex. The truth is that most often we cannot know for sure, since there exists little direct testimony from those involved, especially the enslaved women. (44) The inability to quantify the “number of cases” or, indeed, to “know for sure” anything about them does not prevent the author from considering them nonetheless “substantial,” and the paucity of direct testimony,6 “especially [from] the enslaved women,” does not stop the author from extrapolating wildly about said “feelings of affection and attachment” between them and their “white male masters.” In fact, it is the void in its place—the great historic silence—that enables both the reiteration of longstanding alibis for white male sexual violence—what Hartman (1997) discusses skillfully as the “ruses of seduction”—and the projection of this newfangled, though no less menacing, story about a maverick interracial intimacy that, almost undetectably, undermines the injunctions of white supremacy, serving not only as a sign of agency for enslaved women but a moment of their resistance as well. Their “sexual power” is expressed as the “capacity to attract”—and “somehow” to manipulate—the erotic attachments of white male slaveholders. There is here an unsubtle shift in terms: agency is not in itself subversive; indeed, the entire slave system derives, in large part, from the agency of the enslaved (its capture, manipulation, redeployment, etc.) (Chandler 2000). Agency may be resistant or complicit or both, and it may or may not have practical effects in the world; all of this can only be determined contextually. Much more troubling than Kennedy’s imprecision here, however, is his entirely uncritical suggestion about the “sexual power” of slaves. Is not one of the principal conceits of power to suggest that though the dominant may monopolize power political, economic, and social, the dominated nonetheless enjoy a wily aptitude for “getting their way” by other means, namely, the ars erotica of seduction? Is not one of the most pernicious elements of the proslavery discourse that the “attractiveness” of enslaved black women presents a threat of corruption to civilized white manhood and/or an internal guarantee against the excesses of state-sanctioned violence reserved for white slaveholders? The same quality that served as temptation was also, or alternately, taken to be that which would forestall the descent of slaveholding into unrestrained brutality, an essential rationalization for the upholding of white (male) impunity toward blacks, whether enslaved or nominally “free” (Hartman 1997).7 Finally, was not the suggestion that enslaved black men might have the power to seduce white women (whether free or, in earlier periods, indentured) one of the prime alibis for the construction of regulatory or prohibitory statutes around interracial marriage and sexual relations from the seventeenth century onward (Bardaglio 1999)? In each case, the focus on the “sexual power” of slaves was undoubtedly a displacement of the organized violence consistently required of captivity and, further, a dissimulation of the institutionalized sexual power of slaveholders in particular (whose authority not only foreclosed the possibility of prosecution and militated against the extralegal reprisals but also contributed immeasurably to their “capacity to attract and shape affectionate, erotic attachments of all kinds.” The asymmetry here approaches the incommensurable—how, after all, would a slave go on to “court” a master? How would such an exercise in self-objectification, supplementing structural availability with an affirmation of “willingness,” rightly be called power?). This is no less the case simply because for Kennedy the “sexual power” of slaves is something to honor or celebrate rather than to fear.

#### Only a refusal to create a distance from the pathology of blackness, to work inside of it can produce the end of the world, and therefore sociality.

Sexton 10 (Jared Sexton, Director, African American Studies School of Humanities , Associate Professor, African American Studies School of Humanities, Associate Professor, Film & Media Studies School of Humanities at University of California Irvine, “The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism”)

What I find most intriguing about the timbre of the argument of “The Case of Blackness,” and the black optimism it articulates against a certain construal of afro-pessimism, is the way that it works away from a discourse of black pathology only to swerve right back into it as an ascription to those found to be taking up and holding themselves in “the stance of the pathologist” in relation to black folks. I say this not only because there is, in this version of events, a recourse to psychoanalytic terminology (“fetishization,” “obsession,” “repetition,”), but also because there is at the heart of the matter a rhetorical question that establishes both the bad advice of a wild analysis and a tacit diagnosis affording a certain speaker’s benefit: “So why is it repressed?” The “it” that has been afflicted by the psychopathology of obsessional neurosis is the understanding, which is also to say the celebration, of the ontological priority or previousness of blackness relative to the antiblackness that establishes itself against it, a priority or previousness that is also termed “knowledge of freedom” or, pace Chandler, comprehension of “the constitutive force of the African American subject(s)” (Chandler 2000: 261). [21] What does not occur here is a consideration of the possibility that something might be unfolding in the project or projections of afro-pessimism “knowing full well the danger of a kind of negative reification” associated with its analytical claims to the paradigmatic (Moten 2004: 279). That is to say, **it might just be the case that an object lesson in the phenomenology of the thing is a gratuity that folds a new encounter into older habits of thought through a reinscription of (black) pathology that reassigns its cause and relocates its source without ever really getting inside it**. In a way, what we’re talking about relates not to a disagreement about “unthought positions” (and their de-formation) but to a disagreement, or discrepancy, about “unthought dispositions” (and their in-formation). I would maintain this insofar as the misrecognition at work in the reading of that motley crew listed in the ninth footnote regards, perhaps ironically, the performative dimension or signifying aspect of a “generalized impropriety” so improper as to appear as the same old propriety returning through the back door. Without sufficient consideration of the gap between statement and enunciation here, to say nothing of quaint notions like context or audience or historical conjuncture, the discourse of afro-pessimism, even as it approaches otherwise important questions, can only seem like a “tragically neurotic” instance of “certain discourse on the relation between blackness and death” (Moten 2007: 9).xiii Fanon and his interlocutors, or what appear rather as his fateful adherents, would seem to have a problem embracing black social life because they never really come to believe in it, because they cannot acknowledge the social life from which they speak and of which they speak—as negation and impossibility—as their own (Moten 2008: 192). Another way of putting this might be to say that they are caught in a performative contradiction enabled by disavowal. I wonder, however, whether things are even this clear in Fanon and the readings his writing might facilitate. Lewis Gordon’s sustained engagement finds Fanon situated in an ethical stance grounded in the affirmation of blackness in the historic antiblack world. In a response to the discourse of multiracialism emergent in the late twentieth-century United States, for instance, Gordon writes, following Fanon, that “there is no way to reject the thesis that there is something wrong with being black beyond the willingness to ‘be’ black – in terms of convenient fads of playing blackness, but in paying the costs of antiblackness on a global scale. Against the raceless credo, then, racism cannot be rejected without a dialectic in which humanity experiences a blackened world” (Gordon 1997: 67). What is this willingness to ‘be’ black, of choosing to be black affirmatively rather than reluctantly, that Gordon finds as the key ethical moment in Fanon? [23] Elsewhere, in a discussion of Du Bois on the study of black folk, Gordon restates an existential phenomenological conception of the antiblack world developed across his first several books: “Blacks here suffer the phobogenic reality posed by the spirit of racial seriousness. In effect, they more than symbolize or signify various social pathologies—they become them. In our antiblack world, blacks are pathology” (Gordon 2000: 87). This conception would seem to support Moten’s contention that even much radical black studies scholarship sustains the association of blackness with a certain sense of decay and thereby fortifies and extends the interlocutory life of widely accepted political common sense. In fact, it would seem that Gordon deepens the already problematic association to the level of identity. And yet, this is precisely what Gordon argues is the value and insight of Fanon: he fully accepts the definition of himself as pathological as it is imposed by a world that knows itself through that imposition, rather than remaining in a reactive stance that insists on the (temporal, moral, etc.) heterogeneity between a self and an imago originating in culture. Though it may appear counterintuitive, or rather because it is counterintuitive, this acceptance or affirmation is active; it is a willing or willingness, in other words, to pay whatever social costs accrue to being black, to inhabiting blackness, to living a black social life under the shadow of social death. This is not an accommodation to the dictates of the antiblack world. **The affirmation of blackness, which is to say an affirmation of pathological being, is a refusal to distance oneself from blackness in a valorization of minor differences that bring one closer to health, to life, or to sociality**. Fanon writes in the first chapter of Black Skin, White Masks, “The Black Man and Language”: “A Senegalese who learns Creole to pass for Antillean is a case of alienation. The Antilleans who make a mockery out of him are lacking in judgment” (Fanon 2008: 21). In a world structured by the twin axioms of white superiority and black inferiority, of white existence and black nonexistence, a world structured by a negative categorical imperative—“above all, don’t be black” (Gordon 1997: 63)—in this world, the zero degree of transformation is the turn toward blackness, a turn toward the shame, as it were, that “resides in the idea that ‘I am thought of as less than human’” (Nyong’o 2002: 389).xiv In this we might create a transvaluation of pathology itself, something like an embrace of pathology without pathos

#### Their educational reforms misunderstand history – only the alt captures the revolutionary potential of past trauma and connects it to present instances of anti-black violence

**Dumas 16** [Michael J. Dumas, Assistant Professor at the University of California, Berkeley in the Graduate School of Education and the Department of African American Studies, “Against the Dark: Antiblackness in Education Policy and Discourse,” *Theory Into Practice* 55:11–19, 2016, published by The College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University] NN

What does it mean to suggest that education policy is a site of antiblackness? Fundamentally, it is an acknowledgment of the long history of Black struggle for educational opportunity, which is to say a struggle against what has always been (and continues to be) a struggle against specific anti-Black ideologies, discourses, representations, (mal)distribution of material resources, and physical and psychic assaults on Black bodies in schools. During the years of statesanctioned slavery, white slaveowners would often beat their Black property for attempting to learn to read; for Black people in bondage, learning to read was understood not only as a pathway to economic mobility, but, perhaps more importantly, as assertion of their own humanity, a resistance to being propertied (Anderson, 1988; Dumas, 2010). A century later, Black children faced down snarling, spitting mobs of white parents and elected officials who were incensed that their own white children would have to sit next to Black children, and fearful that their white education would be sullied by the presence of the Black. And this, then, is the essence of antiblackness in education policy: the Black is constructed as always already problem—as nonhuman; inherently uneducable, or at very least, unworthy of education; and, even in a multiracial society, always a threat to what Sexton (2008, p. 13) described as “everything else.” School desegregation is perhaps the most prominent education policy of the past century in which Black people have been positioned as problem. Racial desegregation of schools in the United States has been made necessary due to generations of state-supported residential segregation, a form of “American apartheid” (Massey & Denton, 1993) in which government housing policies allowed whites to accumulate land (and, therefore, wealth) at the expense of Black people (Dumas, 2015; Roithmayr, 2014). Residential segregation was rationalized as a necessary means to avoid race mixing—the presence of Black people particularly, but other people of color as well, was seen as a detriment to the quality of life and economic stability to which white people were entitled as a result of their skin color. A similar narrative emerged as whites organized in opposition to school integration; anti-Black racism was at least one primary cause of white flight from school districts that were ordered to desegregate (Kohn, 1996). In many cities, whites went to great lengths to create districts or school-assignment plans that concentrated whites in the most heavily resourced schools, and relegated Black children to underfunded schools with less experienced teachers and crumbling physical infrastructures (Dumas, 2011, 2014; Horsford, Sampson & Forletta, 2013). In short, school desegregation policy was precipitated by antiblackness. However, school desegregation researchers are more likely to frame their analyses through the lenses of access and diversity, emphasizing the educational benefits of cross-cultural interaction and the importance of providing more equitable allocation of educational resources (Orfield & Eaton, 1996; Orfield & Lee, 2004; Wells, 1995; Wells, Duran, & White, 2008). In contrast, theorizing antiblackness in school desegregation policy shifts the focus to interrogation of policies that led to the displacement of Black educators and the destruction of school communities that affirmed Black humanity (Tillman, 2004). Antiblackness allows one to capture the depths of suffering of Black children and educators in predominantly white schools, and connect this contemporary trauma to the longue dure´e of slavery from bondage to its afterlife in desegregating (and now resegregating) schools. And taking Sexton’s (2008) analysis of multiracialism into account leads to a more nuanced and careful critique of how schools pit the academic success of (some) Asian American students against and above the academic difficulties of Black students. Here, schools can be celebrated as diverse despite the absence of Black students in the building and/ or in the higher academic tracks. Ultimately, the slave has no place in the most privileged and highly-regarded school spaces; the Black becomes a kind of educational anachronism, not quite suited for our idealized multicultural learning community.

### 1NC – Schooling – Soft Left

#### Education itself is established on humanist ideals of democracy and freedom that are built upon the fungibility of the black body – even the most radical reformation of schooling misunderstands the historical caste systems that create a cyclical pattern of failure that dooms aff solvency – only a pessimistic analysis that begins and ends at the black positionality has the revolutionary potential to unravel the political and social dimensions that create flaws within education

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Many scholars who have studied the charter/choice governance model have pointed out how such free market reform policies continue legacies of population fragmentation and containment within urban cities along racial, class, and language lines (Buras, 2014; Lipman, 2011; Parker & Margonis, 1996; Wells, Slayton, & Scott, 2002). In her incisive study of the Chicago public school system, Lipman (2011) situates neoliberal economic policy and educational/urban reform within the historical projects of wealth accumulation and White supremacy. While Lipman gestures toward the ‘‘pivotal’’ 400- year legacy of White supremacy in the U.S. nation state, her analysis of the charter/choice debate is largely concerned with how to rehabilitate the project of public education from the damaging forms of enclosures brought on through neoliberal governance models (cf. Stern & Hussain, 2015). What is missing from the critical literature on charter/choice policies is an accounting of how even Marxist critiques retain modern European notions of equity, citizenship, and rights built on the dehumanization of Blacks and the ‘‘dark world.’’ Alternatively, a caste analysis would ask whether existing critiques of charter/choice policies assume a democratic potential in the public school system that was never a design feature. If schools are democratic institutions only insofar as they can support and augment White supremacy and accumulation, what would an adequate response to neoliberal caste strategies such as charter/choice governance be? One contribution a caste analysis makes to the existing research literature on race/class and educational inequality is that it sheds a pessimistic light on the prospect of the public education system in the United States as a recuperable institution. Such a pessimistic assessment stems from the fact that a caste analytic is rooted in a genealogical understanding of U.S. schooling as a population management tool of the racial capitalist state. The founding of the public school in the United States, Du Bois (1935/1998, 1999) argued, was not born out of the application of Enlightenment ideals of democracy and equality but rather from a moment of crisis in the coarticulating projects of White supremacy and capital accumulation during the colonial-plantation period and aftermath of the Civil War. As such, liberal reform and Marxist strategies for dealing with economic and racial inequalities through schooling are untenable because even in these models, democracy and equity have not adequately been washed of their White supremacist and accumulatory origins. From Pessimism to Abolitionary Democracy The second contribution Du Bois’s caste analytic provides to existing literature on choice/charter reform is a call to develop practical expressions of ‘‘abolition democracy’’ (Davis, 2005; Du Bois, 1935/1998; Lipsitz, 2004; Olson, 2004). Different from liberal education reforms based on the assumption that equal political and social standing has been established in the post– Civil Rights era, an abolitionary democratic position starts from the premise that democracy has been thwarted from the onset by the racial capitalist state after its brief period of existence following the Civil War (Du Bois, 1934/ 1998). As Angela Davis (2005) puts it, Du Bois argued that the abolition of slavery was accomplished only in the negative sense. In order to achieve the comprehensive abolition of slavery—after the institution was rendered illegal and black people were released from their chains—new institutions should have been created to incorporate black people into the social order. (p. 95) From an abolitionary democratic standpoint, then, the reconstruction of the public education system in the United States needs to start from Du Bois’s insight that ‘‘by betraying the Negro . . . white Americans betrayed themselves as well, because they destroyed the most democratic and egalitarian force in their national politics, while strengthening the power of the most elite, plutocratic and undemocratic elements in their country’’ (Lipsitz, 2004, p. 277). A caste analysis of U.S. schooling logically points to abolitionary responses to (neo)liberal educational reform. Charter/choice strategies are seen for what they are: the continuation of a historical betrayal that empowers an elite White oligarchy (the 1%) while denigrating all Whites (despite their very real material privileges) through the continued dehumanization of the dark world. A caste analysis call for a second abolitionary education movement pushes beyond existing critiques of charter/choice strategies in another important way by forefronting a fundamental claim in work that has come to be known as Afro-pessimism. As Dumas (2015a) points out, one of the most salient insights from Afro-pessimist thinkers such as Frank Wilderson (2010) is that through chattel slavery the world gave birth and coherence to both its joys of domesticity and to its struggles of political discontent; and with these joys and struggles the Human was born, but not before it murdered the Black, forging a symbiosis between political ontology of Humanity and the social death of Blacks. (Dumas, 2015a, p. 20) Du Bois’s caste analytic and Wilderson’s claim that the European humanistic tradition is based on the fungibility of Black bodies converge around a central thesis: Schools in racial capitalist society are biopolitical to their core, a constituent part of the life and death processes associated with White supremacy and anti-Blackness upon which caste control is built.6 Caste schooling carries with it a material politics of humanity (and therefore democracy) whereby Black bodies and populations are necessarily rooted in an ontological condition of less than human that supports Whiteness as a fully human condition (Wilderson, 2010). In the context of the charter/choice debate, caste and fungibility work together as complementary concepts. When school districts in New Orleans or Philadelphia are handed over to charter management companies, caste populations are being (re)produced. However, they are also working within the historical circuits of Black fungibility because charter/choice policies are framed as an ‘‘innovative’’ approach to rescuing impoverished people of color from a failed public school system. Just as the formerly enslaved and free African American were used to avert a crisis in production and White supremacy after the Civil War by propping up and extending the racial hate and privileges of poor Whites in work and educational spaces, the Black figure (and other students of color) is needed today to sustain governing strategies aimed at ‘‘fixing’’ problems such as the achievement gap student and ‘‘turn around’’ school. As replaceable parts in racial capitalist society, the Black fungible body and populations form a base for neoliberal caste reconstruction because choice/charter policies help provide Whites access to greater assets for thriving through wages of Whiteness generated from the currency of Black social death. One reason high-performing elite charter schools exist is because failing ‘‘urban’’ schools that capture surplus populations of underperforming and ‘‘at-risk’’ students call for innovative market solutions. The fungible populations and bodies of the dark world are part of the measurement and thus the valuation of social life as it is either enhanced (invested in through accumulatory benefits that elite charters provide) or left to whither (in disinvested, underfunded schools). It is through the historical reservoir of antiBlackness that caste reconstruction operates through the charter/choice governance model today. A rejection of charter/choice policies and other neoliberal governing strategies must include a problematized understanding of how the fungibility of Black bodies and populations undergird the humanist (liberal, Marxist, and neo-Marxist) ideal of a democratic education system and the type of human and less than human it can produce. Lacking such a critique, we risk falling back into a romantic notion of democratic education that fails to see how it is based on the ontological ‘‘grammar of suffering’’ of Black bodies and populations (Dumas, 2014; Wilderson, 2010). Du Bois’s caste analysis of education therefore situates the U.S. public education system as part of the ongoing project of caste control in that schools in the neoliberal era help produce the political and ontological conditions of social death and social life. Social life produced through neoliberal education governance strategies foregrounds a historical materialism where charter/choice policies should be read as part of a specific emergence of freedom—as economic value, political category, legal right, cultural practice, lived experience—from the modern transformation of slavery into what Robin Blackburn terms the ‘‘Great Captivity’’ of the New World: the convergence of the private property regime and the invention of racial blackness. (Sexton, 2011, p. 19) There is more at stake in the school choice movement and ‘‘innovative’’ charter governance approach than the loss of a potentially democratic and egalitarian institution of the public school. What is at stake, and what Du Bois’s caste analytic shows, is that the very definitions of freedom, equality, and justice are based on the social death of Black bodies and populations.

#### The aff’s critical pedagogy and endorsement of a simple reshuffling of resources in schools is emblematic of a larger racial caste system that refuses the category of human to black people

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Within the field of educational research W.E.B. Du Bois is one of the most important thinkers in the 20th century. Yet, as Banks (1992), Gordon (1995), Alridge (1999, 2008), Johnson (2000), Brown (2010), and Grant, Brown, and Brown (2016) argue, critical educational thought is rarely conceptualized from the standpoint of the Black intellectual tradition. One result has been a failure to recognize one of the most important theoretical contributions to educational research in the 20th century: Du Bois’s devastating and comprehensive historical and sociological analysis of schooling in the United States, which he termed caste education. For Du Bois, schools played a central role in preserving the caste society established in the colonialplantation period. After the fall of the old caste system based on slave codes, a type of reconstruction took place, according to Du Bois—one in which the public school became a primary place where the racial privileges of the ‘‘white world’’ and the dehumanizing conditions the ‘‘dark world’’ were educated into existence and the old caste codes were dressed in new Jim Crow clothing. Du Bois’s work on caste formation through schooling underscores the dynamic and adaptive nature of caste control in U.S. society, which continues today in the school, prison, hyper-policed communities, court, housing, and health systems (Alexander, 2010). With the application of corporate ‘‘turnaround’’ tactics working in concert with city gentrification projects (Buras, 2014; Lipman, 2011), schools have become tools of caste formation that create ‘‘gated communities for children of privilege’’ (Novak, 2014). In this sense, Du Bois’s caste analysis helps us understand what Ladson-Billings (2006) has called the ongoing educational ‘‘debt’’ as a necessary byproduct of the inextricable projects of White supremacy and capitalist accumulation through schooling. A caste analysis of schools thus emphasizes the fact that there are no intentions of ever paying off the educational ‘‘debt’’ in a racial capitalist society. Doing so would mean the public schooling system ceasing to be one of the most important sites of caste reconstruction necessary for producing racial and economic competition between the White and non-White worlds. In developing Du Bois’s caste analysis of schooling in racial capitalist society, I proceed as follows. First, I discuss Du Bois’s marginalization in education research and how this example of ‘‘epistemic apartheid’’ has obscured his highly original biopolitical critique of schooling in the United States. Next, I define racial capitalism and its relation to caste education. Specifically, I outline how Du Bois’s historical materialist understanding of racial capitalism grounds his caste analysis of U.S. schools within a biopolitical framework; schools, for Du Bois, are one of the most important governing tools for managing and producing social life in line with the racial capitalist needs of the industrial/state nexus. In developing Du Bois’s biopolitical analysis of education, I focus next on clarifying what a caste analysis consists of in his writings on education, race, and economic injustice. The next section puts the conceptual strengths of caste into conversation with the debate on the intersection of race and class in the education research literature. I argue here that Du Bois’s caste analytic bridges a gap in the literature through its biopolitical approach that differs from other models generated from Marxist, neo-Marxist, critical race theory (CRT), and other critical social theory traditions. I then turn to Du Bois’s concept of ‘‘double consciousness’’ to look at how unequal forms of social life are produced in segregated schools. Here I focus on how subjects think of themselves and others in schooled spaces organized through caste tools—what I call veil technologies. Du Bois’s focus on the production of subjectivity in caste school settings offers a powerful biopolitical perspective on how racial and economic inequality is reproduced through states’ school governing strategies. In the last section, I apply Du Bois’s caste analytic to the choice/charter policy debate as a way of introducing a new direction that moves away from liberal reform models and European-informed Marxist strategies of resistance. Turning to recent work in Afro-pessimism, I argue that despite the difference between them, both models of social and political change assume a problematic understanding of the human subject supportive of White supremacy and accumulation. Finally, a brief note on the methodology I use in this essay to articulate Du Bois’s analytic of caste. To support the claim that Du Bois’s analytic of caste is a biopolitical methodology, I trace its historical development as it evolves throughout Du Bois’s large interdisciplinary body of research on education, race, capitalism, and imperialism. In connecting the diffuse pieces of work where Du Bois provides caste analyses of education throughout his early sociological and historical work to his later Marxist revolutionary and anti-imperialist phase, a highly relevant methodological framework is apparent. Namely, the caste analytic I outline and unify from Du Bois’s work provides an important interdisciplinary research model that puts human life as the stakes of the public education system—the very ability of people of color to live without being cut down by the systematic violence of the white world. When Du Bois (1973/2001) says in the opening quote to this essay that ‘‘either we do this or we die,’’ he means that the abolition of caste education and caste society in general requires developing an education system that can create an ‘‘alternative of not dying like hogs’’ (p. 121). For Du Bois then, part of ‘‘guid[ing] our future so as to ensure our physical survival, our spiritual freedom and our social growth’’ for the dark world depends on picking up and utilizing caste as a methodological tool as we move into the next hundred years of educational research. In the neoliberal era when caste schooling still persists as an important appendage to the racial capitalist state, social death is now wrapped in free market myths and discourses of individual responsibility. It is now imperative more than ever for educational research to carry on and advance Du Bois’s study of caste education. Now let us, however, turn to some of the reasons Du Bois’s caste analytic has remained obscured as a method of educational research.

#### **The only possible demand is one that calls for the end of the world itself—the affirmative represents a conflict within the paradigm of America but refuses to challenge the foundational antagonism that produces the violence that undergirds the that same paradigm**

Wilderson, ’10 [2010, Frank B. Wilderson is an Associate Professor of African-American Studies at UC Irvine and has a Ph.D. from UC Berkeley, “Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms,”]

Leaving aside for the moment their state of mind, it would seem that the structure, that is to say the rebar, or better still the grammar of their demands—and, by extension, the grammar of their suffering—was indeed an ethical grammar. Perhaps their grammars are the only ethical grammars available to modern politics and modernity writ large, for they draw our attention not to the way in which space and time are used and abused by enfranchised and violently powerful interests, but to the violence that underwrites the modern world’s capacity to think, act, and exist spatially and temporally. The violence that robbed her of her body and him of his land provided the stage upon which other violent and consensual dramas could be enacted. Thus, they would have to be crazy, crazy enough to call not merely the actions of the world to account but to call the world itself to account, and to account for them no less! The woman at Columbia was not demanding to be a participant in an unethical network of distribution: she was not demanding a place within capital, a piece of the pie (the demand for her sofa notwithstanding). Rather, she was articulating a triangulation between, on the one hand, the loss of her body, the very dereliction of her corporeal integrity, what Hortense Spillers charts as the transition from being a being to becoming a “being for the captor” (206), the drama of value (the stage upon which surplus value is extracted from labor power through commodity production and sale); and on the other, the corporeal integrity that, once ripped from her body, fortified and extended the corporeal integrity of everyone else on the street. She gave birth to the commodity and to the Human, yet she had neither subjectivity nor a sofa to show for it. In her eyes, the world—and not its myriad discriminatory practices, but the world itself—was unethical. And yet, the world passes by her without the slightest inclination to stop and disabuse her of her claim. Instead, it calls her “crazy.” And to what does the world attribute the Native American man’s insanity? “He’s crazy if he thinks he’s getting any money out of us”? Surely, that doesn’t make him crazy. Rather it is simply an indication that he does not have a big enough gun. What are we to make of a world that responds to the most lucid enunciation of ethics with violence? What are the foundational questions of the ethico-political? Why are these questions so scandalous that they are rarely posed politically, intellectually, and cinematically—unless they are posed obliquely and unconsciously, as if by accident? Return Turtle Island to the “Savage.” Repair the demolished subjectivity of the Slave. Two simple sentences, thirteen simple words, and the structure of U.S. (and perhaps global) antagonisms would be dismantled. An “ethical modernity” would no longer sound like an oxymoron. From there we could busy ourselves with important conflicts that have been promoted to the level of antagonisms: class struggle, gender conflict, immigrants rights. When pared down to thirteen words and two sentences, one cannot but wonder why questions that go to the heart of the ethico-political, questions of political ontology, are so unspeakable in intellectual meditations, political broadsides, and even socially and politically engaged feature films. Clearly they can be spoken, even a child could speak those lines, so they would pose no problem for a scholar, an activist, or a filmmaker. And yet, what is also clear—if the filmographies of socially and politically engaged directors, the archive of progressive scholars, and the plethora of Left-wing broadsides are anything to go by—is that what can so easily be spoken is now (five hundred years and two hundred fifty million Settlers/Masters on) so ubiquitously unspoken that these two simple sentences, these thirteen words not only render their speaker “crazy” but become themselves impossible to imagine. Soon it will be forty years since radical politics, Left-leaning scholarship, and socially engaged feature films began to speak the unspeakable. In the 1960s and early 1970s the questions asked by radical politics and scholarship were not “Should the U.S. be overthrown?” or even “Would it be overthrown?” but rather when and how—and, for some, what—would come in its wake. Those steadfast in their conviction that there remained a discernable quantum of ethics in the U.S. writ large (and here I am speaking of everyone from Martin Luther King, Jr., prior to his 1968 shift, to the Tom Hayden wing of SDS, to the Julian Bond and Marion Barry faction of SNCC, to Bobbie Kennedy Democrats) were accountable, in their rhetorical machinations, to the paradigmatic zeitgeist of the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, and the Weather Underground. Radicals and progressives could deride, reject, or chastise armed struggle mercilessly and cavalierly with respect to tactics and the possibility of “success,” but they could not dismiss revolution-as-ethic because they could not make a convincing case—by way of a paradigmatic analysis—that the U.S. was an ethical formation and still hope to maintain credibility as radicals and progressives. Even Bobby Kennedy (a U.S. attorney general and presidential candidate) mused that the law and its enforcers had no ethical standing in the presence of Blacks. One could (and many did) acknowledge America’s strength and power. This seldom, however, rose to the level of an ethical assessment, but rather remained an assessment of the so-called “balance of forces.” The political discourse of Blacks, and to a lesser extent Indians, circulated too widely to credibly wed the U.S. and ethics. The raw force of COINTELPRO put an end to this trajectory toward a possible hegemony of ethical accountability. Consequently, the power of Blackness and Redness to pose the question—and the power to pose the question is the greatest power of all—retreated as did White radicals and progressives who “retired” from struggle. The question’s echo lies buried in the graves of young Black Panthers, AIM Warriors, and Black Liberation Army soldiers, or in prison cells where so many of them have been rotting (some in solitary confinement) for ten, twenty, thirty years, and at the gates of the academy where the “crazies” shout at passers-by. Gone are not only the young and vibrant voices that affected a seismic shift on the political landscape, but also the intellectual protocols of inquiry, and with them a spate of feature films that became authorized, if not by an unabashed revolutionary polemic, then certainly by a revolutionary zeitgeist. Is it still possible for a dream of unfettered ethics, a dream of the Settlement and the Slave estate’s destruction, to manifest itself at the ethical core of cinematic discourse, when this dream is no longer a constituent element of political discourse in the streets nor of intellectual discourse in the academy? The answer is “no” in the sense that, as history has shown, what cannot be articulated as political discourse in the streets is doubly foreclosed upon in screenplays and in scholarly prose; but “yes” in the sense that in even the most taciturn historical moments such as ours, the grammar of Black and Red suffering breaks in on this foreclosure, albeit like the somatic compliance of hysterical symptoms—it registers in both cinema and scholarship as symptoms of awareness of the structural antagonisms. Between 1967 and 1980, we could think cinematically and intellectually of Blackness and Redness as having the coherence of full-blown discourses. But from 1980 to the present, Blackness and Redness manifests only in the rebar of cinematic and intellectual (political) discourse, that is, as unspoken grammars. This grammar can be discerned in the cinematic strategies (lighting, camera angles, image composition, and acoustic strategies/design), even when the script labors for the spectator to imagine social turmoil through the rubric of conflict (that is, a rubric of problems that can be posed and conceptually solved) as opposed to the rubric of antagonism (an irreconcilable struggle between entities, or positionalities, the resolution of which is not dialectical but entails the obliteration of one of the positions). In other words, even when films narrate a story in which Blacks or Indians are beleaguered with problems that the script insists are conceptually coherent (usually having to do with poverty or the absence of “family values”), the non-narrative, or cinematic, strategies of the film often disrupt this coherence by posing the irreconcilable questions of Red and Black political ontology—or non-ontology. The grammar of antagonism breaks in on the mendacity of conflict. Semiotics and linguistics teach us that when we speak, our grammar goes unspoken. Our grammar is assumed. It is the structure through which the labor of speech is possible. Likewise, the grammar of political ethics—the grammar of assumptions regarding the ontology of suffering—which underwrite Film Theory and political discourse (in this book, discourse elaborated in direct relation to radical action), and which underwrite cinematic speech (in this book, Red, White, and Black films from the mid-1960s to the present) is also unspoken. This notwithstanding, film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume an ontological grammar, a structure of suffering. And the structure of suffering which film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume crowds out other structures of suffering, regardless of the sentiment of the film or the spirit of unity mobilized by the political discourse in question. To put a finer point on it, structures of ontological suffering stand in antagonistic, rather then conflictual, relation to one another (despite the fact that antagonists themselves may not be aware of the ontological positionality from which they speak). Though this is perhaps the most controversial and out-of-step claim of this book, it is, nonetheless, the foundation of the close reading of feature films and political theory that follows.

#### Only a refusal to create a distance from the pathology of blackness, to work inside of it can produce the end of the world, and therefore sociality.

Sexton 10 (Jared Sexton, Director, African American Studies School of Humanities , Associate Professor, African American Studies School of Humanities, Associate Professor, Film & Media Studies School of Humanities at University of California Irvine, “The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism”)

What I find most intriguing about the timbre of the argument of “The Case of Blackness,” and the black optimism it articulates against a certain construal of afro-pessimism, is the way that it works away from a discourse of black pathology only to swerve right back into it as an ascription to those found to be taking up and holding themselves in “the stance of the pathologist” in relation to black folks. I say this not only because there is, in this version of events, a recourse to psychoanalytic terminology (“fetishization,” “obsession,” “repetition,”), but also because there is at the heart of the matter a rhetorical question that establishes both the bad advice of a wild analysis and a tacit diagnosis affording a certain speaker’s benefit: “So why is it repressed?” The “it” that has been afflicted by the psychopathology of obsessional neurosis is the understanding, which is also to say the celebration, of the ontological priority or previousness of blackness relative to the antiblackness that establishes itself against it, a priority or previousness that is also termed “knowledge of freedom” or, pace Chandler, comprehension of “the constitutive force of the African American subject(s)” (Chandler 2000: 261). [21] What does not occur here is a consideration of the possibility that something might be unfolding in the project or projections of afro-pessimism “knowing full well the danger of a kind of negative reification” associated with its analytical claims to the paradigmatic (Moten 2004: 279). That is to say, **it might just be the case that an object lesson in the phenomenology of the thing is a gratuity that folds a new encounter into older habits of thought through a reinscription of (black) pathology that reassigns its cause and relocates its source without ever really getting inside it**. In a way, what we’re talking about relates not to a disagreement about “unthought positions” (and their de-formation) but to a disagreement, or discrepancy, about “unthought dispositions” (and their in-formation). I would maintain this insofar as the misrecognition at work in the reading of that motley crew listed in the ninth footnote regards, perhaps ironically, the performative dimension or signifying aspect of a “generalized impropriety” so improper as to appear as the same old propriety returning through the back door. Without sufficient consideration of the gap between statement and enunciation here, to say nothing of quaint notions like context or audience or historical conjuncture, the discourse of afro-pessimism, even as it approaches otherwise important questions, can only seem like a “tragically neurotic” instance of “certain discourse on the relation between blackness and death” (Moten 2007: 9).xiii Fanon and his interlocutors, or what appear rather as his fateful adherents, would seem to have a problem embracing black social life because they never really come to believe in it, because they cannot acknowledge the social life from which they speak and of which they speak—as negation and impossibility—as their own (Moten 2008: 192). Another way of putting this might be to say that they are caught in a performative contradiction enabled by disavowal. I wonder, however, whether things are even this clear in Fanon and the readings his writing might facilitate. Lewis Gordon’s sustained engagement finds Fanon situated in an ethical stance grounded in the affirmation of blackness in the historic antiblack world. In a response to the discourse of multiracialism emergent in the late twentieth-century United States, for instance, Gordon writes, following Fanon, that “there is no way to reject the thesis that there is something wrong with being black beyond the willingness to ‘be’ black – in terms of convenient fads of playing blackness, but in paying the costs of antiblackness on a global scale. Against the raceless credo, then, racism cannot be rejected without a dialectic in which humanity experiences a blackened world” (Gordon 1997: 67). What is this willingness to ‘be’ black, of choosing to be black affirmatively rather than reluctantly, that Gordon finds as the key ethical moment in Fanon? [23] Elsewhere, in a discussion of Du Bois on the study of black folk, Gordon restates an existential phenomenological conception of the antiblack world developed across his first several books: “Blacks here suffer the phobogenic reality posed by the spirit of racial seriousness. In effect, they more than symbolize or signify various social pathologies—they become them. In our antiblack world, blacks are pathology” (Gordon 2000: 87). This conception would seem to support Moten’s contention that even much radical black studies scholarship sustains the association of blackness with a certain sense of decay and thereby fortifies and extends the interlocutory life of widely accepted political common sense. In fact, it would seem that Gordon deepens the already problematic association to the level of identity. And yet, this is precisely what Gordon argues is the value and insight of Fanon: he fully accepts the definition of himself as pathological as it is imposed by a world that knows itself through that imposition, rather than remaining in a reactive stance that insists on the (temporal, moral, etc.) heterogeneity between a self and an imago originating in culture. Though it may appear counterintuitive, or rather because it is counterintuitive, this acceptance or affirmation is active; it is a willing or willingness, in other words, to pay whatever social costs accrue to being black, to inhabiting blackness, to living a black social life under the shadow of social death. This is not an accommodation to the dictates of the antiblack world. **The affirmation of blackness, which is to say an affirmation of pathological being, is a refusal to distance oneself from blackness in a valorization of minor differences that bring one closer to health, to life, or to sociality**. Fanon writes in the first chapter of Black Skin, White Masks, “The Black Man and Language”: “A Senegalese who learns Creole to pass for Antillean is a case of alienation. The Antilleans who make a mockery out of him are lacking in judgment” (Fanon 2008: 21). In a world structured by the twin axioms of white superiority and black inferiority, of white existence and black nonexistence, a world structured by a negative categorical imperative—“above all, don’t be black” (Gordon 1997: 63)—in this world, the zero degree of transformation is the turn toward blackness, a turn toward the shame, as it were, that “resides in the idea that ‘I am thought of as less than human’” (Nyong’o 2002: 389).xiv In this we might create a transvaluation of pathology itself, something like an embrace of pathology without pathos.

### 1NC – Schooling – Critical

#### Blackness constitutes the site of a paradoxical double-bind within the social order – it is both the organizing principle that makes possible the coherence of the world and the object of that world’s gratuitous violence – as such, the aff’s wedding to affirmative potentiality accedes to a form of communicative capitalism which is only capable of modulatively reproducing the anti-black grammar of civil society

Barber 16 (Daniel Colucciello Barber, researcher at the Humboldt University of Berlin, PhD from Duke University, 2016, “The Creation of Non-Being,” *Rhizomes* Issue 29, footnotes 1, 2, and 7 included in curly braces, modified) gz

[1] Anti-blackness operates axiomatically. This is the case, at least, insofar as we speak of what Frank B. Wilderson, III, has called "the world" (Wilderson 2003: 234).[1] {1. "World" here refers not to reality as such, but more precisely to the paradigmatic operations by which reality is structured, positioned, and rendered sensible. Yet this does not mean that one can directly express or pose reality as distinct from the world, for the world governs the very conditions of possibility for expression or position. Even purportedly universal terms, such as humanity, social life, and—to invoke the concern of this essay—being itself, are operations of the world. The Afro-Pessimist thesis, following Wilderson, is that this world constitutes itself and maintains its coherence, at essence, through anti-blackness: the world has being insofar as blackness does not. Since the grammar of this world, or the logic of the aforementioned operations, is so naturalized—enacted and assumed by/from power—that it generally has no need to appear (much less defend itself), the articulation of reality without the anti-black world must begin as an articulation against this world.} The aim of this essay is to address the consequences of this axiomatic operation for some rather classical terms of reference within continental philosophy, such as being, analogy,[2] communication, possibility, and knowledge. {2. Both the reading of Lazzarato I provide below and my general argument, which revolves around the question of negativity and analogy, are deeply shaped by—and only conceivable thanks to—the writings of Wilderson, whose claim about analogy is summarized in the following remark, made in conversation with Hartman: "In my own work, obviously I'm not saying that in this space of negation, which is blackness, there is no life. We have tremendous life. But this life is not analogous to those touchstones of cohesion that hold civil society together. In fact, the trajectory of our life (within our terrain of civil death) is bound up in claiming—sometimes individually, sometimes collectively—the violence which Fanon writes about in *The Wretched of the Earth*, that trajectory which, as he says, is 'a splinter to the heart of the world' and 'puts the settler out of the picture.' So, it doesn't help us politically or psychologically to try to find ways in which how we live is analogous to how white positionality lives, because, as I think your book suggests, whites gain their coherence by knowing what they are not" (Hartman and Wilderson 2003: 187).} Such terms are the means by which the world claims to grant itself coherence; they form the grammatical ground, the structuring condition, of the world. If the "gratuitous violence" of anti-blackness extends into the very "grammar" of the world (Wilderson 2010: 38, 131),[3] then the aforementioned terms—far from providing retreat into a "metaphysical" domain unaffected by the historical and material—serve as points for the articulation of antagonism toward anti-blackness. In fact, the gratuity of such violence—its irreducibility to purposive meaning—entails a refusal of the coherent ground that these very terms claim to supply. This is to say that being—or the possibility thereof—grounds itself not through its own coherence, but through an enactment of power that is staged by anti-black violence. Power precedes grammatical ground.

[2] Maurizio Lazzarato's analysis of contemporary capitalism approaches the anti-blackness analyzed by Wilderson. Lazzarato argues that capitalism is not grounded in any coherent science of economy, but is an enactment of the power to make indebted beings. It is by way of this emphasis on power that he links a purportedly secular capitalism to the theological structure of Christianity—that is, to a being that acts gratuitously, or without ground. Yet Lazzarato, I argue, ultimately wards off an encounter with anti-blackness through reliance on a coherence implicit in "the indebted man" (Lazzarato 2012: 8). I elaborate this argument by drawing on Gilles Deleuze's concept of "difference in itself" (Deleuze 1994: 36-89). This concept, on my reading, ungrounds the purported coherence of being by way of a logically prior differentiality, which is expressed as non-being. Essential to this argument is the task of articulating such non-being without conversion to an affirmation of the world.

Non-Being: Deleuze Against Affirmation

[3] Deleuze's philosophy has come to be associated with habits of affirmation, where "habits" indicate the practices or operations by which reality is experientially and experimentally enacted.[4] This association could be attributed to Deleuze's invocation of concepts such as the rhizome, which appears to advocate teeming, emergent, multiplicitous movement in excess of all boundaries. In such a landscape of fluidity and flux, Deleuze's notion of creation then becomes associated with the affirmation of alternative possibilities. This association may also be attributed to Deleuze's rigorous refusal of the being of negativity. He contends that negative being plays no role in the determination of reality, that it is in fact an illusion that conceals the force of differential immanence. Given the centrality of this contention, any association of Deleuze's thought with habits of affirmation would have to depend on the following claim: the refusal of negative being entails the refusal of habits of negativity, in favor of habits of affirmation.[5]

[4] Yet it is fundamentally mistaken to conflate the refusal of negative being with the refusal of negative habits. The call for habits of affirmation is theoretically illegitimate: if all habits are real, and if reality has no negative being, then all habits—precisely because they are real—do not involve negative being; the reality that is habituated—regardless of whether this habituation is characterized as affirmative or negative—has no negative being. If the call for habits of affirmation is therefore not entailed by Deleuze's refusal of negative being, then from where does this call arise? If habits of affirmation are imperative, then from where does this imperativity draw its mandate? To begin to answer these questions, one must address the ways in which habits of affirmation are *logically consistent*—and ultimately *politically complicit*—with the contemporary conjuncture of capitalism.

[5] This conjuncture, which has been variously described in terms of "late capitalism," "postfordism," or "communicative capitalism," is marked by an affirmation of mobility, innovation, fluidity, possibility, and creativity. Deleuze analyzed this conjuncture in terms of control societies, which he distinguished from disciplinary societies. Control establishes domination not by setting up in advance strict boundaries, but rather by a kind of unending encouragement, or motivated permissiveness: control establishes and expands itself by establishing and expanding possibilities of communication. Domination "no longer operate[s] by confining people but through continuous control and instant communication" (Deleuze 1997: 174). Whereas discipline names the prohibition of excessive mobility and innovation, control names the "modulation" of the possibilities implied in such mobility and innovation (Deleuze 1997: 179).[6]

[6] With control, domination remains not despite, nor in opposition to, but precisely *as* possibility, which is modulated through a communicability that is ever more fluid and receptive in its listening in order to be ever more innovative in its surveilling.[7] {7. The fundamental insidiousness of control is that it permits and encourages the fluidity, mobility, and possibility implied by the sheer *capacity* to narrate. Communicative capitalism does not work by mandating what can and cannot be narrated, rather it calls for any-narration-whatever, as long as the possibility of narration *is* affirmed.} Following Deleuze's analysis of control, habits of affirmation—of multiplicitous possibilities, or of the possibility of being-otherwise—are not resistant to, but actually constitutive of, control's modulation. Control is marked by "endless postponement" (Deleuze 1997: 179), meaning that the future—as that which breaks with the present—never takes place. The present is extended into the future, and so the future becomes a modulation of the present; an essential incommensurability between present and future remains unthinkable.[8] Given Deleuze's analysis, it is not by accident that he increasingly experimented with habits of negativity. In his last book, *What is Philosophy?* – co-written with Félix Guattari, and published one year after his analysis of control—one can observe, for instance, his attentiveness to "shame" (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 107), which was motivated by his reading of Primo Levi, or his indication of agreement with the negative dialectic of Theodor Adorno.[9]

[7] One finds, in the same book, a polemic against communication and a concomitant positioning of creation as distinct from and incommensurable with the communicative.[10] Simply put, Deleuze's increased attention to control, or communication, directly corresponds to his increased attention to the negative—not as being but as experience and experiment, as habit. Thus it is not only that Deleuze's refusal of negative being cannot be conflated with habits of affirmation, it is also that Deleuze, when attending to control, attempts to articulate habits of *negativity*. *What is Philosophy?* concludes with an articulation of the *No* of chaos, the *non* of thought that enables creation: philosophy must attain "an essential relationship with the No that concerns it"; philosophy does "not need the No as beginning, or as the end in which [it] would be called upon to disappear by being realized, but at every moment of [its] becoming or [its] development" (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 218).

[8] The creation named by Deleuze's philosophy is thus in immanence with the No, and it is this No-creation immanence that begins to articulate antagonism toward communication: "Creating has always been something different from communicating" (Deleuze 1997: 175). This divergence between communication and the No of creation is utter, essential, and irredeemable. There is no possibility of emancipating communication, nor is there any affirmative basis for creation—for the base is communication. There is nothing to affirm, and so creation is immanent with the negativity of the non: "The key thing may be to create vacuoles of noncommunication" (Deleuze 1997: 175).

The Reality of Non-Being

[9] My argument, drawing on Deleuze, is that the logic of possibility actually serves to modulatively reproduce the anti-black grammar of the world. Creation, defined as a break with the presently given world, is not a possibility. It is rather immanent with an axiomatic No to such possibility, with habits of negativity.

[10] This thesis concerns a key problematic that stems from the Afro-Pessimist analysis of anti-blackness: if blackness ~~stands~~ [is] both within the habitus of modernity, as an organizing principle, and without this habitus, as a perpetually banished subjectivity, then the very articulation of blackness would seem to depend on and reproduce such a habitus. In other words, both *being*-within and *being*-without are possibilities governed by modernity's dominative positioning of blackness. The articulation of blackness is in fact bound by this problematic insofar as one remains within the ambit of habits of affirmation. In other words, the presumption of affirmation is co-extensive with the reproduction of the habitus of modernity: that which is presently available for affirmation is already governed by modernity and its articulation of blackness, and so habits of affirmation inevitably participate in and reproduce the double-bind in which modernity positions blackness.

[11] Against such reproduction, it is essential to insist on habits of negativity. Such insistence is total: since it is affirmation *as such* that entails participation in the being here indexed by modernity, even a modicum of affirmation mitigates the force enacted by negativity. The power of creation therefore resides entirely and essentially on the side of negativity—and not at all on the side of affirmation. Concomitantly, to invoke such power actually entails an unmitigated refusal of habits of affirmation; affirmation does not name or support, but on the contrary denies, the power of creation. Given the double-bind in which modernity positions blackness, this is to say that the negativity of the non, in virtue of its immanence with a force of creation, indexes blackness as a power of non-being, as that which is without need of—and in fact opposed to—reliance on the affirmative.

[12] It remains necessary to outline the articulation of this immanence of creation and non-being—that is, to theoretically express how an unmitigated insistence on habits of negativity can be both a refusal of affirmation and an enactment of power. This warrants a return to Deleuze's thought by way of some questions: How can habits of negativity, articulated via Deleuze's insistence on the non, gain theoretical consistency with his conceptual refusal of negative being? If negative being is refused, then in what sense can there be insistence on the non?

[13] Deleuze argues that "being is difference itself. Being is also non-being, but *non-being is not the being of the negative* . . . non-being is Difference" (Deleuze 1994: 76-77). This makes clear that negative being is refused in virtue of *difference*; what is essential is difference in itself. Hence difference is articulated not as the affirmation of affirmative being, nor even as the affirmation of being as such. On the contrary, difference is articulated as "non-being": negative *being* is refused, but it is refused in favor of *non*-being. Difference antecedes both positive being *and* negative being, thereby displacing their dialectical or conflictual relation. In other words, difference is not between opposed beings but in itself, autonomous from and antecedent to every being or thing; difference is real, but precisely as a matter of *non*-being. Its reality is not the being of a thing, it is *no*-thing.

[14] Such theorization enables the delinking of creation (as force of non-being, or no-thing) from affirmation (as possibility of being). Difference, or non-being, marks a real force of creation that is without, and incommensurable with, being. In virtue of this unanalogizability of non-being with being, creation is articulated as a force stemming from negativity, and not at all from affirmation: affirmation is said of being and its possibilization, whereas creation is said of non-being. Habits of negativity, which antagonize every (positively or negatively described) being, or being as such, are thus coeval with an insistence on the real force of non-being.

[15] This argument can be used to negotiate a tension between the Afro-Pessimist emphasis on irresolvable negativity and the concern of Black Optimism to emphasize a power named by blackness: while the former's emphasis on negativity extends to habits of affirmation as such, this negativity immanently involves—and thus does not abandon—an insistence on the power of creation. Consequently, the Black Op concern to speak of the power of blackness may be satisfied entirely within the space of negativity, or social death, on which Afro-Pessimism insists. Such satisfaction does not then require recourse to qualifications that would mitigate the negativity of this space, On the contrary, power is immanent to a redoubled negativity, or a negativity toward both being and the affirmation of the possibility of being-otherwise.

[16] Yet even as Deleuze's philosophical efforts may be deployed by and for the articulation of Afro-Pessimist claims, these claims vertiginously intensify Deleuze's theorization of non-being: Deleuze theorizes non-being in terms of a "vertigo" of immanence (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 48), yet blackness is the historical, material experience of such vertigo. Drawing on a distinction made by Wilderson, this is to say that for Deleuze non-being is a "subjective vertigo," or a vertigo *into which* Deleuze's thought makes an entrance, while blackness is experienced as "objective vertigo," meaning that vertigo is—historically or materially—*always already* there (Wilderson 2011: 3). Immanence, or the vertigo of non-being, remains an object for the thought of Deleuze; blackness is historically or materially the *objective reality of* non-being—the very reality of the vertigo of immanence. Consequently, to think non-being according to blackness entails the reading of Deleuze's theoretical articulation in terms of the operations by which historical, material power is enacted.

#### The aff’s critical pedagogy and endorsement of a simple reshuffling of resources in schools is emblematic of a larger racial caste system that refuses the category of human to black people

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Within the field of educational research W.E.B. Du Bois is one of the most important thinkers in the 20th century. Yet, as Banks (1992), Gordon (1995), Alridge (1999, 2008), Johnson (2000), Brown (2010), and Grant, Brown, and Brown (2016) argue, critical educational thought is rarely conceptualized from the standpoint of the Black intellectual tradition. One result has been a failure to recognize one of the most important theoretical contributions to educational research in the 20th century: Du Bois’s devastating and comprehensive historical and sociological analysis of schooling in the United States, which he termed caste education. For Du Bois, schools played a central role in preserving the caste society established in the colonialplantation period. After the fall of the old caste system based on slave codes, a type of reconstruction took place, according to Du Bois—one in which the public school became a primary place where the racial privileges of the ‘‘white world’’ and the dehumanizing conditions the ‘‘dark world’’ were educated into existence and the old caste codes were dressed in new Jim Crow clothing. Du Bois’s work on caste formation through schooling underscores the dynamic and adaptive nature of caste control in U.S. society, which continues today in the school, prison, hyper-policed communities, court, housing, and health systems (Alexander, 2010). With the application of corporate ‘‘turnaround’’ tactics working in concert with city gentrification projects (Buras, 2014; Lipman, 2011), schools have become tools of caste formation that create ‘‘gated communities for children of privilege’’ (Novak, 2014). In this sense, Du Bois’s caste analysis helps us understand what Ladson-Billings (2006) has called the ongoing educational ‘‘debt’’ as a necessary byproduct of the inextricable projects of White supremacy and capitalist accumulation through schooling. A caste analysis of schools thus emphasizes the fact that there are no intentions of ever paying off the educational ‘‘debt’’ in a racial capitalist society. Doing so would mean the public schooling system ceasing to be one of the most important sites of caste reconstruction necessary for producing racial and economic competition between the White and non-White worlds. In developing Du Bois’s caste analysis of schooling in racial capitalist society, I proceed as follows. First, I discuss Du Bois’s marginalization in education research and how this example of ‘‘epistemic apartheid’’ has obscured his highly original biopolitical critique of schooling in the United States. Next, I define racial capitalism and its relation to caste education. Specifically, I outline how Du Bois’s historical materialist understanding of racial capitalism grounds his caste analysis of U.S. schools within a biopolitical framework; schools, for Du Bois, are one of the most important governing tools for managing and producing social life in line with the racial capitalist needs of the industrial/state nexus. In developing Du Bois’s biopolitical analysis of education, I focus next on clarifying what a caste analysis consists of in his writings on education, race, and economic injustice. The next section puts the conceptual strengths of caste into conversation with the debate on the intersection of race and class in the education research literature. I argue here that Du Bois’s caste analytic bridges a gap in the literature through its biopolitical approach that differs from other models generated from Marxist, neo-Marxist, critical race theory (CRT), and other critical social theory traditions. I then turn to Du Bois’s concept of ‘‘double consciousness’’ to look at how unequal forms of social life are produced in segregated schools. Here I focus on how subjects think of themselves and others in schooled spaces organized through caste tools—what I call veil technologies. Du Bois’s focus on the production of subjectivity in caste school settings offers a powerful biopolitical perspective on how racial and economic inequality is reproduced through states’ school governing strategies. In the last section, I apply Du Bois’s caste analytic to the choice/charter policy debate as a way of introducing a new direction that moves away from liberal reform models and European-informed Marxist strategies of resistance. Turning to recent work in Afro-pessimism, I argue that despite the difference between them, both models of social and political change assume a problematic understanding of the human subject supportive of White supremacy and accumulation. Finally, a brief note on the methodology I use in this essay to articulate Du Bois’s analytic of caste. To support the claim that Du Bois’s analytic of caste is a biopolitical methodology, I trace its historical development as it evolves throughout Du Bois’s large interdisciplinary body of research on education, race, capitalism, and imperialism. In connecting the diffuse pieces of work where Du Bois provides caste analyses of education throughout his early sociological and historical work to his later Marxist revolutionary and anti-imperialist phase, a highly relevant methodological framework is apparent. Namely, the caste analytic I outline and unify from Du Bois’s work provides an important interdisciplinary research model that puts human life as the stakes of the public education system—the very ability of people of color to live without being cut down by the systematic violence of the white world. When Du Bois (1973/2001) says in the opening quote to this essay that ‘‘either we do this or we die,’’ he means that the abolition of caste education and caste society in general requires developing an education system that can create an ‘‘alternative of not dying like hogs’’ (p. 121). For Du Bois then, part of ‘‘guid[ing] our future so as to ensure our physical survival, our spiritual freedom and our social growth’’ for the dark world depends on picking up and utilizing caste as a methodological tool as we move into the next hundred years of educational research. In the neoliberal era when caste schooling still persists as an important appendage to the racial capitalist state, social death is now wrapped in free market myths and discourses of individual responsibility. It is now imperative more than ever for educational research to carry on and advance Du Bois’s study of caste education. Now let us, however, turn to some of the reasons Du Bois’s caste analytic has remained obscured as a method of educational research.

#### The aff’s scholarship represents an epistemic apartheid where their theories are built upon the fungibility of black scholarship

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As Margonis (2007) has argued, Du Bois’s work in educational theory exemplifies a larger legacy of ‘‘epistemological ignorance’’ that reflects the ways White supremacy affects knowledge production, even in the work of progressive and radical thinkers in the field of education (see also Grant et al., 2016). As Rabaka (2010, 2013) has aptly noted, Du Bois’s institutional marginalization is an example of ‘‘epistemic apartheid.’’ The underutilization and historical marginalization of Du Boisean research in education has led to the obscuring of at least two important theoretical contributions useful for studying racial and economic inequality and schooling. First, Du Bois’s analysis of caste education shows him to be much more than simply Booker T. Washington’s counterpart when it comes to radical critiques of schooling in a racial capitalist society. Following Gordon’s (1995) and others’ call decades ago, shifting Du Bois from margin to center moves beyond critical analyses of schooling that treat race and class as separate units of analysis or from the standpoint of the European critical theory tradition (Brown & De Lissovoy, 2011; Leonardo, 2004, 2012; Watkins, 2005a). Second, the theoretical contribution of Du Bois’s work on caste education is an anticipation of critiques of schooling that intersect with features of what has come to be known as biopolitics (Giroux, 2008; Lewis, 2007, 2009; Peters, 2001; Pierce, 2013). As an interdisciplinary area of research, biopolitical analyses have grown out of Foucault’s work on the ways modern institutions and governments utilize racism (along with other forms of biopower) as a key governing strategy to regulate and divide the population within a state to achieve specific economic and racial goals. For example, Du Bois points out that compulsory public schooling was used by the North in the lead-up to the Civil War to raise the skill and ability level of ‘‘free’’ wage workers in ways that made plantation labor less competitive in terms of the needs of industrial work. In this sense, compulsory public schooling was used as a state biopolitical strategy that put pressure on the slave labor economy of the South to enter the more efficient (and profitable) labor relations of wage work. Yet, Du Bois notes, racial divisions were built into this strategy: White ‘‘free’’ workers in the North learned a deep animosity toward the emancipated slaves because they represented a threat to their wage potential and monopoly of work in the North (Du Bois, 1935/1998). In this example, biopower (state governing strategies designed to target individual habits and desires for the productive, racial, and gender needs of society) can be thought of as the state/industrial governing policies used to increase the nation’s industrial labor base by teaching White worker subjects to internalize racist antagonism toward their non-White working counterparts. The bio of biopower describes how the production of a racialized social life is a prime target of state governance. One of the underlying theoretical contributions of this article is that Du Bois’s analysis of caste education represents an early model of biopolitical research on U.S. schooling. Indeed, as Alexander Weheliye (2014) argues, Du Bois’s study of African Americans in the 20th century provides an alternative and more appropriate biopolitical theory of how race and class work to dehumanize and regulate the population of the ‘‘dark world.’’ In contrast to the European biopolitical tradition rooted in the thought of Foucault, Agamben, and others, ‘‘[as] an object of knowledge in the Du Boisian system of thought, the Negro appears not as a social Darwinist fait accompli but . . . as the conglomerate effect of different racializing assemblages’’ (p. 20). Caste education understood as a biopolitical theory of schooling therefore shows how populations have been managed and shaped to fit the needs of racial capitalist society, where schools play a pivotal role within the racializing assemblages that produce unequal forms of life: human (White) and less than human (non-White). As such, Du Bois’s work is a point of entry for future work that bridges biopolitical and educational research in highly relevant ways—especially how racial capitalist schooling has shaped educational bodies and populations over the past 150 years. In this sense, Du Bois’s biopolitical analysis of education, his caste analytic, exemplifies the best of interdisciplinary research on education for this Centennial Issue. It bridges the most cutting-edge research on education and social justice from the previous century to our current one. Part of the reason for Du Bois’s continued relevance in this century is that he provides the first study of the education within the racial capitalist society of the United States.

#### **The only possible demand is one that calls for the end of the world itself—the affirmative represents a conflict within the paradigm of America but refuses to challenge the foundational antagonism that produces the violence that undergirds the that same paradigm**

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Leaving aside for the moment their state of mind, it would seem that the structure, that is to say the rebar, or better still the grammar of their demands—and, by extension, the grammar of their suffering—was indeed an ethical grammar. Perhaps their grammars are the only ethical grammars available to modern politics and modernity writ large, for they draw our attention not to the way in which space and time are used and abused by enfranchised and violently powerful interests, but to the violence that underwrites the modern world’s capacity to think, act, and exist spatially and temporally. The violence that robbed her of her body and him of his land provided the stage upon which other violent and consensual dramas could be enacted. Thus, they would have to be crazy, crazy enough to call not merely the actions of the world to account but to call the world itself to account, and to account for them no less! The woman at Columbia was not demanding to be a participant in an unethical network of distribution: she was not demanding a place within capital, a piece of the pie (the demand for her sofa notwithstanding). Rather, she was articulating a triangulation between, on the one hand, the loss of her body, the very dereliction of her corporeal integrity, what Hortense Spillers charts as the transition from being a being to becoming a “being for the captor” (206), the drama of value (the stage upon which surplus value is extracted from labor power through commodity production and sale); and on the other, the corporeal integrity that, once ripped from her body, fortified and extended the corporeal integrity of everyone else on the street. She gave birth to the commodity and to the Human, yet she had neither subjectivity nor a sofa to show for it. In her eyes, the world—and not its myriad discriminatory practices, but the world itself—was unethical. And yet, the world passes by her without the slightest inclination to stop and disabuse her of her claim. Instead, it calls her “crazy.” And to what does the world attribute the Native American man’s insanity? “He’s crazy if he thinks he’s getting any money out of us”? Surely, that doesn’t make him crazy. Rather it is simply an indication that he does not have a big enough gun. What are we to make of a world that responds to the most lucid enunciation of ethics with violence? What are the foundational questions of the ethico-political? Why are these questions so scandalous that they are rarely posed politically, intellectually, and cinematically—unless they are posed obliquely and unconsciously, as if by accident? Return Turtle Island to the “Savage.” Repair the demolished subjectivity of the Slave. Two simple sentences, thirteen simple words, and the structure of U.S. (and perhaps global) antagonisms would be dismantled. An “ethical modernity” would no longer sound like an oxymoron. From there we could busy ourselves with important conflicts that have been promoted to the level of antagonisms: class struggle, gender conflict, immigrants rights. When pared down to thirteen words and two sentences, one cannot but wonder why questions that go to the heart of the ethico-political, questions of political ontology, are so unspeakable in intellectual meditations, political broadsides, and even socially and politically engaged feature films. Clearly they can be spoken, even a child could speak those lines, so they would pose no problem for a scholar, an activist, or a filmmaker. 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The answer is “no” in the sense that, as history has shown, what cannot be articulated as political discourse in the streets is doubly foreclosed upon in screenplays and in scholarly prose; but “yes” in the sense that in even the most taciturn historical moments such as ours, the grammar of Black and Red suffering breaks in on this foreclosure, albeit like the somatic compliance of hysterical symptoms—it registers in both cinema and scholarship as symptoms of awareness of the structural antagonisms. Between 1967 and 1980, we could think cinematically and intellectually of Blackness and Redness as having the coherence of full-blown discourses. But from 1980 to the present, Blackness and Redness manifests only in the rebar of cinematic and intellectual (political) discourse, that is, as unspoken grammars. 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Semiotics and linguistics teach us that when we speak, our grammar goes unspoken. Our grammar is assumed. It is the structure through which the labor of speech is possible. Likewise, the grammar of political ethics—the grammar of assumptions regarding the ontology of suffering—which underwrite Film Theory and political discourse (in this book, discourse elaborated in direct relation to radical action), and which underwrite cinematic speech (in this book, Red, White, and Black films from the mid-1960s to the present) is also unspoken. This notwithstanding, film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume an ontological grammar, a structure of suffering. And the structure of suffering which film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume crowds out other structures of suffering, regardless of the sentiment of the film or the spirit of unity mobilized by the political discourse in question. To put a finer point on it, structures of ontological suffering stand in antagonistic, rather then conflictual, relation to one another (despite the fact that antagonists themselves may not be aware of the ontological positionality from which they speak). Though this is perhaps the most controversial and out-of-step claim of this book, it is, nonetheless, the foundation of the close reading of feature films and political theory that follows.

## Thesis Cards

### Wilderson – World = Anti-Black

#### **The only possible demand is one that calls for the end of the world itself—the affirmative represents a conflict within the paradigm of America but refuses to challenge the foundational antagonism that produces the violence that undergirds the that same paradigm**

Wilderson, ’10 [2010, Frank B. Wilderson is an Associate Professor of African-American Studies at UC Irvine and has a Ph.D. from UC Berkeley, “Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms,”]

Leaving aside for the moment their state of mind, it would seem that the structure, that is to say the rebar, or better still the grammar of their demands—and, by extension, the grammar of their suffering—was indeed an ethical grammar. Perhaps their grammars are the only ethical grammars available to modern politics and modernity writ large, for they draw our attention not to the way in which space and time are used and abused by enfranchised and violently powerful interests, but to the violence that underwrites the modern world’s capacity to think, act, and exist spatially and temporally. The violence that robbed her of her body and him of his land provided the stage upon which other violent and consensual dramas could be enacted. Thus, they would have to be crazy, crazy enough to call not merely the actions of the world to account but to call the world itself to account, and to account for them no less! The woman at Columbia was not demanding to be a participant in an unethical network of distribution: she was not demanding a place within capital, a piece of the pie (the demand for her sofa notwithstanding). Rather, she was articulating a triangulation between, on the one hand, the loss of her body, the very dereliction of her corporeal integrity, what Hortense Spillers charts as the transition from being a being to becoming a “being for the captor” (206), the drama of value (the stage upon which surplus value is extracted from labor power through commodity production and sale); and on the other, the corporeal integrity that, once ripped from her body, fortified and extended the corporeal integrity of everyone else on the street. She gave birth to the commodity and to the Human, yet she had neither subjectivity nor a sofa to show for it. In her eyes, the world—and not its myriad discriminatory practices, but the world itself—was unethical. And yet, the world passes by her without the slightest inclination to stop and disabuse her of her claim. Instead, it calls her “crazy.” And to what does the world attribute the Native American man’s insanity? “He’s crazy if he thinks he’s getting any money out of us”? Surely, that doesn’t make him crazy. Rather it is simply an indication that he does not have a big enough gun. What are we to make of a world that responds to the most lucid enunciation of ethics with violence? What are the foundational questions of the ethico-political? Why are these questions so scandalous that they are rarely posed politically, intellectually, and cinematically—unless they are posed obliquely and unconsciously, as if by accident? Return Turtle Island to the “Savage.” Repair the demolished subjectivity of the Slave. Two simple sentences, thirteen simple words, and the structure of U.S. (and perhaps global) antagonisms would be dismantled. An “ethical modernity” would no longer sound like an oxymoron. 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### Barber – Axiology

#### Blackness constitutes the site of a paradoxical double-bind within the social order – it is both the organizing principle that makes possible the coherence of the world and the object of that world’s gratuitous violence – as such, the aff’s wedding to affirmative potentiality accedes to a form of communicative capitalism which is only capable of modulatively reproducing the anti-black grammar of civil society

Barber 16 (Daniel Colucciello Barber, researcher at the Humboldt University of Berlin, PhD from Duke University, 2016, “The Creation of Non-Being,” *Rhizomes* Issue 29, footnotes 1, 2, and 7 included in curly braces, modified) gz

[1] Anti-blackness operates axiomatically. This is the case, at least, insofar as we speak of what Frank B. Wilderson, III, has called "the world" (Wilderson 2003: 234).[1] {1. "World" here refers not to reality as such, but more precisely to the paradigmatic operations by which reality is structured, positioned, and rendered sensible. Yet this does not mean that one can directly express or pose reality as distinct from the world, for the world governs the very conditions of possibility for expression or position. Even purportedly universal terms, such as humanity, social life, and—to invoke the concern of this essay—being itself, are operations of the world. The Afro-Pessimist thesis, following Wilderson, is that this world constitutes itself and maintains its coherence, at essence, through anti-blackness: the world has being insofar as blackness does not. Since the grammar of this world, or the logic of the aforementioned operations, is so naturalized—enacted and assumed by/from power—that it generally has no need to appear (much less defend itself), the articulation of reality without the anti-black world must begin as an articulation against this world.} The aim of this essay is to address the consequences of this axiomatic operation for some rather classical terms of reference within continental philosophy, such as being, analogy,[2] communication, possibility, and knowledge. {2. Both the reading of Lazzarato I provide below and my general argument, which revolves around the question of negativity and analogy, are deeply shaped by—and only conceivable thanks to—the writings of Wilderson, whose claim about analogy is summarized in the following remark, made in conversation with Hartman: "In my own work, obviously I'm not saying that in this space of negation, which is blackness, there is no life. We have tremendous life. But this life is not analogous to those touchstones of cohesion that hold civil society together. In fact, the trajectory of our life (within our terrain of civil death) is bound up in claiming—sometimes individually, sometimes collectively—the violence which Fanon writes about in *The Wretched of the Earth*, that trajectory which, as he says, is 'a splinter to the heart of the world' and 'puts the settler out of the picture.' So, it doesn't help us politically or psychologically to try to find ways in which how we live is analogous to how white positionality lives, because, as I think your book suggests, whites gain their coherence by knowing what they are not" (Hartman and Wilderson 2003: 187).} Such terms are the means by which the world claims to grant itself coherence; they form the grammatical ground, the structuring condition, of the world. If the "gratuitous violence" of anti-blackness extends into the very "grammar" of the world (Wilderson 2010: 38, 131),[3] then the aforementioned terms—far from providing retreat into a "metaphysical" domain unaffected by the historical and material—serve as points for the articulation of antagonism toward anti-blackness. In fact, the gratuity of such violence—its irreducibility to purposive meaning—entails a refusal of the coherent ground that these very terms claim to supply. This is to say that being—or the possibility thereof—grounds itself not through its own coherence, but through an enactment of power that is staged by anti-black violence. Power precedes grammatical ground.

[2] Maurizio Lazzarato's analysis of contemporary capitalism approaches the anti-blackness analyzed by Wilderson. Lazzarato argues that capitalism is not grounded in any coherent science of economy, but is an enactment of the power to make indebted beings. It is by way of this emphasis on power that he links a purportedly secular capitalism to the theological structure of Christianity—that is, to a being that acts gratuitously, or without ground. Yet Lazzarato, I argue, ultimately wards off an encounter with anti-blackness through reliance on a coherence implicit in "the indebted man" (Lazzarato 2012: 8). I elaborate this argument by drawing on Gilles Deleuze's concept of "difference in itself" (Deleuze 1994: 36-89). This concept, on my reading, ungrounds the purported coherence of being by way of a logically prior differentiality, which is expressed as non-being. Essential to this argument is the task of articulating such non-being without conversion to an affirmation of the world.

Non-Being: Deleuze Against Affirmation

[3] Deleuze's philosophy has come to be associated with habits of affirmation, where "habits" indicate the practices or operations by which reality is experientially and experimentally enacted.[4] This association could be attributed to Deleuze's invocation of concepts such as the rhizome, which appears to advocate teeming, emergent, multiplicitous movement in excess of all boundaries. In such a landscape of fluidity and flux, Deleuze's notion of creation then becomes associated with the affirmation of alternative possibilities. This association may also be attributed to Deleuze's rigorous refusal of the being of negativity. He contends that negative being plays no role in the determination of reality, that it is in fact an illusion that conceals the force of differential immanence. Given the centrality of this contention, any association of Deleuze's thought with habits of affirmation would have to depend on the following claim: the refusal of negative being entails the refusal of habits of negativity, in favor of habits of affirmation.[5]

[4] Yet it is fundamentally mistaken to conflate the refusal of negative being with the refusal of negative habits. The call for habits of affirmation is theoretically illegitimate: if all habits are real, and if reality has no negative being, then all habits—precisely because they are real—do not involve negative being; the reality that is habituated—regardless of whether this habituation is characterized as affirmative or negative—has no negative being. If the call for habits of affirmation is therefore not entailed by Deleuze's refusal of negative being, then from where does this call arise? If habits of affirmation are imperative, then from where does this imperativity draw its mandate? To begin to answer these questions, one must address the ways in which habits of affirmation are *logically consistent*—and ultimately *politically complicit*—with the contemporary conjuncture of capitalism.

[5] This conjuncture, which has been variously described in terms of "late capitalism," "postfordism," or "communicative capitalism," is marked by an affirmation of mobility, innovation, fluidity, possibility, and creativity. Deleuze analyzed this conjuncture in terms of control societies, which he distinguished from disciplinary societies. Control establishes domination not by setting up in advance strict boundaries, but rather by a kind of unending encouragement, or motivated permissiveness: control establishes and expands itself by establishing and expanding possibilities of communication. Domination "no longer operate[s] by confining people but through continuous control and instant communication" (Deleuze 1997: 174). Whereas discipline names the prohibition of excessive mobility and innovation, control names the "modulation" of the possibilities implied in such mobility and innovation (Deleuze 1997: 179).[6]

[6] With control, domination remains not despite, nor in opposition to, but precisely *as* possibility, which is modulated through a communicability that is ever more fluid and receptive in its listening in order to be ever more innovative in its surveilling.[7] {7. The fundamental insidiousness of control is that it permits and encourages the fluidity, mobility, and possibility implied by the sheer *capacity* to narrate. Communicative capitalism does not work by mandating what can and cannot be narrated, rather it calls for any-narration-whatever, as long as the possibility of narration *is* affirmed.} Following Deleuze's analysis of control, habits of affirmation—of multiplicitous possibilities, or of the possibility of being-otherwise—are not resistant to, but actually constitutive of, control's modulation. Control is marked by "endless postponement" (Deleuze 1997: 179), meaning that the future—as that which breaks with the present—never takes place. The present is extended into the future, and so the future becomes a modulation of the present; an essential incommensurability between present and future remains unthinkable.[8] Given Deleuze's analysis, it is not by accident that he increasingly experimented with habits of negativity. In his last book, *What is Philosophy?* – co-written with Félix Guattari, and published one year after his analysis of control—one can observe, for instance, his attentiveness to "shame" (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 107), which was motivated by his reading of Primo Levi, or his indication of agreement with the negative dialectic of Theodor Adorno.[9]

[7] One finds, in the same book, a polemic against communication and a concomitant positioning of creation as distinct from and incommensurable with the communicative.[10] Simply put, Deleuze's increased attention to control, or communication, directly corresponds to his increased attention to the negative—not as being but as experience and experiment, as habit. Thus it is not only that Deleuze's refusal of negative being cannot be conflated with habits of affirmation, it is also that Deleuze, when attending to control, attempts to articulate habits of *negativity*. *What is Philosophy?* concludes with an articulation of the *No* of chaos, the *non* of thought that enables creation: philosophy must attain "an essential relationship with the No that concerns it"; philosophy does "not need the No as beginning, or as the end in which [it] would be called upon to disappear by being realized, but at every moment of [its] becoming or [its] development" (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 218).

[8] The creation named by Deleuze's philosophy is thus in immanence with the No, and it is this No-creation immanence that begins to articulate antagonism toward communication: "Creating has always been something different from communicating" (Deleuze 1997: 175). This divergence between communication and the No of creation is utter, essential, and irredeemable. There is no possibility of emancipating communication, nor is there any affirmative basis for creation—for the base is communication. There is nothing to affirm, and so creation is immanent with the negativity of the non: "The key thing may be to create vacuoles of noncommunication" (Deleuze 1997: 175).

The Reality of Non-Being

[9] My argument, drawing on Deleuze, is that the logic of possibility actually serves to modulatively reproduce the anti-black grammar of the world. Creation, defined as a break with the presently given world, is not a possibility. It is rather immanent with an axiomatic No to such possibility, with habits of negativity.

[10] This thesis concerns a key problematic that stems from the Afro-Pessimist analysis of anti-blackness: if blackness ~~stands~~ [is] both within the habitus of modernity, as an organizing principle, and without this habitus, as a perpetually banished subjectivity, then the very articulation of blackness would seem to depend on and reproduce such a habitus. In other words, both *being*-within and *being*-without are possibilities governed by modernity's dominative positioning of blackness. The articulation of blackness is in fact bound by this problematic insofar as one remains within the ambit of habits of affirmation. In other words, the presumption of affirmation is co-extensive with the reproduction of the habitus of modernity: that which is presently available for affirmation is already governed by modernity and its articulation of blackness, and so habits of affirmation inevitably participate in and reproduce the double-bind in which modernity positions blackness.

[11] Against such reproduction, it is essential to insist on habits of negativity. Such insistence is total: since it is affirmation *as such* that entails participation in the being here indexed by modernity, even a modicum of affirmation mitigates the force enacted by negativity. The power of creation therefore resides entirely and essentially on the side of negativity—and not at all on the side of affirmation. Concomitantly, to invoke such power actually entails an unmitigated refusal of habits of affirmation; affirmation does not name or support, but on the contrary denies, the power of creation. Given the double-bind in which modernity positions blackness, this is to say that the negativity of the non, in virtue of its immanence with a force of creation, indexes blackness as a power of non-being, as that which is without need of—and in fact opposed to—reliance on the affirmative.

[12] It remains necessary to outline the articulation of this immanence of creation and non-being—that is, to theoretically express how an unmitigated insistence on habits of negativity can be both a refusal of affirmation and an enactment of power. This warrants a return to Deleuze's thought by way of some questions: How can habits of negativity, articulated via Deleuze's insistence on the non, gain theoretical consistency with his conceptual refusal of negative being? If negative being is refused, then in what sense can there be insistence on the non?

[13] Deleuze argues that "being is difference itself. Being is also non-being, but *non-being is not the being of the negative* . . . non-being is Difference" (Deleuze 1994: 76-77). This makes clear that negative being is refused in virtue of *difference*; what is essential is difference in itself. Hence difference is articulated not as the affirmation of affirmative being, nor even as the affirmation of being as such. On the contrary, difference is articulated as "non-being": negative *being* is refused, but it is refused in favor of *non*-being. Difference antecedes both positive being *and* negative being, thereby displacing their dialectical or conflictual relation. In other words, difference is not between opposed beings but in itself, autonomous from and antecedent to every being or thing; difference is real, but precisely as a matter of *non*-being. Its reality is not the being of a thing, it is *no*-thing.

[14] Such theorization enables the delinking of creation (as force of non-being, or no-thing) from affirmation (as possibility of being). Difference, or non-being, marks a real force of creation that is without, and incommensurable with, being. In virtue of this unanalogizability of non-being with being, creation is articulated as a force stemming from negativity, and not at all from affirmation: affirmation is said of being and its possibilization, whereas creation is said of non-being. Habits of negativity, which antagonize every (positively or negatively described) being, or being as such, are thus coeval with an insistence on the real force of non-being.

[15] This argument can be used to negotiate a tension between the Afro-Pessimist emphasis on irresolvable negativity and the concern of Black Optimism to emphasize a power named by blackness: while the former's emphasis on negativity extends to habits of affirmation as such, this negativity immanently involves—and thus does not abandon—an insistence on the power of creation. Consequently, the Black Op concern to speak of the power of blackness may be satisfied entirely within the space of negativity, or social death, on which Afro-Pessimism insists. Such satisfaction does not then require recourse to qualifications that would mitigate the negativity of this space, On the contrary, power is immanent to a redoubled negativity, or a negativity toward both being and the affirmation of the possibility of being-otherwise.

[16] Yet even as Deleuze's philosophical efforts may be deployed by and for the articulation of Afro-Pessimist claims, these claims vertiginously intensify Deleuze's theorization of non-being: Deleuze theorizes non-being in terms of a "vertigo" of immanence (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 48), yet blackness is the historical, material experience of such vertigo. Drawing on a distinction made by Wilderson, this is to say that for Deleuze non-being is a "subjective vertigo," or a vertigo *into which* Deleuze's thought makes an entrance, while blackness is experienced as "objective vertigo," meaning that vertigo is—historically or materially—*always already* there (Wilderson 2011: 3). Immanence, or the vertigo of non-being, remains an object for the thought of Deleuze; blackness is historically or materially the *objective reality of* non-being—the very reality of the vertigo of immanence. Consequently, to think non-being according to blackness entails the reading of Deleuze's theoretical articulation in terms of the operations by which historical, material power is enacted.

### Dumas - Blackness

#### Anti-blackness is a structural antagonism that undergirds political life. Their gesture towards non-Black bodies facilitates the expansion of antiblackness, colonialism, and ultimately sustains the ontological foundation and expansion of the current socioeconomic order.

**Dumas 16** [Michael J. Dumas, Assistant Professor at the University of California, Berkeley in the Graduate School of Education and the Department of African American Studies, “Against the Dark: Antiblackness in Education Policy and Discourse,” *Theory Into Practice* 55:11–19, 2016, published by The College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University]

Antiblackness is the central concern and proposition within an intellectual project known as Afro-pessimism.1 Afro-pessimism theorizes that Black people exist in a structurally antagonistic relationship with humanity. That is, the very technologies and imaginations that allow a social recognition of the humanness of others systematically exclude this possibility for the Black. The Black cannot be human, is not simply an Other but is other than human. Thus, antiblackness does not signify a mere racial conflict that might be resolved through organized political struggle and appeals to the state and to the citizenry for redress. Instead, antiblackness marks an irreconcilability between the Black and any sense of social or cultural regard. The aim of theorizing antiblackness is not to offer solutions to racial inequality, but to come to a deeper understanding of the Black condition within a context of utter contempt for, and acceptance of violence against the Black. Afro-pessimist scholars contend that the Black is socially and culturally positioned as slave, dispossessed of human agency, desire, and freedom. This is not meant to suggest that Black people are currently enslaved (by whites or by law), but that slavery marks the ontological position of Black people. Slavery is how Black existence is imagined and enacted upon, and how non-Black people—and particularly whites— assert their own right to freedom, and right to the consumption, destruction, and/or simple dismissal of the Black. “Through chattel slavery,” Frank Wilderson (2010) argued, the world gave birth and coherence to both its joys of domesticity and to its struggles of political discontent; and with these joys and struggles the Human was born, but not before it murdered the Black, forging a symbiosis between the political ontology of Humanity and the social death of Blacks. (pp. 20 – 21) This “social death” of the slave is introduced most explicitly in the work of Orlando Patterson (1982), who detailed how slavery involves a parasitic relationship between slave owner and slave, such that the freedom of the slave owner is only secured and understood in relation to power over the slave. For Patterson, slavery is “the permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons” (p. 13). Although slavery involves personal relationships between groups, it also operates as an institutionalized system, maintained through social processes that make it impossible for the Slave to live, to be regarded as alive for her- or himself in the social world. This focus on slavery might seem anachronistic in the current historical moment, some 150 years after the (formal) end of the institution in the United States. However, Wilderson maintained that the relations of power have not changed. He explained: Nothing remotely approaching claims successfully made on the state has come to pass. In other words, the election of a Black president aside, police brutality, mass incarceration, segregated and substandard schools and housing, astronomical rates of HIV infection, and the threat of being turned away en masse at the polls still constitute the lived experience of Black life. (p. 10) This lived experience serves as a continual reinscribing of the nonhumanness of the Black, a legitimization of the very antiblackness that has motivated centuries of violence against Black bodies. In this sense, even as slavery is no longer official state policy and practice, the slave endures in the social imagination, and also in the everyday suffering experienced by Black people. As Saidiya Hartman (2007) insisted, Americans are living in what she described as “the afterlife of slavery:” Black lives are still imperiled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago. This is the afterlife of slavery—skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment. I, too, am the afterlife of slavery. (p. 6) Importantly here, the afterlife of slavery is not only an historical moment, but deeply impressed upon Black flesh, in the embodiment of the Black person as slave. Thus, Hartman maintained, she is also this afterlife of slavery. Salamishah Tillet (2012) made clear the heaviness of the historical memory, the everpresence of slavery in Black life: Because racial exclusion has become part and parcel of African American political identity since slavery, it cannot simply be willed or wished away. This protracted experience of disillusionment, mourning, and yearning is in fact the basis of African American civic estrangement. Its lingering is not just a haunting of the past but is also a reminder of the present-day racial inequities that keep African American citizens in an indeterminate, unassimilable state as a racialized ‘Other.’ While the affect of racial melancholia was bred in the dyad of slavery and democracy, it persists because of the paradox of legal citizenship and civic estrangement. (p. 9) To the extent that there is ample evidence of the civic estrangement of Black people—their exclusion from the public sphere—one can theorize that the Black is still socially positioned as the slave, as difficult as it may be to use this frame to understand contemporary “race relations.” Here, “race relations” is necessarily in quotations because there is really no relation to be had between master and slave in the way one might conceptualize human relationships. For Afro-pessimists, the Black is not only misrecognized, but unrecognizable as human, and therefore there is no social or political relationship to be fostered or restored. As Wilderson argued, Our analysis cannot be approached through the rubric of gains or reversals in struggles with the state and civil society, not unless and until the interlocutor first explains how the Slave is of the world. The onus is not on one who posits the Master/Slave dichotomy but on the one who argues there is a distinction between Slaveness and Blackness. How, when, and where did such a split occur? (p. 11) And this is the broader challenge posed by a theory of antiblackness: There is no clear historical moment in which there was a break between slavery and acknowledgement of Black citizenship and Human-ness; nor is there any indication of a clear disruption of the technologies of violence—that is, the institutional structures and social processes—that maintain Black subjugation. Thus, Afro-pessimists suggest that one must consider the Black as (still) incapable of asking for (civil or human) rights. This does not deny the long legacy of Black racial struggle, but it positions this struggle as an impossibility, because the Black is (still) imagined outside of the citizenship that allows claims for redress to be regarded as legitimate, or even logical. Part of the challenge in theorizing blackness in contemporary race discourse is that Americans are living in an officially antiracist society, in which, as Jodi Melamed has documented, postWorld War II racial liberalisms and neoliberalisms make some space for the participation of multicultural subjects (Melamed, 2011). That is, even as race continues to structure capitalism, which in turn facilitates white accumulation, the official stance of the state is against racism; blatantly racist laws and government practices have been declared illegal, and the market embraces outreach to a wide multicultural range of consumers. In this context, there is a rush to celebrate the social and economic advancement of select Black individuals and, perhaps more significantly, the success of other groups of people of color. In fact, it is the social and cultural inclusion of non-Black people of color that is often offered as evidence of the end of racial animus and racial barriers in the society. Therefore, the failure of large swaths of the Black population is purported to be a result of cultural deficits within the Black. The slave, always suspected of being lazy and shiftless, now must bear primary responsibility for not making it in a society, which—officially, anyway—thrives on multiracial harmony and civic participation. Jared Sexton (2008, 2010) contended that in this era, multiracialism thrives largely at the expense of, and firmly against, blackness. His argument rests on the premise that the color line is more fluid during periods in which Black freedom is thought to be most contained. Thus, during slavery in the United States, multiracial communities could serve as “buffer classes between whites and blacks” which often “corroborated and collaborated with antiblackness” (Sexton, 2008, p. 12). The current period is marked by similar dynamics, with little organized Black political movement, resegregation of neighborhoods and schools, and, in fact, an easy deterritorialization and gentrification of historic Black urban homeplaces. The current Black Lives Matter movement (Garza, 2014), which has emerged in the wake of so many cases of antiBlack violence, may yet shift Americans into a period of heightened anxiety about Black bodies, but Sexton’s description of the current period is valid: There is little fear of Black bodies and, arguably, an emboldened antipathy to the Black overall. This, in Sexton’s theorizing, opens up new spaces for multiracial inclusion. In this moment, the Black –white divide is seen as less consequential and not as much the result of white attitudes and behaviors. In these moments, Sexton maintained, the more significant boundary is the one constructed “between blackness and everything else” (2008, p. 13). And this is a boundary seemingly constructed and maintained by recalcitrant Black people against multiracialism, and more to the point, multiracial progress. Multiracialism, in Sexton’s view, “premises its contribution to knowledge, culture and politics upon an evacuation of the historical richness, intellectual intensity, cultural expansiveness, and political complexity of Black experience, including, perhaps especially, its indelible terrors” (2008, p. 15). Transcending the Black-white binary, multiracialism ostensibly moves people past the narrowness and anachronism of blackness and toward a more profitable global economy and more sophisticated cultural milieu. Embracing non-Black bodies of color thus facilitates, and is facilitated by, antiblackness, and can be justified as antiracist precisely because it is inclusive of more than white. “The [B]lack body,” Lewis Gordon contended, “is confronted by the situation of its absence” (1997, p. 73). This absence—this social death or afterlife of/as the slave—positions Black people as the embodiment of problem, a thing rather than a people suffering from problems created by antiblackness. Part of the aim of Afropessimist scholarship is to insist on the humanity of Black people. “Those of us who seek to understand [B]lack people,” Gordon concluded, need to “bear in mind that [B]lack people are human beings” (p. 78). In an anti-Black world, this is easier said than done. In the end, there may be, as Wilderson suggested, no “roadmap to freedom so extensive it would free us from the epistemic air we breathe” (2010, p. 338). Even so, like Gordon, Wilderson suggested that theorizing antiblackness is important simply as an existential and political recognition of Black humanity, as a means “to say we must be free of air, while admitting to knowing no other source of breath” (p. 338; italics in original).

## Links

### Link – Generic School Affs

#### (This card links to many different affs, you should re-tag and re-highlight accordingly) Education itself is established on humanist ideals of democracy and freedom that are built upon the fungibility of the black body – even the most radical reformation of schooling misunderstands the historical caste systems that create a cyclical pattern of failure that dooms aff solvency – only a pessimistic analysis that begins and ends at the black positionality has the revolutionary potential to unravel the political and social dimensions that create flaws within education

Pierce 16, Clayton Pierce is an assistant professor of interdisciplinary studies at Western Washington University, 10/11/16, “W.E.B. Du Bois and Caste Education: Racial Capitalist Schooling From Reconstruction to Jim Crow,” <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0002831216677796> NN

Many scholars who have studied the charter/choice governance model have pointed out how such free market reform policies continue legacies of population fragmentation and containment within urban cities along racial, class, and language lines (Buras, 2014; Lipman, 2011; Parker & Margonis, 1996; Wells, Slayton, & Scott, 2002). In her incisive study of the Chicago public school system, Lipman (2011) situates neoliberal economic policy and educational/urban reform within the historical projects of wealth accumulation and White supremacy. While Lipman gestures toward the ‘‘pivotal’’ 400- year legacy of White supremacy in the U.S. nation state, her analysis of the charter/choice debate is largely concerned with how to rehabilitate the project of public education from the damaging forms of enclosures brought on through neoliberal governance models (cf. Stern & Hussain, 2015). What is missing from the critical literature on charter/choice policies is an accounting of how even Marxist critiques retain modern European notions of equity, citizenship, and rights built on the dehumanization of Blacks and the ‘‘dark world.’’ Alternatively, a caste analysis would ask whether existing critiques of charter/choice policies assume a democratic potential in the public school system that was never a design feature. If schools are democratic institutions only insofar as they can support and augment White supremacy and accumulation, what would an adequate response to neoliberal caste strategies such as charter/choice governance be? One contribution a caste analysis makes to the existing research literature on race/class and educational inequality is that it sheds a pessimistic light on the prospect of the public education system in the United States as a recuperable institution. Such a pessimistic assessment stems from the fact that a caste analytic is rooted in a genealogical understanding of U.S. schooling as a population management tool of the racial capitalist state. The founding of the public school in the United States, Du Bois (1935/1998, 1999) argued, was not born out of the application of Enlightenment ideals of democracy and equality but rather from a moment of crisis in the coarticulating projects of White supremacy and capital accumulation during the colonial-plantation period and aftermath of the Civil War. As such, liberal reform and Marxist strategies for dealing with economic and racial inequalities through schooling are untenable because even in these models, democracy and equity have not adequately been washed of their White supremacist and accumulatory origins. From Pessimism to Abolitionary Democracy The second contribution Du Bois’s caste analytic provides to existing literature on choice/charter reform is a call to develop practical expressions of ‘‘abolition democracy’’ (Davis, 2005; Du Bois, 1935/1998; Lipsitz, 2004; Olson, 2004). Different from liberal education reforms based on the assumption that equal political and social standing has been established in the post– Civil Rights era, an abolitionary democratic position starts from the premise that democracy has been thwarted from the onset by the racial capitalist state after its brief period of existence following the Civil War (Du Bois, 1934/ 1998). As Angela Davis (2005) puts it, Du Bois argued that the abolition of slavery was accomplished only in the negative sense. In order to achieve the comprehensive abolition of slavery—after the institution was rendered illegal and black people were released from their chains—new institutions should have been created to incorporate black people into the social order. (p. 95) From an abolitionary democratic standpoint, then, the reconstruction of the public education system in the United States needs to start from Du Bois’s insight that ‘‘by betraying the Negro . . . white Americans betrayed themselves as well, because they destroyed the most democratic and egalitarian force in their national politics, while strengthening the power of the most elite, plutocratic and undemocratic elements in their country’’ (Lipsitz, 2004, p. 277). A caste analysis of U.S. schooling logically points to abolitionary responses to (neo)liberal educational reform. Charter/choice strategies are seen for what they are: the continuation of a historical betrayal that empowers an elite White oligarchy (the 1%) while denigrating all Whites (despite their very real material privileges) through the continued dehumanization of the dark world. A caste analysis call for a second abolitionary education movement pushes beyond existing critiques of charter/choice strategies in another important way by forefronting a fundamental claim in work that has come to be known as Afro-pessimism. As Dumas (2015a) points out, one of the most salient insights from Afro-pessimist thinkers such as Frank Wilderson (2010) is that through chattel slavery the world gave birth and coherence to both its joys of domesticity and to its struggles of political discontent; and with these joys and struggles the Human was born, but not before it murdered the Black, forging a symbiosis between political ontology of Humanity and the social death of Blacks. (Dumas, 2015a, p. 20) Du Bois’s caste analytic and Wilderson’s claim that the European humanistic tradition is based on the fungibility of Black bodies converge around a central thesis: Schools in racial capitalist society are biopolitical to their core, a constituent part of the life and death processes associated with White supremacy and anti-Blackness upon which caste control is built.6 Caste schooling carries with it a material politics of humanity (and therefore democracy) whereby Black bodies and populations are necessarily rooted in an ontological condition of less than human that supports Whiteness as a fully human condition (Wilderson, 2010). In the context of the charter/choice debate, caste and fungibility work together as complementary concepts. When school districts in New Orleans or Philadelphia are handed over to charter management companies, caste populations are being (re)produced. However, they are also working within the historical circuits of Black fungibility because charter/choice policies are framed as an ‘‘innovative’’ approach to rescuing impoverished people of color from a failed public school system. Just as the formerly enslaved and free African American were used to avert a crisis in production and White supremacy after the Civil War by propping up and extending the racial hate and privileges of poor Whites in work and educational spaces, the Black figure (and other students of color) is needed today to sustain governing strategies aimed at ‘‘fixing’’ problems such as the achievement gap student and ‘‘turn around’’ school. As replaceable parts in racial capitalist society, the Black fungible body and populations form a base for neoliberal caste reconstruction because choice/charter policies help provide Whites access to greater assets for thriving through wages of Whiteness generated from the currency of Black social death. One reason high-performing elite charter schools exist is because failing ‘‘urban’’ schools that capture surplus populations of underperforming and ‘‘at-risk’’ students call for innovative market solutions. The fungible populations and bodies of the dark world are part of the measurement and thus the valuation of social life as it is either enhanced (invested in through accumulatory benefits that elite charters provide) or left to whither (in disinvested, underfunded schools). It is through the historical reservoir of antiBlackness that caste reconstruction operates through the charter/choice governance model today. A rejection of charter/choice policies and other neoliberal governing strategies must include a problematized understanding of how the fungibility of Black bodies and populations undergird the humanist (liberal, Marxist, and neo-Marxist) ideal of a democratic education system and the type of human and less than human it can produce. Lacking such a critique, we risk falling back into a romantic notion of democratic education that fails to see how it is based on the ontological ‘‘grammar of suffering’’ of Black bodies and populations (Dumas, 2014; Wilderson, 2010). Du Bois’s caste analysis of education therefore situates the U.S. public education system as part of the ongoing project of caste control in that schools in the neoliberal era help produce the political and ontological conditions of social death and social life. Social life produced through neoliberal education governance strategies foregrounds a historical materialism where charter/choice policies should be read as part of a specific emergence of freedom—as economic value, political category, legal right, cultural practice, lived experience—from the modern transformation of slavery into what Robin Blackburn terms the ‘‘Great Captivity’’ of the New World: the convergence of the private property regime and the invention of racial blackness. (Sexton, 2011, p. 19) There is more at stake in the school choice movement and ‘‘innovative’’ charter governance approach than the loss of a potentially democratic and egalitarian institution of the public school. What is at stake, and what Du Bois’s caste analytic shows, is that the very definitions of freedom, equality, and justice are based on the social death of Black bodies and populations.

### Link – Chain of Equivalences

#### Chain of equivalencies bad

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The recent efflorescence of work applying affect theory to the study of race and racism includes explicit criticisms and implicit endorsements of racial formation theory. Affect theory is used to account for how to think the “micro” of embodiment and intersubjectivity within neoliberal biopolitical state formations. James Thomas’s work provides one example of this approach. Thomas claims to improve on racial formation theory through attention to the “affective-cultural assemblages . . . that produce racial order through their coming together with one another” (Thomas 2014, 74). According to Thomas, this emphasis attends to two deficiencies he finds with racial formation theory. The first problem is the undertheorized role of culture that draws a distinction between racial meaning and reality (78). For Thomas, instead of “a world existing outside of expression, with expression mediating that relationship, reality produces itself only through expression. Meaning-making, then, is not a point of access to reality—it is reality” (78). The second problem Thomas identifies is racial formation theory’s “simultaneous deconstruction of race as a real concept and the active construction of an essentialist political identity of the Other” (81). In this view, the problem is not that identity politics subsumes blackness, but that it forbids interracial coalition. Thomas asks, “How . . . can a politics of solidarity be fostered among working-class Blacks and Whites when their agency is theorized as bounded to their race, class, and gender?” (83). Instead of identity (understood in this case as principally biological), Thomas suggests that affect can serve as a more productive basis for a shared sense of belonging regardless of race, produce “a unified anti-racist platform,” and foster “a practice-oriented enterprise for . . . collective action, rather than an identity- oriented enterprise” (83, 85). Each of the different items on the additive menu coalesces in the dead zone to reproduce the conceptual aphasia regarding blackness. Each addition brings salient angles into play and yet the resulting geometry regards as tangential the singularity of black positionality. Racial formation theory and its critics cohere as the police power against blackness (Woods forthcoming). This antagonism runs deep and makes plain at least four issues we observe in brief here. First is the ongoing intransigence of white supremacy as an organizing rubric for both analysis and action. The only legitimate antidote to white supremacy for Omi and Winant and their critics is multiculturalism, multiracial coalition, and racial projects arising from communities of color. Cutting through the sheen of race consciousness, this is simply humanism’s inclusion and liberalism’s integration principles, dressed up as if it were oppositional to colorblindness. From this perspective, these dynamics are prima facie evidence that the blackwhite binary model of race relations is outmoded and a drag on post–civil rights racial formation. White supremacy thus sets the terms for both white dominance and its repudiation. If whites cannot legitimately stand apart, since autonomy signifies hierarchy, then no racialized group can either. This orientation towards the racial terrain is a power move against the longstanding interventions from black studies quarters—not to mention from black nationalist and black power political formations—that have consistently pointed out, in and across the generations, that black positionality is singular and without analog among other non-black people of color. In lending his support to “the death of white sociology” Ron Walters cogently observed, “Black life has been distinctive and separate enough to constitute its own uniqueness” and therefore its own analytical frame (1973, 197). Positioning all subordinated peoples on the same plane conflates the gratuitous violence of antiblackness with white supremacy, neoliberalism, capitalism, settler colonialism, heteronormative patriarchy, and other modes of being human: “The same people who recently confronted the police dogs and fire hoses, who crossed the mountains and deserts to reach Phoenix or Los Angeles (or traversed the Mediterranean to reach Madrid or Lisbon or Paris), the same people who resist military occupation in Jenin” (Winant 2012, 605). The reality registered throughout black historical struggle is that black suffering is a qualitatively different kind of problem, not merely a matter of degree or scale vis-à-vis other non-white people color. This point has been extensively elaborated throughout the corpus of black critical thought. To cite but one recent contribution on this score, Charles Mills disentangles “the major varieties of white Western racism” in order to highlight that “no other nonwhite group has been so enduringly constitutive of their identity and so enduringly central to white racial consciousness and global racial consciousness in general” (2013, 34, 35, emphasis in original). Extend-ing his argument, Mills makes clear that the anti-Arab, anti-Semite, anti- Native American, anti-Latino, and anti-Aborigine do not create the very thing they are against, “but the Negrophobe does create the Negro” (Mills 2013, 37 fn 10). Perhaps more forcefully, this point has been levied time and again from the ranks of black social movement. Case in point is Cesaire’s biting resignation letter from the French Communist Party in 1956. He states with great acuity “the singularity of our ‘situation in the world,’ which cannot be confused with any other. The singularity of our problems, which cannot be reduced to any other problem. The singularity of our history, constructed out of terrible misfortunes that belong to no one else” (Cesaire 2010, 147).20 For this basic reason, the pitfalls of coalition have been long understood by the black movement. In his characteristic candor, Malcolm X states in a “Message to the Grassroots”: “It’s just like when you’ve got some coffee that’s too black, which means it’s too strong. What you do? You integrate it with cream, you make it weak. If you pour too much cream in, you won’t even know you ever had coffee. It used to be hot, it becomes cool. It used to be strong, it becomes weak. It used to wake you up, now it’ll put you to sleep” (1965, 16). Walter Rodney, too, explained at length how African people’s development was irrevocably corrupted (what has been done cannot be undone) and that survival depends upon extracting an autonomy from the oppressor culture (1990). While the push for coalition and the use of analogies by non-black people disavows these black voices across the generations, non-blacks are not shy about making use of black fungibility to promote their own ethical standing and to impose a scalar reversal in the world’s violence (Sexton 2010 and 2015). For instance, scenes of police violence against protestors in Ferguson, Missouri are more legible and coherent to civil society’s understanding of the ethical problems involved when analogized to Palestine, or the crisis of gun violence in black urban spaces can only be understood when related to war zones elsewhere, as in the reference to Chicago as “Chi-Raq.” Hortense Spillers pointedly cuts to the power differentials recruited to the coalition question when she describes it as a historical “grid of identities running at perpendicular angles: things in serial and lateral array; beings in hierarchical and vertical array” (2003, 314).

### Link – Colonialism

#### There is an ontological difference between slavery and colonialism – we must prefigure slavery in order to understand the ways in which whiteness has dispossessed the Savage – the concept of the law is irredeemable once properly understood for black agency is only ever conceivably legal when it is criminal – the struggle for indigenous liberation is always appropriative of black struggle in a violent analogization that erases black agency

Sexton 10 the curtain of the sky pg 14-7

That is to say, in the debate about the colonial policy of assimilation and its discontents, a debate in which Mannoni and Fanon intervene respectively, it is slavery and the particular freedom struggle it engenders that mark the critical difference. Slavery: that which reduces ‘colonial peoples to a molten state’ uniquely enabling the metropolitan power ‘to pour them into a new mould’, a process in which ‘the personality of the native is first destroyed through uprooting, enslavement, and the collapse of the social structure’ (Mannoni 1990: 27). For Mannoni, ‘assimilation is only practicable where an individual has been isolated from his group, wrenched from his environment and transplanted else- where’ (Mannoni 1990: 27, emphasis added). Fanon’s historical materialist redaction of Mannoni’s psychology of the colonial relation is to refuse the latter’s projection of the ‘affective disorders’ produced by colonization into a pre-colonial cultural eternity. Not so much, perhaps, because such projection would have the Malagasy desire her own colonizer (like the Inca who Mannoni suggests desires her own conquistador in an earlier historical period), but because the contradictions of colonization might provide an even more problematic recommendation for ‘the introduction of slavery’ (Mannoni 1990: 27). To suffer the loss of political sovereignty, the exploitation of labor, the dispossession of land and resources is deplorable; yet, we might say in this light that to suffer colonization is unenviable unless one is enslaved. One may not be free, but one is at least not enslaved. More simply, we might say of the colonized: you may lose your motherland, but you will not ‘lose your mother’ (Hartman 2007). The latter condition, the ‘social death’ under which kinship is denied entirely by the force of law, is reserved for the ‘natal alienation’ and ‘genealogical isolation’ characterizing slavery. Here is Orlando Patterson, from his encyclopedic 1982 Slavery and Social Death: I prefer the term ‘natal alienation’ because it goes directly to the heart of what is critical in the slave’s forced alienation, the loss of ties of birth in both ascending and descending generations. It also has the important nuance of a loss of native status, of deracination. It was this alienation of the slave from all formal, legally enforceable ties of ‘blood,’ and from any attachment to groups or localities other than those chosen for him [sic] by the master, that gave the relation of slavery its peculiar value to the master. The slave was the ultimate human tool, as imprintable and as disposable as the master wished. And this was true, at least in theory, of all slaves, no matter how elevated. (Patterson 1982: 7–8) True even if elevated by the income and formal education of the mythic American middle class, the celebrity of a Hollywood icon, or the political position of the so-called Leader of the Free World. 4 The alienation and isolation of the slave is not only vertical, canceling ties to past and future generations and rendering thereby the notion of ‘descen- dants of slaves’ as a strict oxymoron. It is also a horizontal prohibition, canceling ties to the slave’s contemporaries as well. Reduced to a tool, the deracination of the slave, as Mannoni and Fanon each note in their turn, is total, more fundamental even than the displacement of the colonized, whose status obtains in a network of persecuted human relations rather than in a collection or dispersal of a class of things. Crucially, this total deracination is strictly correlative to the ‘absolute submission mandated by [slave] law’ discussed rigorously in Saidiya Hartman’s 1997 Scenes of Subjection: the slave estate is the most perfect example of the space of purely formal obedience defining the jurisdictional field of sovereignty (Agamben 2000). Because the forced submission of the slave is absolute, any signs whatsoever of ‘reasoning … intent and rationality’ are recognized ‘solely in the context of criminal liability’. That is, ‘the slave’s will [is] acknowledged only as it [is] prohibited or punished’ (Hartman 1997: 82, emphasis added). A criminal will, a criminal reasoning, a criminal intent, a criminal rationality: with these erstwhile human capacities construed as indices of culpability before the law, even the potentiality of slave resistance is rendered illegitimate and illegible a priori. The disqualification of black resistance by the logic of racial slavery is not unrelated to the longstanding cross-racial phenomenon in which the white bourgeois and proletarian revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic can allegorize themselves as revolts against slavery, while the hemispheric black struggle against actually existing slavery cannot authorize itself literally in those same terms. The latter must code itself as the apotheosis of the French and American revolutions (with their themes of Judeo-Christian deliverance) or, later, the Russian and Chinese revolutions (with their themes of secular messianic trans- formation) or, later still, the broad anti-colonial movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America of the mid-20th century (with their themes of indigenous reclamation and renaissance). 5 One of the defining features of contemporary political and intellectual culture remains this metaphoric transfer that appropriates black suffering as the template for non-black grievances, while it misrecognizes the singularity of black struggles against racial slavery and what Loïc Wacquant calls its ‘functional surrogates’ or what Hartman terms its ‘afterlife’. Put differently, ‘the occult presence of racial slavery’ continues to haunt our political imagination: ‘nowhere, but nevertheless everywhere, a dead time which never arrives and does not stop arriving’ (Marriott 2007: xxi). Hartman’s notion of slavery’s afterlife and Wacquant’s theorization of slavery’s functional surrogates are two productive recent attempts to name the interminable terror of slavery, but we are still very much within the crisis of language – of thinking and feeling, seeing and hearing – that slavery provokes. Both scholars challenge the optimistic idea of a residual ‘legacy’ of slavery, precisely because it requires the untenable demarcation of an historic end in Emancipation. The relations of slavery live on, Hartman might say, after the death knell of formal abolition, mutating into ‘the burdened individuality of freedom’.The functions of the chattel system are largely maintained,Wacquant might say, despite the efforts of Reconstruction, preserved in surrogate institutional form under Jim Crow, the ghetto, and the prison. Slavery lives on, it survives, despite the grand attempts on its institutional life forged by the international movements against slavery, segregation and mass imprisonment (Davis 2003). But what if slavery does not die, as it were, because it is immortal, but rather because it is non-mortal, because it has never lived, at least not in the psychic life of power? What if the source of slavery’s longevity is not its resilience in the face of opposition, but the obscurity of its existence? Not the accumulation of its political capital, but the illegibility of its grammar? On this account, for those that bear the mark of slavery – the trace of blackness – to speak is to sound off without foundation, to appear as a ghost on the threshold of the visible world, a spook retaining (only) the negative capacity to absent the presence,ornegatethewilltopresence,ofeveryclaimtohumanbeing,evenperhapsthefugi- tive movement of stolen life explored masterfully by Fred Moten (2008). We might rethink as well the very fruitful notion of ‘fugitive justice’ that shapes the prize-winning 2005 special issue of Representations on ‘Redress’. Co-editors Saidiya Hartman and Stephen Best are posing the right question: ‘How does one compensate for centuries of violence that have as their consequence the impossibility of restoring a prior existence, of giving back what was taken, of repairing what was broken?’ (Hartman and Best 2005: 2) That is to say, they are thinking about ‘the question of slavery in terms of the incomplete nature of abolition’, ‘the contemporary predicament of freedom’ (2005: 5, emphasis added). Yet, the notion subsequently developed of a fugitive life ‘lived in loss’ – spanning the split difference between grievance and grief, remedy and redress, law and justice, hope and resignation – relies nonetheless on an outside, however improbable or impossible, as the space of possibility, of movement, of life. Returning to our schematization of Fanon, we can say that the outside is a concept embedded in the problématique of colonization and its imaginary topography, indeed, the fact that it can imagine topographically at all. But, even if the freedom dreams of the black radical imagination do conjure images of place (and to do here does not imply that one can in either sense of the latter word: able or permitted); what both the fact of blackness and the lived experience of the black name for us, in their discrepant registers, is an anti-black world for which there is no outside. 6 ‘The language of race developed in the modern period and in the context of the slave trade’ (Hartman 2007: 5). And if that context is our context and that context is the world, then this is the principal insight revealed by the contemporary predicament of freedom: there is no such thing as a fugitive slave. Malcolm X, by another route, was not far from this formulation in his famous ‘The Ballot or the Bullet’ address, delivered 3 April 1964 at the Cory Methodist Church in Cleveland, Ohio. Speaking to the risks of political confrontation with the structures of racial domination, he exhorts: ‘If you go to jail, so what? If you black, you were born in jail. If you black, you were born in jail, in the North as well as the South. Stop talking about the South. Long as you south of the Canadian border, you’re south.’ For blacks in the USA, the political borders of the nation-state mark the walls of a social incarceration, a political ontology of race uninterrupted by ontic differences of region or legal standing. Of course, Malcolm X did not restrict his commentary to the USA, even if recent devel- opments in national electoral politics were the focus of this particular address. His evolv- ing analysis accommodated a much larger geographical scale, what he elsewhere designated ‘white world supremacy’. But if there is any weight to his insistence that the Mason-Dixon Line, demarcating the territories of a still unresolved civil war, or even the prison wall, constituting liberal democracy’s internal hard edge, are incidental to black life – this from a former prisoner of over six years – should we not extend this reasoning to the ultimate penalty, the absolute master, and stop talking about death as the limit of black life? Not a loss (of life and limb, liberty and property), but a never having had. Not only the figurative ‘nothing to lose but your chains’ of the proletariat, but the literal inability to lose (because unable to own, to accumulate, to have and to hold, to self-possess) at all. Can’t have (even when we got), can’t be (even when we are): a strange freedom in the heart of slavery. ‘The political ontology of race’ is a phrase borrowed from work of political theorist Frank B. Wilderson, III, where it has been elaborated from his 2003 Social Identities article, ‘Gramsci’s Black Marx’, to his 2008 American Book Award-winning memoir, Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile and Apartheid, and his forthcoming Red,White, and Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms. Drawing heavily upon Gordon and Fanon, alongside the early Patterson, the ongoing research of Wacquant on the four ‘peculiar institutions’ that have ‘operated to define, confine, and control African Americans in the history of the United States’ (Wacquant 2002: 41), and an array of noted literary critics and historians (e.g. David Eltis, Lindon Barrett, Saidiya Hartman, Ronald A.T. Judy, David Marriott, Hortense Spillers); Wilderson supplants the paradigm of comparative ethnic and racial studies in two principle ways. First, by moving conceptually from the empirical to the structural, especially insofar as the question of differential racialization – or the compli- cations of racial hierarchy – makes recourse to a comparative sociology, measuring relative rates of infant mortality, poverty, illiteracy, high school graduation, hate crimes, impris- onment, electoral participation, and so on. Second, by reframing racism (pace Fanon) as a social relationship that is grounded in anti-blackness rather than white supremacy. What Wilderson demonstrates at length is that ‘the racialization of the globe’ (Dikötter 2008) or the formation of the ‘world racial system’ (Winant 2002) does not adhere strictly to Du Bois’s thesis on the color line – ‘the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men [sic] in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea’ – in which ‘Negro slavery’ is referred to as but one ‘phase’ of a general problem. Rather, slavery establishes the vestibule of the category of the Human. To be sure, Humans do not live under con- ditions of equality in the modern world. In fact, modernity is, to a large degree, marked by societies structured in dominance: patriarchy and white supremacy, settler colonialism and extra-territorial conquest, imperialist warfare and genocide, class struggle and the international division of labor. Yet, for Wilderson, there is a qualitative difference, an ontological one, between the inferiorization or dehumanization of the masses of people ‘in Asia … in America and the islands of the sea’, including the colonization of their land and resources, the exploitation of their labor and even their extermination in whole or in part, and the singular com- modification of human being pursued under racial slavery, that structure of gratuitous violence in which bodies are rendered as flesh to be accumulated and exchanged. 7 On this score, we should note that ‘the absolute submission mandated by law was not simply that of slave to his or her owner, but the submission of the enslaved before all whites’ (Hartman 1997: 83). The latter group is perhaps better termed all non-blacks (or the unequally arrayed category of non-blackness), because it is racial blackness as a necessary condition for enslavement that matters most, rather than whiteness as a sufficient condition for freedom. The structural position of the Indian slaveholder – or, for that matter, the smattering of free black slaveholders in the USA or the slaveholding mulatto elite in the Caribbean – is a case in point (Blackburn 1997; Koger 2006; Miles and Holland 2006). Freedom from the rule of slave law requires only that one be considered non-black, whether that non-black racial designation be ‘white’ or ‘Indian’ or, in the rare case, ‘Oriental’ – this despite the fact that each of these groups have at one point or another labored in conditions similar to or contiguous with enslaved African-derived groups. In other words, it is not labor relations, but property relations that are constitutive of slavery.

### Link – Critical Pedagogy (Schooling)

#### (This tag should differ greatly depending on the aff) The aff’s critical pedagogy and endorsement of a simple reshuffling of resources in schools is emblematic of a larger racial caste system that refuses the category of human to black people

Pierce 16, Clayton Pierce is an assistant professor of interdisciplinary studies at Western Washington University, 10/11/16, “W.E.B. Du Bois and Caste Education: Racial Capitalist Schooling From Reconstruction to Jim Crow,” <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0002831216677796> NN

Within the field of educational research W.E.B. Du Bois is one of the most important thinkers in the 20th century. Yet, as Banks (1992), Gordon (1995), Alridge (1999, 2008), Johnson (2000), Brown (2010), and Grant, Brown, and Brown (2016) argue, critical educational thought is rarely conceptualized from the standpoint of the Black intellectual tradition. One result has been a failure to recognize one of the most important theoretical contributions to educational research in the 20th century: Du Bois’s devastating and comprehensive historical and sociological analysis of schooling in the United States, which he termed caste education. For Du Bois, schools played a central role in preserving the caste society established in the colonialplantation period. After the fall of the old caste system based on slave codes, a type of reconstruction took place, according to Du Bois—one in which the public school became a primary place where the racial privileges of the ‘‘white world’’ and the dehumanizing conditions the ‘‘dark world’’ were educated into existence and the old caste codes were dressed in new Jim Crow clothing. Du Bois’s work on caste formation through schooling underscores the dynamic and adaptive nature of caste control in U.S. society, which continues today in the school, prison, hyper-policed communities, court, housing, and health systems (Alexander, 2010). With the application of corporate ‘‘turnaround’’ tactics working in concert with city gentrification projects (Buras, 2014; Lipman, 2011), schools have become tools of caste formation that create ‘‘gated communities for children of privilege’’ (Novak, 2014). In this sense, Du Bois’s caste analysis helps us understand what Ladson-Billings (2006) has called the ongoing educational ‘‘debt’’ as a necessary byproduct of the inextricable projects of White supremacy and capitalist accumulation through schooling. A caste analysis of schools thus emphasizes the fact that there are no intentions of ever paying off the educational ‘‘debt’’ in a racial capitalist society. Doing so would mean the public schooling system ceasing to be one of the most important sites of caste reconstruction necessary for producing racial and economic competition between the White and non-White worlds. In developing Du Bois’s caste analysis of schooling in racial capitalist society, I proceed as follows. First, I discuss Du Bois’s marginalization in education research and how this example of ‘‘epistemic apartheid’’ has obscured his highly original biopolitical critique of schooling in the United States. Next, I define racial capitalism and its relation to caste education. Specifically, I outline how Du Bois’s historical materialist understanding of racial capitalism grounds his caste analysis of U.S. schools within a biopolitical framework; schools, for Du Bois, are one of the most important governing tools for managing and producing social life in line with the racial capitalist needs of the industrial/state nexus. In developing Du Bois’s biopolitical analysis of education, I focus next on clarifying what a caste analysis consists of in his writings on education, race, and economic injustice. The next section puts the conceptual strengths of caste into conversation with the debate on the intersection of race and class in the education research literature. I argue here that Du Bois’s caste analytic bridges a gap in the literature through its biopolitical approach that differs from other models generated from Marxist, neo-Marxist, critical race theory (CRT), and other critical social theory traditions. I then turn to Du Bois’s concept of ‘‘double consciousness’’ to look at how unequal forms of social life are produced in segregated schools. Here I focus on how subjects think of themselves and others in schooled spaces organized through caste tools—what I call veil technologies. Du Bois’s focus on the production of subjectivity in caste school settings offers a powerful biopolitical perspective on how racial and economic inequality is reproduced through states’ school governing strategies. In the last section, I apply Du Bois’s caste analytic to the choice/charter policy debate as a way of introducing a new direction that moves away from liberal reform models and European-informed Marxist strategies of resistance. Turning to recent work in Afro-pessimism, I argue that despite the difference between them, both models of social and political change assume a problematic understanding of the human subject supportive of White supremacy and accumulation. Finally, a brief note on the methodology I use in this essay to articulate Du Bois’s analytic of caste. To support the claim that Du Bois’s analytic of caste is a biopolitical methodology, I trace its historical development as it evolves throughout Du Bois’s large interdisciplinary body of research on education, race, capitalism, and imperialism. In connecting the diffuse pieces of work where Du Bois provides caste analyses of education throughout his early sociological and historical work to his later Marxist revolutionary and anti-imperialist phase, a highly relevant methodological framework is apparent. Namely, the caste analytic I outline and unify from Du Bois’s work provides an important interdisciplinary research model that puts human life as the stakes of the public education system—the very ability of people of color to live without being cut down by the systematic violence of the white world. When Du Bois (1973/2001) says in the opening quote to this essay that ‘‘either we do this or we die,’’ he means that the abolition of caste education and caste society in general requires developing an education system that can create an ‘‘alternative of not dying like hogs’’ (p. 121). For Du Bois then, part of ‘‘guid[ing] our future so as to ensure our physical survival, our spiritual freedom and our social growth’’ for the dark world depends on picking up and utilizing caste as a methodological tool as we move into the next hundred years of educational research. In the neoliberal era when caste schooling still persists as an important appendage to the racial capitalist state, social death is now wrapped in free market myths and discourses of individual responsibility. It is now imperative more than ever for educational research to carry on and advance Du Bois’s study of caste education. Now let us, however, turn to some of the reasons Du Bois’s caste analytic has remained obscured as a method of educational research.

### Link - Disability

#### The affirmative’s project is premised upon the resolution of disability as a conflict within the paradigm of civil society through the acquisition of contingent freedom – however, this deflects from anti-blackness as the fundamental antagonism that subtends modern sociality which demands a mode of gratuitous freedom from the world itself – only the alternative’s positing of blackness as an unrepresentable grammar of suffering shakes the foundation of their theory and reveals that disability studies, as a discipline, coheres itself through black nonbeing

Kim 13 (Hyo Kim, assistant professor of English at Medgar Evers College, City University of New York, PhD from Stony Brook University, Fall 2013, ““The Ruse of Analogy”: Blackness in Asian American and Disability Studies,” *Penumbra: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Critical and Creative Inquiry* Volume 1) gz

Min Hyoung Song recently highlighted a disavowed yet structurally inevitable entanglement between blackness and Asian Americans in U.S. civil society when he noted that Asian Americans are becoming “less of a model whose successes specifically berate blacks and other racial minorities for their lack of resolve and more a kind of, for lack of a better term, super-minority whose successes berate everyone [including the disabled] who fails somehow to succeed” (18). Song’s provocative take on the evolving status of the “model minority” maps what I see as a potentially productive dialogue between Disability studies and the contemporary critique of the concept of an Asian-American model minority.1 Also, as Song makes explicit, we should also include in this dialogue the construction of blackness in any discussion of the “model minority” because the term insinuates that there is an antithesis of the “model” and it is safe to say within the Americas that people of African descent have historically and are now under the greatest scrutiny in that category. In this way, Asian Americans’ emergent status as “super-minority” also correlates with what Michelle Alexander has recently diagnosed as the “‘color blind’ public consensus that personal and cultural traits, not structural arrangements, are largely responsible for the fact that the majority of young black men in urban areas across the United States are currently under the control of the criminal justice system or branded as felons for life” (234-5). Broadly put, the aim of the present essay is to foreground how subfields such Asian American and Disability studies can participate, however unwittingly, in deflecting attention from what Alexander calls the “structural arrangements” that contour blackness within U.S. civil society. In doing so, I hope to intervene in the ongoing depoliticization of ethnic/minoritarian studies within higher learning. The Zero Degree of Sociality of Blackness To clarify this structural displacement I also draw upon Frank B. Wilderson’s recent intervention entitled Red, White & Black (2011). Wilderson’s provocative study maintains that in order for a politics or ethics to become legible within U.S. civil society, it must be based upon an assumptive logic which calibrates all citizens-subjects as a priori human, which effectively puts under erasure what Wilderson calls one of the “structural antagonisms” that has historically framed black bodies as potentially, or rather, always already non-human. It is, therefore, only by attending to such “structural antagonisms” (as opposed to a conflict which can be dialectically resolved) that anti-blackness (and in a different way, the antagonism toward the Native American) can be brought into sharp relief not as contingent but gratuitous (i.e. structural) to the formation of U.S. civil society.2 Thus when the concept of the human (or any of its metonymic variation such as personhood) is invoked as the a priori condition that subsumes all persons within civil society, it has the effect of displacing and putting under erasure what Wilderson calls the “blackness’s grammar of suffering”―which is structurally bound to the Middle Passage that effectively transformed the African into the fungible object status of the Slave. Therefore, as Wilderson reminds us: For the Black, freedom is an ontological, rather than experiential, question. There is no philosophically credible way to attach an experiential, a contingent, rider onto the notion of freedom when one considers the Black―such as freedom from gender or economic oppression, the kind of contingent riders rightfully placed on the non-Black when thinking freedom. Rather, the riders that one could place on Black freedom would be hyperbolic―though no less true―and ultimately untenable: freedom from the world, freedom from Humanity, freedom from everyone (including one’s Black self). (24) In this, there can be no analogue to “blackness’s grammar of suffering,” which exceeds the descriptive power of representative language, as it gestures toward the unrepresentable, the zero-degree of sociality which the Slave embodies. Drawing upon the interarticulations between Disability and Asian American studies to illuminate this structural displacement is not as arbitrary as it might seem, as both become legible and ultimately unstable in and around “blackness.” This complex entanglement, says Wilderson via Ronald Judy’s (Dis)Forming the American Canon (1994) that the mere presence of the Black and his or her project, albeit adjusted structurally, threatens the fabric of the ‘stable’ economy by threatening its structure of exchange. ‘Not only are the conjunctive operations of discourse of knowledge and power that so define the way in which academic fields get authenticated implicated in the academic instituting of Afro-American studies, but so is the instability entailed in the nature of the academic work.’ (40) As previously mentioned, Wilderson’s deployment of the term “antagonism” reflects his understanding that U.S. Civil Society continues to gratuitously position the Black as a being without humanity. According to Wilderson’s extension of Judy’s study, the disavowal of the “structural antagonism” toward the Black is thus a necessary function that is crucial to not only “instituting of Afro-American studies” but the manner in which such fields as Asian American and Disability studies “get authenticated” within academia. This insight is crucial to understanding how the convergence of Disability and Asian American studies on their assumptive logic of the human unwittingly works to displace “blackness’s grammar of suffering” from the political and ethical terrain that contours U.S. civil society.

### Link – Educational Reform

#### Their educational reforms misunderstand history – only the alt captures the revolutionary potential of past trauma and connects it to present instances of anti-black violence

**Dumas 16** [Michael J. Dumas, Assistant Professor at the University of California, Berkeley in the Graduate School of Education and the Department of African American Studies, “Against the Dark: Antiblackness in Education Policy and Discourse,” *Theory Into Practice* 55:11–19, 2016, published by The College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University] NN

What does it mean to suggest that education policy is a site of antiblackness? Fundamentally, it is an acknowledgment of the long history of Black struggle for educational opportunity, which is to say a struggle against what has always been (and continues to be) a struggle against specific anti-Black ideologies, discourses, representations, (mal)distribution of material resources, and physical and psychic assaults on Black bodies in schools. During the years of statesanctioned slavery, white slaveowners would often beat their Black property for attempting to learn to read; for Black people in bondage, learning to read was understood not only as a pathway to economic mobility, but, perhaps more importantly, as assertion of their own humanity, a resistance to being propertied (Anderson, 1988; Dumas, 2010). A century later, Black children faced down snarling, spitting mobs of white parents and elected officials who were incensed that their own white children would have to sit next to Black children, and fearful that their white education would be sullied by the presence of the Black. And this, then, is the essence of antiblackness in education policy: the Black is constructed as always already problem—as nonhuman; inherently uneducable, or at very least, unworthy of education; and, even in a multiracial society, always a threat to what Sexton (2008, p. 13) described as “everything else.” School desegregation is perhaps the most prominent education policy of the past century in which Black people have been positioned as problem. Racial desegregation of schools in the United States has been made necessary due to generations of state-supported residential segregation, a form of “American apartheid” (Massey & Denton, 1993) in which government housing policies allowed whites to accumulate land (and, therefore, wealth) at the expense of Black people (Dumas, 2015; Roithmayr, 2014). Residential segregation was rationalized as a necessary means to avoid race mixing—the presence of Black people particularly, but other people of color as well, was seen as a detriment to the quality of life and economic stability to which white people were entitled as a result of their skin color. A similar narrative emerged as whites organized in opposition to school integration; anti-Black racism was at least one primary cause of white flight from school districts that were ordered to desegregate (Kohn, 1996). In many cities, whites went to great lengths to create districts or school-assignment plans that concentrated whites in the most heavily resourced schools, and relegated Black children to underfunded schools with less experienced teachers and crumbling physical infrastructures (Dumas, 2011, 2014; Horsford, Sampson & Forletta, 2013). In short, school desegregation policy was precipitated by antiblackness. However, school desegregation researchers are more likely to frame their analyses through the lenses of access and diversity, emphasizing the educational benefits of cross-cultural interaction and the importance of providing more equitable allocation of educational resources (Orfield & Eaton, 1996; Orfield & Lee, 2004; Wells, 1995; Wells, Duran, & White, 2008). In contrast, theorizing antiblackness in school desegregation policy shifts the focus to interrogation of policies that led to the displacement of Black educators and the destruction of school communities that affirmed Black humanity (Tillman, 2004). Antiblackness allows one to capture the depths of suffering of Black children and educators in predominantly white schools, and connect this contemporary trauma to the longue dure´e of slavery from bondage to its afterlife in desegregating (and now resegregating) schools. And taking Sexton’s (2008) analysis of multiracialism into account leads to a more nuanced and careful critique of how schools pit the academic success of (some) Asian American students against and above the academic difficulties of Black students. Here, schools can be celebrated as diverse despite the absence of Black students in the building and/ or in the higher academic tracks. Ultimately, the slave has no place in the most privileged and highly-regarded school spaces; the Black becomes a kind of educational anachronism, not quite suited for our idealized multicultural learning community.

### Link – Education Starting Points

#### This debate comes down to a question of starting points – their policies are doomed to failure absent a radical shift in politics that starts at the position of the non-human

**Dumas 16** [Michael J. Dumas, Assistant Professor at the University of California, Berkeley in the Graduate School of Education and the Department of African American Studies, “Against the Dark: Antiblackness in Education Policy and Discourse,” *Theory Into Practice* 55:11–19, 2016, published by The College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University] NN

W. E. B. DuBois, writing about integration of schools in 1935, argued that segregated schools were still needed due to the “growing animosity of the whites” (p. 328). White public opinion, he explained, was overwhelmingly opposed to establishing racially integrated schools. In such a context, he believed, it was impossible for Black children to receive “a proper education,” which, in his view, included “sympathetic touch between teacher and pupil” and the teaching of knowledge about Black history and culture as a group, as citizens. One can read DuBois as seeking an education for Black people that creates spaces to disrupt the exclusion of the Black from the cultural and political regard extended to those who are presumed Human. Most educators would like to believe that modern Americans live in a different time than DuBois—that the animosity of whites against Black people has declined, or is no longer the norm, especially among well-intentioned educators who profess to care about all children and who are likely to have been educated in colleges of education with expressed commitments to equity and diversity. The scholarship on antiblackness insists that the very imagination of all children was never intended to include the Black, and that the Black becomes antagonistically positioned in relation to diversity visions and goals. It is the Black that is feared, despised, (socially) dead. But how is any of this helpful? First, as Wilderson (2010) suggested, it is important for educators to acknowledge that antiblackness infects educators’ work in schools, and serves as a form of (everyday) violence against Black children and their families. This acknowledgement is different from a broad stance against intolerance or racism, or an admission of the existence of white privilege. Teachers, administrators, and district leaders should create opportunities to engage in honest and very specific conversations about Black bodies, blackness, and Black historical memories in and of the school and local community. They all might explore together what it means to educate a group of people who were never meant to be educated and, in fact, were never meant to be, to exist as humans. More systemically, educators might begin to imagine an education policy discourse and processes of policy implementation that take antiblackness for granted. Thus, any racial disparity in education should be assumed to be facilitated, or at least exacerbated, by disdain and disregard for the Black. Differences in academic achievement; frequency and severity of school discipline; rate of neighborhood school closures; fundraising capacity of PTAs; access to arts, music, and unstructured playtime—these are all sites of antiblackness. That is to say, these are all policies in which the Black is positioned on the bottom, and as much as one might wring one’s hands about it all, and pursue various interventions, radical improvements are impossible without a broader, radical shift in the racial order. This is perhaps, however fittingly, a pessimistic view of education policy. However, its possibility is in fomenting a new politics, a new practice of education, committed to Black—and therefore human—emancipation.

### Link - Environmentalism

#### The aff’s state-based environmental politics reaffirms anti-black hegemony – solutions to environmental justice still rely on an underpinning of racial capitalism which prevents any truly revolutionary or successful approach toward global warming

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We have argued that through its reliance on the state the EJ movement has not been successful at improving the environmental quality of vulnerable populations. Exide Technologies illustrates the inability and/or refusal of diverse parts of the state to enforce existing laws. The many reasons for this include a lack of awareness, the judiciary’s willingness to strike deals, and the local regulatory agency’s failure and/or unwillingness to close the facility when it did not comply with regulations. In the second case, a predominantly Black community in Gainesville Georgia has not been able to secure a clean environment for decades. Here, no laws are being broken. Rather, there is an absence of meaningful regulation and enforcement, especially concerning small emitters. The local state consistently tells activists that its hands are tied and that nothing can be done, when in reality, the inaction reflects a lack of political will. Though certainly there is room for enhanced regulatory science and policy practices, especially around cumulative exposure (Sadd et al. 2011), it should be clear that the problem is primarily one of politics. The question we are left with is “why?” Why have these communities and the larger EJ movement been unable to extract meaningful protection from the state? Part of the challenge in answering this question is the diversity of the EJ movement, the myriad challenges individual communities face, and the various measures of success within and outside the movement. Despite this diversity, we feel there are important overarching themes. The first point to stress is the extent to which vulnerable communities, in this case communities of color, are essential to the functioning of racial capitalism. Racial capitalism is a distinct interpretation of capitalism that acknowledges race as a structuring logic (Robinson [1983] 2000). Racism, as a material and ideological system that produces differential meaning and value, is harnessed by capital in order to exploit the differences that racism creates. In this case, devalued communities, places, and people serve as pollution “sinks,” that enable firms to accumulate more surplus than would otherwise be possible (see also Faber 2008, ch. 1). We must bear this fundamental truth in mind when considering how the EJ movement has imagined the state and approached it. There is no doubt that activists understand that they are essential to racial capitalism, even if they do not express it in those terms. But they seem to believe that the state will actually protect them. Accordingly, they approach the state with a great deal of faith and hope. This is especially the case in California with its many Latina/o politicians. Hope and faith are not the only emotions that accompany interactions with the state, however. There is also distrust, disappointment, and desperation. In the case of the NFC, who have worked with EPA Region 4 for over 25 years and seen little change in the community, they still feel that the EPA is the only option, even if they are pessimistic that such efforts will actually result in meaningful change. The fact that activists continually turn to the state and see it as the only option suggests the hegemony of the state in terms of creating social change: activists cannot readily identify paths outside of the framework offered by the state. It is important here to recall the deep connections between the CRM and the EJ movement. While Swyngedouw and Heynen (2003) have argued that the EJ movement is a fundamentally liberal project, we believe that the movement includes a diversity of political orientations, including some quite radical and some more conservative (Carter 2016). Yet, there is no denying that the movement’s dominant strand is liberal. Indeed, Pellow and Brulle (2005) have advocated for a critical EJ studies. As a primarily liberal movement, EJ seeks to address the most problematic aspects of capitalism and racial domination, without necessarily challenging capitalism or the state’s efforts to protect it. Perhaps EJ is following the path of many other social movements, splintering between more liberal and radical factions. Liberal groups will continue to work with the state, while the latter confronts it, perhaps through alliances with anarchist and/or anti-capitalist formations, with environmentalists from the Global South, or with counterhegemonic identity movements, such as Black Lives Matter. Using conventional strategies, especially relying on the state in this neoliberal era, will not produce conditions that compel polluters to stop. The state is not about to eliminate the necessary “sinks” that communities of color provide, for fear of both capital flight and the wrath of conservatives. Instead, the state gives lip-service to EJ but in fact does little to change the materiality of disproportionate pollution patterns. In the case of Exide, it was only after the story had been publicized for years by the Los Angeles Times that the facility was finally closed down. The inability of regulators to control Exide became a joke, and the legitimacy of state and local regulators was threatened.3 And recall, Exide decided to close instead of facing criminal charges. What is needed on the part of the EJ movement is a fundamental rethinking of its attitude towards the state. Instead of seeing the state as a helpmate or partner, it needs to see the state as an adversary and directly challenge it. While the early EJ movement did this, over the decades it has been increasingly co-opted by the state and lost much of its oppositional content. It can regain its radical position by not only challenging the state, but refusing to participate in regulatory charades. The EJ movement should take a page from Black Lives Matter. It’s not about being respectable, acknowledged, and included. It’s about raising hell for both polluters and the agencies that protect them. Given the planetary crisis we are facing, we need a radicalized EJ movement more than ever.

### Link – Epistemic Apartheid

#### The aff’s scholarship represents an epistemic apartheid where their theories are built upon the fungibility of black scholarship

Pierce 16, Clayton Pierce is an assistant professor of interdisciplinary studies at Western Washington University, 10/11/16, “W.E.B. Du Bois and Caste Education: Racial Capitalist Schooling From Reconstruction to Jim Crow,” <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0002831216677796> NN

As Margonis (2007) has argued, Du Bois’s work in educational theory exemplifies a larger legacy of ‘‘epistemological ignorance’’ that reflects the ways White supremacy affects knowledge production, even in the work of progressive and radical thinkers in the field of education (see also Grant et al., 2016). As Rabaka (2010, 2013) has aptly noted, Du Bois’s institutional marginalization is an example of ‘‘epistemic apartheid.’’ The underutilization and historical marginalization of Du Boisean research in education has led to the obscuring of at least two important theoretical contributions useful for studying racial and economic inequality and schooling. First, Du Bois’s analysis of caste education shows him to be much more than simply Booker T. Washington’s counterpart when it comes to radical critiques of schooling in a racial capitalist society. Following Gordon’s (1995) and others’ call decades ago, shifting Du Bois from margin to center moves beyond critical analyses of schooling that treat race and class as separate units of analysis or from the standpoint of the European critical theory tradition (Brown & De Lissovoy, 2011; Leonardo, 2004, 2012; Watkins, 2005a). Second, the theoretical contribution of Du Bois’s work on caste education is an anticipation of critiques of schooling that intersect with features of what has come to be known as biopolitics (Giroux, 2008; Lewis, 2007, 2009; Peters, 2001; Pierce, 2013). As an interdisciplinary area of research, biopolitical analyses have grown out of Foucault’s work on the ways modern institutions and governments utilize racism (along with other forms of biopower) as a key governing strategy to regulate and divide the population within a state to achieve specific economic and racial goals. For example, Du Bois points out that compulsory public schooling was used by the North in the lead-up to the Civil War to raise the skill and ability level of ‘‘free’’ wage workers in ways that made plantation labor less competitive in terms of the needs of industrial work. In this sense, compulsory public schooling was used as a state biopolitical strategy that put pressure on the slave labor economy of the South to enter the more efficient (and profitable) labor relations of wage work. Yet, Du Bois notes, racial divisions were built into this strategy: White ‘‘free’’ workers in the North learned a deep animosity toward the emancipated slaves because they represented a threat to their wage potential and monopoly of work in the North (Du Bois, 1935/1998). In this example, biopower (state governing strategies designed to target individual habits and desires for the productive, racial, and gender needs of society) can be thought of as the state/industrial governing policies used to increase the nation’s industrial labor base by teaching White worker subjects to internalize racist antagonism toward their non-White working counterparts. The bio of biopower describes how the production of a racialized social life is a prime target of state governance. One of the underlying theoretical contributions of this article is that Du Bois’s analysis of caste education represents an early model of biopolitical research on U.S. schooling. Indeed, as Alexander Weheliye (2014) argues, Du Bois’s study of African Americans in the 20th century provides an alternative and more appropriate biopolitical theory of how race and class work to dehumanize and regulate the population of the ‘‘dark world.’’ In contrast to the European biopolitical tradition rooted in the thought of Foucault, Agamben, and others, ‘‘[as] an object of knowledge in the Du Boisian system of thought, the Negro appears not as a social Darwinist fait accompli but . . . as the conglomerate effect of different racializing assemblages’’ (p. 20). Caste education understood as a biopolitical theory of schooling therefore shows how populations have been managed and shaped to fit the needs of racial capitalist society, where schools play a pivotal role within the racializing assemblages that produce unequal forms of life: human (White) and less than human (non-White). As such, Du Bois’s work is a point of entry for future work that bridges biopolitical and educational research in highly relevant ways—especially how racial capitalist schooling has shaped educational bodies and populations over the past 150 years. In this sense, Du Bois’s biopolitical analysis of education, his caste analytic, exemplifies the best of interdisciplinary research on education for this Centennial Issue. It bridges the most cutting-edge research on education and social justice from the previous century to our current one. Part of the reason for Du Bois’s continued relevance in this century is that he provides the first study of the education within the racial capitalist society of the United States.

### Link - Extinction

#### Institutional structures of domination create everyday holocausts—you should reject singular focused impacts in favor of working against the ongoing extinctions of people of color [international conflict impacts]

Omolade 89, [1989, Barbara Omolade is a historian of black women for the past twenty years and an organizer in both the women’s and civil rights/black power movements, “We Speak for the Planet” in “Rocking the ship of state : toward a feminist peace politics”, pp. 172-176]

Recent efforts by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan to limit nuclear testing, stockpiling, and weaponry, while still protecting their own arsenals and selling arms to countries and factions around the world, vividly demonstrate how "peace" can become an abstract concept within a culture of war. Many peace activists are similarly blind to the constant wars and threats of war being waged against people of color and the planet by those who march for "peace" and by those they march against. These pacifists, like Gorbachev and Reagan, frequently want people of color to fear what they fear and define peace as they define it. They are unmindful that our lands and peoples have already been and are being destroyed as part of the "final solution" of the "color line." It is difficult to persuade the remnants of Native American tribes, the starving of African deserts, and the victims of the Cambodian "killing fields" that nuclear war is the major danger to human life on the planet and that only a nuclear "winter" embodies fear and futurelessness for humanity. The peace movement suffers greatly from its lack of a historical and holistic perspective, practice, and vision that include the voices and experiences of people of color; the movement's goals and messages have therefore been easily coopted and expropriated by world leaders who share the same culture of racial dominance and arrogance. The peace movement's racist blinders have divorced peace from freedom, from feminism, from education reform, from legal rights, from human rights, from international alliances and friendships, from national liberation, from the particular (for example, black female, Native American male) and the general (human being). Nevertheless, social movements such as the civil rights-black power movement in the United States have always demanded peace with justice, with liberation, and with social and economic reconstruction and cultural freedom at home and abroad. The integration of our past and our present holocausts and our struggle to define our own lives and have our basic needs met are at the core of the inseparable struggles for world peace and social betterment. The Achilles heel of the organized peace movement in this country has always been its whiteness. In this multi-racial and racist society, no allwhite movement can have the strength to bring about basic changes. It is axiomatic that basic changes do not occur in any society unless the people who are oppressed move to make them occur. In our society it is people of color who are the most oppressed. Indeed our entire history teaches us that when people of color have organized and struggled-most especially, because of their particular history, Black people-have moved in a more humane direction as a society, toward a better life for all people.1 Western man's whiteness, imagination, enlightened science, and movements toward peace have developed from a culture and history mobilized against women of color. The political advancements of white men have grown directly from the devastation and holocaust of people of color and our lands. This technological and material progress has been in direct proportion to the undevelopment of women of color. Yet the dayto- day survival, political struggles, and rising up of women of color, especially black women in the United States, reveal both complex resistance to holocaust and undevelopment and often conflicted responses to the military and war. The Holocausts Women of color are survivors of and remain casualties of holocausts, and we are direct victims of war-that is, of open armed conflict between countries or between factions within the same country. But women of color were not soldiers, nor did we trade animal pelts or slaves to the white man for guns, nor did we sell or lease our lands to the white man for wealth. Most men and women of color resisted and fought back, were slaughtered, enslaved, and force marched into plantation labor camps to serve the white masters of war and to build their empires and war machines. People of color were and are victims of holocausts-that is, of great and widespread destruction, usually by fire. The world as we knew and created it was destroyed in a continual scorched earth policy of the white man. The experience of Jews and other Europeans under the Nazis can teach us the value of understanding the totality of destructive intent, the extensiveness of torture, and the demonical apparatus of war aimed at the human spirit. A Jewish father pushed his daughter from the lines of certain death at Auschwitz and said, "You will be a remembrance-You tell the story. You survive." She lived. He died. Many have criticized the Jews for forcing non-Jews to remember the 6 million Jews who died under the Nazis and for etching the names Auschwitz and Buchenwald, Terezin and Warsaw in our minds. Yet as women of color, we, too, are "remembrances" of all the holocausts against the people of the world. We must remember the names of concentration camps such as Jesus, Justice, Brotherhood, and Integrity, ships that carried millions of African men, women, and children chained and brutalized across the ocean to the "New World." We must remember the Arawaks, the Taino, the Chickasaw, the Choctaw, the Narragansett, the Montauk, the Delaware, and the other Native American names of thousands of U.S. towns that stand for tribes of people who are no more. We must remember the holocausts visited against the Hawaiians, the aboriginal peoples of Australia, the Pacific Island peoples, and the women and children of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We must remember the slaughter of men and women at Sharpeville, the children of Soweto, and the men of Attica. We must never, ever, forget the children disfigured, the men maimed, and the women broken in our holocausts-we must remember the names, the numbers, the faces, and the stories and teach them to our children and our children's children so the world can never forget our suffering and our courage. Whereas the particularity of the Jewish holocaust under the Nazis is over, our holocausts continue. We are the madres locos (crazy mothers) in the Argentinian square silently demanding news of our missing kin from the fascists who rule. We are the children of El Salvador who see our mothers and fathers shot in front of our eyes. We are the Palestinian and Lebanese women and children overrun by Israeli, Lebanese, and U.S. soldiers. We are the women and children of the bantustans and refugee camps and the prisoners of Robbin Island. We are the starving in the Sahel, the poor in Brazil, the sterilized in Puerto Rico. We are the brothers and sisters of Grenada who carry the seeds of the New Jewel Movement in our hearts, not daring to speak of it with our lipsyet. Our holocaust is South Africa ruled by men who loved Adolf Hitler, who have developed the Nazi techniques of terror to more sophisticated levels. Passes replace the Nazi badges and stars. Skin color is the ultimate badge of persecution. Forced removals of women, children, and the elderly-the "useless appendages of South Africa"-into barren, arid bantustans without resources for survival have replaced the need for concentration camps. Black sex-segregated barracks and cells attached to work sites achieve two objectives: The work camps destroy black family and community life, a presumed source of resistance, and attempt to create human automatons whose purpose is to serve the South African state's drive toward wealth and hegemony. Like other fascist regimes, South Africa disallows any democratic rights to black people; they are denied the right to vote, to dissent, to peaceful assembly, to free speech, and to political representation. The regime has all the typical Nazi-like political apparatus: house arrests of dissenters such as Winnie Mandela; prison murder of protestors such as Stephen Biko; penal colonies such as Robbin Island. Black people, especially children, are routinely arrested without cause, detained without limits, and confronted with the economic and social disparities of a nation built around racial separation. Legally and economically, South African apartheid is structural and institutionalized racial war. The Organization of African Unity's regional intergovernmental meeting in 1984 in Tanzania was called to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. The meeting considered South Africa's racist apartheid regime a peace issue. The "regime is an affront to the dignity of all Africans on the continent and a stark reminder of the absence of equality and peace, representing the worst form of institutionalized oppression and strife." Pacifists such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi who have used nonviolent resistance charged that those who used violence to obtain justice were just as evil as their oppressors. Yet all successful revolutionary movements have used organized violence. This is especially true of national liberation movements that have obtained state power and reorganized the institutions of their nations for the benefit of the people. If men and women in South Africa do not use organized violence, they could remain in the permanent violent state of the slave. Could it be that pacifism and nonviolence cannot become a way of life for the oppressed? Are they only tactics with specific and limited use for protecting people from further violence? For most people in the developing communities and the developing world consistent nonviolence is a luxury; it presumes that those who have and use nonviolent weapons will refrain from using them long enough for nonviolent resisters to win political battles. To survive, peoples in developing countries must use a varied repertoire of issues, tactics, and approaches. Sometimes arms are needed to defeat apartheid and defend freedom in South Africa; sometimes nonviolent demonstrations for justice are the appropriate strategy for protesting the shooting of black teenagers by a white man, such as happened in New York City. Peace is not merely an absence of 'conflict that enables white middleclass comfort, nor is it simply resistance to nuclear war and war machinery. The litany of "you will be blown up, too" directed by a white man to a black woman obscures the permanency and institutionalization of war, the violence and holocaust that people of color face daily. Unfortunately, the holocaust does not only refer to the mass murder of Jews, Christians, and atheists during the Nazi regime; it also refers to the permanent institutionalization of war that is part of every fascist and racist regime. The holocaust lives. It is a threat to world peace as pervasive and thorough as nuclear war.

### Link - Foucault

#### Their conception of power and discipline places erasure on non-white individuals and communities by universalizing operations of power on white bodies as some sort of all incorporating narrative of experience, rendering invisible entire histories of white supremacist slaughter.

Joy James 1996 [Resisting State Violence p. 24-25]

Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* offers a body politics of state punishment and prosecution that is considered by some postmodernists to be a master narrative competent to critique contemporary state policing. Yet this particular work contributes to the erasure of racist violence. In respect to U.S. policing and punishment, the metanarrative of *Discipline and Punish* vanquishes historical and contemporary racialized terror, punishments, and control in the United States; it therefore distorts and obscures violence in America in general. By examining erasure in body politics, lynching, and policing; penal executions and torture; and terror in U.S. foreign policy— issues that Foucault overlooks in his discussion of the history of policing in the United States—we find visceral spectacles of state abuse. *Erasure in Body Politics* Writing about the "disappearance of torture as a public spectacle"—with no reference to its continuity in European and American colonies where it was inflicted on indigenous peoples in Africa and the Americas—Foucault weaves a historical perspective that eventually presents the contemporary ("Western") state as a nonpractitioner of torture.*1* His text illustrates how easy it is to erase the specificity of the body and violence while centering discourse on them. Losing sight of the violence practiced by and in the name of the sovereign, who at times was manifested as part of a dominant race, Foucault universalizes the body of the white, propertied male. Much of *Discipline and Punish* depicts the body with no specificity tied to racialized or sexualized punishment. The resulting veneer of bourgeois respectability painted over state repression elides racist violence against black and brown and red bodies. Foucault states that the "historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born" (137). Failing to concretize this "art of the human body," he leaves unaddressed these questions: which body serves as prototype? Who bore this representative model or type? Ostensibly talking about the body while ignoring its uniqueness, Foucault explores issues of policing that are restricted to behavior. If one asserts that the "introduction of the 'biographical' is important in the history of penalty. . . . Because it establishes the 'criminal' as existing before the crime and even outside it" (252), one might also note that the biographical is intricately tied to the biological—that is, the "criminal" is identified not only by his or her act but also by his or her appearance.2 Consider how Foucault's discussion of nonconformity as offense masks the body: What is specific to the disciplinary penalty is non-observance, that which does not measure up to the rule, that departs from it. The whole indefinite domain of the non-conforming is punishable: the soldier commits an "offence" whenever he does not reach the level required; a pupil's "offence" is not only a minor infraction, but also an inability to carry out his tasks. (178-79) Nonobservance and nonconformity are often understood as biologically determined, given that the departure from the norm shows up not only in behavior but visually in terms of physical characteristics that are racialized. Foucault's exclusive focus on actions suggests undifferentiated bodies. Physical appearance, however, can be considered an expression of either conformity or rebellion. Because some bodies fail to conform physiologically, different bodies are expected and are therefore required to behave differently under state or police gaze. Greater obedience is demanded from those whose physical difference marks them as aberrational, offensive, or threatening. Conversely, some bodies appear more docile than others because of their conformity in appearance to idealized models of class, color, and sex; their bodies are allowed greater leeway to be self-policed or policed without physical force. To illustrate: a white male executive in an Armani suit is considered more docile, civilized, and in need of less invasive, coercive policing than a black male youth in a hooded sweatshirt and off-the-hip baggy jeans. (In contrast, white youths who racially cross-dress— with baseball caps turned backwards, "X" t-shirts, low-riding pants—are generally not aggressively targeted by police who distinguish between fashion consumerism and racial membership.) Noting how physique is constructed as a marker for deviancy and criminality, Frantz Fanon writes in "The Negro and Psychopathology" that the "Negro symbolizes the biological danger. . . . To suffer from a phobia of Negroes is to be afraid of the biological." 3 To fear the black is to fear the body; conversely, to revere the black is to idealize the body. Foucault writes of social fear and policing that are reflected in "binary division and branding," which produces the polarized social entities of the "mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal"; this "coercive assignment" of labeling, categorizing, and identifying places the individual under "constant surveillance" (199). Foucault, however, makes no mention of sexual and racial binary oppositions to designate social inferiority and deviancy as biologically inscribed on the bodies of nonmales or nonwhites. Therefore, when he reports in *Discipline and Punish* that "the mechanisms of power" are organized "around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him," racial and sexual issues are evaded (199-200). To write that these mechanisms of dominance rely on the panopticism produced by the disciplinary and exclusionary practices for the "arrest of the plague" and the "exile of the leper" (which for Foucault respectively represent the dreams of a "disciplined society" and a "pure community") without considering the role of race in the formation of that disciplined society and pure community is to see the United States through blinders (198). In racialized societies such as the United States, the plague of criminality, deviancy, immorality, and corruption is embodied in the black because both sexual and social pathology are branded by skin color (as well as by gender and sexual orientation). Where the plague and the leper are codified in the black, for instance, the dreams and desires of a society and state will be centered on the control of the black body. Binary oppositions and panopticism will thereby be racialized. In binary opposition, antiblack racism has played a critical, historical role in rationalizing (and inverting) hierarchies of oppressor and oppressed: crazy/sane, dangerous/harmless, and normal/deviant. Foucault ignores this phenomenon, while other theorists such as Frantz Fanon and Sander Gilman explore it. Panopticism and the policing gaze are also informed by racial and sexual bias; the tools for observation and examination that Foucault delineates are constructed within worldviews influenced by racial and sexual mythologies and political ideologies that guide carceral testing. Foucault's *carceral* refers to a network of regimentation and discipline, a prison without walls in turn made up of social networks for surveillance.

### Link – Gender/Sexuality

#### Gender and sexuality are part of a drama of value that operates on the terrain of bodies, but the black is only flesh

Wilderson III 2010 [Frank B., Apparently just an unqualified film critic. Friends with Siskel and Ebert? *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*, pages 313-316]

Above I suggested that Seshadri-Crooks, by way of Butler, contradicts my assessments. This is imprecise: in point of fact, she is simply mute in the face of my assessments. Again, the drama of value that Butler imagines is one in which gender stands in as a reified form that masks the hybridity of bodies. The body then, or rather disparate bodies, is a basic "always already" for Butler, Seshadri-Crooks, and most feminism (this includes the feminism of film theory). Granted, though it appears in her assessment as the smallest scale of cartographic coherence, it nonetheless appears as—and herein lies the rub!—a capacity for spatiality and temporality possessed universally by all. But surely Judith Butler, a White American, if not Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, an East Indian, must recall that Africans went into the hold of ships as bodies and emerged from the holds of those ships as "flesh." "I. . . make a distinction . . . between 'body' and 'flesh' and impose that distinction as the central one between captive and liberated subject-positions. In that sense, before the 'body' there is the 'flesh,' that zero degree of social conceptualization that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse or the reflexes of iconography."42 For the body's reification of gender to constitute an essential grammar of suffering there must first be a body there. Feminism, Marxism, and film studies must provide and account for a corpus delicti, the corpse of a murder victim. One would think that true rigor demands some, however short, nod to that historical process through which Black flesh was recomposed as a body before one can write about a universal template called "the body" which can perform and contest gender in dramas of value. In other words, what "event" (what coherence of time) reinstated Black corporeal integrity (reinstated cartographic coherence) so that philosophers and film theorists (and Marxists, filmmakers, and White feminists) could imagine Blackness as possessing the capacity to be staged in dramas where bodily stylization is repeated—where value reifies as gender? This burden of proof is on the Master, not the Slave. Lacan, Silverman, Negri, Hardt, Butler, Heath, Marc Forster and company must make that case to Fanon, Spillers, Patterson, Hartman, Marriott, Judy, and Mbembe. I . . . suggest that "gendering" takes place within the confines of the domestic, an essential metaphor that then spreads its tentacles for male and female subjects over a wide ground of human and social purposes [that ground being civil society]. Domesticity appears to gain its power by way of a common origin of cultural fictions that are grounded in the specificity of proper names, more exactly, a patronymic, which, in turn, situates those subjects that it covers in a particular place. Contrarily, the cargo of a ship might not be regarded as elements of the domestic, even though the vessel that carries the cargo is sometimes romantically personified as "she." The human cargo of a slave vessel—in the effacement and remission of African family and proper names—contravenes notions of the domestic. . . . Under these conditions, one is neither female, nor male, as both subjects are taken into account as quantities.43 Until one can demonstrate how the corporeal integrity of the Black has indeed been repaired, "a political genealogy of gender ontologies" which "blow[s] apart the sex-gender-desire nexus .. . [and thus] permits resignification of identity as contingency" is a political project the Slave can only laugh at, or weep at. But whether laughing or weeping (for the Slave's counterhegemonic responses are of no essential value and have no structural impact), the Slave is always sidelined by such "resignification of [Human] identity." Resignification of an identity which never signified— an identity void of semiotic play—is nothing to look forward to. Here, an unforgivable obscenity is performed twice over: first, through the typical White feminist gesture that assumes all women (and men) have bodies, ergo all bodies contest gender's drama of value; and, second, by way of the more recent, but no less common, assertions that the analysis of "relations" between White and Black has a handy analog in the analysis of gendered relations. Indeed, for such intellectual protocols to transpose themselves from obscenities to protocols truly meaningful to the Slave (in other words, for their explanatory power to be essential and not merely important), the operative verbs, attached to what Butler calls "the . . . forces that police," would have to be not mask and redact but murder. "Identity" may very well be "the investiture of name, and the marking of reference"44—and here is where the postcolonial subject and the White subject of empire can duke it out (if, in the process, they would leave us alone!)—but Blackness marks, references, names, and identifies a corpse. And a corpse is not relational because death is beyond representation, and relation always occurs within representation. What is the "it" beyond representation that Whiteness murders? In other words, what "evidence" do we have that the violence that positions the Slave, is structurally different from the violence inflicted on the worker, the woman, the spectator, and the postcolonial? Again, as I demonstrated in part 1, the murdered "it" is capacity par excellence, spatial and temporal capacity. Marxism, film theory, and the political common sense of socially engaged White cinema think Human capacity as Butler and Seshadri-Crooks do, as universal phenomena. But Blacks experience Human capacity as a homicidal phenomenon. Fanon, Judy, Mbembe, Hartman, Marriott, Patterson, and Spillers have each, in his or her own way, shown us that the Black lost the coherence of space and time in the hold of the Middle Passage. The philosophy of Judith Butler, the film theory of Kaja Silverman, Mary Ann Doane, and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, the Marxism of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, the social optimism or pessimism of popular film reviews, and the auteurial intention of the director Marc Forster all leave the Slave unthought. They take as given that the Black has access to dramas of value. But each disparate entity in any drama of value must possess not only spatiality (for even a patch of grass exists in space), but the power to labor on space, the cartographic capacity to make place—if only at the scale of the body. Each disparate entity in any drama of value must possess not only temporality (for even a patch of grass begins-exists-and-is-no-more) but the power to labor over time: the historiographic capacity to narrate "events"—if only the "event" of sexuality. The terrain of the body and the event of sexuality were murdered when the African became a "genealogical isolate."45 Thus, the explanatory power of the theorists, filmmaker, and film reviewers cited above, at its very best, is capable of thinking Blackness as identity or as identification, conceding, however, as the more rigorous among them do, that "black and white do not say much about identity, though they do establish group and personal identifications of the subjects involved."46 But even this concession gets us nowhere. At best, it is a red herring investing our attention in a semiotic impossibility: that of the Slave as signifier. At worst, it puts the cart before the horse, which is to say that no Marxist theory of social change and proletarian recomposition, and no feminist theory of bodily resignification, has been able (or cared) to demonstrate how, when, and where Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves. Yet, they remain, if only by omission, steadfast in their conviction that slavery was abolished. At moments, however, the sensory excess of cinema lets ordinary White film say what extraordinary White folks will not.

### Link - Hegemony

#### US hegemony is just the racial violence of America gone global –aff claims to benevolence are symptoms of white privilege

Rodriguez ‘07 [Dylan, PhD in Ethnic Studies Program of the University of California Berkeley and Associate Proffessor of Ethnic Studies at University of California Riverside, “American Globality And the US Prison regime: State Violence And White Supremacy from Abu Ghraib to Stockton to bagong diwa”, Ateneo de Manila University, 2007, Kritika Kultura 9 (2007): 022-048]

In fact, the notion of American globality I have begun discussing here already exceeds negri and Hardt’s formulation to the extent that it is a global racial formation, and more pointedly a global mobilization of a white supremacist social formation (read: a united States of America formed by the social-economic geographies of racial chattel slavery and their recodification through the post-13th Amendment innovation of other technologies of criminalization and imprisonment). The US prison regime’s production of human immobilization and death composes some of the fundamental modalities of American national coherence. It inscribes two forms of domination that tend to slip from the attention of political theorists, including Negri and Hardt: first, the prison regime strategically institutionalizes the biopolitical structures of white racial/nationalist ascendancy—it quite concretely provides a definition for white American personhood, citizenship, freedom, and racialized patriotism. Second, the prison regime reflects the moral, spiritual, and cultural inscription of Manifest Destiny (and its descendant material cultural and state-building articulations of racist and white supremacist conquest, genocide, and population control) across different historical moments. to invoke and critically rearticulate negri and Hardt’s formulation, the focal question becomes: How does the right of the US-as-global police to kill, detain, obliterate become voiced, juridically coded, and culturally recoded? the structure of presumption—and therefore relative political silence—enmeshing the prison’s centrality to the logic of American globality is precisely evidence of the fundamental power of the uS prison regime within the larger schema of American hegemony. In this sense the uS prison regime is ultimately really not an “institution.” rather it is a formulation of world order (hence, a dynamic and perpetual labor of institutionalization rather than a definitive modernist institution) in which massively scaled, endlessly strategized technologies of human immobilization address (while never fully resolving) the socio-political crises of globalization. The US prison regime defines a global logic of social organization that constitutes, mobilizes, and prototypes across various localities. What would it mean, then, to consider state-crafted, white supremacist modalities of imprisonment as the perpetual end rather than the self-contained means of American globality? I am suggesting a conception of the prison regime that focuses on what cultural and political theorist Allen Feldman calls a “formation of violence,” which anchors the contemporary articulation of white supremacy as a global technology of coercion and hegemony. Feldman writes, the growing autonomy of violence as a self-legitimating sphere of social discourse and transaction points to the inability of any sphere of social practice to totalize society. Violence itself both reflects and accelerates the experience of society as an incomplete project, as something to be made. As a formation of violence that self-perpetuates a peculiar social project through the discursive structures of warfare, the US prison regime composes an acute formation of racial and white supremacist violence, and thus houses the capacity for mobilization of an epochal (and peculiar) white supremacist global logic. This contention should not be confused with the sometimes parochial (if not politically chauvinistic) proposition that American state and state-sanctioned regimes of bodily violence and human immobilization are somehow self-contained “domestic” productions that are exceptional to the united States of America, and that other “global” sites simply “import,” imitate, or reenact these institutionalizations of power. In fact, I am suggesting the opposite: the US prison regime exceeds as it enmeshes the ensemble of social relations that cohere uS civil society, and is fundamental to the geographic transformations, institutional vicissitudes, and militarized/economic mobilizations of “globalization” generally. to assert this, however, is to also argue that the constituting violence of the US prison regime has remained somewhat undertheorized and objectified in the overlapping realms of public discourse, activist mobilization, and (grassroots as well as professional) scholarly praxis.

Here I am arguing that it is not possible to conceptualize and critically address the emergence and global proliferation of the (uS/global) prison industrial complex outside a fundamental understanding of what are literally its technical and technological premises: namely, its complex organization and creative production of racist and white supremacist bodily violence. It is only in this context, I would say, that we can examine the problem of how “the Prison” is a modality (and not just a reified product or outcome) of American statecraft in the current political moment. It is only a theoretical foregrounding of the white supremacist state and social formation of the united States that will allow us to understand the uS prison regime as an American globality that materializes as it prototypes state violence and for that matter, “state power” itself through a specific institutional site.

### Link – Income Inequality

#### Their income inequality reform sanitizes racism

Ward Univ. of Illinois @ Urbana-Champaign, ‘07 Robert Anthony-; Neoliberal Silences, Race, & The Hope of CRT; A paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Research Association; April Draft; http://www.urban.illinois.edu/apa-pw/APA07/Neoliberal%20Silences\_Robert%20Ward.pdf

Neoliberalism fosters an economic theory of democracy. The idea is that democracy is commodified at the price of political liberalism, subordinating the state to the market. Highlighting the parallel between economic and political markets. Neoliberal policy in the development of charter schools does not create an “equal playing field”, in contrast, by undoing the memory of past discrimination, and unseating our historical consciousness of institutional discrimination it seeks to overlook civic values in the interest of developing commercial interests. The need through actualizing the academic function of education to place individuals in the division of labor and integrate them into the workforce (distributive and economic functions of education) takes precedent for charters and is disconnected from concepts of the social, justice, or civic responsibility. As such, colorblindness negates relationships between racial difference and power. The danger in such an ideological approach to educational policy and other implications is that the “rhetoric of color-blindness is commonly used as a pretext to continue to justify hierarchical racial divisions (Parker, 2003, 150).” Though market ideology virtually ignores notions of race, the history of racialization and discrimination in both the national and New Orleans context are implicit in every facet of the restructuring process. Through a shift in focus from individual actors or governing bodies determining school structures to the market as the primary delineator, power is “uncoupled from matters of ethics and social responsibility (Giroux, 2004, 59).” Thus, social responsibility is shifted from the state and those governing bodies onto the poor and oppressed groups and historical discriminatory policies and treatments forgotten. Under the neoliberal approach to education through charter schools, market ideology replaces longstanding social contracts that sought equality and opportunities that public schools were hoped to one day fulfill. The chartering of public education is representative of a much larger effort that is deeply ingrained in America’s racial consciousness, in whiteness, and in the new left’s attempts to position class over the legacy of racialization in America. Market ideology is the triumph of capital over politics as well as morality. It is the triumph of economic logic over all other domains of human existence, and therefore represents the end of history (Giroux 2004). The promotion of a new relationship between government and knowledge: the development of new forms of social accounting and expertise (via technological advances) to promote notions of government at a distance. The notion of educational reform for “equal educational opportunity” finds little material import and is purely ideological at best. Major criticism levied on both reform movements since the mid 1950’s and research such as the landmarks studies of the *Coleman Report* and the work of Jencks, and Bowles and Gintis are extensive in scope. Of particular interest are that reforms and research to this end were all results based with a primary focus on individualism, competition, and meritocracy. Also, the ideological stance of “equal educational opportunity” concentrates too heavily on site based reform, choosing to view schools as autonomous instead of as closely tied to the wider society of racial segregation mechanisms, the labor market, and the state itself. Finally, the too little consideration in reform language considers the question of what education is and seeks to accomplish, besides being viewed as purely functional (Burbules & Sherman 1979). This is to say that without reform addressing past discrimination by way of race and class then reform initiatives are not only still inequitable and unequal but still in fact discriminatory. Particularly through reform initiatives using market ideology, but also in discussions of educational equity in general, too little attention is paid to the fact that American public education “depends heavily on local property taxes, and inequalities in tax revenues among school districts produce inequalities in educational resources, facilities, programs, and opportunities (Walters, 2001, 44).” Whereas the federal response is for local and state governance to turn to market ideology to solve the questions of equal educational opportunities, particularly in urban districts, what ends up occurring is that the market ideology approach to education veils how racial histories accrue political, economic, and cultural weight to the power of whiteness. This occurs simply by virtue of refusal to acknowledge it. As a final point from the establishment of common schools in the early 19th century to the market approach to education in the present day, “racial inequality in educational funding and other forms of educational opportunity were explicit policies of the state throughout the country (Anderson, 2001, 35).” What the market approach to educational reform offers to Whites and the power structures driving these reforms is the belief that the concept of institutional racism have no merit. It legitimates the idea that America has achieve a “level playing field” and as such privileges in education and economic opportunities that Whites enjoy are due to individual “determination, a strong work ethic, high moral values, and a sound investment in education (Giroux, 2004).” This ideological standpoint leaves Whites and the elite free and clear, absolving them from feeling any sense of responsibility to rebuild the physical infrastructure of American schools. This task proves critical for sustaining a high-quality learning environment for those students who have been cheated from such opportunities. This leaves millions of students in need of decent facilities and educational opportunities, especially in urban areas, and in a strange twist of fate, only themselves to blame for the conditions in which they exist (Anderson, 2005, 133).”

### Link – Marxist Schooling

#### Our theory encompasses theirs but not vice versa – their Marxist lens that sees capitalism as the base for which conflicts occurs misunderstands the ways in which blackness doesn’t exist in the material plane but rather acts as the base on which materialism can be developed – this means only the alt alone can solve their offense

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Developed in his groundbreaking Black Reconstruction (Du Bois, 1935/ 1998), Du Bois’s theory of racial capitalism is both a critique and advancement of Marx’s Eurocentric and class-based theorization. Different from Marx’s understanding of a stage theory of history, where capitalism comes after slave-based economies, racial capitalism encompasses the view that ‘‘racial ideologies and the social structures emergent from capitalism mutually constitute one another’’ (Cheng, 2013, p. 150). Robinson’s (2000) pioneering Black Marxism has also pointed out that Du Bois’s concept of racial capitalism rewrote the history between slavery and capitalism in the United States. In particular, Du Bois’s racial capitalist analysis of the United States shows that slavery and capitalism are not independent or hierarchical to each other but rather co-articulating systems of power integral to the economic and political development of the United States. Robinson states that the conflicts between American creed and reality, the contradictions of American society, the distortions of its social structures and political institutions ensued from its dependence on slavery and would resound throughout the system into the twentieth century. Slavery, then, was not a historical aberration, it was not a ‘‘mistake’’ in an otherwise bourgeois democratic age. It was, and its imprints continued to be, systemic. (p. 200) Mapping Du Bois’s analysis of caste education helps us understand how schooling has participated in the ‘‘aberration’’ of democracy in a racial capitalist society based on the production of racial divisions among the working populations and the preservation of White supremacy. I also situate Du Bois’s critique of caste education as central to understanding how racial capitalist schooling functions for an important theoretical and methodological reason: Du Bois’s analytic of caste shows how the U.S. education system cannot simply be explained through its relation to economic superstructure or how schools operate solely to reproduce economic social relations beneficial to the processes of capitalist accumulation (Brown & De Lissovoy, 2011). Instead, Du Bois places the caste education system within the co-productive and dynamic relationship between capitalist and White supremacist power structures foundational to the creation and development of the U.S. nation state. Du Bois’s mapping of caste education therefore helps us understand how schools have and continue to participate in the processes of racial capitalism by viewing them within patterns of social control that have spanned the colonial-plantation period to current neoliberal restructuring education projects. Ultimately, what I hope to show in this article is that understanding racial capitalist schooling through Du Bois’s biopolitical analysis of caste education reveals an evolving and adaptive system of social control that maintains unequal and violent relations between what he called the white and dark worlds. Du Bois’s analysis of caste education, in addition to its focus on the school’s role in controlling non-White and White populations on behalf of the goals of racial capitalism, is also useful because it explains how individuals come to learn caste subjectivities. Schools, thought of as a network of caste technologies of control (curriculum, funding sources, industrial reform strategies, vocational mandates, control of teacher training, etc.), participate in the production of caste psychologies that preserve and reconstitute competitive relations between the white and dark worlds. For Du Bois, a fundamental feature of caste education is that schooling in racial capitalist society creates fractured and unequal forms of social existence activated through technologies organizing the educational spaces of the white and dark worlds. As Du Bois (1999) puts it in one of his incisive critiques of American democracy, ‘‘Reconstruction became in history a great movement for the self-assertion of the white race against the impudent ambition of the degraded blacks,’’ and the ‘‘result was the disfranchisement of the blacks of the South and a world-wide attempt to restrict democratic development to white races and distract them with race hatred against the darker races’’ (p. 80). How state/industrial actors use caste technologies as a governing strategy to regulate working-class populations can be seen in Du Bois’s notion of the veil and double consciousness (something I take up below). The veil constitutes the material tools used to shape the epistemic parameters of learning that direct and guide individuals’ conduct within the dark and white worlds. The veil gains material life, I argue, through tools (i.e., policies, curriculum, teacher training, funding) that promote antagonistic and divided forms of social life through the reproduction of caste psychologies in the compulsory schooled spaces of the white and dark worlds. One of the most important lessons we can learn from Du Bois’s analysis of caste education is how racial capitalist schooling is deeply invested in producing caste individuals who act and behave in line with the values, habits, and customs of the white and dark worlds—what Du Bois (1935/1998) called caste psychologies. The subjective dimension of how individuals within the white and dark worlds are targeted as productive sites (or conversely non-investible) by state/industrial actors within a racial capitalist society is extremely important not only for understanding the history of education in the Reconstruction and Jim Crow periods but also how caste education operates in its current neoliberal phase. Maintaining a racially and class-segmented population is a key attribute of racial capitalist schooling that persists in current free market restructuring projects in urban and suburban neighborhoods across the nation. Let us now examine the origin of caste as an analytic category in the work of Du Bois in order to shed light on its biopolitical character.

#### Marx education link – racial caste system root cause

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Du Bois’s early analysis of the caste system in the United States can be organized into two connected historical phases. The first phase examined how a caste system developed and crystallized within the plantation system’s slave codes during the colonial period. The second was concerned with how the original caste system based on slave codes and the economic structures of the plantation system were transformed during the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras in such a way as to satisfy Southern and Northern states’ need to maintain (a) cheap and exploitable reserve labor populations and (b) a legal and political system that distinguished citizenship on the grounds of White supremacy. Du Bois thus situates the caste system of control as an evolutionary framework that began in the colonial and slave history of the United States ‘‘between 1750 and 1800 [when] an increasing number of laws began to form a peculiar and systematic slave code based on a distinct idea of social caste’’ (Du Bois, 1898, para. 8). Yet the caste system in Du Bois’s (1909) work should not be viewed as a static, ahistoric concept. Rather, it is a deeply historical and dialectic concept that understood caste as a problem of the past, so far as the black American was concerned, [that] began with caste—a definite place preordained in custom, law and religion where all men of black blood must be thrust. To be sure, this caste idea as applied to blacks was no sudden, full grown conception, for the enslavement of the workers was an idea which America inherited from Europe and was not synonymous for many years with the enslavement of the blacks, although the blacks were the chief workers. (p. 142) Here Du Bois articulates a very important feature of the first phase of growth in the caste system during the colonial-plantation period: the fusing of types of work (slave work) with one’s color. One important development in the caste system during this period was the artificial superimposing of labor and race (in a biological sense). By connecting types of work to biological constructions of race in his historical analysis of caste, Du Bois brilliantly reconfigures Marx’s (1977) Eurocentric analysis of caste and labor. In particular, Du Bois extends Marx’s insight on how divisions of labor in caste societies in India and medieval Europe were reinscribed within industrial work settings in Northern Europe in the 1800s specific to the racial and class dynamics of the United States. Similar to the way factory work disciplined laborers into biologically preordained types of work (e.g., coal shoveling for children and fabric bleaching for women), the plantation system also performed what Marx called the action of the same natural law that regulates the differentiation of plants and animals into species and varieties, except that, when a certain degree of development has been reached, the heredity of castes and exclusiveness of guilds are ordained as a law of society. (p. 459) Another important feature of the first phase of the caste system’s development during the colonial-plantation period is its ability to constantly evolve and respond to internal and external contradictions within a slave society. Free African American and other African maroon communities, for example, brought up governing questions of racial purity for states that sprang from situations of ‘‘illicit intercourse and considerable intermarriage with indentured servants, a number of persons of mixed blood; there was also created by emancipation and the birth of black sons of white women a class of free Negroes’’ (Du Bois, 1898, p. 4).2 In addition to the problem of blood purity—a fundamental problem for states’ maintenance of a eugenic expression of White supremacy—the productive base of slave labor also underwent transformations due to the industrialization of plantation work. One of the most important of these transformations to the caste system of control came from economic pressures that growing Northern and European markets put on the slave labor force producing valuable Southern agricultural commodities such as cotton and tobacco. Slave codes increasingly became connected to the productive demands of a quickly growing world market and the efficiency measures it required from its labor sources (Du Bois, 1935/1998). For Du Bois (1898), the caste system in the United States first developed within the historical conditions of the colonial-plantation period as a response to new social-political problems growing out of the slave system (free African Americans as a threat to ideas of racial purity, citizenship, and legal structures of the nation) and the desire to protect the racial purity of ‘‘a feeble civilization against an influx of barbarism and heathenism’’ (p. 4). The caste system also was forced to respond to greater economic demands growing out of the rapidly expanding capitalist economic system. Gradually, however, with increasing pressure to abolish the slave system brought on by the industrial needs of the North and the onset of the Civil War, the slave caste system was forced to ‘‘chang[e] the Slave Code into a Black Code, replacing a caste of condition by a caste of race’’ (p. 4). In other words, caste in the colonial-plantation period endured—just not in the same way—through slave codes based on the legal and cultural institution of slavery. If caste was to persist as a governing strategy over the formerly enslaved population in the United States after the Civil War, states seeking to enforce the dominance of the white world had to adapt caste control to a new world where slavery could no longer be its primary justification. If the colonial slave plantation system was the first historical context from which Du Bois charted the rise of a caste system in the United States, the second phase began immediately following emancipation and during the Reconstruction period. As Du Bois states throughout his work, most notably in his Black Reconstruction, state and federal governments after the Civil War could no longer legitimate (at least in a juridical sense) a caste system based on slave codes; a new system of laws and social life needed to be established to preserve the economic benefits of slavery for both Southern and Northern industrial interests and maintain a citizenship model based on White supremacy. Changing the ‘‘Slave Code into a Black Code’’ thus took concrete form in the failures of the U.S. government after the Civil War, despite the Freedmen’s Bureau’s efforts to establish social and political institutions such as schools, hospitals, banks, land, and legal rights required to support and protect large and vulnerable ex-slave communities. Instead, what Du Bois’s (1911) analysis shows is that the lasting result of the Civil War and emancipation was a code of laws in nearly every southern State which granted the Negro nominal freedom but made economic freedom impossible by hindering his access to the land, curtailing his right to change employers and to freedom of wage contract, and by establishing a distinct labouring caste with restricted rights and privileges of all sorts and prospect of any political rights at any future time. (p. 305) Here we can begin to see a unique strength of Du Bois’s articulation of a biopolitical theory of caste emphasizing the regulating power of state racism. In opposition to mainstream sociological research on the race problem in the first part of the 20th century based on eugenic ideas of African Americans (and people of color in general) as a degenerate, impure, and shiftless subspecies, Du Bois offered an alternative genealogical understanding of caste that situates the race problem as evolving within the historical conditions particular to caste in racial capitalist society. His (1909) rooting of the origins of the caste system within the colonial slave system requires us to ‘‘retrac[e] our steps and follow more carefully the details of the proposed programme of renewed caste in America’’ (p. 145). The renewal or preservation of the caste system, according to Du Bois (1909), centered on the growing unanimity of thought in the white world of three propositions after Reconstruction: 1. It was a mistake to give Negros the ballot. 2. Negroes are an inferior race. 3. The only permanent settlement of the ‘‘race problem’’ is legalized recognition of this inferiority. (p. 145) One of the primary dimensions to the caste system Du Bois’s analysis illustrates therefore is the fixing of citizenship, or who can legally be a part of the political community and under what terms, into a biologically racist framework of White supremacy. Instead of slaves being excluded from political life because they had no legal status under the slave codes, the Black codes preserved biological distinctions in previous caste arrangements by denying citizenship rights through new legal and institutional means such as voting laws, literacy tests, poll taxes, and segregated schools as well as terroristic means such as lynching and mass incarceration. The transition from slave codes to Black codes was ultimately carried out by building on the caste system established during the colonial-slave period and reconfiguring its power as a governing strategy to respond to the needs of an intensifying racial capitalist nation that emerged after the Civil War, a program that unified the white world in both North and South. From a methodological standpoint, Du Bois’s historical materialist examination of the two phases of the caste system provides an important perspective on the U.S. caste system of control that holds together two important tensions that make his understanding of caste unique. On the one hand, a primary function of the slave caste system and its transition into the Black codes of the Jim Crow era was to legally and socially bind African Americans into a racially distinct labor group—an exploitable and fungible source of economic value without legal and political rights. On the other hand, the caste system of control also demonstrates the state and industrial leaders’ ability to adapt to the needs of a racial capitalist society when it is met with a crisis such as the abolition of slavery. Du Bois’s concept of caste shows how racial and class inequality are maintained through adaptive techniques of governance such as Jim Crow laws and a segregated schooling system that ultimately work on behalf of racial capitalism—caste by another name. Du Bois’s understanding of caste, as we see, includes a co-evolutionary relation of power between White supremacy and capitalism that stresses how the enforcement of Whiteness as social power is integral to a core axiom of capitalist society: creating competitive and antagonistic worker groups to increase the exploitative range of surplus value available from human bodies. In the next section, I apply Du Bois’s caste analytic to the context of racial capitalist schooling to show the biopolitical stakes of the state/industrial controlled education of the dark world.

### Link – Mental Health

#### Clinical approaches to mental health are indispensable to anti-blackness – psychiatry functions to incorporate the slave into the realm of the human by trying to find inner freedom or escape – there is no freedom for black people in this world

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It is this conceptual density that gets trafficked into, unknowingly perhaps, the debates about free blacks in antebellum society. The epigraph raises these concerns, without explicitly making bare the existential presumptions about blackness that anchor it. For J.C. Calhoun, freedom for blackness is death, a form of death worse than mere biological expiration—mental death, or insanity. Since the human-being names a relationship of care between the “self,” Being, and its projection into the external world (freedom), claiming that the black is incapable of such care places him outside the realm of freedom and into the domain of the unfree, the care-less, and the unthought. But this realm of unfreedom is also a form of “death,” according to Orlando Patterson, because anti-blackness strips the captive of this fundamental existential relationship by objectifying this “self” and presenting this relationship to the captor for his pleasure. Thus, we have a strange play between deaths, deaths reconfigured as life, which seems to be the only existential option for blackness in modernity: freedom engenders mental death and unfreedom engenders social death. Because social death is a form of mental death, to the extent that the mind is pulverized by routinized pain and terror, and mental death is a form of social death, to the extent that Consciousness cannot actualize or move throughout the field of the social, there is no escaping this condition of “death” as life and “life” as death for Calhoun. “Free Black” names this existential deadlock. We might inquire of Calhoun, what type of mental health is possible for a captive in a condition of unfreedom? Are dependency, terror, and salubriousness identical relations of the black self? Freedom and Life become impossibilities for blacks in an anti-black order. Vital statistics, psychiatry, and epidemiology become indispensable for antebellum society in maintaining the impossibility of freedom and life in the “ontological exception,” and these discourses are deployed as technologies of liquidation. The purported objectivity of science and math is another ‘pure ontology’ myth designed to secure the ontological coordinates of the human. Purportedly, it is through the uncontaminated numerical sign that we gain access to the purity of being and the “thing” in and of itself (we might suggest that the “number” resolves the Kantian tension between noumenon and phenomenon for antebellum citizens). Antebellum society increasingly relies on “numeracy” 4 (the obsession with numbering and quantifying), disease, and psychic interiority to think through black ontology; the fields of vital statistics, psychiatry, and epidemiology provide a ‘pure’ grammar to describe an entire repertoire of social relations, theological imaginations, and ethical imperatives. The antebellum free black has primarily become an “object” for historiography and, concomitantly, has been analyzed through humanist presuppositions and conceptual paradigms (e.g. that there is a “subject” of the historical process; that a clear distinction between life and death exists historically; that blacks are “human,” capable of transforming space through time, etc.). Because Western historiography takes humanism for granted and applies the notion of human agency and existence to its “objects” of analysis, the ontological crisis of blackness is often overlooked in historiography.5 In other words, can we have a historiography that does not presume the “human” as the subject of history and the various capacities that this human possesses (e.g. freedom, temporal change, time/space capacity)? I would argue that the humanist grammar of “subject,” “human” “agent,” and “freedom,” does not quite apply to the antebellum free black, and thus, the antebellum free black is more of a philosophical allegory than a historical agent. In this essay, I argue that it is precisely the crisis of humanism and blackness that is the source of conflict for antebellum society. Since manumission did not resolve the ontological problem of blackness (i.e. blacks as property, irrational, and unfree), antebellum free blacks became an “exception”— they were situated both inside and outside of Civil Society simultaneously, and this strange social position enabled antebellum Civil Society to function. Agamben calls the being inhabiting this strange position a “werewolf.” 6 And for antebellum society, the free black resembles this werewolf figure, whose liminal presence is so terrifying that it must be contained and, eventually, destroyed. The fields of vital statics, psychiatry, and epidemiology, then, became indispensable discourses for antebellum society to theorize and regulate the ontological exception of the free black.

### Link - Performance

#### Their faith in performance and conceptual rupturing as an act of emancipation trades off with structural analysis and puts false place in subjectivity

Wilderson 2010

Unfortunately, cultural studies that theorizes the interface between Blacks and Humans is hobbled in its attempts to (a) expose power relationships and (b) examine how relations of power influence and shape cultural practice. Cultural studies insists on a grammar of suffering which assumes that we are all positioned essentially by way of the symbolic order, what Lacan calls the wall of language—and as such our potential for stasis or change (our capacity for being oppressed or free) is overdeter-mined by our "universal" ability or inability to seize and wield discursive weapons. This idea corrupts the explanatory power of most socially engaged films and even the most radical line of political action because it produces a cinema and a politics that cannot account for the grammar of suffering of the Black—the Slave. To put it bluntly, the imaginative labor5 of cinema, political action, and cultural studies are all afflicted with the same theoretical aphasia. They are speechless in the face of gratuitous violence. This theoretical aphasia is symptomatic of a debilitated ensemble of questions regarding political ontology. At its heart are two registers of imaginative labor. The first register is that of description, the rhetorical labor aimed at explaining the way relations of power are named, categorized, and explored. The second register can be characterized as prescription, the rhetorical labor predicated on the notion that everyone can be emancipated through some form of discursive, or symbolic, intervention. But emancipation through some form of discursive or symbolic intervention is wanting in the face of a subject position that is not a subject position—what Marx calls "a speaking implement" or what Ronald Judy calls "an interdiction against subjectivity." In other words, the Black has sentient capacity but no relational capacity. As an accumulated and fungible object, rather than an exploited and alienated subject, the Black is openly vulnerable to the whims of the world, and so is his or her cultural "production." What does it mean—what are the stakes—when the world can whimsically transpose one's cultural gestures, the stuff of symbolic intervention, onto another worldly good, a commodity of style? Frantz Fanon echoes this question when he writes, "I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects." He clarifies this assertion and alerts us to the stakes which the optimistic assumptions of film studies and cultural studies, the counterhegemonic promise of alternative cinema, and the emancipatory project of coalition politics cannot account for, when he writes: "Ontology—once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside—does not permit us to understand the being of the black."6 This presents a challenge to film production and to film studies given their cultivation and elaboration by the imaginative labor of cultural studies, underwritten by the assumptive logic of Humanism; because if everyone does not possess the DNA of culture, that is, (a) time and space transformative capacity, (b) a relational status with other Humans through which one's time- and space-transformative capacity is recognized and incorporated, and (c) a relation to violence that is contingent and not gratuitous, then how do we theorize a sentient being who is positioned not by the DNA of culture but by the structure of gratuitous violence? How do we think outside of the conceptual framework of subalternity—that is, outside of the explanatory power of cultural studies—and think beyond the pale of emancipatory agency by way of symbolic intervention? I am calling for a different conceptual framework, predicated not on the subject-effect of cultural performance but on the structure of political ontology, a framework that allows us to substitute a culture of politics for a politics of culture. The value in this rests not simply in the way it would help us rethink cinema and performance, but in the way it can help us theorize what is at present only intuitive and anecdotal: the unbridgeable gap between Black being and Human life. To put a finer point on it, such a framework might enhance the explanatory power of theory, art, and politics by destroying and perhaps restructuring the ethical range of our current ensemble of questions. This has profound implications for non-Black film studies, Black film studies, and African American studies writ large because they are currently entangled in a multicultural paradigm that takes an interest in an insufficiently critical comparative analysis— that is, a comparative analysis in pursuit of a coalition politics (if not in practice then at least as a theorizing metaphor) which, by its very nature, crowds out and forecloses the Slave's grammar of suffering.

### Link - Poverty

#### The affirmative’s progressive call for legislation is the opposite of radical grassroots action directly trading off with the challenging of assumptions of white supremacy and policing that fuel militarism

**Rodriguez ‘8**

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We are collectively witnessing, surviving, and working in a time of unprecedented state-organized human capture and state-produced physical/social/ psychic alienation, from the 2.5 million imprisoned by the domestic and global US prison industrial complex to the profound forms of informal apartheid and proto- apartheid that are being instantiated in cities, suburbs, and rural areas all over the country. This condition presents a profound crisis – and political possibility – for people struggling against the white supremacist state, which continues to institutionalize the social liquidation and physical evisceration of Black, brown, and aboriginal peoples nearby and far away. If we are to approach racism, neoliberalism, militarism/militarization, and US state hegemony and domination in a legitimately "global" way, it is nothing short of unconscionable to expend significant political energy protesting American wars elsewhere (e.g. Iraq, Afghanistan etc.) when there are overlapping, and no less profoundly oppressive, declarations of and mobilizations for war in our very own, most intimate and nearby geographies of "home." This time of crisis and emergency necessitates a critical examination of the political and institutional logics that structure so much of the US progressive left, and particularly the "establishment" left that is tethered (for better and worse) to the non-profit industrial complex (NPIC). I have defined the NPIC elsewhere as the set of symbiotic relationships that link political and financial technologies of state and owning class social control with surveillance over public political discourse, including and especially emergent progressive and leftist social movements. This definition is most focused on the industrialized incorporation, accelerated since the 1970s, of pro-state liberal and progressive campaigns and movements into a spectrum of government-proctored non-profit organizations. It is in the context of the formation of the NPIC as a political power structure that I wish to address, with a less-than-subtle sense of alarm, a peculiar and disturbing politics of assumption that often structures, disciplines, and actively shapes the work of even the most progressive movements and organizations within the US establishment left (of which I too am a part, for better and worse): that is, the left's willingness to fundamentally tolerate – and accompanying unwillingness to abolish – the institutionalized dehumanization of the contemporary policing and imprisonment apparatus in its most localized, unremarkable, and hence "normal" manifestations within the domestic "homeland" of the Homeland Security state. Behind the din of progressive and liberal reformist struggles over public policy, civil liberties, and law, and beneath the infrequent mobilizations of activity to defend against the next onslaught of racist, classist, ageist, and misogynist crirninalization, there is an unspoken politics of assumption that takes for granted the mystified permanence of domestic warfare as a constant production of targeted and massive suffering, guided by the logic of Black, brown, and indigenous subjection to the expediencies and essential violence of the American (global) nation-building project. To put it differently: despite the unprecedented forms of imprisonment, social and political repression, and violent policing that compose the mosaic of our historical time, the establishment left (within and perhaps beyond the US) does not care to envision, much less politically prioritize, the abolition of US domestic warfare and its structuring white supremacist social logic as its most urgent task of the present and future. Our non-profit left, in particular, seems content to engage in desperate (and usually well-intentioned) attempts to manage the casualties of domestic warfare, foregoing the urgency of an abolitionist praxis that openly, critically, and radically addresses the moral, cultural, and political premises of these wars. Not long from now, generations will emerge from the organic accumulation of rage, suffering, social alienation, and (we hope) politically principled rebellion against this living apocalypse and pose to us some rudimentary questions of radical accountability: How were we able to accommodate, and even culturally and politically normalize the strategic, explicit, and openly racist technologies of state violence that effectively socially neutralized and frequently liquidated entire nearby populations of our people, given that ours are the very same populations that have historically struggled to survive and overthrow such "classical" structures of dominance as colonialism, frontier conquest, racial slavery, and other genocides? In a somewhat more intimate sense, how could we live with ourselves in this domestic state of emergency, and why did we seem to generally forfeit the creative possibilities of radically challenging, dislodging, and transforming the ideological and institutional premises of this condition of domestic warfare in favor of short-term, "winnable" policy reforms? (For example, why did we choose to formulate and tolerate a "progressive" political language that reinforced dominant racist notions of "criminality" in the process of trying to discredit the legal basis of "Three Strikes" laws?) What were the fundamental concerns of our progressive organizations and movements during this time, and were they willing to comprehend and galvanize an effective, or even viable opposition to the white supremacist state's terms of engagement (that is, warfare)? 'this radical accountability reflects a variation on anti- colonial liberation theorist Frantz Fanon's memorable statement to his own peers, comrades, and nemeses: Each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it, in relative opacity. In the underdeveloped countries preceding generations have simultaneously resisted the insidious agenda of colonialism and paved the way for the emergence of the current struggles. Now that we are in the heat of combat, we must shed the habit of decrying the efforts of our forefathers or feigning incomprehension at their silence or passiveness.

### Link - Queerness

#### Thinking queerness as an identity, performance or set of practices obscures the prior ontological queerness of blackness, which exists as the absolute index of otherness over and against which humanity and modernity vouchsafe their value and coherence. This failure to theorize gender and sexuality from the underside of the human is a failure to interrogate the very template of deviance that haunts queerness, ensuring anti-black homonormative identification.

Jackson 2011 [Zakiyyah, PhD candidate in African diaspora studies in the African American studies department at the University of California, Berkeley, “Waking Nightmares,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2-3]

Marriott’s scholarship reminds us that queer theory may unwittingly diminish its criticality if it fails to acknowledge the role antiblack racism plays in shaping the discursive practices of gender and sexuality. The violence that produces blackness necessitates that from the existential vantage point of black lived experience, gender and sexuality lose their coherence as normative categories.8 Moreover, as queer theory attempts to map a territory that encompasses an increasingly generalized nonnormativity, it may unwittingly overlook the function of blackness in modernity, since the black body has been rendered the “absolute index of otherness.” 9 While particular nonblack sexual and gendered practices may be queered, blackness serves as an essential template of gendered and sexual “deviance” that is limited to the negation not of a particular practice but of a state of being. In other words, there are no practices that an individual black person can take up that will settle once and for all the doubt that accompanies the assertion of a black humanity. Marriott’s texts encourage us to interrogate the subject of feminist and queer theory rather than presume that a subject is always and already there. Marriott’s writing invites us to reflect on aspects of gendered and sexualized racial experience that often go unaccounted for in scholarly work on race, despite the efforts of black feminism and its theories of intersectionality. Feminists of color have encouraged us to think about gender and sexuality as they intersect with the particularities of race and embodiment. In the context of blackness, gender oppression not only circumscribes the life chances of women but also stratifies or suspends the category of manhood.10 Black men are seen as “excessively male and insufficiently masculine.”11 Historically, black men’s “inversion” has served as an alibi for their rape and castration, painful reminders that rape is, as feminists state, “about power” rather than contingent on an essentialized female vulnerability or an inherent male power. Existential negation, which we refer to as “race” in polite conversation, substantially complicates our theorization of “black patriarchy” and “black sexuality.” It requires us to theorize gendered and sexual violence from the underside of “the human,” which arguably necessitates that we think about queerness as something other than an identity, gender, or even set of sexual practices. We might think of black queerness as an existential matter rather than as an attribution that accompanies only some black subjectivities. Marriott reminds us that nonbeing is the existential burden facing black people under the conditions of (post)modernity and also the specter that haunts queer subjectivity. This is fitting considering that the birth of “homosexuality” is inextricable from the rise of scientific authority and its racism. Fantasies of blackness, particularly black female sexuality, are the gendered and racial specters that haunt queerness — that from which homonormative subjects must distance themselves in order to be properly recognized as humans, as citizens, as subjects. Despite prior interdictions on same-sex sexuality, it is only as recently as the late nineteenth century that sexual acts and desires became constitutive of identity: the homosexual becomes a type.12 In Siobhan Somerville’s “Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body,” she queries, “is it merely a historical coincidence that the classification of bodies as either ‘homosexual’ or ‘heterosexual’ emerged at the same time that the United States was aggressively policing the imaginary boundary between ‘black’ and ‘white’ bodies?”13 Somerville goes on to suggest the mutually constitutive effects of the bifurcated categories of race and sexuality, their structural interdependence and mutual production. Structures and methodologies that drove dominant scientific ideologies of race were subsequently taken up in the scientific pursuit of an emerging discourse of sexuality. Difference was thought to be a visualizable fact inscribed on the body; according to this logic, interiority could be read on the surface of the body’s anatomical markers. Racial difference seemed to hinge on and be most represented by the supposed differences of sexual appetites and anatomies, particularly those of the African female. Sexologists drew on fantasies of black female embodiment as their model of sexual deviancy and gender nonconformity. Racial comparative-anatomy methods were used to determine sexual definition, with a presumed similitude between “deviant” white bodies and the black body. The word homosexual itself seemed to conjure some anxieties about miscegenation, as the “barbarously hybrid word” was a mix of Latin and Greek, even referring to “shades of gender” and “sexual half-breeds.” 14 Reading Marriott in the context of feminist and queer theory offers new insight into the gendered and sexualized nature of blackness’s ontological negation, particularly the nonheteronormativity of race’s reproduction. The negation of blackness is the foundation of ethics and politics, even of modern sociality itself; this negation overdetermines black practices as criminal, queer, nationally polluting, and pathological.15

### Link – School Reform

#### Schools were never meant to be equitable for black people and their liberal reform misses the forest for the trees – the caste system created through slavery ensures that absent a complete overthrow of the racial state, progress will be impossible

Pierce 16, Clayton Pierce is an assistant professor of interdisciplinary studies at Western Washington University, 10/11/16, “W.E.B. Du Bois and Caste Education: Racial Capitalist Schooling From Reconstruction to Jim Crow,” <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0002831216677796> NN

Du Bois’s understanding of caste education also carries with it an insurrectionary model of education that centers the standpoint of African American knowledge and experience (Alridge, 1999; Rabaka, 2007). For Du Bois, emancipatory learning grows out of acts of resistance to the dominant dialectic articulation of caste education—a system designed to extract economic value from the African American population and enforce their political status as second-class, biologically inferior citizens (Watkins, 2001). Du Bois saw the emergence of a public education system for ex-slaves during the transition from slave codes to Black codes of the Jim Crow era as not necessarily preordained; hard work was required by the white world to ensure the preservation and adaptability of caste control through new means. What Du Bois’s analysis reveals is a reconstitution of a governing rationality administered through industrial/state actors and their need to produce a segmented and competing labor force beneficial to industrial capital while also maintaining a citizenship model based on White supremacy. For Du Bois, the insurrectionary potential of education was to be strategically managed by state/industrial actors as evidenced in the failure of Reconstruction and the reestablishment of ‘‘slavery by another name’’ in the Jim Crow era (Blackmon, 2009). Du Bois’s (1935/1998) painstaking research on the formation of a public school system in the South during Reconstruction in his Black Reconstruction, as well as more recent work such as James Anderson’s (1988) The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935, shows that one of the most effective strategies used to thwart a potentially insurrectionary educational model was federal and state disinvestment of support for the basic educational, health, financial, work, and land needs of the ex-slave population. Here again, the biopolitical nature of Du Bois’s caste education analytic emerges: The racial capitalist state creates the social and political conditions for the dark world that shortens, assaults, and exposes populations and individuals to countless forms of health risks (mob violence, environmental racism, poor health care) and psychological terror. Schools play a particularly important role in exposing and enforcing people to experience these life (bio) conditions while managing the crisis education represented as a threat to the racial capitalist state. The good intentions and then collapse of the Freedman’s Bureau for Du Bois signaled an important turning point in the reentrenchment of a caste system of control in the United States. Remarking on the original progressive intent of the Freedmen’s Bureau to establish a public school system for exslaves ‘‘in a country which gave the laisser-faire economics their extremest trial’’ and which ‘‘struck the whole nation as unthinkable,’’ Du Bois (1911, p. 305) points to how the public guarantee of state-funded public schools for ex-slaves quickly shifted to a privatized model of governance. ‘‘It soon began to occur to many that the preliminary guardianship and training of the slave need not be done at public expense, but could be done by the Negro himself and by his friends as private enterprise’’ (Du Bois, 1911, p. 306). Four primary conditions led to this shift, according to Du Bois: the rapid advance of the house servant, the growth of private schools, the cost of the Freedman’s Bureau, and the difficulty of reconstructing the political South without friendly votes. As Du Bois’s research on this transition period of caste reconstruction demonstrates, a union between Northern philanthropists (industrialists) and the White Southern ruling class forged a caste education system that met the needs of both groups: access to a large exploitable population of economic and socially vulnerable workers that also upheld the racial exclusion of ex-slaves (and non-Whites generally) from full social and political participation. After the Freedmen’s Bureau Reconstruction efforts to provide a public education system for African Americans were destroyed, a caste system of control was established where ‘‘anywhere from twice to ten times as much was spent on the white child as the Negro child, and even the poor white child did not receive an adequate education’’ (Du Bois, 1935/1998, p. 663). Schools set up for ex-slaves in the South ‘‘were given few buildings and little equipment’’ while no effort was made to compel Negro children to go to school. On the contrary, in the country they were deliberately kept out of school by the requirements of contract labor which embraced the labor of wife and children as well as the laborer himself. The course of study was limited. . . . The supervising officers paid little or no attention to Negro schools, and the education of the Negro for many years after the overthrow of Reconstruction proceeded in spite of their school system, not because of it. (Du Bois, 1935/1998, p. 697) What emerged from a time when the nation could have made real strides toward constructing a more democratic society through quality and equal schooling for all, ‘‘abolition democracy,’’ was instead a caste system of control rebuilt through ‘‘the doctrine of racial separation, which overthrew Reconstruction by uniting the planter and the poor white’’ and which ‘‘was far exceeded by its astonishing economic results’’ (Du Bois, 1935/ 1998, p. 700).4 State and federal disinvestment and the takeover of African American education by private industry constituted a key veil technology of caste education governance (Du Bois, 1935/1998).

#### School reform/charter schools link (it’s about New Orleans but I think makes a broader claim too)

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In this article, I question the notion of socially conscious capitalism and argue that what is happening in New Orleans is, instead, unconscionable and has little to do with improving school performance for children of color. Educational reforms in New Orleans are not designed to respond to oppressed communities or to enhance public school performance, even if they are often couched in such language. Rather, this is a feeding frenzy, a revivified Reconstruction-era blueprint for how to capitalize on public education and line the pockets of white entrepreneurs (and their black allies) who care less about working-class schoolchildren and their grandmothers and much more about obtaining public and private monies and an array of lucrative contracts. Schools are performing just as reformers tacitly, if not explicitly, intend because the educational reform model is not about improving urban education. These reforms are a form of accumulation by dispossession, which David Harvey (2006) defines as a process in which assets previously belonging to one group are put in circulation as capital for another group. In New Orleans, this has included die appropriation and commodification of black children, black schools, and black communities for white exploitation and profit. As I show, this process is intimately connected to the production of an urban space economy (Harvey, 1973) premised on capital accumulation and the politics of white supremacy. Here again, Harvey conceives of the city as a built environment that embodies the conditions and spatial ordering necessary for capital accumulation to proceed. Since every economic-spatial project is also a racial one - a point inadequately addressed by Harvey's largely Marxist framework - I also rely on Cheryl Harris's (1995) critical race theory of whiteness as property. For Harris, white identity has historically enabled its possessors to use and enjoy a host of benefits and assets and to exclude communities of color from such entitlements. In New Orleans, white entrepreneurs have seized control of a key asset in black communities - public schools - and through state assistance, charter school reform, and plans for reconstruction, have built a profitable and exclusionary educational system that threatens to reinforce rather than challenge the political economy of New Orleans. This economy has long been based on the economic exploitation of African Americans, particularly in the cultural tourism industry. Kalamu ya Salaam, a New Orleans poet and teacher, describes the interconnections between political economy, race, and schooling: Education is ground zero in the systemic exploitation of black people in New Orleans - ground zero because public schools are the direct feeder for the necessary, albeit unskilled, labor needed for the tourist-oriented economy ... In New Orleans they are building more hotels every day. Where will the bellhops and maids come from? . . . Our schools are the way they are because the economy . . . continues to require a labor force to clean, cook, and serve. (Buras et al., 2010, pp. 66-67) Salaam's complex analysis resonates with the ecological framework I seek to elaborate on in this article (see also Lipman, 2004; Orni & Winant, 1994; Tate, 2008). According to Marcus Weaver-Hightower (2008), policy ecology "consists of the policy itself along with all of the texts, histories, people, places, groups, traditions, economic and political conditions, institutions, and relationships that affect it or that it affects" (p. 155). This is what Harvey (2006) refers to as the socioecological web of life, or the critical analysis of space-time at a variety of geographical scales. Figure 2 presents a visual representation of the web of federal, state, and local actors that has shaped die racial-economic reconstruction of public schools in New Orleans over the past five years. Before undertaking my analysis, I delineate the spatial frames I use to illuminate the perspectives of education actors. Absolute space is fixed, bounded, calculated, timeless, and presumed to have die precision of Cartesian geometry: a current grid of city streets, a map of school buildings. Relative space-time pertains to relationships between objects and depends on what is being observed, why it is being observed, and who is doing the observing. There are multiple possible geometries depending on one's point of reference: the flow and movement of students from homes to schools. Relational space-time is representative of the past, present, and future swirling through and across space; rather than referring to what exists at a single point in time, it requires an aesthetic reading of where "mathematics, poetry, and music converge if not merge" (Harvey, 2006, p. 124): sitting in a newly renovated school and reminiscing about its past incarnations while seeing, through a window, a razed building where a future high school could have resided. Intersecting this matrix is another series of spatial frames: perceived space (as sensed through sight, sound, and touch), conceived space (as envisioned or represented), and lived space (infused with complex meanings generated from daily life, emotion, experience, and imagination) (Harvey, 2006; Lefebvre, 1974). Taken together, these spatial frames illuminate the stakes of particular policy choices and put in sharp relief whose interests are most squarely served by current reforms and the urban space economy they produce. Understanding the policy ecology at the heart of educational reform in New Orleans is the central focus of this article. Drawing on and extending Harvey's (2006) theory of spatial politics and uneven geographical development under capitalism as well as Harris's (1995) theory surrounding the confluence of white power and property rights, I render transparent the racialized urban space economy of New Orleans and the fundamental part that school reform and conscious capitalism play in its production (see also Lipman, 2004; Omi & Winant, 1994; Tate, 2008). The remaking of New Orleans' educational landscape after 2005 involved both systematic federal and state intervention and the actions of local education entrepreneurs and allies in city government. As such, I begin by mapping the web of influence from Washington, DC, to Louisiana's state capital in Baton Rouge and, ultimately, to New Orleans.

### Link - Science

#### Science rests on the foundations of rationality and productivity – this calculability prevents a break from political hope to the realm of spiritual hope

**Warren 15** [Calvin K., Assistant Professor of American Studies at George Washington University, “Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope,” *CR: The New Centennial Review*, Volume 15, Number 1, Spring 2015] NN

To speak of the “Politics of Hope” is to denaturalize or demystify a certain usage of hope. Here I want to make a distinction between “hope” (the spiritual concept) and “the politics of hope” (political hope). The relationship between the spiritual concept of hope and its use as a political instrument is the focus of the black nihilist critique.2 Following Kant and other postmetaphysical philosophers, the critical field questions (and in some circles completely denounces) a certain spiritual predisposition to the world—that “unknowable” noumenon that limits Rea- son but provides the condition of possibility for its organization of the world of perception, phenomenon. The problem with the critical questioning of the spiritual is that it often appropriates spiritual concepts and then, insidiously, translates them into the “scientific” or the knowable, as a way to both capital- ize on the mystic power of the spiritual and to preserve the spiritual under the guise of “enlightened understanding.” We find this deceptive translation and capitalization of spiritual substance within the sphere of the Political—that organization of social existence through political institutions, mandates, log- ics, and grammars—as a way to govern and discipline beings. If we think of hope as a spiritual concept—a concept that always escapes confinement within scientific discourse—then we can suggest that hope constitutes a “spiritual currency” that we are given as an inheritance to invest in various aspects of existence. The issue, however, is that there is often a compulsory investment of this spiritual substance in the Political. This is the forced desti- nation of hope—it must end up in the Political and cannot exist outside of it (or any existence of hope “outside” the political subverts, compromises, and destroys hope itself. Like placing a fish out of water. It is as if hope only has intelligibility and efficacy within and through the Political). Put differently, the politics of hope posits that one must have a politics to have hope; politics is the natural habitat of hope itself. To reject hope in a nihilistic way, then, is really to reject the politics of hope, or certain circumscribed and compulsory forms of expressing, practicing, and conceiving of hope.

### Link – STEM Reform

#### Even the most radical reforms in the STEM field create a form of respectability politics where only those who are deemed to participate in the futurity of the state and institutional racism are considered valubale

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By now, most folks have heard about Ahmed Mohamed. Ahmed is a Muslim, Sudanese-American 14-year-old high school student who was arrested for bringing his homemade clock to school. Both police and school officials were adamant that the homemade clock looked threatening and that it resembled a so-called ‘hoax bomb’, an assertion that some online commentators have noted does not jibe with the fact that a bomb squad was not mobilized to the school, as one might reasonably expect officials do in response to a bomb scare. To many, the facts seem clear: Ahmed’s arrest was motivated by Islamophobia and anti-Blackness and is part of a broader pattern of racism by the police and school officials. In this post, I want to dwell a bit on what Ahmed Mohamed’s case teaches us about the racial politics of knowledge. I think we need to begin with the clock as an object and how it – alongside Ahmed’s body – was racially profiled. It is important to note that, seen through eyes conditioned by racist suspicion, a clock in Ahmed’s hands was not immediately legible as a product of an inquiring mind and capable hands. It was, first and foremost, a threat. Ahmed’s Black, Muslim, male body holding a clock was quickly read as a dangerous fusion of body and machine, perhaps conjuring up the racialized specter of the suicide bomber. To school officials, Ahmed was not participant in the space of learning, but a hazard to it. The clock and its maker made it very clear who – what body – is seen as a learner and as, therefore, belonging in the space of the school. Ahmed’s case has become something of a media phenomenon, with the hashtag #IStandwithAhmed tracking its virality. Among those who have rallied around Ahmed are important people in positions of political and economic power. President Barack Obama, for example, invited Ahmed to the White House, calling him an inspiration for liking science, which apparently “makes America great”. Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook fame posted on FB that “the future belongs to people like Ahmed”, those who “[have] the skill and ambition to build something cool”. Ahmed has even received invitations from MIT and NASA, as well as gifts from Microsoft. One noteworthy theme among these statements of support is the elevation of Ahmed into a certain figure of futurity: a budding scientist or engineer. This is not surprising, given the centrality of the clock and its making to this situation. However, we must guard against exceptionalizing Ahmed. Being bright is great and perhaps should be celebrated, but it should not be a prerequisite for treatment with basic human dignity. By exceptionalizing Ahmed, we risk elevating model minoritization as the only way for a person of colour to be treated with dignity in this racist social context. Furthermore, because the figure of model minority stands in as a barometer against which other racialized bodies are measured, we end up placing the responsibility on racialized folks to engage in a contest for respectability. Even then, Ahmed’s case actually suggests that being exceptional is no guarantee. This call to model minoritization needs to be understood in the context of capitalist nationalism. The tweets by both Obama and Zuckerberg already beg such a reading. In such modes of racial recuperation, there is an uncritical elevation of his utility to the American capitalist future, one in which the neoliberal subject – in the form of the self-made innovator – is the quintessential American subject-in-the-making. In such a scenario, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields become part and parcel of capitalist nation-building – as training grounds for a certain type of national-economic subject. Ahmed is thus recuperated by many supporters, mostly, if not only, through his (future) neoliberal utility judged via his aptitude for STEM. It is worth noting, however, that under these conditions, the same utilitarian impulse that exceptionalizes Ahmed also produces the disposability of bodies not deemed useful. Deb Cowen and Amy Siciliano more precisely terms these disposable bodies ‘surplus masculinities’, which they argue are increasingly sequestered in the holding spaces of prisons or the military. That Ahmed was interested in STEM was thus one way that some supporters, especially high profile players in the field of technology, have come to understand him – and therefore themselves – as deserving of decent treatment. It is worth asking: what if, instead of being a budding scientist or engineer, Ahmed displayed a certain aptitude for the social sciences and humanities? What if he challenged institutionalized racisms and continuing colonialisms, as do Black Lives Matter and Idle No More activists who are routinely treated as threats to national security? What if he publicly criticized foreign policies and state racisms, as did Sunera Thobani and Steven Salaita, who suffered professionally and publicly for the knowledges that they dared to speak in public? Would Ahmed have garnered the same support? Would he have gotten invitations to MIT, the White House or Facebook headquarters? Some might say that the point is moot, given that the arrest would not have happened since the clock in question would not exist. Fair enough. I ask this question in order to draw out the bigger point that Ahmed’s case makes clear that certain knowledges and bodies are understood as more valid than others if they are deemed more useful to the capitalist national future. Those who contest such a future, and indeed the status quo that is rests on? Not so much.

### Link - Technology

#### **Technology functions as a white mythology—the ideals of enlightenment, progress, and western superiority are intimately tied to technological progress**

Dinerstein, ’06 [Septermber 2006, Joel Dinerstein is an Assistant Professor of English at Tulane University , “Technology and Its Discontents: On the Verge of the Posthuman” American Quarterly, Volume 58, Number 3, pp. 569-570]

Immediately after 9/11, a Middle East correspondent for The Nation summarized the coming war on terrorism as “[their] theology versus [our] technology, the suicide bomber against the nuclear power.”1 His statement missed the point: technology is the American theology. For Americans, it is not the Christian God but technology that structures the American sense of power and revenge, the nation’s abstract sense of well-being, its arrogant sense of superiority, and its righteous justification for global dominance. In the introduction to Technological Visions, Marita Sturken and Douglas Thomas declare that “in the popular imagination, technology is often synonymous with the future,” but it is more accurate to say that technology is synonymous with faith in the future—both in the future as a better world and as one in which the United States bestrides the globe as a colossus.2 Technology has long been the unacknowledged source of European and Euro-American superiority within modernity, and its underlying mythos always traffics in what James W. Carey once called “secular religiosity.”3 Lewis Mumford called the American belief system “mechano-idolatry” as early as 1934; a few years later he deemed it our “mechano-centric religion.” David F. Noble calls this ideology “the religion of technology” in a work of the same name that traces its European roots to a doctrine that combines millenarianism, rationalism, and Christian redemption in the writings of monks, explorers, inventors, and NASA scientists. If we take into account the functions of religion and not its rituals, it is not a deity who insures the American future but new technologies: smart bombs in the Gulf War, Viagra and Prozac in the pharmacy, satellite TV at home. It is not social justice or equitable economic distribution that will reduce hunger, greed, and poverty, but fables of abundance and the rhetoric of technological utopianism. The United States is in thrall to “techno-fundamentalism,” in Siva Vaidhyanathan’s apt phrase; to Thomas P. Hughes, “a god named technology has possessed Americans.” Or, as public policy scholar Edward Wenk Jr. sums it up, “we are . . . inclined to equate technology with civilization [itself].”4Technology as an abstract concept functions as a white mythology. Yet scholars of whiteness rarely engage technology as a site of dominant white cultural practices (except in popular culture), and scholars of technology often sidestep the subtext of whiteness within this mythos. The underlying ideology and cultural practices of technology were central to American studies scholarship in its second and third generations, but the field has marginalized this critical framework; it is as if these works of (mostly) white men are now irrelevant to the field’s central concerns of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ethnic identity on the one hand, and power, empire, and nation on the other. In this essay I will integrate some older works into the field’s current concerns to situate the current posthuman discourse within an unmarked white tradition of technological utopianism that also functions as a form of social evasion. By the conclusion, I hope to have shown that the posthuman is an escape from the panhuman.

## Impact

### Social Death

#### Social death has no ethical considerations behind it – none of their impacts matter to those who are already dead - the Slave’s subject position is one of non-ontology – civil society checks violence against any non-Black, but guarantees it against the Slave

**Wilderson- 2002**

Frank Wilderson- The Prison Slave as Hegemony's (Silent) Scandal-Presented a t #Imprisoned Intellectuals # Conference Brown University, April 13th 2002, NN

**Civil society is not a terrain intended for the Black subject. It is coded as waged and wages are White.** Civil society is the terrain where hegemony is produced, contested, mapped. And th e invitat ion to p articipate in hegemony's gestures of influence, leadership, and consent is not ext ended to t he unwaged. We live in the world , but ex ist out side of civil s ociety**. This structurally impossible position is a paradox, because the Black subject, the slave, is vital to political economy: s/he kick-starts capital at its genesis and rescues it from its over-accumulation crisis at its end.** **But Marxism has no account of this phenomenal birth and life-saving role played by the Black subject**: from Marx and Gr amsci we have con sistent s ilence. In taking Foucau lt to ta sk for a ssum ing a univ ersal s ubject in r evolt ag ainst d iscipline, in the same s pirit in which I have t aken Gr amsci to ta sk for as suming a u niversal sub ject, the subject of civil societ y in revolt a gainst capita l, Joy Jam es writes : The U.S. carceral network kills, however, and in its prisons, it kills more blacks than any other ethnic group. American prisons constitute an "outside" in U.S. political life. In fact, our society displays waves of concentric outside circles with increasing distances from bourgeois self-policing. The state routinely polices the14 unassim ilable in the hell of lockdow n, deprivat ion tanks , control units , and holes for political prisoners (Resisting State Violence 1996: 34 ) But this peculiar preoccupation is not Gramsci's bailiwick. His concern is with White folks; or with folks in a White (ned) enough subject position that they are confronted by, or threat ened by th e remova l of, a wag e -- be it monetary or social. **But Black subjectivity itself disarticulates the Gramscian dream as a ubiquitous emancipatory strategy, because Gramsci, like most White activists, and radical American movements like the prison abolition movement, has no theory of the unwaged, no solidarity with the slave If we are to take Fanon at his word when he writes,** #**Decolonization**, which sets out to change the order of the world, **is**, **obviously, a program of complete disorder** # (37) **then we must accept the fact that** **no other body functions in the Imaginary, the Symbolic, or the Real so completely as a repository of complete disorder as the Black body. Blackness is the site of absolute dereliction at the level of the Real, for in its magnetizing of bullets the Black body functions as the map of gratuitous violence through which civil society is possible: namely, those other bodies for which violence is, or can be, contingent. Blackness is the site of absolute dereliction at the level of the Symbolic, for Blackness in America generates no categories for the chromosome of History, no data for the categories of Immigration or Sovereignty; it is an experience without analog # a past, without a heritage. Blackness is the site of absolute dereliction at the level of t he Imaginary for #whoever says #rape # says Black, # (Fanon) , whoever says #prison # says Black, and whoever says #AIDS # says Black (Sexton) # the #Negro is a phobogenic object # (Fanon).** Indeed &a phobogenic object &a past without a heritage &the map of gratuitous violence &a program of complete disorder. But whereas this realization is, and should be cause for alarm, it should not be cause for lament, or worse, disavowal # not at least, for a true revolutionary, or for a truly revolutionary movement such as prison a bolition. 15 **If a social movement is to be neither social democratic, nor Marxist, in terms of the structure of its political desire then it should grasp the invitation to assume the positionality of subjects of social death that present themselves; and, if we are to be honest with ourselves we must admit that the “Negro “ has been inviting Whites, and as well as civil society #s junior partners, to the dance of social death for hundreds of years, but few have wanted to learn the steps**. They have been, and remain today # even in the most anti-racist movements, like the prison abolition movement # invested elsewhere. **This is not to say that all oppositional political desire today is pro-White, but it is to say that it is almost always “anti-Black” which is to say it will not dance with death**. **Black liberation**, as a prospect, **makes radicalism more dangerous to the U.S.** Not because it raises the specter of some alternative polity (like socialism, or community control of existing resources) but because its condition of possibility as well as its gesture of resistance functions as a negative dialectic: a politics of refusal and a refus al to affirm , a program of complete disorder. **One mus t embrace its disorder, its in coherence and allow oneself to be elaborated by it, if indeed one's politics are to be underwritten by a desire to take this country down.** If this is not the desire which underwrites one #s politics then through what strategy of legitimation is the word #prison # being linked t o the wo rd #abolition #? Wh at ar e this movem ent #s lines of po litical a ccount abilit y? There #s nothing foreign, frightening, or even unpracticed about the embrace of disorder and incoherence. The desire to be embraced, and elaborated, by disorder and incoherence is not anathema in and of itself: no one, for example, has ever been known to say #gee-whiz, if only my orgasms would end a little sooner, or maybe not come at all. # But few so-called radicals desire to be embraced, and elaborated, by the disorder and incoherence of Blackness # and the state of politica l movemen ts in A merica to day is ma rked by t his very N egroph obogen isis: #gee-whiz, if only Black rage could be more coherent, or maybe not come at all. # Perhaps there #s something more terrifying about the joy of Black, then there is about the joy of sex (unless one is talking sex wit h a Negr o). Perhaps coalitions today p refer to remain in- orgas mic in the fa ce of civilsociety # with hegemony as a handy prophylactic, just in case. But if, through this stasis, or paralysis , they tr y to do t he work of pr ison a bolit ion # that work will fail; because it is always work from a position of coherence (i.e. the worker) on behalf of a position of incoherence, the Black subject, or prison slave. In this way, social formations on the Left remain blind to the contradictions of coalitions bet ween worker s and s laves. T hey remain coalitions opera ting with in the logic of civil society; and function less as revolutionary promises and more as crowding out scenarios of Black antagonisms # they simply feed our frustration. Whereas the positionality of the worker # be s/he a factory worker demanding a monetary wage or an immigrant or White woman demanding a social wage # gestures toward the reconfiguration of civil society, the positionality of the Black subject # be s/he a prison-slave or a prison-slave-in-waiting # gestures toward the disconfiguration of civil society: from the coherence of civil society, t he Black subject beckons with the in coherence of civil war. **A civil war which reclaims Blackness not as a positive value,** but as a politically enabling site, to quote Fanon, of “absolute dereliction“: a scandal **which rends civil society asunder. Civil war, then, becomes that unthought, but never forgotten understudy of hegemony.** **A Black specter waiting in the wings, an endless antagonism that cannot be satisfied (via reform or reparation) but must nonetheless be pursued to the death.**

## Framework

### Spectator Mentality

#### **Their framework upholds a spectator mentality that reifies contemporary practices of power that maintain oppression**

Reid-Brinkley 2k8 [Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley, "THE HARSH REALITIES OF “ACTING BLACK”: HOW AFRICAN-AMERICAN POLICY DEBATERS NEGOTIATE REPRESENTATION THROUGH RACIAL PERFORMANCE AND STYLE"page 15]

Genre Violation Four: Policymaker as Impersonal and the Rhetoric of Personal Experience. Debate is a competitive game. 112 It requires that its participants take on the positions of state actors (at least when they are affirming the resolution). Debate resolutions normally call for federal action in some area of domestic or foreign policy. Affirmative teams must support the resolution, while the negative negates it. The debate then becomes a “laboratory” within which debaters may test policies. 113 Argumentation scholar Gordon Mitchell notes that “Although they may research and track public argument as it unfolds outside the confines of the laboratory for research purposes, in this approach students witness argumentation beyond the walls of the academy as spectators, with little or no apparent recourse to directly participate or alter the course of events.” 114 Although debaters spend a great deal of time discussing and researching government action and articulating arguments relevant to such action, what happens in debate rounds has limited or no real impact on contemporary governmental policy making. And participation does not result in the majority of the debate community engaging in activism around the issues they research. Mitchell observes that the stance of the policymaker in debate comes with a “sense of detachment associated with the spectator posture.” 115 In other words, its participants are able to engage in debates where they are able to distance themselves from the events that are the subjects of debates. Debaters can throw around terms like torture, terrorism, genocide and nuclear war without blinking. Debate simulations can only serve to distance the debaters from real world participation in the political contexts they debate about. As William Shanahan remarks: …the topic established a relationship through interpellation that inhered irrespective of what the particular political affinities of the debaters were. The relationship was both political and ethical, and needed to be debated as such. When we blithely call for United States Federal Government policymaking, we are not immune to the colonialist legacy that establishes our place on this continent. We cannot wish away the horrific atrocities perpetrated everyday in our name simply by refusing to acknowledge these implications” (emphasis in original). 116 The “objective” stance of the policymaker is an impersonal or imperialist persona. The policymaker relies upon “acceptable” forms of evidence, engaging in logical discussion, producing rational thoughts. As Shanahan, and the Louisville debaters’ note, such a stance is integrally linked to the normative, historical and contemporary practices of power that produce and maintain varying networks of oppression. In other words, the discursive practices of policyoriented debate are developed within, through and from systems of power and privilege. Thus, these practices are critically implicated in the maintenance of hegemony. So, rather than seeing themselves as government or state actors, Jones and Green choose to perform themselves in debate, violating the more “objective” stance of the “policymaker” and require their opponents to do the same.

### Social Sciences Bad

#### Mainstream social science is structured by the entrenched, white-supremacists system which ignores the issue of race—you should prefer our impact arguments

Shaw, ’04 [Katharine, Associate Professor of Urban Studies at Ohio State Using Feminist Critical Policy Analysis in the Realm of Higher Education: The Case of Welfare Reform as Gendered Educational Policy Source: The Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 75, No. 1, Special Issue: Questions of Research and Methodology, (Jan. - Feb., 2004), pp. 56-79]

The methods and theoretical frameworks that dominate current policy analysis have been developed and implemented by those in power who, particularly in the world of policy formation and analysis, are overwhelmingly white, male, and well educated. Thus, traditional policy research has, according to Marshall, reflected the assumptions, worldview, and values of this group. As is the case with much mainstream research in the social sciences, traditional policy analysis can be characterized by the following elements. Among the most important are a belief in a single concept of truth (truth with a capital "T"); the assumption that objectivity on the part of the researcher is both achievable and desirable; the assumption that all research subjects share the same relationship to their social environment, thereby rendering such particularities as gender, race, social class, and sexuality unimportant; and the practice of evaluating women on the basis of male norms (Bensimon & Marshall, 1997, p. 7-8). Since this positivist paradigm is so widely accepted in the policy world, it allows policy analysts to assume a dispassionate, objective stance and at the same time encourages the broader policy community to perceive the research enterprise in this way. Thus, traditional policy analysis willfully ignores the inherently political nature of all research, and policy research in particular. As Marshall states, "Traditional policy analysis is grounded in a narrow, falsely objective, overly instrumental view of rationality that masks its latent biases and allows policy elites and technocrats to present analyses and plans as neutral and objective when they are actually tied to prevailing relations of power" (1997a, p. 3).

### Procedural Focus DA

#### Procedural focus DA

Bhattacharyya 13, Race and Ethnicity Prof at Aston University (Gargi, How can we live with ourselves? Universities and the attempt to reconcile learning and doing, Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol. 36, No. 9, 1411-1428)

In Britain also there has been a move away from radical imagination in the politics of race, towards either highly institutionalized activity designed to measure and correct differential outcomes, or to ethnic particularity that challenges racism faced by a particular group but rarely links this activity to other struggles or a vision of an alternative society. However necessary these forms of organization may be because institutional outcomes continue to harden inequality between groups and mobilization needs to take place where people are, building on the affiliations that make sense to them the loss of a larger vision and set of aspirations diminishes what anti-racist politics can be. Kelly (2002, p. xii) goes on to specify the loss that arises from too exclusive a focus on matters of institutional detail or immediate politicking: Without new visions we don’t know what to build, only what to knock down. We not only end up confused, rudderless, and cynical, but we forget that making a revolution is not a series of clever maneuvers and tactics but a process that can and must transform us. This new revolutionary subject is unlikely to emerge from the mundane techniques of management that have come to typify ‘useful’ research in the field of racism. In response to the formulation of recent research funding in the UK, research in the field of race and racism that connects with ‘users’ has tended towards the technical. Much of this is shaped by the demand that research demonstrate its own ‘impact’, that is, shows its usefulness to an audience beyond academia, often before any findings are made and in order for time and money to be allocated.6 For the field of race and ethnic studies, this demand brings a model of knowledge as technique often management technique. Whether racism is seen to arise from communicational barriers between groups or from flawed institutional practices, the solution is presented as alternative practices do this and others will adapt their behaviour in these ways. If this were the extent of the imaginative failure, things would not be too bad. After all, universities rarely include the most exciting of ideas until the excitement can be rewritten as tradition. Sometimes banishment from the academy can help to get a different and more energetic audience for ideas that aspire to change our world. However, the politics of race seems to be institutionalized in an even more tightly confined logic in the spaces outside the academy. There may be a widespread recognition that racism demands an institutional response, but this is ripped away from any larger political narrative altogether. As a result, the attempts by scholars to address a public also tend to be limited by the narrow demands of such technical or legalistic approaches to what anti-racism can and should be. There is a dilemma here. For scholars who wish to connect with so called practitioners and who, perhaps, consider this world of equalities practice as their ‘public’ research is likely to become focused around these questions of technical organization. Of course, many of us still seek to document and explore the complexity of racism and its impact in the world but the focus for this endeavour becomes segmented by institutional focus and, often, a rush to make ‘recommendations’. Access to research funding in Britain, increasingly the only route to creating space for scholarly work, demands that research delivers this ‘impact’ of immediate and usable advice. At the same time, the ‘public’ of practitioners a group here that is overwhelmingly concentrated in organizations tasked with delivering services to diverse populations, whether through statutory services or the third sector appear to understand the role of the intellectual only as this kind of technical adviser.7 Useful research becomes only this research that can enable alternative and potentially more effective operation of bureaucratic practices of one kind or another. This framing of anti-racist research transforms the kind of politics that can be imagined for this intellectual endeavour. This is anti-racism as a matter of organizational adaptation, not any wider social transformation. Perhaps some believe that transformation occurs through the collective impact of these many small organizational changes that has certainly been the unspoken implication of anti- racist work since the Lawrence Enquiry but, whatever the benefits of improved institutional practices, if these in fact have been achieved, this approach abandons any sense of political movement. We may be producing work that connects with a public, but the aspirations of both scholars and public seem less than they were.

## Permutation

### Combinations Bad

#### Our response is an act of exhaustion that wallows in the violence of blackness – negation and institutional analysis is a political imperative that renders the aff’s glorification of modernity incoherent – any combination of our methods results in inclusionary violence

Jones 16, D Dalton Anthony Jones is an associate professor of cultural and critical studies at Bowling Green State University, nearest date given is 2016, *Rhizomes Issue 29: Black Holes: Afro-Pessimism, blackness and the discourses of Modernity, “*Northern Hieroglyphics: Nomadic Blackness and Spatial Literacy,” <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/jones/index.html> NN

[21] Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Civilization and Its Discontents, Madness and Civilization: all of the classic exegeses on mental illness and modernity express the dementia of blackness in its stable form. To be black, is to be mad. To be sane in a world of repetitive violence against one's body and soul is to be mad. Blackness is an unstable delirium that sucks the very light out of Enlightenment.[9] If Afro-pessimist thought forces us to make an accounting of the past, its imperative, its impetus for being, the persistence of its assertion as a destabilizing injunction, is driven by decidedly contemporary concerns. It is the effort to make an honest accounting of the question, "where does my body stand in relation to my flesh and how can they both, one without sacrificing the other, find a stable place to stand in this world or, in the meantime, how can I at least find a way to speak the contradiction and violence of that displacement?" It assumes the task of answering this question by delving into the past not for the sake of melancholy, the right to sing the blues or wallow in self-pity, but in order to elaborate the mechanics of a wound that still festers. It is an exhaustive project that demands willpower and invites sanction at every step. It entails not cutting a truce between the past and the present, not accepting a plea-bargain that leaves our accumulated grievances and the perpetual expendability of our lives off of the negotiating table in exchange for the dubious right to join the legions of alienated and exploited citizens struggling to find coherence in an insane and abusive new world order that has evolved, seamlessly and coercively, from the old. To hazard the consequences of not raising the white flag is an act of courage. But one look out of the window at the America I am traversing across tells me that I do not want to join the rank and file I see. And with that decision, for better or worse, begins a struggle that cannot rely on the power of affirmation alone. It demands that one produce a string of negations as persistent and unrelenting as the steady repetition of deportations that promote one's exile, and it requires one to challenge, ruthlessly, the unethical stability and indefensible centrism that has been the operational status quo of modernity since its inception. [22] For this reason, Jared Sexton, who provides a concise overview of the objections mounted against Afro-pessimism, asserts, following Wilderson, that Afro-pessimism is as much a structural position as a school of thought or collection of ideological dogmas. (Sexton, Afro-Pessimism: The Unclear Word, 9) Rather, it is a (dis)position of embodiment that is deployed and asserted at key junctures. While the encounter may not always be willful, it inevitably emerges of its own accord with a predictable yet spontaneous regularity. It disrupts the flow of social discourse, particularly at those moments of convergence between the black body and its "institutional inscription."[10] More than a unified polemic, although it can be this too, Afro-pessimism is an extended meditation upon a set of accumulated negations growing out of the contradictions of Western thought and practice. Sometimes these can be moments of catharsis, appearing as a productive intervention, creating levity and release in unexpected places at unexpected times, but their (re)appearance and (re)iteration occur with such frequency, and always in a mode that replicates the grievance of blackness, that even such affective solidarities become a structural disposition bound by a relation of violence and a posture of negation. [23] Afro-pessimism is, in other words, first and foremost a political imperative.

## Alternative

### Anti-Ethical Decision Maker

#### **Role of the judge is to be an anti-ethical decision maker. All decision calculus must** revolve **around the ontological entity of the slave.**

Curry ’13 [Dr. Tommy Curry is an associate Prof of Philosophy @ Texas A&M ; “In the Fiat of Dreams: The Delusional Allure of Hope, the Reality of Anti-Black Violence and the Demands of the Anti-Ethical” Academia.edu] GREEN HIGHLIGHTING

Racism is not unethical simply because it is a moral affront to the allegedly generalizable Western/white/enlightenment notion of humanity extended to Blacks by the liberal synonymy of citizenship. Racism is unethical, immoral, because it re-presents—makes known in the present— and acts to capture the Blacks urging the acknowledgment of racism in the ontological entity of modernity’s greatest oppression—the slave; the non-human. It is the historical event of their inhumanity introduced by modernity that allows the white to retreat so easily into the rationalization of their death and dehumanization. It is the memory of slavery, which motivates the white’s attachment to the contingency of Black life, and ultimately concludes that racism, while unfortunate, is/was necessary for America/the West, the world to exist and humanity/the citizen to reach its historical/imperial apex. Thus, MAN, the onto-anthropological basis of humanity and the cultural values that are simultaneously birthed to project humanity into existence is the origin of the oppressive conceptualizations of the other. Oppression “as is” was born out of and sustained by the exclusive morality of white/Western humanity against the barbarism imposed on the Black/African. As such, the nigger born of racism is behind all oppressions, since “it” is the cultural/epistemological/historical ontology to be deterred/ameliorated by being ethically deliberated upon—the nigger is the moral rock bottom of dehumanization. The oppressed is made nigger through dehumanization; the product of absolute debasement, while morality/virtue the valuations of ethics itself is reified perpetually by the activity of whiteness; its perpetual commanding of morality to conform to and justify their existence as the human. As Karen Gange writes in “On the Obsolence of Disciplines (2007), The shift out of our present conception of Man, out of our present “World System”—the one that places people of African descent and the ever-expanding global, transracial category of the homeless, jobless, and criminalized damned as the zero-most factor of Other to Western Man’s Self—has to be first and foremost a cultural shift, *not* an economic one. Until such a rupture in our conception of being human is brought forth, such “sociological” concerns as that of the vast global and local economic inequalities, immigration, labor policies, struggles about race, gender, class, and ethnicity, and struggles over the environment, global warming, and distribution of world resources, will remain status quo. Anti-ethics; the call to demystify the present concept of man as illusion, as delusion, and as stratagem, is the axiomatic rupture of white existence and the multiple global oppressions like capitalism, militarism, genocide, and globalization, that formed the evaluative nexus which allows whites to claim they are the civilized guardians of the world’s darker races. It is the rejection of white virtue, the white’s axiomatic claim to humanity that allows the Black, the darker world to sow the seeds of consciousness towards liberation from oppression. When white (in)humanity is no longer an obstacle weighed against the means for liberation from racism, the oppressed are free to overthrow the principles that suggest their paths to liberation are immoral and hence not possible. To accept the oppressor as is, the white made manifest in empire, is to transform white western (hu)man from semi-deitous sovereign citizen to contingent, mortal, and un-otherable. In short, seeing whites as they are is the proof that Black consciousness has shifted our present conception of man and has found a new teleological/cultural orientation; an endarkening path towards a new humanity.

### Black Nihilism

#### The alternative is black nihilism --- refusing political hope is the only metaphysically coherent response to the constant slaughter of black bodies

**Warren 15** [Calvin K., Assistant Professor of American Studies at George Washington University, “Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope,” *CR: The New Centennial Review*, Volume 15, Number 1, Spring 2015]

V. Conclusion Throughout this essay, I have argued that the Politics of hope preserve metaphysical structures that sustain black suffering. This preservation amounts to an exploitation of hope—when the Political colonizes the spiritual principle of hope and puts it in the service of extending the “will to power” of an anti-black organization of existence. The Politics of hope, then, is bound up with metaphysical violence, and this violence masquerades as a “solution” to the problem of anti-blackness. Temporal linearity, perfection, betterment, struggle, work, and utopian futurity are conceptual instruments of the Political that will never obviate black suffering or anti-black violence; these concepts only serve to reproduce the conditions that render existence unbearable for blacks. Political theologians and black optimists avoid the immediacy of black suffering, the horror of anti-black pulverization, and place relief in a “not-yet-but-is (maybe)-to-come-social order” that, itself, can do little more but admonish blacks to survive to keep struggling. Political hope becomes a vicious and abusive cycle of struggle—it mirrors the Lacanian drive, and we encircle an object (black freedom, justice, relief, redress, equality, etc.) that is inaccessible because it doesn’t really exist. The political theologian and black optimist, then, propose a collective Jouissance as an answer to black suffering—finding the joy in struggle, the victory in toil, and the satisfaction in inefficacious action. We continue to “struggle” and “work” as black youth are slaughtered daily, black bodies are incarcerated as forms of capital, black infant mortality rates are soaring, and hunger is disabling the bodies, minds, and spirits of desperate black youth. In short, these conditions are deep metaphysical problems—the sadistic pleasure of metaphysical domination—and “work” and “struggle” avoid the terrifying fact that the world depends on black death to sustain itself. Black nihilism attempts to break this “drive”—to stop it in its tracks, as it were—and to end the cycle of insanity that political hope perpetuates. The question that remains is a question often put to the black nihilist: what is the point? This compulsory geometrical structuring of thought—all knowledge must submit to, and is reducible to, a point—it is an epistemic flicker of certainty, determination, and, to put it bluntly, life. “The point” exists for life; it enlivens, enables, and sustains knowledge. Thought outside of this mandatory point is illegible and useless. To write outside of the “episteme of life” and its grammar will require a position outside of this point, a position somewhere in the infinite horizon of thought (perhaps this is what Heidegger wanted to do with his reconfiguration of thought). Writing in this way is inherently subversive and refuses the geometry of thought. Nevertheless, the [End Page 243] nihilist is forced to enunciate his refusal through a “point,” a point that is contradictory and paradoxical all at once. To say that the point of this essay is that “the point” is fraudulent—its promise of clarity and life are inadequate—will not satisfy the hunger of disciplining the nihilist and insisting that one undermine the very ground upon which one stands. Black nihilistic hermeneutics resists “the point” but is subjected to it to have one’s voice heard within the marketplace of ideas. The “point” of this essay is that political hope is pointless. Black suffering is an essential part of the world, and placing hope in the very structure that sustains metaphysical violence, the Political, will never resolve anything. This is why the black nihilist speaks of “exploited hope,” and the black nihilist attempts to wrest hope from the clutches of the Political. Can we think of hope outside the Political? Must “salvation” translate into a political grammar or a political program? The nihilist, then, hopes for the end of political hope and its metaphysical violence. Nihilism is not antithetical to hope; it does not extinguish hope but reconfigures it. Hope is the foundation of the black nihilistic hermeneutic. In “Blackness and Nothingness,” Fred Moten (2013) conceptualizes blackness as a “pathogen” to metaphysics, something that has the ability to unravel, to disable, and to destroy anti-blackness. If we read Vattimo through Moten’s brilliant analysis, we can suggest that blackness is the limit that Heidegger and Nietzsche were really after. It is a “blackened” world that will ultimately end metaphysics, but putting an end to metaphysics will also put an end to the world itself—this is the nihilism that the black nihilist must theorize through. This is a far cry from what we call “anarchy,” however. The black nihilist has as little faith in the metaphysical reorganization of society through anarchy than he does in traditional forms of political existence.The black nihilist offers political apostasy as the spiritual practice of denouncing metaphysical violence, black suffering, and the idol of anti-blackness. The act of renouncing will not change political structures or offer a political program; instead, it is the act of retrieving the spiritual concept of hope from the captivity of the Political. Ultimately, it is impossible to end metaphysics without ending blackness, and the black nihilist will never be able to withdraw from the Political completely without a certain death-drive or being-toward-death. This is the essence of black suffering: the lack of reprieve from metaphysics, the tormenting complicity in the reproduction of violence, and the lack of a coherent grammar to articulate these dilemmas. After contemplating these issues for some time in my office, I decided to take a train home. As I awaited my train in the station, an older black woman asked me about the train schedule and when I would expect the next train headed toward Dupont Circle. When I told her the trains were running slowly, she began to talk about the government shutdown. “They don’t care anything about us, you know,” she said. “We elect these people into office, we vote for them, and they watch black people suffer and have no intentions of doing anything about it.” I shook my head in agreement and listened intently. “I’m going to stop voting, and supporting this process; why should I keep doing this and our people continue to suffer,” she said. I looked at her and said, “I don’t know ma’am; I just don’t understand it myself.” She then laughed and thanked me for listening to her—as if our conversation were somewhat cathartic. “You know, people think you’re crazy when you say things like this,” she said giving me a wink. “Yes they do,” I said. “But I am a free woman,” she emphasized “and I won’t go back.” Shocked, I smiled at her, and she winked at me; at that moment I realized that her wisdom and courage penetrated my mind and demanded answers. I’ve thought about this conversation for some time, and it is for this reason I had to write this essay. To the brave woman at the train station, I must say you are not crazy at all but thinking outside of metaphysical time, space, and violence. Ultimately, we must hope for the end of political hope.

### Burn it Down

#### We must burn civil society to the ground - there is no up from slavery. From segregation to neosegregation, the end of the 1AC’s progress is only the perfection of the slave - The legal system becomes the plantation, and we must kill it.

**Farley ’05** (Anthony Paul, Professor of Law @ Boston College, “Perfecting Slavery”, 1/27/2005, http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1028&context=lsfp –) NN

What is to be done? Two hundred years ago, when the slaves in Haiti rose up, they, of necessity, burned everything: They burned San Domingo flat so that at the end of the war it was a charred desert. Why do you burn everything? asked a French officer of a prisoner. We have a right to burn what we cultivate because a man has a right to dispose of his own labour, was the reply of this unknown anarchist. The slaves burned everything because everything was against them. Everything was against the slaves, the entire order that it was their lot to follow, the entire order in which they were positioned as worse than senseless things, every plantation, everything. “Leave nothing white behind you,” said Toussaint to those dedicated to the end of white-over black. “God gave Noah the rainbow sign. No more water, the fire next time.” The slaves burned everything, yes, but, unfortunately, they only burned everything in Haiti. Theirs was the greatest and most successful revolution in the history of the world but the failure of their fire to cross the waters was the great tragedy of the nineteenth century. At the dawn of the twentieth century, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote, “The colorline belts the world.” Du Bois said that the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the colorline. The problem, now, at the dawn of the twenty-first century is the problem of the colorline. The colorline continues to belt the world. Indeed, the slave power that is the United States now threatens an entire world with the death that it has become and so the slaves of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, those with nothing but their chains to lose, must, if they would be free, if they would escape slavery, win the entire world. We begin as children. We are called and we become our response to the call. Slaves are not called. What becomes of them? What becomes of the broken-hearted? The slaves are divided souls, they are brokenhearted, the slaves are split asunder by what they are called upon to become. The slaves are called upon to become objects but objecthood is not a calling. The slave, then, during its loneliest loneliness, is divided from itself. This is schizophrenia. The slaves are not called, or, rather, the slaves are called to not be. The slaves are called unfree but this the living can never be and so the slaves burst apart and die. The slaves begin as death, not as children, and death is not a beginning but an end. **There is no progress and no exit from the undiscovered country of the slave, or so it seems.** We are trained to think through a progress narrative, a grand narrative, the grandest narrative, that takes us up from slavery. There is no up from slavery. The progress from slavery to the end of history is the progress from white-over-black to white-over-black to white-overblack. The progress of slavery runs in the opposite direction of the past present future timeline. The slave only becomes the perfect slave at the end of the timeline, only under conditions of total juridical freedom. It is only under conditions of freedom, of bourgeois legality, that the slave can perfect itself as a slave by *freely choosing* to bow down before its master. The slave perfects itself as a slave by offering a prayer for equal rights. The system of marks is a plantation. The system of property is a plantation. The system of law is a plantation. These plantations, all part of the same system, *hierarchy*, produce white-overblack, white-over-black only, and that continually. The slave perfects itself as a slave through its prayers for equal rights. The plantation system will not commit suicide and the slave, as stated above, has knowing non-knowledge of this fact. **The slave finds its way back from the undiscovered country only by burning down every plantation**. When the slave prays for equal rights it makes the free choice to be dead, and it makes the free choice to not be. Education is the call. We are called to be and then we become something. We become that which we make of ourselves. We follow the call, we pursue a calling. Freedom is the only calling—it alone contains all possible directions, all of the choices that may later blossom into the fullness of our lives. We can only be free. Slavery is death. How do slaves die? Slaves are not born, they are made. The slave must be trained to be that which the living cannot be. The only thing that the living are not free to be is dead. The slave must be trained to follow the call that is not a call. The slave must be trained to pursue the calling that is not a calling. The slave must be trained to objecthood. The slave must become death. Slavery is white-over-black. White-over-black is death. White-over-black, death, then, is what the slave must become to pursue its calling that is not a calling.

### Unflinching Paradigmatic Analysis

#### Our act of an unflinching paradigmatic analysis allows us to deny intellectual legitimacy to the compromises that radical elements have made because of an unwillingness to hold moderates feet to the fire

Wilderson, ’10 [2010, Frank B. Wilderson is an Associate Professor of African-American Studies at UC Irvine and has a Ph.D. from UC Berkeley, “Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms,”]

**STRANGE AS** it might seem, this book project began in South Africa. During the last years of apartheid I worked for revolutionary change in both an underground and above-ground capacity, for the Charterist Movement in general and the ANC in particular. During this period, I began to see how essential an unflinching paradigmatic analysis is to a movement dedicated to the complete overthrow of an existing order. The neoliberal compromises that the radical elements of the Chartist Movement made with the moderate elements were due, in large part, to our inability or unwillingness to hold the moderates' feet to the fire of a political agenda predicated on an unflinching paradigmatic analysis. Instead, we allowed our energies and points of attention to be displaced by and onto pragmatic considerations. Simply put, we abdicated the power to pose the question—and the power to pose the question is the greatest power of all. Elsewhere, I have written about this unfortunate turn of events ***(Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile and Apartheid),*** so I'll not rehearse the details here. Suffice it to say, this book germinated in the many political and academic discussions and debates that I was fortunate enough to be a part of at a historic moment and in a place where the word revolution was spoken in earnest, free of qualifiers and irony. For their past and ongoing ideas and interventions, I extend solidarity and appreciation to comrades Amanda Alexander, Franco Barchiesi, Teresa Barnes, Patrick Bond, Ashwin Desai, Nigel Gibson, Steven Greenberg, Allan Horowitz, Bushy Kelebonye (deceased), Tefu Kelebonye, Ulrike Kistner, Kamogelo Lekubu, Andile Mngxitama, Prishani Naidoo, John Shai, and S'bu Zulu.

### Maximum Captivity

#### We must theorize slavery as maximum captivity in order to produce a structural analysis capable to think of the resistance necessary to disrupt that system.

Sexton 8 (Jared Sexton, Director of African American Studies at UC Irvine, 2008, “Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism”, pages 111-114)

FYI: Randall Kennedy is “one of the first black scholars in this generation to pen a sustained argument advocating what he terms ‘a cosmopolitan ethos that welcomes the prospect of genuine, loving interracial intimacy’ ” (page 107-108)

In response to the last question, we examine several comments from Kennedy’s opening chapter, “In the Age of Slavery.” As noted, Kennedy is at pains to counter the claims of a certain black feminist history regarding the “extremity of power” exercised by the slaveholder and “the absolute submission required of the slave” (Hartman, quoted in Kennedy 2003, 532fn11). He is, in other words, attempting to demonstrate, or at least to speculate upon, the limits of the slave system’s power of domination. Beyond this limit—whose locus proves frustratingly obscure—the agency of the slave herself was, we are told, able to affect significantly the conditions of captivity to alternate ends. Kennedy, in other words, proffers a narrative in which evidence of agency (evidence, that is, confirming an assumption of agency), however circumscribed or practically ineffective, is taken as a sign of resistance. More properly, this is a narrative of resistant affection, an insistence that the dehumanizing social order of racial slavery was unable to achieve its ultimate goal—“the absolute submission of the slave”—because it could not overcome the irresistible force of affection between men and women, “regardless of color.” When all is said and done, a human is still a human, as it were, and the family romance of normative heterosexuality persists “even within” hierarchies that preclude for the captive all of the recognizable (social, political, economic, cultural, legal) trappings of “human being” in the modern sense. Here is Kennedy: The slave system failed, however, to perfect the domination that [ Judge Thomas] Ruffin envisioned. It failed to bind the slaves so tightly as to deprive them of all room to maneuver. It failed to wring from them all prohibited yearnings. Slavery was, to be sure, a horribly oppressive system that severely restricted the ambit within which its victims could make decisions. But slavery did not extinguish altogether the possibility of choice. (43) We might ask, what is the minimum ambit of decision making? What sort of system, if not slavery, would bind one so tightly as to deprive one of all “room to maneuver”? Need a system of domination be “perfect” in order for it to be legally binding or socially effective or politically determinant? Need the captive body be deprived of all room to maneuver for the situation to be considered one of extremity? Need the yearnings of slaves be wrung entirely from them for their prohibition to be considered a constitutive element of life? At what point does the quantitative measure of the slave’s bondage become difference of a qualitative sort? What precisely is the “choice” available under slavery, and is it one worthy of belaboring, one whose sphere of influence is to be considered newsworthy? To put a finer point on it, why is the categorical discrepancy refused between the free and the enslaved, or more specifically, between the slave and the slaveholder? Is such refusal not tantamount to denying the very existence of slavery as a system that produced slaves rather than free people whose freedom was simply “severely restricted” or whose power was simply “severely limited” or who simply faced “difficult situations”? Kennedy continues: Bondage severely limited the power—including the sexual power—of slaves. But it did not wholly erase their capacity to attract and shape affectionate, erotic attachments of all sorts, including interracial ones. In a hard-to-quantify but substantial number of cases, feelings of affection and attachment between white male masters and their black female slaves somehow survived slavery’s deadening influence. The great difficulty, in any particular instance, lies in determining whether sex between a male master and a female slave was an expression of sexual autonomy or an act of unwanted sex. The truth is that most often we cannot know for sure, since there exists little direct testimony from those involved, especially the enslaved women. (44) The inability to quantify the “number of cases” or, indeed, to “know for sure” anything about them does not prevent the author from considering them nonetheless “substantial,” and the paucity of direct testimony,6 “especially [from] the enslaved women,” does not stop the author from extrapolating wildly about said “feelings of affection and attachment” between them and their “white male masters.” In fact, it is the void in its place—the great historic silence—that enables both the reiteration of longstanding alibis for white male sexual violence—what Hartman (1997) discusses skillfully as the “ruses of seduction”—and the projection of this newfangled, though no less menacing, story about a maverick interracial intimacy that, almost undetectably, undermines the injunctions of white supremacy, serving not only as a sign of agency for enslaved women but a moment of their resistance as well. Their “sexual power” is expressed as the “capacity to attract”—and “somehow” to manipulate—the erotic attachments of white male slaveholders. There is here an unsubtle shift in terms: agency is not in itself subversive; indeed, the entire slave system derives, in large part, from the agency of the enslaved (its capture, manipulation, redeployment, etc.) (Chandler 2000). Agency may be resistant or complicit or both, and it may or may not have practical effects in the world; all of this can only be determined contextually. Much more troubling than Kennedy’s imprecision here, however, is his entirely uncritical suggestion about the “sexual power” of slaves. Is not one of the principal conceits of power to suggest that though the dominant may monopolize power political, economic, and social, the dominated nonetheless enjoy a wily aptitude for “getting their way” by other means, namely, the ars erotica of seduction? Is not one of the most pernicious elements of the proslavery discourse that the “attractiveness” of enslaved black women presents a threat of corruption to civilized white manhood and/or an internal guarantee against the excesses of state-sanctioned violence reserved for white slaveholders? The same quality that served as temptation was also, or alternately, taken to be that which would forestall the descent of slaveholding into unrestrained brutality, an essential rationalization for the upholding of white (male) impunity toward blacks, whether enslaved or nominally “free” (Hartman 1997).7 Finally, was not the suggestion that enslaved black men might have the power to seduce white women (whether free or, in earlier periods, indentured) one of the prime alibis for the construction of regulatory or prohibitory statutes around interracial marriage and sexual relations from the seventeenth century onward (Bardaglio 1999)? In each case, the focus on the “sexual power” of slaves was undoubtedly a displacement of the organized violence consistently required of captivity and, further, a dissimulation of the institutionalized sexual power of slaveholders in particular (whose authority not only foreclosed the possibility of prosecution and militated against the extralegal reprisals but also contributed immeasurably to their “capacity to attract and shape affectionate, erotic attachments of all kinds.” The asymmetry here approaches the incommensurable—how, after all, would a slave go on to “court” a master? How would such an exercise in self-objectification, supplementing structural availability with an affirmation of “willingness,” rightly be called power?). This is no less the case simply because for Kennedy the “sexual power” of slaves is something to honor or celebrate rather than to fear.

### Pathology

#### Only a refusal to create a distance from the pathology of blackness, to work inside of it can produce the end of the world, and therefore sociality.

Sexton 10 (Jared Sexton, Director, African American Studies School of Humanities , Associate Professor, African American Studies School of Humanities, Associate Professor, Film & Media Studies School of Humanities at University of California Irvine, “The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism”)

What I find most intriguing about the timbre of the argument of “The Case of Blackness,” and the black optimism it articulates against a certain construal of afro-pessimism, is the way that it works away from a discourse of black pathology only to swerve right back into it as an ascription to those found to be taking up and holding themselves in “the stance of the pathologist” in relation to black folks. I say this not only because there is, in this version of events, a recourse to psychoanalytic terminology (“fetishization,” “obsession,” “repetition,”), but also because there is at the heart of the matter a rhetorical question that establishes both the bad advice of a wild analysis and a tacit diagnosis affording a certain speaker’s benefit: “So why is it repressed?” The “it” that has been afflicted by the psychopathology of obsessional neurosis is the understanding, which is also to say the celebration, of the ontological priority or previousness of blackness relative to the antiblackness that establishes itself against it, a priority or previousness that is also termed “knowledge of freedom” or, pace Chandler, comprehension of “the constitutive force of the African American subject(s)” (Chandler 2000: 261). [21] What does not occur here is a consideration of the possibility that something might be unfolding in the project or projections of afro-pessimism “knowing full well the danger of a kind of negative reification” associated with its analytical claims to the paradigmatic (Moten 2004: 279). That is to say, **it might just be the case that an object lesson in the phenomenology of the thing is a gratuity that folds a new encounter into older habits of thought through a reinscription of (black) pathology that reassigns its cause and relocates its source without ever really getting inside it**. In a way, what we’re talking about relates not to a disagreement about “unthought positions” (and their de-formation) but to a disagreement, or discrepancy, about “unthought dispositions” (and their in-formation). I would maintain this insofar as the misrecognition at work in the reading of that motley crew listed in the ninth footnote regards, perhaps ironically, the performative dimension or signifying aspect of a “generalized impropriety” so improper as to appear as the same old propriety returning through the back door. Without sufficient consideration of the gap between statement and enunciation here, to say nothing of quaint notions like context or audience or historical conjuncture, the discourse of afro-pessimism, even as it approaches otherwise important questions, can only seem like a “tragically neurotic” instance of “certain discourse on the relation between blackness and death” (Moten 2007: 9).xiii Fanon and his interlocutors, or what appear rather as his fateful adherents, would seem to have a problem embracing black social life because they never really come to believe in it, because they cannot acknowledge the social life from which they speak and of which they speak—as negation and impossibility—as their own (Moten 2008: 192). Another way of putting this might be to say that they are caught in a performative contradiction enabled by disavowal. I wonder, however, whether things are even this clear in Fanon and the readings his writing might facilitate. Lewis Gordon’s sustained engagement finds Fanon situated in an ethical stance grounded in the affirmation of blackness in the historic antiblack world. In a response to the discourse of multiracialism emergent in the late twentieth-century United States, for instance, Gordon writes, following Fanon, that “there is no way to reject the thesis that there is something wrong with being black beyond the willingness to ‘be’ black – in terms of convenient fads of playing blackness, but in paying the costs of antiblackness on a global scale. Against the raceless credo, then, racism cannot be rejected without a dialectic in which humanity experiences a blackened world” (Gordon 1997: 67). What is this willingness to ‘be’ black, of choosing to be black affirmatively rather than reluctantly, that Gordon finds as the key ethical moment in Fanon? [23] Elsewhere, in a discussion of Du Bois on the study of black folk, Gordon restates an existential phenomenological conception of the antiblack world developed across his first several books: “Blacks here suffer the phobogenic reality posed by the spirit of racial seriousness. In effect, they more than symbolize or signify various social pathologies—they become them. In our antiblack world, blacks are pathology” (Gordon 2000: 87). This conception would seem to support Moten’s contention that even much radical black studies scholarship sustains the association of blackness with a certain sense of decay and thereby fortifies and extends the interlocutory life of widely accepted political common sense. In fact, it would seem that Gordon deepens the already problematic association to the level of identity. And yet, this is precisely what Gordon argues is the value and insight of Fanon: he fully accepts the definition of himself as pathological as it is imposed by a world that knows itself through that imposition, rather than remaining in a reactive stance that insists on the (temporal, moral, etc.) heterogeneity between a self and an imago originating in culture. Though it may appear counterintuitive, or rather because it is counterintuitive, this acceptance or affirmation is active; it is a willing or willingness, in other words, to pay whatever social costs accrue to being black, to inhabiting blackness, to living a black social life under the shadow of social death. This is not an accommodation to the dictates of the antiblack world. **The affirmation of blackness, which is to say an affirmation of pathological being, is a refusal to distance oneself from blackness in a valorization of minor differences that bring one closer to health, to life, or to sociality**. Fanon writes in the first chapter of Black Skin, White Masks, “The Black Man and Language”: “A Senegalese who learns Creole to pass for Antillean is a case of alienation. The Antilleans who make a mockery out of him are lacking in judgment” (Fanon 2008: 21). In a world structured by the twin axioms of white superiority and black inferiority, of white existence and black nonexistence, a world structured by a negative categorical imperative—“above all, don’t be black” (Gordon 1997: 63)—in this world, the zero degree of transformation is the turn toward blackness, a turn toward the shame, as it were, that “resides in the idea that ‘I am thought of as less than human’” (Nyong’o 2002: 389).xiv In this we might create a transvaluation of pathology itself, something like an embrace of pathology without pathos.

### Violent Revolutions

#### We must affirm violent revolution. Fear of violence is a conservative political maneuver –the question is not whether or not there will be violence but whether it will be directed at an unjust social order

Wilderson 2011[Frank B., University of California Irvine – African American Studies/Drama Department, The Vengeance of Vertigo: Aphasia and Abjection in the Political Trials of Black Insurgents, InTensions Journal, Issue 5, Fall/Winter 2011]

Many pacifist scholars and activists consider the strategies and tactics of armed revolutionaries in First World countries to be short-sighted bursts of narcissism.xvii What pacifist detractors forget, however, is that for Gramsci, the strategy of **a War of Position is one of commandeering civic and political spaces one trench at a time in order to turn those spaces into pedagogic locales for the dispossessed**; and this process is one which combines peaceful as well as violent tactics as **it moves** the struggle **closer to an all-out violent assault on the state**. The BLA and their White revolutionary co-defendants may have been better Gramscians than those who critique them through the lens of Gramsci. Their tactics (and by tactics I mean armed struggle as well as courtroom performances) were no less effective at winning hearts and minds than candle light vigils and “orderly” protests. If the end-game of Gramscian struggle is the isolation and emasculation of the ruling classes’ ensemble of questions, as a way to **alter the structure of feeling of the dispossessed so that the next step, the violent overthrow of the state, doesn’t *feel l*ike such a monumental undertaking, then I would argue the pedagogic value of retaliating against police by killing one of them each time they kill a Black person, the expropriating of bank funds from armored cars in order to further finance armed struggle as well as community projects** such as acupuncture clinics in the Bronx where drug addicts could get clean, **and the bombing of major centers of U.S. commerce and governance**, followed by trials in which the defendants used the majority of the trial to critique the government rather than plead their case, **have as much if not more pedagogic value than peaceful protest**. In other words, if not for the **“pathological pacifism**” (Churchill) which **clouds political debate** and scholarly analysis there would be no question that the BLA, having not even read Gramsci,xviii were among the best Gramscian theorists the U.S. has ever known. But though the BLA were great Gramscian theorists, they could not become Gramscian subjects. The political character of one’s actions is inextricably bound to the political status of one’s subjectivity; and while this status goes without saying for Gilbert and Clark, it is always in question for Balagoon and Bukhari. [34] How does one calibrate the gap between objective vertigo and the need to be productive as a Black revolutionary? What is the political significance of restoring balance to the inner ear? Is tyranny of closure the only outcome of such interventions or could restoration of the Black subject’s inner ear, while failing at the level of conceptual framework, provide something necessary, though intangible, at the level of blood and sweat political activism? These unanswered questions haunt this article. Though I have erred in this article on the side of paradigm as opposed to praxis, and cautioned against assuming that we know or can know what the harvest of their sacrifice was, I believe we are better political thinkers—if not actors—as a result of what they did with their bodies, even if we still don’t know what to do with ours. \*

### Alt Solves Education

#### Only a prior analysis of blackness as existing antagonistically to the human can re-structure the educational system ethically

**Dumas 16** [Michael J. Dumas, Assistant Professor at the University of California, Berkeley in the Graduate School of Education and the Department of African American Studies, “Against the Dark: Antiblackness in Education Policy and Discourse,” *Theory Into Practice* 55:11–19, 2016, published by The College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University] NN

Although most educational researchers and practitioners would acknowledge all of these stories as lamentable examples of racism or (multi)cultural insensitivity (or in more critical scholarship, as the enactment of white supremacy), thus far there has been little theorizing in education on the specificity of anti-Black racism, or what I contend is the broader terrain of antiblackness. Intellectual inquiry on antiblackness, which is mostly situated in comparative literature, philosophy, performance studies, and cultural studies, insists that Black humanity is, as Frank Wilderson asserted, “a paradigmatic impossibility” because to be Black is to be “the very antithesis of a Human subject” (2010, p. 9). Antiblackness scholarship, so necessarily motivated by the question of Black suffering, interrogates the psychic and material assault on Black flesh, the constant surveillance and mutilation and murder of Black people (Alexander, 1994; Tillet, 2012). It also grapples with the position of the Black person as socially dead—that is denied humanity and thus ineligible for full citizenship and regard within the polity (Patterson, 1982). And in all the theorizing on antiblackness, there is a concern with what it means to have one’s very existence as Black constructed as problem—for white people, for the public (good), for the nation-state, and even as a problem for (the celebration of) racial difference (Gordon, 1997, 2000; Melamed, 2011). Inspired by this theoretical work on antiblackness, I argue here that any incisive analyses of racial(ized) discourse and policy processes in education must grapple with cultural disregard for and disgust with blackness. I aim to explain how a theorization of antiblackness allows one to more precisely identify and respond to racism in education discourse and in the formation and implementation of education policy. Briefly, I contend that deeply and inextricably embedded within racialized policy discourses is not merely a general and generalizable concern about disproportionality or inequality, but also, fundamentally and quite specifically, a concern with the bodies of Black people, the signification of (their) blackness, and the threat posed by the Black to the educational well-being of other students. I begin with an, albeit brief, discussion of the scholarship on antiblackness, highlighting a number of themes and commitments in this interdisciplinary body of work. Then, using school (de)segregation as an example, I demonstrate how policy discourse is informed by antiblackness, and conclude with some brief discussion of what an awareness of antiblackness means for educational practice, and for the survival and well-being of the Black children and communities we serve.

# AFF Answers

## Framework

### Heuristics

#### Our methodology is to utilize the state as a heuristic – only that pedagogy allows us to understand the analytical tools of government

Zanotti ‘14

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By questioning substantialist representations of power and subjects, inquiries on the possibilities of political agency are reframed in a way that focuses on power and subjects’ relational character and the contingent processes of their (trans)formation in the context of agonic relations. **Options for resistance to government**al **scripts are not limited to ‘‘rejection,**’’ ‘‘revolution,’’ or ‘‘dispossession’’ to regain a pristine ‘‘freedom from all constraints’’ or an immanent ideal social order. **It is found instead in** multifarious and contingent struggles **that are** constituted within the scripts of governmental rationalities **and at the same time exceed and** transform them. **This approach questions oversimplifications of** the **complex**ities of liberal **political rationalities** and of their interactions with non-liberal political players **and nurtures a** radical **skepticism about identifying universally good or bad actors or abstract solutions to political problems.** International **power interacts in complex ways with diverse political spaces** and within these spaces it is appropriated, hybridized, redescribed, hijacked, and tinkered with. Governmentality as a heuristic focuses on performing complex diagnostics of events. It **invites** historically situated explorations and **careful differentiations rather than overarching demonization**s **of ‘‘power,’’ romanticizations of the ‘‘rebel’’** or the ‘‘the local.’’ More broadly, theoretical formulations that conceive the subject in non-substantialist terms **and** focus on processes of subjectification, on the ambiguity of power discourses, and on hybridization as the terrain for political transformation, open ways for reconsidering political agency beyond the dichotomy of oppression/rebellion. These alternative formulations also **foster an ethic**s **of political engagement**, to be continuously **taken** up **through plural and uncertain practices, that demand continuous attention to ‘‘what happens’’ instead of fixations on ‘‘what ought to be.**’’83 **Such ethics of engagement would not await the revolution** to come or hope for a pristine ‘‘freedom’’ to be regained. **Instead, it would constantly attempt to twist** the working of **power by playing with whatever cards are available** **and would require intense processes of reflexivity on the consequences of political choices**. To conclude with a famous phrase by Michel Foucault ‘‘my point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So **my position leads not to apathy but to hyper- and pessimistic activism.**’’84

### Material Change Good

**Political progress happens through institutions---recognizing that doesn’t produce complacency---building politics is far more valuable than theorizing about anti-institutional black agency**

**Reed 15** – professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania

(Adolph, “The James Brown Theory of Black Liberation,” https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/10/adolph-reed-black-liberation-django-lincoln-selma-glory/)

**What approach to political action can follow from the contention that the Thirteenth Amendment was empty window dressing** and that black slaves’ emancipation was like James Brown’s backward, Nixonian ideal of self-help?∂ **The perspective that shrivels the scope of black political concern to expressing racial “agency”** similarly **diminishes the significance of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the US Supreme Court’s** 1944 **Smith v. Allwright decision that outlawed the infamous “white primary” (and exponentially increased black voting in the South), the 1954 Brown decision, 1964 Civil Rights law, and 1965 Voting Rights Act as if all were in some twisted way racially inauthentic because acknowledging their significance as moments in the struggle for social justice detracts from** the James Brown Theory of **Black Liberation**.∂ That ideological commitment is what impelled Ava DuVernay to make the seemingly gratuitous move of falsifying Martin Luther King Jr’s relationship with the Johnson administration around the Selma campaign: “I wasn’t interested in making a white savior movie,” she replied to critics, “I was interested in making a movie centered on the people of Selma.”∂ Of course, she doesn’t do the latter either, but her commitment to not “making a white savior movie” also led her to misconstrue the tension between the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Selma, which stemmed precisely from the SNCC activists’ objection that King and his organization maintained secret, backdoor dealings with the Johnson administration.∂ **The psychobabbling bromides that elevate recognition and celebration of black agency rest on an ideological perspective that in practical terms rejects effective black political action in favor of expressive display. It is the worldview of an element of the contemporary black professional stratum anchored in the academy**, blogosphere, and the world of mass media chat **whose standing in public life is bound up with establishing a professional authority in speaking for the race. This is the occupational niche of the so-called black public intellectuals**.∂ The torrent of **faddish chattering-class blather and** trivial **debate** sparked by Michael Eric Dyson’s recent attack on Cornel West in the New Republic **illustrates the utter fatuity of this domain, as if there were any reason to care about a squabble between two** freelance Racial Voices **with no constituency or links to** radical **institutions** between them.∂ In an illustration of what this game is all about, the Nation, sensing space for competing brands, projected some Alternative Black Voices into this circus of spurious racial representation in a piece entitled “6 Scholars Who Are ‘Reimagining Black Politics.’ ”∂ Twenty years practically to the week before publication of Dyson’s essay, I took stock of what was then **the newly confected category of the Black Public Intellectual** and noted that the notion’s definitive irony was that its avatars **were** quite specifically **not organically rooted in any dynamic political activity and** in fact **emerged only after opportunities for real connection to political movements had disappeared**. Nor were the “public intellectuals” connected to any particular strain of scholarship or criticism.∂ **Rather, their status was no more than a posture and a brand. By the early 2000s, it was possible to see young people entering doctoral programs with their sights on the academy as a venue for** pursuing careers as public intellectuals — i.e. among the free-floating **racial commentariat**. And that was before the explosion of the blogosphere and Twitterverse, which have exponentially increased both avenues for realizing such aspirations and the numbers of people pursuing them.∂ **But the politics enacted in those venues is by and large an ersatz politics, and the controversies that sustain them are by and large ephemeral, vacant bullshit** — **the “feud” between Iggy Azalea and Azealia Banks, whether black people were dissed because Selma wasn’t nominated** for/didn’t win enough Oscars, and so on.∂ **In the context of this sort of non-stop idiotic bread and circuses** — and this may be an apt moment to remind that the blogosphere is open to any fool with a computer and Internet access — **it is good to reflect on one of the crucial moments in American history when the linking of social and political forces presented a clear choice between egalitarian and inegalitarian interests, and masses of black people joined with others to strike a consequential blow for social justice and to wipe the scourge of slavery from the United States**.∂ **No, it wasn’t a final victory over inequality** — **it didn’t usher in a utopian order, and the greatest promises** opened by the triumph **were unfulfilled** or largely undone. **But it was one of the most important victories that egalitarian forces have won, along with those of the twentieth-century labor, civil rights, and women’s movements, and it is worth reflecting on it and the ways it changed the country for the better**.∂ That struggle against the slaveholders’ insurrection, along with those latter movements, also underscores the fact that **the path to winning the kind of just world to which a left should aspire requires building a politics that seeks**, as the old saying goes, **to unite the many to defeat the few. Any other focus is either unserious or retrograde**.

### Simulation Good

#### Simulated legal debates are crucial for social transformation---teaching legal precision is net-better for eliminating oppression even if one-shot legal solutions don’t work the first time

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By now it has begun to dawn that one of the subjects of this class session is how lawyers translate their moral intuitions and sense of justice into legal arguments. Most beginning students have found themselves in the situation of wanting to express their **moral intuitions** in the form of legal arguments but of feeling powerless to do so. A common attitude of Northeastern students is that a lawyer **cannot turn moral and political convictions into legal arguments** in the context of case-litigation. If you are interested in directly pursuing a moral and/or political agenda, at a minimum you need to take up legislative and policy work, and more likely you need to leave the law altogether and take up grass roots organizing instead. I insist that we keep the focus on litigation for this class period. After the straw poll, I ask the students to simulate the role of Staughton Lynd‟s legal assistants and to assume that the court has just definitively rejected the claims based on contract, promissory estoppel, and the notion of a community property right. However, they should also assume, counter-factually, that Judge Lambros stayed dismissal of the suit for ten days to give plaintiffs one last opportunity to come up with a theory. I charge the students with the task of making a convincing common law argument, supported by respectable legal authority, that the plaintiffs were entitled to substantial relief. Put another way, I ask the students to prove that Judge Lambros was mistaken—that he was legally wrong—when he concluded that there was no basis in existing law to vindicate the workers‟ and community‟s rights. In some classroom exercises, I permit students to select the side for which they wish to argue, but I do not allow that in this session. All students are asked to **simulate the role** of plaintiffs‟ counsel and to **make the best arguments they can**—**either because they** actually **believe** **such arguments** **and/or because in their** simulated role they are fulfilling their ethical **duty to provide** zealous **representation**. A recurring, instant reflex is to say: “it‟s simple—the workers‟ human rights were violated in the Youngstown case.” I remind the class that the challenge I set was to come up with a common law theory. The great appeal of human rights discourse for today‟s students is that it seems to provide a technical basis upon which their fervent moral and political commitments appear to be legally required. “What human rights?” I ask. The usual answers are (1) “they had a right to be treated like human beings” or (2) “surely there is some human right on which they can base their case.” To the first argument I respond: “well, how they are entitled to be treated is exactly what the court is called upon in this case to decide. Counsel may not use a re-statement of the conclusion you wish the court to reach as the legal basis supporting that conclusion.” To the second response I reply: “it would be nice if some recognized human right applied, but we are in the Northern District of Ohio in 1980. Can you cite a pertinent human rights instrument?” (Answer: “no.”) The students then throw other ideas on the table. Someone always proposes that U.S. Steel‟s actions toward the community were “unconscionable.” I point out that unconscionability is a defense to contract enforcement whereas the plaintiffs were seeking to enforce a contract (the alleged promise not to close the plant if it were rendered profitable). In any case, we have assumed that the judge has already ruled that there was no contract. Another suggestion is that plaintiffs go for restitution. A restitution claim arises when plaintiff gives or entrusts something of value to the defendant, and the defendant wrongfully refuses to pay for or return it. But here we are assuming that Judge Lambros has already ruled that the workers did not endow U.S. Steel with any property or value other than their labor power for which they were already compensated under the applicable collective bargaining agreements. If the community provided U.S. Steel with value in the nature of tax breaks or infrastructure development, the effect of Judge Lambros‟ ruling on the property claim is to say that these were not investments by the community but no-strings-attached gifts given in the hope of attracting or retaining the company‟s business. At this point I usually give a hint by saying, “if we‟ve ruled out contract claims, and we‟ve ruled property claims, what does that leave?” Aha, torts! A student then usually suggests that U.S. Steel committed the tort of intentional infliction of emotional distress (IIED).15 I point out that, even if it were successful, this theory would provide plaintiffs relief only for their emotional injuries, but not their economic or other losses, and most likely would not provide a basis for an injunction to keep the plant open. In any event, IIED is an intentional tort. What, I ask, is the evidence that U.S. Steel intends the plant shutdown to cause distress? The response that “they should know that emotional distress will result” is usually not good enough to make out an intentional tort. An astute student will point out that in some jurisdictions it is enough to prove that the defendant acted with reckless disregard for the likelihood that severe emotional distress would result. I allow that maybe there‟s something to that, but then shift ground by pointing out that a prima facie requirement of IIED is that the distress suffered go beyond what an “ordinary person” may be expected to endure or beyond the bounds of “civilized behavior.”16 Everyone knows that plants close all the time and that the distress accompanying job-loss is a normal feature of American life. A student halfheartedly throws out negligent infliction of emotional distress, to which my reply is: “In what way is U.S. Steel‟s proposed conduct negligent? The problem we are up against here is precisely that the corporation is acting as a rational profit-maximizer.” A student always proposes that plaintiffs should allege that what U.S. Steel did was “against public policy.” First of all, I say, “public policy” is not a cause of action; it is a backdrop against which conduct or contract terms are assessed. Moreover, what public policy was violated in this case? The student will respond by saying “it is against public policy for U.S. Steel to leave the community devastated.” I point out once again that that is the very conclusion for which we are contending—it is circular argument to assert a statement of our intended conclusion as the rationale for that conclusion. This dialogue continues for awhile. One ineffective theory after another is put on the table. Only once or twice in the decades I have taught this exercise have the students gotten close to a viable legal theory. But this is not wasted time—learning occurs in this phase of the exercise. The point conveyed is that while law and morals/politics are inextricably intertwined, they are not the same. For one thing, lawyers have a distinct way of talking about and analyzing problems that is characteristic of the legal culture of a given time and place. So-called “legal reasoning” is actually a repertoire of **conventional**, **culturally approved rhetorical moves and counter-moves** deployed by lawyers to create an appearance of the legal necessity of the results for which they contend. In addition, good lawyers actually possess **useful**, specialized **knowledge** not generally absorbed by political theorists or movement activists. Legal training **sensitizes us** to the many **complexities** that arise whenever general norms and principles are implemented in the form of rules of decision or case applications. Lawyers know, for example, that large stakes may turn on precisely how a right is defined, **who has standing** to vindicate it, **what remedies it provides, how the right is enforced** and in what venue(s), and so on. **We are not doing our jobs** properly **if we argue,** simply, “**what the defendant did was unjust and the plaintiff deserves relief**.” No one needs a lawyer to make the “what the defendant did was unjust” argument. As Lynd‟s account shows, the workers of Youngstown did make that argument in their own, eloquent words and through their collective resistance to the shut-downs. If “what the defendant did was unjust” is all we have to offer, **lawyers bring no added value to the table.** Progressive students sometimes tell themselves that law is basically **gobbledygook**, but that you can assist movements for social change if you learn how to spout the right gobbledygook. In this view of legal practice, “creativity” consists in identifying an appropriate technicality that helps your client. But in the Youngstown situation, we are way past that naïve view. There is no “technicality” that can win the case. In this setting, a social justice lawyer must use the bits and pieces lying around to generate **new legal knowledge** and **new legal theories**. And these new theories must say something more than “**my client deserves to win**” (although it is fine to commence one‟s research on the basis of that moral intuition). The class is beginning to get frustrated, and around now someone says “well, what do you expect? This is capitalism. There‟s no way the workers were going to win.” The “this-is-capitalism” (“TIC”) statement sometimes comes from the right, sometimes from the left, and usually from both ends of the spectrum but in different ways. The TIC statement precipitates another teachable moment. I begin by saying that we need to tease out exactly what the student means by TIC, as several interpretations are possible. For example, TIC might be a prediction of what contemporary courts are most likely to do. That is, TIC might be equivalent to saying that “it doesn‟t matter what theory you come up with; 999 US judges out of 1,000 would rule for U. S. Steel.”17 I allow that this is probably true, but not very revealing. The workers knew what the odds were before they launched the case. Even if doomed to fail, a legal case **may still make a contribution to social justice** if the litigation creates a focal point **of energy around which a community can mobilize, articulate moral and political claims, educate the wider public, and conduct political consciousness-raising**. And if there is political value in pursuing a case, we might as well make good legal arguments. On an alternative reading, the TIC observation is more ambitious than a mere prediction. It might be a claim that a capitalist society requires a legal structure of a certain kind, and that therefore professionally acceptable legal reasoning within capitalist legal regimes cannot produce a theory that interrogates the status quo beyond a certain point. Put another way, some outcomes are so foreign to the bedrock assumptions of private ownership that they cannot be reached by respectable legal reasoning. A good example of an outcome that is incompatible with capitalism, so the argument goes, is a court order interfering with U.S. Steel‟s decision to leave Youngstown. This reading of the TIC comment embodies the idea that legal discourse is encased within a deeper, extra-legal structure given by requirements of the social order (capitalism), so that within professionally responsible legal argument the best lawyers in the world could not state a winning theory in Local 1330. Ironically, **the left and the right in the class often share this belief.** I take both conservative and progressive students on about this. I insist that the claim that our law is constrained by a **rigid** meta-logic of capitalism—which curiously parallels the notion that legal outcomes are tightly constrained by legal reasoning—is just plain wrong. Capitalist societies recognize all **sorts of limitations** on the rights of property owners. Professor Singer‟s classic article catalogues a multitude of them.18 The claim is **not only false**, **it is a** dangerous **falsehood**. **To believe TIC in this sense is to limit in advance our aspirations for what social justice lawyering can accomplish**. Now the class begins to sense that I am not just playing law professor and asking rhetorical questions to which there are no answers. The students realize that I actually think that I have a theory up my sleeve that shows that Judge Lambros was wrong on the law. If things are going well, the students begin to feel an emotional stake in the exercise. Many who voted in the straw poll that the plaintiffs deserved to win are anxious to see whether I can pull it off. Other students probably engage emotionally for a different reason—the ones who have been skeptical or derisive of my approach all term hope that my “theory,” when I eventually reveal it, is so implausible that I will fall flat on my face. I begin to feed the students more hints. One year I gave the hint, “What do straying livestock, leaking reservoirs, dynamite blasting, and unsafe products have in common?”—but that made it too easy. Usually my hints are more oblique, as in “does anything you learned about accident law ring a bell?” Whatever the form, the students take the hints, and some start cooking with gas. Over the next few minutes, the pieces usually fall into place. The legal theory toward which I have been steering the students is that U.S. Steel is strictly liable in tort for the negative social effects of its decision to disinvest in Youngstown. I contend that that is what the law provided in Ohio in 1980, and therefore a mechanism was available for the District Court to order substantial relief. A basic, albeit contested theme of modern tort law, which all students learn in first year, is that society allows numerous risky and predictably harmful activities to proceed because we deem those activities, on balance, to be worthwhile or necessary. In such cases, the law often imposes liability rules designed to make the activity pay for the injuries or accidents it inevitably causes. For more than a century, tort rules have been fashioned to force actors to take account of all consequences proximately attributable to their actions, so that they will internalize the relevant costs and price their products accordingly. The expectation is that in the ordinary course of business planning, the actor will perform a cost/benefit analysis to make sure that the positive values generated by the activity justify its costs. Here, I remind the students of the famous Learned Hand Carroll Towing formula19 comparing B vs. PL, where B represents the costs of accident avoidance (or of refraining from the activity when avoidance is impossible or too costly); and P x L (probability of the harm multiplied by the gravity of the harm) reflects foreseeable accident costs.20 The tort theory that evolved from this and similar cost/benefit approaches is called “market deterrence.” The notion is that liability rules should be designed to induce the actor who is in the best position to conduct this kind of cost/benefit analysis with respect to a given activity to actually conduct it. Such actors will have incentives to make their products and activities safer and/or to develop safer substitute products and activities.21 Actors will then pass each activity‟s residual accident costs on to consumers by “fractionating” and “spreading” such costs through their pricing decisions. As a result, prices will give consumers an accurate picture of the true social costs of the activity, including its accident costs. Consumers are thus enabled to make rational decisions about whether to continue purchasing the product or activity in light of its accident as well as its production costs. In principle, if a particular actor produces an unduly risky product (in the sense that its accident costs are above “market level”), that actor‟s products will be priced above market, and he/she will be driven out of business.22 Tort rules have long been crafted with an eye toward compelling risky but socially valuable activities or enterprises to internalize their external costs. My examples—to which the students were exposed in first year—are the ancient rule imposing strict liability for crop damage caused by escaping livestock;23 strict liability under the doctrine of Rylands v. Fletcher for the escape of dangerous things brought onto one‟s property;24 strict liability under Restatement (Second) § 519 for damage caused by “abnormally dangerous activities” such as dynamite blasting;25 and most recently, strict products liability.26 Of course, there are many exceptions to this approach. For example, “unavoidably unsafe” or “Comment k products” are deemed non-defective and therefore do not carry strict liability. And of course the U.S. largely rejected Rylands. Why was that? Because, as was memorably stated in Losee v. Buchanan: “We must have factories, machinery, dams, canals and railroads. They are demanded by the manifold wants of mankind, and lay at the basis of all our civilization.”27 In assuming that entrepreneurial capitalism would be stymied if enterprises were obliged to pay for the harms they cause, the Losee court accepted a strong version of TIC. Time permitting, I touch briefly on the debate about whether the flourishing of the negligence principle in the U.S. subsidized 19th century entrepreneurial capitalism,28 the possible implications of the Coase Theorem for our discussion of Local 1330,29 and the debate about whether it is appropriate for courts to fashion common law rules with an eye toward their distributive as well as efficiency consequences.30 With this as background, I argue that the District Court should have treated capital mobility—investors‟ circulation of capital in search of the highest rate of return—as a risky but socially valuable activity warranting the same legal treatment as straying cattle and dynamite blasting. Capital mobility is socially valuable. It is indispensable for economic growth and flexibility. Capital mobility generates important positive externalities for “winners,” such as economic development and job-creation at the new site of investment. However, capital mobility also predictably causes negative external effects on “bystanders” (the ones economists quaintly label “the losers”). We discussed some of these externalities at the outset of the class—the trauma associated with income interruption and pre-mature retirement, waste or destruction of human capital, multiplier effects on the local economy, and social pathologies and community decline of the kind experienced in Youngstown. The plaintiffs should have argued that capital mobility must internalize its social dislocation costs for reasons of economic efficiency, and that this can be accomplished by making investors strictly liable in tort for the social dislocation costs proximately caused by their capital mobility decisions. An investor considering shifting capital from one use to another will compare their respective rates of return. In theory, the investment with the higher return is socially optimal (as well as more profitable for the individual investor). The higher-return investment enlarges the proverbial pie. But investors must perform accurate comparisons of competing investment opportunities in order for the magic hand of the market to perform its magic. A rational investor bases her analysis primarily on price signals reflecting estimated rates of return on alternative investment options. This comparison will yield an irrational judgment leading to a socially suboptimal investment decision unless the estimated rate of return on the new investment reflects its external effects, both positive and negative. Investors often have public-relations incentives to tout the positive economic consequences promised at the new location. To guarantee rational decision making, the law must force investors contemplating withdrawal of capital from an enterprise to also carefully consider the negative social dislocation costs properly attributable to the activity of disinvestment. This can be achieved by making capital mobility strictly liable for its proximately caused social dislocation costs.31 This approach erects no inefficient barriers to capital mobility, nor does it bar all disinvestment decisions that may cause disruption and loss in the exit community. Other things being equal, if the new investment discounted by the social dislocation costs of exit will generate a higher rate of return than the current use of the capital, the capital should be disinvested from the old use and transferred to the new use. However, if investors are not forced by liability rules to take into account the social dislocation costs of disinvestment, the new investment opportunity will appear more attractive than it really is in a social sense. The situation involves a classic form of market failure. The market is imperfect because investors are not obliged to take into account the negative social dislocation costs proximately caused by their decisions. Inaccurate price signals lead to the overproduction of capital movement and therefore to a suboptimal allocation of resources. Apart from any severance and unemployment benefits received by workers at the old plant, the social dislocation costs of disinvestment are almost entirely externalized onto the workers and the surrounding community. Strict tort liability will induce investors and their downstream customers to fractionate and spread the dislocation costs of capital mobility when pricing the products of the new activity. This will provide those who use or benefit from the new activity at the destination community more accurate signals as to its true social costs and oblige them to fractionally share in the misfortunes afflicting the departure community. Suppose, for example, that U.S. Steel invested the money it took out of Youngstown toward construction of a modern, high-tech steel mill in a Sunbelt state. The price of steel produced at the new mill should fractionally reflect social dislocation costs in Youngstown. According to legal “common sense” and mainstream economic theory, the movement of capital from a lesser to a more profitable investment is an unambiguous social good. Allowing capital to migrate to its highest rate of return guarantees that society‟s resources are devoted to their most productive uses. Society as a whole is better off if capital is permitted freely to migrate to the new investment and there to grow the pie. In short, the free mobility of capital maximizes aggregate welfare. We are all “winners” in the long run, even if some unfortunate “losers” might get hurt along the way. It follows as an article of faith that any legal inhibition on the mobility of capital is inefficient and socially wasteful. This is why mainstream legal thinking refuses to accord long-term workers or surrounding communities any sort of “property interest” in the enterprise which a departing investor is obliged to buy out before removal.32 An unwritten, bed-rock assumption of US law is that capital is not and should not be legally responsible for the social dislocation costs occasioned by its mobility.33 Such costs are mostly externalized onto employees and the surrounding community, even if the exit community had subsidized the old investment with tax breaks and similar forms of corporate welfare. The legal common sense about capital mobility is mistaken. It is not a priori true that the movement of capital toward the greatest rate of return unambiguously enhances aggregate social welfare. Free capital mobility maximizes aggregate welfare and allocates resources to their most productive uses only in a perfect market; that is, only in the absence of market failure. The claim that free capital mobility is efficient is sometimes true, and sometimes it is not. It all depends on the particular facts and circumstances on the ground. Voilà. Judge Lambros was wrong. In 1980, a mechanism did exist in our law to recognize the plaintiffs‟ claims and afford them substantial relief for economic, emotional, and other losses.34 All that was required was a logical extension of familiar torts thinking. Had Judge Lambros correctly applied well-known and time-honored torts principles, he would have treated the social dislocation costs of the plant closure as an externality that must be embedded in U.S. Steel‟s calculations regarding the relative profitability of the old and new uses to which it might put its capital. This would close the gap between private and social costs, thereby tending to perfect the market. Notice an important rhetorical advantage of this theory—its core value is economic efficiency. The plaintiffs can get this far along in their argument without mentioning “fairness,” “equity,” or “justice,” let alone “human rights,” values that are often fatal to legal argument in U.S. courts today.35 I now brace myself for the “you gotta be kidding me” phase of the discussion. Objections cascade in. The progressive students want to be convinced that this is really happening. The mainstream students want to poke holes and debunk. A few of them are grateful at last for an opportunity to show how misguided they always knew my teaching was. Always, students assert that my summary discussion of the cost/benefit analysis omitted various costs and benefits. For example, one year I omitted to say that the social dislocation costs in the exit community must be discounted by ameliorative public expenditures such as unemployment insurance benefits. My response to this type of objection is always the same: “you are absolutely right, that cost or benefit should be included in the analysis. And here are a few more considerations we would need to address to perfect the cost/benefit analysis which I left out only in the interest of time.” But I learn from this discussion; not infrequently, students contribute something I had not previously considered. A frequent objection is that the task of quantifying the social dislocation costs associated with capital mobility is just too complicated and difficult. I concede that it is a complex task and that conservative estimates might be required in place of absolute precision. I ask, however, whether it is preferable to allow investors to proceed on the basis of price-signals we know to be wrong or to induce them to use best efforts to arrive at fair estimates. Separation of powers always comes up, as it should. I go through the usual riffs. Yes, I concede, these problems cry out for a comprehensive legislative solution rather than case-by-case adjudication. But standard, well-known counter-arguments suggest that Judge Lambros should nevertheless have imposed tort liability in this case. For one thing, determining the rules of tort liability has always been within the province of courts. Deferring to the status quo (that those who move capital are not legally responsible for negative externalities) is every bit as much a choice, every bit as much “activism” or “social engineering,” as altering the status quo. Legal history is filled with cases in which the legislature was only prompted to address an important public policy concern by the shock value of a court decision. Particularly is this so in cases involving the rights and interests of marginalized, insular, and under-represented groups like aging industrial workers. I note that Congress eventually responded to the plant closing problem with the WARN Act, a modest but not unimportant effort to internalize to enterprises some of the social dislocation costs of capital disinvestment. The statute liquidates these costs into a sum equal to sixty days‟ pay after an employer orders a plant closing or mass layoff without giving proper notice.36 I call the students‟ attention to the provision of WARN barring federal courts from enjoining plant closings37 and ask why Congress might have included that restriction. Another common objection concerns causation. A student will say: “The closedown of the mills, let alone the shutdown of any particular plant, could not have caused all of the suicides, heart failures, domestic violence, and so on, in Youngstown. Surely many such tragedies would have occurred anyway, even if U.S. Steel had remained. It isn‟t fair to impose liability on U.S. Steel for everything bad that happened in Youngstown during the statute-of-limitations period.” I immediately say that this is a terrific point, and that I was hoping someone would raise it. I compliment the student by saying that the question shows that he/she is now tapping legal knowledge. Typically, the class is concerned with causation-in-fact or “but for” causation. Their question is, how do we know that a plant shutdown caused any particular case of heart failure or suicide in Youngstown? Problems of causal uncertainty are a familiar issue, and I remind students that they were exposed to several well-known responses in Torts. A time-honored, if simplistic device is to shift the burden of proof regarding causationinfact to the defendant, when everyone knows full well that the defendant has no more information than the plaintiff with which to resolve the problem of causal uncertainty.38 In recent decades, courts have developed more sophisticated responses to problems of causal uncertainty as, for example, in the DES cases. As the court stated in Sindell:39 In our contemporary complex industrialized society, advances in science and technology create fungible goods which may harm consumers and which cannot be traced to any specific producer. The response of the courts can be either to adhere rigidly to prior doctrine, denying recovery to those injured by such products, or to fashion remedies to meet these changing needs. Just as Justice Traynor in his landmark concurring opinion in Escola . . . recognized that in an era of mass production and complex marketing methods the traditional standard of negligence was insufficient to govern the obligations of manufacturer to consumer, so should we acknowledge that some adaptation of the rules of causation and liability may be appropriate in these recurring circumstances . . . .40 At this point, some of the progressive students are beginning to salivate. They came to law school with the hope that legal reasoning would provide them a highly refined and politically neutral technology for speaking truth to power. The first semester disabuses most of them of that crazy idea. They have learned that they will not find certainty or answers in legal discourse, and that legal texts are minefields of gaps, conflicts, and ambiguities with moral and political implications. I can tell from the glint in their eyes that they are beginning to ask themselves whether this economics stuff, which they formerly shunned like the plague, might provide a substitute toolbox of neutral technologies with which to demonstrate that redress for workers and other subordinated and marginalized groups is legally required. I cannot allow them to think that. Therefore, unless an alert student has spotted it, I now reveal my Achilles‟ heel. The weak link in my argument is the age-old question of proximate causation. Assume we solve the causation-in-fact problem. For example, assume that by analogy to the Sindell theory of market-share liability, the court arrives at a fair method of attributing to the plant shutdown some portion of the social trauma and injuries occurring in the wake of U.S. Steel‟s departure from Youngstown. How do we know whether the plant closing proximately caused these harms? What do we mean by “proximate causation” anyway, and why does it matter? These questions present another exciting, teachable moment. Naturally, the students haven‟t thought about proximate cause since first year. They barely remember what it is and how it differs from causation-in-fact. Some 3Ls shuffle uncomfortably knowing that the Bar examination looms, and they are soon going to need to know about this. I provide a quick review of proximate causation which addresses the question, how far down the chain of causation should liability reach? I illustrate my points by referring to Palsgraf v. Long Island R.R,41 which all law students remember. Perhaps U.S. Steel might fairly be held accountable for the suicide of steelworkers within ninety days of the plant closing, but we might draw the line before holding U.S. Steel liable for a stroke suffered by a steelworker‟s spouse five years later. Now keyed in to what proximate cause doctrine is about, the students eagerly wait for me to tell them what the “answer” is, that is, where proximate causation doctrine would draw the line in the Youngstown case. That‟s when I give them the bad news. I explain that proximate causation doctrine does not provide a determinate analytical method for measuring the scope of liability. We pretend that buzzwords like “reasonable foreseeability” or “scope-of-the-risk” give us answers, but ultimately decisions made under the rubric of proximate causation are always value judgments.42 The conclusion that “X proximately caused Y” is a statement about the type of society we want to live in. At this juncture, the 3Ls grumpily realize that I am not going to be much help in preparing them for their bar review course. I now distribute a one-page hand-out on proximate causation prepared in advance. The handout reprints Justice Andrews‟ remarkable observation in his Palsgraf dissent: What we . . . mean by the word „proximate‟ is, that because of convenience, of public policy, of a rough sense of justice, the law arbitrarily declines to trace a series of events beyond a certain point. This is not logic. It is practical politics . . . . It is all a question of expediency. There are no fixed rules to govern our judgment. There are simply matters of which we may take account.43 I point out that causation-in-fact analysis, too, always involves perspective and value judgments.44 Why assume that water escaping the reservoir diminished the value of the neighboring coal mining company‟s land? Why not assume that the coal company‟s decision to dig close to the border diminished the value of the manufacturer‟s land (by increasing the cost of using the type of reservoir needed in its production process)? For that matter, why assume that the cattle trample on the neighbors‟ crops? Why not assume that the crops get in the way of the cattle? My handout also contains my variation on Robert Keeton‟s famous definition of proximate cause45: When a court states that „the defendant‟s conduct was the proximate cause of (some portion of) the plaintiff‟s injuries,‟ what the court means is that (1) the defendant‟s conduct was a cause-in-fact of that portion of plaintiff‟s injuries; and (2) the defendant‟s conduct and the plaintiff‟s specified injuries are so related that it is appropriate, from the moral and social-policy points of view, to hold the defendant legally responsible for that portion of the plaintiff‟s injuries. What we mean when we ask whether the social dislocation costs associated with the shutdown of the steel plant were proximately caused by capital mobility is whether these costs are, in whole or in part, properly attributable from a moral/political point of view to U.S. Steel‟s decision to disinvest. Economic “science” does not and cannot establish in a value-neutral manner that the social dislocation costs of the plant shutdown are a negative externality of capital mobility. A conclusion of that kind requires a value judgment that we disguise under the rubric of “proximate causation,” a value judgment about whom it is appropriate to ask to bear what costs related to what injuries. The lesson is that in legal reasoning **there is no escape** **from moral and political choice**. If things have gone according to plan, time conveniently runs out, and the class is dismissed on that note. What am I trying to accomplish in a class like this? What are the objectives of critical legal pedagogy? Legal education should **empower students**. It should put them in touch with their **own capacity** to take control over their lives and professional education and development. It should enable them to experience the possibility of participating, **as lawyers,** **in transformative social movements**. But all too often classroom legal education is deadening. The law student‟s job, mastering doctrine, appears utterly unconnected to any process of learning about oneself or developing one‟s moral, political, or professional identity. Classroom legal education tends to reinforce **a sense of powerlessness** about our capacity to change social institutions. Indeed, it often induces students to feel that they are powerless to shape and alter their own legal education. Much of legal education induces in students a pervasive and exaggerated **sense of the constraint of legal rules** and roles and the students‟ inability to do much about it. In capsule form, the goals of critical legal pedagogy are— • **to disrupt the socialization process** that occurs during legal education; • **to unfreeze entrenched habits** of mind and **deconstruct** the false claims of necessity which constitute so-called “legal reasoning”; • to urge students to see their life‟s work ahead as an opportunity to unearth and challenge law‟s dominant ideas about society, justice, and human possibility and to infuse **legal rules and practices** **with** emancipatory and egalitarian content; • to persuade students that legal discourses and practices comprise a **medium**, **neither infinitely plastic nor inalterably rigid**, in which they can pursue moral and political projects and **articulate alternative visions of social organization and social justice**; • to train them to **argue** professionally and respectably **for the utopian and the impossible**; • to alert them that legal cases potentially provide a forum for **intense public consciousness-raising** **about** issues of **social justice**; • to encourage them to view legal representation as an opportunity to challenge, push, and relocate the boundaries between intra-systemic and extra-systemic activity, that is, an opportunity **to work within the system** in a way that reconstitutes it; and • to show that the existing social order is **not immutable** but “is merely possible, and that people have the freedom and power to act upon it.”46 The most important point of the class is that social justice lawyers **never give up.** **The appropriate response** **when you think you have a hopeless case** **is to go back and do more work in the legal medium**.

## AT: Links

### AT: Schools Link

#### There is demonstrable progress in racial inequality specifically in the context of schooling—this proves pragmatic change is possible within the current system

**Feldscher 13**, Harvard School of Public Health, 9/19/13

(Karen, “Progress, but challenges in reducing racial disparities,” http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/features/progress-but-challenges-in-reducing-racial-disparities/)

September 19, 2013 — **Disparities between blacks and whites in the U.S. remain pronounced**—and health is no exception. **A panel of experts at** Harvard School of Public Health (**HSPH**) **discussed these disparities**—what they are, why they persist, and what to do about them—at a September 12, 2013 event titled “Dialogue on Race, Justice, and Public Health.” **The event** was held in Kresge G-1 and **featured** panelists Lisa **Coleman, Harvard University’s chief diversity officer;** David **Williams**, Florence Sprague Norman and Laura Smart Norman **Professor of Public Health** in the HSPH Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences; Chandra **Jackson**, Yerby **Postdoctoral Research Fellow in** the HSPH Department of **Nutrition; and** Zinzi **Bailey**, a fifth-year **doctoral student in** the HSPH Department of **Social and Behavioral Sciences.** Robert **Blendon**, Richard L. Menschel **Professor of Public Health and Professor of Health Policy and Political Analysis** at HSPH, **moderated** the discussion. **Gains, but pains** Health care disparities are troubling, Coleman said. One study found that doctors recommended coronary revascularization—bypass surgery that replaces blocked blood vessels with new ones—among white patients with heart disease 50% of the time, but just 23% of the time for blacks. Black women are less likely to be given a bone marrow density test than white women, even when it’s known they’ve had prior fractures. And the black infant mortality rate is 2.3 times higher than that of non-Hispanic whites. **Each speaker acknowledged that racial minorities have made significant gains** over the past half-century, **but** said **there is** much **more work** still **to do.** **They cited** statistics providing stark evidence of continuing disparities in **health, wealth, education, income, arrest and incarceration rates, foreclosure rates, and poverty.**  Coleman called the data “disconcerting; in some cases, alarming.” **Schools are desegregated**, she said, **but not integrated**; median income is $50,000 per year for whites but $31,000 a year for blacks and $37,000 a year for Hispanics; since the 1960s, the unemployment rate among blacks has been two to two-and-a-half times higher than for whites; and one in three black men can expect to spend time in prison during their lifetimes. Blendon shared results from surveys that accentuate sharp differences of opinion about how well blacks are faring in the U.S. For instance, in a survey that asked participants if they thought that the lives of black Americans had changed dramatically over the past 50 years, 54% of whites said yes but only 29% of blacks did. Another survey asked whether or not people approved of the verdict in the George Zimmerman trial; 51% of whites approved but only 9% of blacks did. **Reducing disparities** through research, education Jackson talked about growing up in a segregated neighborhood in Atlanta and attending a school with 99% black students and inadequate resources. She became the first in her family to attend college. Now, through her research, she hopes to expose and reduce racial health disparities. In a recent study in the American Journal of Epidemiology, Jackson and colleagues reported that blacks—particularly black professionals—get less sleep than whites, which can have potentially negative impacts on health. **Bailey discussed** what’s known as **the “school-to-prison pipeline”—**a trajectory in which black teens do poorly in school, get held back a grade, drop out, commit a crime, then end up in jail. **On the flip side, she said, there are** “diversity **pipelines**” **to** recruit minority students into **higher education.** “Often these programs target students who have already avoided the school-to-prison pipeline,” Bailey said, noting that she would like to see higher education institutions connect with black students at earlier ages to steer them toward positive choices.

### AT: Hope Link

#### Radical negativity and strategies apathetic to hope recreates white supremacy and annihilates any attempts at equality – engaging the law through and recognizing the ghosts of the past invites optimistic resistance

Sciullo 15, Nick J. Sciullo is an ABD, Department of Communication (Rhetoric and Politics), Georgia State University; M.S., Troy University; J.D., West Virginia University College of Law; B.A., University of Richmond, nearest date given is 2015, “THE GHOSTS OF WHITE SUPREMACY: TRAYVON MARTIN, MICHAEL BROWN, AND THE SPECTERS OF BLACK CRIMINALITY” NN

iii. Black Letter Law's Photographic Negative Black letter law should be read as the photographic negative, for it is black letter law that imposes white supremacy in black script. It is this oppressive rescripting of white supremacy as neutral that allows white supremacy to flourish in the neutral arena of black letter law. Careful students of the law should read the photographic negative though, instead of assuming the neutrality of law's scripting. What I mean here is that there is a tendency to read law as it is, under the pressure of bar passage, job prospects, project deadlines, and efficiency - all the logics of late-stage capitalism. As op-posed to this, in opposition to the liberal reading of law as it is with perhaps a modest critique here and there, students of the law should radically critique law through the oppositional strategy of reading the photographic negative. This play with vision harkens back to the centrality of the photographic image in the Civil Rights Movement. The negative dialectic n39 of reading the law in reverse demands a realization that law is constructed by its absolute non-neutrality. Calling on Theodor Adorno, n40 I see the negative dialectic of producing not some affirming synthesis, but some deformed crisis, a necessary step in grasping law's structural racism. n41 It is, in essence, law's lack of objectiv-ity that makes law's supposed objectivity the profession's closest-held and best-protected secret. By opening up the field of play through negative dialectics, legal scholars may better understand racism as contingent, ephemeral, spec-tral, free-forming, and open to re-writing both by the agents of white supremacy, and those subject to its spectral influ-ence. One of the dangers of doing race work, thinking about race, engaging race in one's social justice activism is the tendency to think about race in relatively rigid ways. This becomes a traditional dialectical move that assumes a bat-tling of static forces to produce a static synthesis. Opposed to that, I see a world of negative dialectics as offering a more nuanced view of race and justice, one that neither rests on outdated notions of blackness and whiteness nor to-tally obscures itself with relativism. The photographic negative metaphor is another way to think about acknowledging white supremacy through looking awry. [\*1406] iv. Hope, Not Pessimism, and Surely Not Optimism In order to better understand the ramifications of this spectral account of law, one must understand that my political project is hope. Attempting to see the unseeable, speak the unspeakable, and think the unthinkable is a logic designed to confront. In desperate times, where white supremacy slips through our fingers save for a few tugs at the ghost's tat-tered rags, what legal scholars must do is engage in politics of hope, because hope sustains a critical orientation to the world. Even if civil society is anti-black, and anti-blackness would seem to prevent black political engagement, the answer is hope and not radical negativity, which can only reproduce the character of negativity attributed to blacks by whites. This is to say, the more radical disjuncture is to confront white negativity with black hope. Keep in mind Ernst Bloch's famous statement, "We must believe in the Principle of Hope. A Marxist does not have the right to be a pessi-mist." n42 But, it is not just a Marxist that cannot be a pessimist, it is also a critical race theorist, a black radical, a labor organizer, a student protestor. Bloch wrote at a time when hope might seem preposterous, when hope was in short sup-ply, yet his vision for hope motivated the Frankfort School to care deeply about ethics and well-being throughout the World Wars and later. n43 While our hauntings may be cause for concern, while they may inspire in us anything but hope, a consistent critical stance against white supremacy requires just the hope Bloch described. In order to do that, we must do more lawyering, more speaking, more writing, more marching, and more learning. White supremacy's proponents are busy at this work. Challenging anti-blackness requires the same. Negativity or disengagement cannot sustain struggle. Far from Nie-tzsche's positive politics of negation, which have their place, what we need now is an orientation toward hope. Let that be the strategy, even if we may quibble about tactics. v. Conclusion Nat Turner haunts us. n44 Gabriel Prosser haunts us. n45 Medgar Evers n46 and Emmett Till n47 haunt us. Trayvon Martin haunts us. n48 Michael Brown haunts [\*1407] us. n49 Eric Garner haunts us. n50 What haunts us more is the specter of white supremacy that enabled these tragic events. In order to engage a world structured by anti-blackness, to engage a legal system that seems determined through many of its most important actors to attack, disempower, and disenfran-chise people of color, to engage a political system built on a foundation of dead black bodies, we must, with nary a bat of the eye, ask what are we to do with the ghosts of white supremacy? n51 We must ask this question not because there is one answer, not because the solution is easy, not because the end is near, but instead precisely because the end is far. We are a long way from justice. We are a long way from peace. We are a long way from recognizing our connections to each other, to our role in the struggle for equality and the ways in which we hinder that struggle's success. n52 The ghosts [\*1408] of white supremacy must be addressed, must be confronted, no matter how fleeting and ineffectual such psychic engagement may be. n53 Trying is the redress to pessimism's affront to an ethic of hope.

### AT: Reform Link

#### Reforms are possible and desirable- tangible change outweighs the risk of cooption

Omi and Winant 13 Resistance is futile?: a response to Feagin and Elias, Michael Omi, Associate Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, Howard Winant, Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara and Director of the University of California Center for New Racial Studies, 2013, Ethnic and Racial Studies, 36:6, 961-973, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2012.715177

In Feagin and Elias’s account, white racist rule in the USA appears unalterable and permanent. There is little sense that the ‘white racial frame’ evoked by systemic racism theory changes in significant ways over historical time. They dismiss important rearrangements and reforms as merely ‘a distraction from more ingrained structural oppressions and deep lying inequalities that continue to define US society’ (Feagin and Elias 2012, p. 21). Feagin and Elias use a concept they call ‘surface flexibility’ to argue that white elites frame racial realities in ways that suggest change, but are merely engineered to reinforce the underlying structure of racial oppression. Feagin and Elias say the phrase ‘racial democracy’ is an oxymoron 􏰀 a word defined in the dictionary as a figure of speech that combines contradictory terms. If they mean the USA is a contradictory and incomplete democracy in respect to race and racism issues, we agree. If they mean that people of colour have no democratic rights or political power in the USA, we disagree. The USA is a racially despotic country in many ways, but in our view it is also in many respects a racial democracy, capable of being influenced towards more or less inclusive and redistributive economic policies, social policies, or for that matter, imperial policies. What is distinctive about our own epoch in the USA (post-Second World War to the present) with respect to race and racism? Over the past decades there has been a steady drumbeat of efforts to contain and neutralize civil rights, to restrict racial democracy, and to maintain or even increase racial inequality. Racial disparities in different institutional sites 􏰀 employment, health, education 􏰀 persist and in many cases have increased. Indeed, the post-2008 period has seen a dramatic increase in racial inequality. The subprime home mortgage crisis, for example, was a major racial event. Black and brown people were disproportionately affected by predatory lending practices; many lost their homes as a result; race-based wealth disparities widened tremendously. It would be easy to conclude, as Feagin and Elias do, that white racial dominance has been continuous and unchanging throughout US history. But such a perspective misses the dramatic twists and turns in racial politics that have occurred since the Second World War and the civil rights era. Feagin and Elias claim that we overly inflate the significance of the changes wrought by the civil rights movement, and that we ‘overlook the serious reversals of racial justice and persistence of huge racial inequalities’ (Feagin and Elias 2012, p. 21) that followed in its wake. We do not. In Racial Formation we wrote about ‘racial reaction’ in a chapter of that name, and elsewhere in the book as well. Feagin and Elias devote little attention to our arguments there; perhaps because they are in substantial agreement with us. While we argue that the right wing was able to ‘rearticulate’ race and racism issues to roll back some of the gains of the civil rights movement, we also believe that there are limits to what the right could achieve in the post-civil rights political landscape. So we agree that the present prospects for racial justice are demoralizing at best. But we do not think that is the whole story. US racial conditions have changed over the post-Second World War period, in ways that Feagin and Elias tend to downplay or neglect. Some of the major reforms of the 1960s have proved irreversible; they have set powerful democratic forces in motion. These racial (trans)formations were the results of unprecedented political mobiliza- tions, led by the black movement, but not confined to blacks alone. Consider the desegregation of the armed forces, as well as key civil rights movement victories of the 1960s: the Voting Rights Act, the Immigration and Naturalization Act (Hart- Celler), as well as important court decisions like Loving v. Virginia that declared anti- miscegenation laws unconstitutional. While we have the greatest respect for the late Derrick Bell, we do not believe that his ‘interest convergence hypothesis’ effectively explains all these developments. How does Lyndon Johnson’s famous (and possibly apocryphal) lament upon signing the Civil Rights Act on 2 July 1964 􏰀 ‘We have lost the South for a generation’ 􏰀 count as ‘convergence’? The US racial regime has been transformed in significant ways. As Antonio Gramsci argues, hegemony proceeds through the incorpora- tion of opposition (Gramsci 1971, p. 182). The civil rights reforms can be seen as a classic example of this process; here the US racial regime 􏰀 under movement pressure 􏰀 was exercising its hegemony. But Gramsci insists that such reforms 􏰀 which he calls ‘passive revolutions’ 􏰀 cannot be merely symbolic if they are to be effective: oppositions must win real gains in the process. Once again, we are in the realm of politics, not absolute rule. So yes, we think there were important if partial victories that shifted the racial state and transformed the significance of race in everyday life. And yes, we think that further victories can take place both on the broad terrain of the state and on the more immediate level of social interaction: in daily interaction, in the human psyche and across civil society. Indeed we have argued that in many ways the most important accomplishment of the anti-racist movement of the 1960s in the USA was the politicization of the social. In the USA and indeed around the globe, race-based movements demanded not only the inclusion of racially defined ‘others’ and the democratization of structurally racist societies, but also the recognition and validation by both the state and civil society of racially-defined experience and identity. These demands broadened and deepened democracy itself. They facilitated not only the democratic gains made in the USA by the black movement and its allies, but also the political advances towards equality, social justice and inclusion accomplished by other ‘new social movements’: second- wave feminism, gay liberation, and the environmentalist and anti-war movements among others. By no means do we think that the post-war movement upsurge was an unmitigated success. Far from it: all the new social movements were subject to the same ‘rearticulation’ (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, p. xii) that produced the racial ideology of ‘colourblindness’ and its variants; indeed all these movements confronted their mirror images in the mobilizations that arose from the political right to counter them. Yet even their incorporation and containment, even their confrontations with the various ‘backlash’ phenomena of the past few decades, even the need to develop the highly contradictory ideology of ‘colour- blindness’, reveal the transformative character of the ‘politicization of the social’. While it is not possible here to explore so extensive a subject, it is worth noting that it was the long-delayed eruption of racial subjectivity and self-awareness into the mainstream political arena that set off this transformation, shaping both the democratic and anti- democratic social movements that are evident in US politics today.

### AT: Futurity Link

#### Futurity is objectively better than the alt – blackness is not static but rather exists as a force constantly propelling itself toward progress

Kearse 16, Stephen Kearse is a freelance writer and critic. He has previously written for Seven Scribes, Paste magazine, and the Toast. 2/2/16, “Quantum Black History: A Review of ‘Physics of Blackness’,” <http://sevenscribes.com/quantum-black-history-a-review-of-physics-of-blackness/> NN

The trajectory of blackness is always forward, up, away. On and on, on to the next, next 15 one coming, we shall overcome, move bitch, I’m not gon’ stop, I’m not gon’ give up, ain’t no mountain high enough, I’mma touch the sky— blackness doesn’t just orient itself toward the future, it accelerates toward it, fast and furious. Almost instinctively, blackness wills itself into an eternal procession toward inevitably better days, progress incarnate. Confronting this will, in Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology Michelle Wright traces the trajectory of blackness to its point of origin, profoundly transforming blackness in the process. Written as a critique of the metanarrative of blackness, and its tendency to privilege straight, American black men, the book is necessarily confrontational. Wright begins by immediately sidestepping the question of what blackness is. Wright takes the nebulousness of blackness as a given. For her, the question isn’t what is blackness: the question is what makes blackness? What holds it together so that it doesn’t seem so nebulous despite stretching out across nations and centuries and peoples? What are its fundamental forces? Using physics as a grand metaphor, Wright pinpoints space and time as the forces underlying blackness, arguing that the geography and temporality of the Middle Passage fundamentally define blackness. For Wright, the Middle Passage is treated as the Big Bang of blackness, the sole point from which blackness expands outward, forming the beautiful nebulas of blackness that we recognize today. This cosmology of blackness – Wright dubs it the “Middle Passage epistemology,” following Annette Henry – is firmly accepted within black studies and at large, but Wright isn’t a stargazer. In her eyes, the blackness that stems from the Middle Passage is destructive. Rather than linking black people, it creates hierarchies that tend to privilege straight black men. The book’s first two chapters confront the Middle Passage epistemology head-on, using Newtonian physics to explain how and why the Middle Passage orients blackness by anchoring it to a single event. Newton’s laws of motions, Wright shows, are loaded with assumptions about time and space, namely that time always moves forward, linearly, and that this forward motion is inherently good, progressive. The notion that time is progressive preexisted Newton, Wright notes, but the laws of motion naturalized this assumption, making it fact rather than worldview. Wright highlights how this worldview of constant progress works for blackness, noting that it threads a compelling linear narrative that moves “from slavery to rebellions to civil disobedience” in a way that “underscores Black achievement and drive” and “allows us to cogently and compellingly graph the antiprogressive thrust of white Western politics and practices, all the while documenting a history of defiance and collective uplift.” In other words, “Murder to Excellence” is a damn good story. But is it a story that we should continue to tell? According to Wright, the answer is no. Though the Middle Passage epistemology is deeply uplifting and encouraging, if it is taken as fact, it has three troubling consequences. First, it undermines the work of struggle by making success inevitable rather than bitterly fought for, flattening the uphill and toiling battle of procuring (and losing) rights into a treadmill of fated, easy victories. Second, if the Middle Passage is the origin of blackness, then from its birth blackness has never been determined by black people; it is just an ongoing series of chain reactions to white racism. The lack of agency in such a narrative is condescending at best. Finally, and most important for Wright, because the Middle Passage tends to prioritize the experiences of straight black men (e.g., Amistad, 12 Years a Slave, Roots), if it is used as the defining event of blackness, the experiences of black women, LGBTQ black people, and black people from outside the Americas and the Caribbean are never mentioned. In other words, there are entire constellations of blackness between murder and excellence, but when seen through the rigid telescope of the Middle Passage, they can only be faint blips, trifling cosmic dust. To counter the Middle Passage epistemology, Wright turns to quantum physics, which unites space and time as spacetime and allows spacetime to curve, bend and stretch in multiple directions. Quantum physics holds promise for Wright because blackness can become multidimensional, arcing along multiple timelines instead of one. The solution that emerges from this turn to quantum physics is “epiphenomenal spacetime,” a way of thinking about space and time in the moment that moves beyond rigid cause and effect and considers causes and effects, probabilities and possibilities, blackness as multitude rather than singularity. The centerpiece of this quantum blackness is the chapter “Quantum Baldwin,” in which Wright critiques James Baldwin’s essay “Encounter on the Seine.” In Baldwin’s essay, he roams Paris, coming across the Eiffel Tower and reflecting on what France variously represents for black Americans, African immigrants, and white Americans. Rather than finding common ground with African immigrants, Baldwin sees a 300-year gulf between black Americans and Africans and shirks away, lonely. The black American experience is uniquely alienating, he concludes. Wright challenges Baldwin, criticizing him for using black American men as a stand-in for all black people, and arguing that the gulf between Africans and black Americans only exists if you follow the logic of a timeline that allows just one narrative of blackness. If Baldwin had actually spoken with some French African immigrants in epiphenomenal spacetime, outside of a timeline in which Africans and black Americans are distant relatives, he could have discovered – or created – other points of proximity: shared education, shared occupation, shared sexuality (Baldwin was gay), shared alienation from home. After all, how did he know he was staring across a 300-year gulf? The French African could have been a second-generation immigrant to France, or a worker from a Caribbean colony, or even an American tourist from Louisiana. None of these alternatives are implausible and each could have complicated Baldwin’s encounter on the Seine. But Baldwin could never know because he stuck to what he knew, blackness from one source, one dimension, one trajectory. Wright concludes the book by detailing some of the black experiences that have been lost because of the dominance of the Middle Passage epistemology. Slaves that were traded across the Indian and Pacific Oceans, black soldiers who fought for the German army in World War II, African women who were displaced by battles in Africa during World War II, and African immigrants to Europe and Asia are just a few of the vast collectives of black people who aren’t accounted for by the Middle Passage epistemology. Many of these groups might not even identify as black, but perhaps they don’t identify as black because they haven’t been given a chance, because their stories are seen as deviations from the timeline rather than enrichments, footnotes rather than headers. There are clear benefits to sticking to the familiar, chanting “We gon’ be alright” and marching forward, a million strong, propelled by the jet fuel potential that is blackness – forged under pressure, distilled, refined, flammable, hurtling along. The past and the present often seem to justify this breakneck speed. Slavery, Jim Crow, new slaves, the New Jim Crow, the Scottsboro Nine, Emmitt Till, the Jena Six , Trayvon Martin— life tends to feel frustratingly cyclical for blackness. Accordingly, the speeding straight arrow of the future holds particular promise, offering a chance to slash through the cycles of misery like Alexander through the Gordian knot. Perhaps Kanye West puts it most concisely: “from the bottom so the top’s the only place to go now.” But what if blackness can be more than a million black men? Physics of Blackness takes the inherent collectivity of blackness seriously, embracing a multiverse of black experiences that includes the descendents of the Middle Passage and all other routes. This view of blackness transforms it into a relation among people rather just than a relation to a fixed point. The trajectory of blackness can still be forward, up, and away, but now it is also across, down, between, through: murder to excellence to beyond and back.

### AT: Rollbacks

#### Examples of how certain reforms have failed are not a useful metric of evaluating progress – their denial of the material progress created for black people by black people is a disavowal of the strength and resilience of blackness

Raynor and Romans 16, Alethea Frazier Raynor co-directs, with Angela Romans, the District & Systems Transformation team at AISR. She has led teams that have documented, supported, and evaluated district reform efforts in Nashville, Tennessee, for the last five years. Currently she leads AISR's project on discipline disparities funded by The Atlantic Philanthrophies and is a member of the research team for the case study of Black and Latino male achievement in Boston Public Schools. They are both professors at Brown University, 2/29/16, “When We Get Weary: Persistence in the Journey to Equity and Excellence,” <http://annenberginstitute.org/blog/commentary/when-we-get-weary-persistence-journey-equity-and-excellence> NN

As this Black History Month comes to end, we recognize much progress from the eras of our childhoods, but in our work toward education and social justice, we are also sometimes weary. In the unending quest to provide liberty and justice for all, we are reminded that the rights for which we pledge allegiance to the American flag are still not accessible to many public school children across the nation. We can become disillusioned in the current political context, knowing that the hard-fought battles for access to quality education, voting rights, and other civil liberties were fragile victories at best, as we now witness states taking two steps backward from the giant steps that helped to move our country toward a more just and fair society. In Texas and Florida, for example, thousands of voters in recent elections have been disenfranchised by voter ID laws, limited early voting, and mishandling of ballots, all of which disproportionately affect communities of color. In Louisiana and New Jersey, state-run school authorities with limited capacity and no clear track record of success have closed or taken over schools in primarily low-income urban communities of color without replacing them with high-quality options that are local and accessible for all children and families. Yet when we become weary, we need only remember how long civil rights activists like Rosanell Eaton have been engaged in the struggle for equity and justice and let her ninety-four years be a gauge for the persistence we will need in the face of inequities that deny whole communities of children the right to a quality education. Seventy-three years ago at age twenty-one, Rosanell Eaton refused to be denied her right to vote, and she met every challenge handed her by White voter registrars. She recited by memory the preamble to the Constitution, passed the literacy test contrived by the voter registration office, and became a registered voter in the state of North Carolina – a right that she has continued to exercise and has fought for on behalf of others ever since. Sadly, at age ninety-four she is still fighting in the trenches against voter ID laws passed in her home state that threaten to disenfranchise her along with countless others from communities that are already marginalized, communities where the right to a quality education has been as elusive as retaining the right to vote. This is disheartening, but what we can learn from Rosanell Eaton is that while we may become weary in the face of inequity, like her we must remain vigilant and relentless in the pursuit of justice and encourage current and future generations of young people to exercise their right to vote and to fight for their right to a quality education. Eaton and many like her have sustained their vigilance over decades. While education has been called the “civil rights issue of our time,” the education of Black people has always been a civil rights issue. The fight for access to equitable educational opportunities has been a part of not only Black history, but U.S. history, starting with enslaved Africans who practiced civil disobedience against Southern laws prohibiting them to read. College students in the 1960s held sit-ins at lunch counters, led Freedom Rides, and marched in acts of civil disobedience. In the 1980s, they protested university investments benefitting the apartheid government in South Africa, furthering the principle of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” As in the past, today’s youth find it unacceptable that their country has failed to provide them with a quality education, and continue to push adults in the system to provide the education they deserve. They demand an end to the school-to-prison pipeline and harsh discipline practices that disproportionately suspend Black and Brown students and they help lead the fight for a rigorous curriculum and qualified teachers in their classrooms. College students across the country, including on our own campus at Brown University, protest racial bias, marginalization of students of color, and the lack of faculty diversity. Here in Providence, a coalition of youth organizers through a four year campaign successfully lobbied the Providence Public School District and City of Providence to provide funding for 1,000 more students to receive free transportation to school, reducing the mandatory living distance for high school students to receive free bus passes from three miles to two. In a district with majority Latino/a or African American students and 84 percent of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, many parents could not afford a car or public transportation costs, requiring students to walk more than three miles to school every day. Local youth engaged elected officials and other leaders to “walk in our shoes” through the cold and snow to experience what they go through to attend school, and recently demanded that elected officials #KeepYourPromise after budget cuts threatened transportation funding. In 1857, the great orator and statesman Frederick Douglass made clear the ongoing nature of our work when he stated, “If there is no struggle there is no progress.” Thus if there is to be progress in public education, we can expect a struggle when we – citizens both young and old – challenge the systemic inequities that are deeply embedded in the institutional fabric of our society. We must use our collective voices to address even more explicitly how inequities in voting rights, school discipline, teacher quality, and even transportation are intertwined and can operate in tandem to perpetuate segregation in our schools and challenge our voting rights at the polls. As African American women fighting for social justice, when we get weary in our work and question the ability of systems to change for the better, we draw inspiration from civil rights champions past and present, and we continue to work across districts and communities to advance educational equity and excellence. We may get weary, but we continue in the struggle as a reminder to young people in generations that follow that their efforts matter, that they matter, and to let them know what Frederick Douglass knew well back in 1857: “Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

## AT: Social Death

### Anti-Blackness = Contingent

**The aff’s conceptualization of anti-blackness as political ontology creates a false dichotomy between destroying this world or being subjected to it --- that homogenizes the experience of the 35 million black people in the US and displaces the possibility of pragmatic practices which can resist anti-blackness.**

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Wilderson’s critique of Agamben is certainly correct within the specific framework of a political ontology of racial positioning. His description of anti-Black antagonism shows a powerful macropolitical sedimentation of [End Page 56] Black suffering in which Black bodies are ontologically frozen into (non-) beings that stand in absolute political distinction from those “who do not magnetize bullets” (Wilderson 2010, 80). In the same framework, Jared Sexton, whose work is very close to Wilderson’s, is also right when he shows how biopolitical thought—specifically the Agambenian form centered on questions of sovereignty—and its variant of “necropolitics” found in Mbembe has so often run aground on the figure of the slave (see Sexton 2010).5 Locating the reality of anti-Blackness wholly within this account of political ontology does provide an undeniably effective analysis of its violence and sedimentation over the modern world as a whole. However, in terms of a general structure, I understand Wilderson’s (and Sexton’s) political ontology to remain **tied in form** to Agamben’s even as it seemingly discounts it and therefore remains bound to some of the problems and limitations that beset such a formal structure, as I’ll discuss in a moment. Despite the critique of Agamben’s ontological blind spots regarding the extent to which Black suffering is non-analogous to non-black suffering, as I’ve tried to show, Wilderson keeps the basic contours of Agamben’s ontological structure in place, maintaining a formal political ontology that expands the bottom end of the binary structure so as to locate an absolute zero-point of political abjection within Black social death. To be clear, this is not to say that the difference between the content and historicity of Wilderson’s social death and Agamben’s bare life does not have profound implications for how political ontology is conceived or how questions of suffering and freedom are posed. Nor is it to say that a congruence of formal structure linking Agamben and Wilderson should mean that their respective projects are not radically differentiated and perhaps even opposed in terms of their broader implications and revelations. Rather, what I want to focus on is how the absolute prioritization of a formal ontological framework of autonomous and irreconcilable spheres of positionality—however descriptively or epistemologically accurate in terms of a regime of ontology and its corresponding macropolitics of anti-Blackness—ends up **limiting** a whole range of possible avenues of analysis that have their proper site within what Deleuze and Guattari describe as the micropolitical. The issue here is the distinction between the macropolitical (molar) and the micropolitical (molecular) fields of organization and becoming. Wilderson and Afro-pessimism in general privilege the macropolitical field in which Blackness is **always already sedimented** and rigidified into a political onto-logical position that **prohibits movement** and the possibility of what Fred Moten calls “fugitivity.” The absolute privileging of the macropolitical as [End Page 57] the frame of analysis tends to bracket or overshadow the fact that “every politics is simultaneously a macropolitics and a micropolitics (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 213). Where the macropolitical is structured around a politics of molarisation that immunizes itself from the threat of contingency and disruption, the micropolitical names the field in which local and singular points of connection produce the conditions for “lines of flight, which are molecular” (ibid., 216). The micropolitical field is where movement and resistance happens against or in excess of the macropolitical in ways not reducible to the kind of formal binary organization that Agamben and Wilderson’s political ontology prioritizes. Such resistance is not necessarily positive or emancipatory, as lines of flight name a contingency that always poses the risk that whatever develops can become “capable of the worst” (ibid., 205). However, within this contingency is also the possibility of creative lines and deterritorializations that provide possible means of positive escape from macropolitical molarisations. Focusing on Wilderson, his absolute prioritization of a political onto-logical structure in which the law relegates Black being into the singular position of social death happens, I contend, at the expense of two significant things that I am hesitant to bracket for the sake of prioritizing political ontology as the sole frame of reference for both analyzing anti-Black racism and thinking resistance within the racialized world. First, it **short-circuits** an analysis of power that might reveal not only how the practices, forms, and apparatuses of anti-Black racism have historically developed, changed, and reassembled/reterritorialized in relation to state power, national identity, philosophical discourse, biological discourse, political discourse, and so on—changes that, despite Wilderson’s claim that focusing on these things only “mystify” the question of ontology (Wilderson 2010, 10), surely have implications for how racial positioning is both thought and resisted in differing historical and socio-political contexts. To the extent that Blackness equals a singular ontological position within a macropolitical structure of antagonism, there is almost **no room** to bring in the spectrum and flow of **social difference and contingency** that no doubt spans across Black identity as a legitimate issue of analysis and as a site/sight for the possibility of a **range of resisting practices**. This bracketing of difference leads him to make some rather sweeping and opaquely abstract claims. For example, discussing a main character’s abortion in a prison cell in the 1976 film Bush Mama, Wilderson says, “Dorothy will abort her baby at the clinic or on the floor of her prison cell, not because she fights for—and either wins [End Page 58] or loses—the right to do so, but because she is one of 35 million accumulated and fungible (owned and exchangeable) objects living among 230 million subjects—which is to say, her will is always already subsumed by the will of civil society” (Wilderson 2010, 128, italics mine). What I want to press here is how Wilderson’s statement, made in the sole frame of a totalizing political ontology overshadowing all other levels of sociality, flattens out the social difference within, and even the possibility of, a micropolitical social field of 35 million Black people living in the United States. Such a flattening reduces the optic of anti-Black racism as well as Black sociality to the frame of political ontology where Blackness remains **stuck in a singular position** of abjection. The result is a severe analytical limitation in terms of the way Blackness (as well as other racial positions) exists across an **extremely wide field of sociality** that is comprised of differing intensities of forces and relational modes between various institutional, political, socio-economic, religious, sexual, and other social conjunctures. Within Wilderson’s political ontological frame, it seems that these conjunctures are excluded—or at least bracketed—as having any bearing at all on how anti-Black power functions and is resisted across highly differentiated contexts. There is only the binary ontological distinction of Black and Human being; only a macropolitics of sedimented abjection. Furthermore, arriving at the second analytical expense of Wilderson’s prioritization of political ontology, I suggest that such a flattening of the social field of Blackness **rigidly delimits** what counts as **legitimate political resistance**. If the framework for thinking resistance and the possibility of creating another world is reduced to rigid ontological positions defined by the absolute power of the law, and if Black existence is understood only as ontologically fixed at the extreme zero point of social death without recourse to anything within its own position qua Blackness, then there is not much room for strategizing or even imagining resistance to anti-Blackness that is not **wholly limited to** expressions and events of **radically apocalyptic political violence**: the law is either destroyed entirely, or there is no freedom. This is not to say that I am necessarily against radical political violence or its use as an effective tactic. Nor is to say that I think the law should be left unchallenged in its total operation, but rather that there might be other and more **pragmatically oriented practices of resistance** that do not necessarily have the absolute destruction of the law as their immediate aim that **should count as genuine** resistance to anti-Blackness. For Wilderson, like Agamben, anything less than an absolute overturning [End Page 59] of the order of things, the violent destruction and annihilation of the full structure of antagonisms, is deemed as “[having nothing] to do with Black liberation” (quoted in Zug 2010). Of course, the desire for the absolute overturning of the currently existing world, the decisive end of the existing world and the arrival of a new world in which “Blacks do not magnetize bullets” should be absolutely affirmed. Further, the severity and gratuitous nature of the macropolitics of anti-Blackness in relation to the possibility of a movement towards freedom should not be bracketed or displaced for the sake of appealing to any non-Black grammar of exploitation or alienation (Wilderson 2010, 142). The question I want to pose, however, is how the **insistence** on the absolute priority of framing this world within a rigid structure of formal ontological positions can only revert to what amounts to a kind of negative theological and **eschatological blank horizon** in which **actually existing** social sites and modes of **resisting praxis** are **displaced** and **devalued** by notions of whatever it is that might arrive from beyond. It seems that Wilderson, again, is close to Agamben on this point, whose ontological structure also severely delimits what might count as genuine resistance to the regime of sovereignty. As Dominick LaCapra points out regarding the possibility of liberation outside of Agamben’s formal ontological structure of bare life and sovereignty, A further enigmatic conjunction in Agamben is between pure possibility and the reduction of being to mere or naked life, for it is the emergence of mere naked life in accomplished nihilism that simultaneously generates, as a kind of miraculous antibody or creation ex nihilo, pure possibility or utterly blank utopianism not limited by the constraints of the past or by normative structures of any sort. (LaCapra 2009, 168) With life’s ontological reduction to the abjection of bare life or social death, the only possible way out, it seems, is the impossible possibility of what Agamben refers to as the “suspension of the suspension,” the laying aside of the distinction between bare life and political life, the “Shabbat of both animal and man” (Agamben 2003, 92). It is in this sense that Agamben offers, again in the words of LaCapra, a “negative theology in extremis . . . an empty utopianism of pure, unlimited possibility” (LaCapra 2009, 166). The result is a discounting and devaluing of other, perhaps more pragmatic and less eschatological, practices of resistance. With the “all or nothing” [End Page 60] approach that posits anything less than the absolute suspension of the current state of things as unable to address the violence and abjection of bare life, there is not much left in which to appeal than a kind of **apocalyptic**, messianic, and contentless eschatological **future space defined by whatever this world is not**.

### Complexity

#### You should err aff—human systems are inherently malleable and metrics of social death used to describe other groups such as the Moores but even those seemingly unchangeable antagonisms were reversed.

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\*\*\*Theonaturalism – religion based difference

The first thing to bear in mind you may wonder why in the beginning of the talk I talked about philosophical anthropology. And many people when they are trying to talk about social change they never think about *what a human being is* and this is something Fanon pays attention to. **Many people want to have closed conceptions of human beings because then human beings can be predicable**. In fact, in fanons writing he gave an example. One of the problems is that when he would walk in reason seems to walk out. One problem we have to bear in mind when we try to look at the question of human beings **in terms of rigid closed systems** is that we often are trying to get as a model of how we work as theorists on issues of social change that are actually based on what we can call **law like generalizations**. Now what is a law like generalization? It is when you make sure that whatever you say has no contradiction down the line. So if you are to say this much [gestures with hand] the next stage must be consistent with that, and the next stage until you are maximally consistent. Do you get that? But here is the problem – and I can just put it in a nut shell- nobody, nobody in this room would like to date, be married to, or be a best friend with a maximally consistent person. You know what that is. Its hell. And this tells you something, because if somebody where maximally consistent, you know what you would say that person is not reasonable. And we have a person here who does work on Hegel that can point out this insight, that a human being has the ability to evaluate rationality. Now why is that important? Because you see the mistake many of us make is **many of us want to push the human being into that maximized law like generalization model**. So when we think about our philosophical anthropology, some people, our question about intersectionality for instance, what some people don’t understand is nowhere is there ever a human being who is one identity. People talk about race – do you ever really see a race walking? You see a racialized man or woman, or transman or transwoman. Do you ever see a class walking? Class is embodied in flesh and blood people. And we can go on and on. So if we enrich our philosophical anthropology we begin to notice certain other things. And one of the other things we begin to realize is that **we commit a serious problem when we do political work.** And the problem is this. The question about **Wilderson** for instance. There is this discussion going on (and allot of people build it out of my earlier books). I have a category I call, as a metaphor, an antiblack world. You notice **an indefinite article** – **an anti-black world**. The reason I say that is because **the world is different from an anti-black world**. The project of racism is to create a world that would be **completely anti-black or anti-woman.** **Although that is a project, it is not a fait accompli**. People don’t seem to understand how recent this phenomenon we are talking about is. A lot of people talk about race they don’t even know the history of how race is connected into theonaturalism. How, for instance, Andalucia and the pushing out of the Moors. The history of how race connected to Christianity was formed. A lot of people don’t understand – from the standpoint of a species whose history is 220,000 years old, what the hell is 500 years? **But the one thing that we don’t understand to is we create a false model for how we study those last 500 years**. We study the 500 years as if the people who have been dominated **have not been fighting and resisting.** Had they not been fighting and resisting we wouldn’t be here. And then we come into this next point because you see the problem in the formulation of **pessimism** and **optimism** is they are both based on forecasted knowledge, a prior knowledge. **But human beings don’t have prior knowledge.** And in fact – what in the world are we if we need to have guarantees for us to act. You know what you call such people? Cowards. The fact of the matter is our ancestors – let’s start with enslaved ancestors. The enslaved ancestors who were burning down those plantations, who were finding clever ways to poison their masters, who were organizing meetings for rebellions, none of them had any clue what the future would be 100 years later. Some had good reason to believe that it may take 1000 years. But you know why they fought? Because they knew it wasn’t for them. One of the problems we have in the way we think about political issues is we commit what Fanon and others in the existential tradition would call a form of political immaturity. Political immaturity is saying it is not worth it unless I, me, individually get the payoff. When you are thinking what it is to relate to other generations – remember Fanon said the problem with people in the transition, the pseudo postcolonial bourgeois – is that they miss the point, you fight for liberation for other generations. And that is why Fanon said other generations they must have their mission. But you see some people fought and said no I want my piece of the pie. And that means the biggest enemy becomes the other generations. And that is why the postcolonial pseudo-bourgeoisie they are not a bourgeoisie proper because they do not link to the infrastructural development of the future, it is about themselves. And that’s why, for instance, as they live higher up the hog, as they get their mediating, service oriented, racial mediated wealth, the rest of the populations are in misery. The very fact that in many African countries there are people whose futures have been mortgaged, the fact that in this country the very example of mortgaging the future of all of you is there. What happens to people when they have no future? It now collapses the concept of maturation and places people into perpetual childhood. So one of the political things – and this is where a psychiatrist philosopher is crucial – is to ask ourselves what does it mean to take on adult responsibility. And that means to understand that **in all political action it’s not about you**. **It is what you are doing for a world you may not even be able to understand**. Now that becomes tricky, because how do we know this? **People have done it before**. There were people, for instance, who fought anti-colonial struggles, there are people (and now I am not talking about like thirty or forty years ago, I am talking about the people from day one 17th 18th century all the way through) and we have no idea what we are doing for the 22nd century. And **this is where developing political insight comes in.** Because **we commit the error of forgetting the systems we are talking about are human systems**. They are not systems in the way we talk about the laws of physics. A human system can only exist by human actions maintaining them. **Which means every human system is incomplete.** **Every human being is by definition incomplete**. Which means you can go this way or you can go another way. The system isn’t actually closed.

### Social Death = Nihilism

#### Reducing anti-blackness to the level of ontology is counter-productive—cements nihilism and has no alt

Rogers15, Associate Professor of African American Studies & Political Science University of California, Los Angeles. Ta-Nehisi Coates’s Wounded Attachment: Reflections on Between the World and Me Fugitive Thoughts, August 2015, http://www.academia.edu/14337627/Ta-Nehisi\_Coatess\_Wounded\_Attachment\_Reflections\_on\_Between\_the\_World\_and\_Me

The Dream seems to run so deep that it eludes those caught by it. Between the World and Me initially seems like a book that will reveal the illusion and in that moment open up the possibility for imagining the United States anew. Remember: “Nothing about the world is meant to be.” But the book does not move in that direction. **Coates** rejects the American mythos and the logic of certain progress it necessitates, but **embraces the certainty of white supremacy and its inescapable constraints. White supremacy is not merely a historically emergent feature** of the Western world generally, and the United States particularly; **it is**anontology. By this I mean that **for Coates white supremacy does not structure reality; it is reality. There is, in this, a danger. When one conceptualizes white supremacy at the level of ontology, there is little room for one’s imagination to soar and** one’s **sense of agency is inescapably constrained**. The meaning of action is tied fundamentally to what we imagine is possible for us. “The missing thing,” Coates writes, “was related to the plunder of our bodies, the fact that any claim to ourselves, to the hands that secured us, the spine that braced us, and the head that directed us, was contestable.” The body is one of the unifying themes of the book. It resonates well with our American ears because the hallmark of freedom is sovereign control over our bodies. This was the site on which slavery did its most destructive work: controlling the body to enslave the soul. We see the reconstitution of this logic in our present moment—the policing and imprisoning of black men and women. **The reality of this colonizes not only the past and the present, but also the future. There can be no affirmative politics when race functions primarily as a wounded attachment—when** our **bodies are the visible reminders that we live at the arbitrary whim of another**. But **what of** **those** young men and women **in the streets of Ferguson, Chicago, New York, andCharleston—how ought we to read their efforts?**We come to understand Coates’s answer to this question in one of the pivotal and tragic moments of the book—the murder of a college friend, Prince Jones, at the hands of the police. As Coates says: “This entire episode took me from fear to a rage that burned in me then, animates me now, and will likely leave me on fire for the rest of my days.” With his soul on fire, all his senses are directed to the pain white supremacy produces, the wounds it creates. This murder should not be read as a function of the actions of a police officer or even the logic of policing blacks in the United States. His account of this strikes a darker chord. What he tells us about the meaning of the death of Prince Jones, what we ought to understand, reveals the operating logic of the “universe”: She [referring to his mother] knew that the galaxy itself could kill me, that all of me could be shattered and all of her legacy spilled upon the curb like bum wine. And no one would be brought to account for this destruction, because my death would not be the fault of any human but the fault of some unfortunate but immutable fact of ‘race,’ imposed upon an innocent country by the inscrutable judgment of invisible gods. The earthquake cannot be subpoenaed. The typhoon will not bend under indictment. They sent the killer of Prince Jones back to his work, because he was not a killer at all. He was a force of nature, the helpless agent of our world’s physical laws. **But if we are all just helpless agents of physical laws, the question might emerge again: What does one do? Coates recommendsinterrogation and struggle**. His love for books and his journey to Howard University, “Mecca,” as he calls it, serve as sites where he can question the world around him. **But interrogation and struggle to what end? His answer is contained in his** incessant **preoccupation with natural disasters**. We might say, at one time we thought the Gods were angry with us or that they were moving furniture around, thus causing earthquakes. Now **we know earthquakes are the result of tectonic shifts. Okay, what do we do with that knowledge? Coates seems to say: Construct an early warning system—don’t misspend your energy trying to stop the earthquake itself.**There is a lesson in this: “**Perhaps one person can make a change, but not the kind of change that would raise your body to equality with your countrymen…And still you are called to struggle, not because it assures you victory, but because it assures you an honorable** and sane **life**.” One’s response can be honorable because it emerges from a clear-sightedness that leaves one standing upright in the face of the truth of the matter—namely, that your white counterparts will never join you in raising your body to equality. “It is truly horrible,” Coates writes in one of the most disturbing sentences of the book, “to understand yourself as the essential below of your country.” Coates’s sentences are often pitched as frank speech; it is what it is. This produces a kind of sanity, he suggests, releasing one from a preoccupation with the world being other than what it is. **Herein lies the danger**: Forget telling his son it will be okay. **Coates cannot even muster a tentative response to his son; he cannot tell him that it may be okay.** “The struggle is really all I have for you,” he tells his son, “because it is the only portion of this world under your control.” What a strange form of control. Black folks may control their place in the battle, but never with the possibility that they, and in turn the country to which they belong, may win. **Releasing the book at this moment—given all that is going on with black lives under public assault and black youth in particular attempting to imagine the world anew—seems the oddest thing to do. For all** of**the channeling of James Baldwin, Coates seems to have forgotten that black folks “can’t afford despair.” As Baldwin went on to say: “I can’t tell my nephew, my niece; you can’t tell the children there is no hope.” The reason** why **you can’t say this is not because you are living in a dream or selling a fantasy, but because there can be no certain knowledge of the future. Humility, borne out of our lack of knowledge of the future, justifies hope.**Much has been made of the comparison between Baldwin and Coates, owing largely to how the book is structured and because of Toni Morrison’s endorsement. But what this connection means seems to escape many commentators. In his 1955 non-fiction book titled Notes of a Native Son, Baldwin reflects on the wounds white supremacy left on his father: “I had discovered the weight of white people in the world. I saw that this had been for my ancestors and now would be for me an awful thing to live with and that the bitterness which had helped to kill my father could also kill me.” Similar to Coates, Baldwin was wounded and so was Baldwin’s father. Yet **Baldwin knew all too well** that **the wounded attachment if held on to would destroy not the plunderers of black life, but the ones who were plundered. “Hatred,** which could destroy so much, **never failed to destroy the man who hated and this was an immutable law.”Baldwin’s father, as he understood him, was destroyed by hatred. Coates is less like Baldwin in this respect and, perhaps, more like Baldwin’s father.** “I am wounded,” says Coates. “I am marked by old codes, which shielded me in one world and then chained me in the next.” The chains reach out to imprison not only his son, but you and I as well. **There is a profound sense of disappointment** here.**Disappointment because** given the power of the book, **Coates seems unable to linger in the conditions that have given life to** **the Ta-Neisha Coates that now occupies the public stage.** Coates’s own engagement with the world—his very agency—has received social support. Throughout the book he often comments on the rich diversity of black beauty and on the power of love. His father, William Paul Coates, is the founder of Black Classic Press—a press with the explicit focus of revealing the richness of black life. His mother, Cheryl Waters, helped to financially support the family and provided young Coates with direction. And yet he seems to stand at a distance from the condition of possibility suggested by just those examples. **One ought not to read these moments above as expressive of the very “Dream” he means to reject. Rather, the point is that black life is at once informed by, but not reducible to**, the **pain exacted on our bodies by this country. This eludes Coates. The wound is so intense he cannot direct his senses beyond the pain.**

### History Proves No Social Death

#### No social death – history proves

Vincent Brown, Prof. of History and African and African-American Studies @ Harvard Univ., December 2009, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," American Historical Review, p. 1231-1249

THE PREMISE OF ORLANDO PATTERSON’S MAJOR WORK, that enslaved Africans were natally alienated and culturally isolated, was challenged even before he published his influential thesis, primarily by scholars concerned with “survivals” or “retentions” of African culture and by historians of slave resistance. In the early to mid-twentieth century, when Robert Park’s view of “the Negro” predominated among scholars, it was generally assumed that the slave trade and slavery had denuded black people of any ancestral heritage from Africa. The historians Carter G. Woodson and W. E. B. Du Bois and the anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits argued the opposite. Their research supported the conclusion that while enslaved Africans could not have brought intact social, political, and religious institutions with them to the Americas, they did maintain significant aspects of their cultural backgrounds.32 Herskovits ex- amined “Africanisms”—any practices that seemed to be identifiably African—as useful symbols of cultural survival that would help him to analyze change and continuity in African American culture.33 He engaged in one of his most heated scholarly disputes with the sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, a student of Park’s, who empha- sized the damage wrought by slavery on black families and folkways.34 More recently, a number of scholars have built on Herskovits’s line of thought, enhancing our understanding of African history during the era of the slave trade. Their studies have evolved productively from assertions about general cultural heritage into more precise demonstrations of the continuity of worldviews, categories of belonging, and social practices from Africa to America. For these scholars, the preservation of distinctive cultural forms has served as an index both of a resilient social personhood, or identity, and of resistance to slavery itself. 35

Scholars of slave resistance have never had much use for the concept of social death. The early efforts of writers such as Herbert Aptheker aimed to derail the popular notion that American slavery had been a civilizing institution threatened by “slave crime.”36 Soon after, studies of slave revolts and conspiracies advocated the idea that resistance demonstrated the basic humanity and intractable will of the enslaved—indeed, they often equated acts of will with humanity itself. As these writ- ers turned toward more detailed analyses of the causes, strategies, and tactics of slave revolts in the context of the social relations of slavery, they had trouble squaring abstract characterizations of “the slave” with what they were learning about the en- slaved.37 Michael Craton, who authored Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies, was an early critic of Slavery and Social Death, protesting that what was known about chattel bondage in the Americas did not confirm Patterson’s definition of slavery. “If slaves were in fact ‘generally dishonored,’ ” Craton asked, “how does he explain the degrees of rank found among all groups of slaves—that is, the scale of ‘reputation’ and authority accorded, or at least acknowledged, by slave and master alike?” How could they have formed the fragile families documented by social historians if they had been “natally alienated” by definition? Finally, and per- haps most tellingly, if slaves had been uniformly subjected to “permanent violent domination,” they could not have revolted as often as they did or shown the “varied manifestations of their resistance” that so frustrated masters and compromised their power, sometimes “fatally.”38 The dynamics of social control and slave resistance falsified Patterson’s description of slavery even as the tenacity of African culture showed that enslaved men, women, and children had arrived in the Americas bearing much more than their “tropical temperament.”

The cultural continuity and resistance schools of thought come together pow- erfully in an important book by Walter C. Rucker, The River Flows On: Black Re- sistance, Culture, and Identity Formation in Early America. In Rucker’s analysis of slave revolts, conspiracies, and daily recalcitrance, African concepts, values, and cul- tural metaphors play the central role. Unlike Smallwood and Hartman, for whom “the rupture was the story” of slavery, Rucker aims to reveal the “perseverance of African culture even among second, third, and fourth generation creoles.”39 He looks again at some familiar events in North America—New York City’s 1712 Coromantee revolt and 1741 conspiracy, the 1739 Stono rebellion in South Carolina, as well as the plots, schemes, and insurgencies of Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner—deftly teasing out the African origins of many of the attitudes and actions of the black rebels. Rucker outlines how the transformation of a “shared cultural heritage” that shaped collective action against slavery corresponded to the “various steps Africans made in the process of becoming ‘African American’ in culture, orientation, and identity.”40

### Not Ontological

#### The Symbolic Order is contingent, not a permanent and unchanging matrix of cultural meaning and symbols. they are simply wrong about the grammar of anti-Black violence being unmovable and fixated on the slave.

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Thus the self-same/other distinction is necessary for the possibility of identity itself. There always has to exist an outside, which is also inside, to the extent it is designated as the impossibility from which the possibility of the existence of the subject derives its rule (Badiou 2009, 220). But although the excluded place which isn’t excluded insofar as it is necessary for the very possibility of inclusion and identity may be universal (may be considered “ontological”), its content (what fills it) – as well as the mode of this filling and its reproduction – are contingent. In other words, the meaning of the signifier of exclusion is not determined once and for all: the place of the place of exclusion, of death is itself over-determined, i.e. the very ¶ framework for deciding the other and the same, exclusion and inclusion, is nowhere engraved in ontological stone but is political and never terminally settled. Put differently, the “curvature of intersubjective space” (Critchley 2007, 61) and thus, the specific modes of the “othering” of “otherness” are nowhere decided in advance (as a certain ontological fatalism might have it) (see Wilderson 2008). The social does not have to be divided into white and black, and the meaning of these signifiers is never necessary – because they are signifiers. ¶ To be sure, colonialism institutes an ontological division, in that whites exist in a way barred to blacks – ¶ who are not. But this ontological relation is really on the side of the ontic – that is, of all contingently ¶ constructed identities, rather than the ontology of the social which refers to the ultimate unfixity, the ¶ indeterminacy or lack of the social. In this sense, then, the white man doesn’t exist, the black man doesn’t exist (Fanon ¶ 1968, 165); and neither does the colonial symbolic itself, including its most intimate structuring relations – division is constitutive of the social, not the colonial division. ¶ “Whiteness” may well be very deeply sediment in modernity itself, but respect for the “ontological difference” (see Heidegger 1962, 26; Watts 2011, 279) shows up its ontological status as ontic. It may be so deeply sedimented that it becomes difficult even to identify the very possibility of the separation of whiteness from the very possibility of order, but from this it does not follow that the “void” of “black being” functions as the ultimate substance, the transcendental signified on which all possible forms of sociality are said to rest. What gets lost here, then, is the specificity of colonialism, of its constitutive axis, its “ontological” differential. A crucial feature of the colonial symbolic is that the real is not screened off by the imaginary in the way it is under capitalism. At the place of the colonised, the symbolic and the imaginary give way because non-identity (the real of the social) is immediately inscribed in the “lived experience” (vécu) of the colonised subject. The colonised is “traversing the fantasy” (Zizek 2006a, 40–60) all the time; the void of the verb “to be” is the very content of his interpellation. The colonised is, in other words, the subject of anxiety for whom the symbolic and the ¶ imaginary never work, who is left stranded by his very interpellation. “Fixed” into “non-fixity,” he is eternally suspended between “element” and “moment”– he is where the colonial symbolic falters in the production of meaning and is thus the point of entry of the real into the texture itself of colonialism. ¶ Be this as it may, whiteness and blackness are (sustained by) determinate and contingent practices of signification; the “structuring relation” of colonialism thus itself comprises a knot of significations which, no matter how tight, can always be undone. Anti-colonial – i.e., anti-“white” – modes of struggle are not (just) “psychic” but involve the “reactivation” (or “de-sedimentation”)7 of colonial objectivity itself. No matter how sedimented (or global), colonial objectivity is ¶ not ontologically immune to antagonism. Differentiality, as Zizek insists (see Zizek 2012, chapter 11, 771 n48), immanently entails antagonism in that differentiality both makes possible the existence of any identity whatsoever and at the same time – because it is the presence of one object in another – undermines any identity ever being (fully) itself. Each element in a differential relation is the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of each other. It is this dimension of antagonism that the Master Signifier covers over transforming its outside (Other) into an element of itself, reducing it to a condition of its possibility.

## AT: Pessimism Alt

### Pessimism Bad

#### Reducing black people to fungible bodies and reading their experiences through pain creates the worst form of depoliticization – not only do they disregard black agency and resistance, they further perpetuate a narrative of white domination

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Second only to a desire for increased diversity, better mental health services were a chief priority for student protesters. Activists framed their concerns and grievances in the language of personal trauma. We shouldn’t be surprised. While every generation of black Americans has experienced unrelenting violence, this is the first one compelled to witness virtually all of it, to endure the snuffing out of black lives in real time, looped over and over again, until the next murder knocks it off the news. We are also talking about a generation that has lived through two of the longest wars in U.S. history, raised on a culture of spectacle where horrific acts of violence are readily available on their smartphones. What Henry Giroux insightfully identifies as an addiction does nothing to inure or desensitize young people to violence. On the contrary, it anchors violence in their collective consciousness, produces fear and paranoia – wrapped elegantly in thrill – and shrouds the many ways capitalism, militarism, and racism are killing black and brown people. So one can easily see why the language of trauma might appeal to black students. Trauma is real; it is no joke. Mental health services and counseling are urgently needed. But reading black experience through trauma can easily slip into thinking of ourselves as victims and objects rather than agents, subjected to centuries of gratuitous violence that have structured and overdetermined our very being. In the argot of our day, “bodies” – vulnerable and threatening bodies – increasingly stand in for actual people with names, experiences, dreams, and desires. I suspect that the popularity of Ta-Nehisi Coates’s Between the World and Me (2015), especially among black college students, rests on his singular emphasis on fear, trauma, and the black body. He writes: “In America, it is traditional to destroy the black body—it is heritage. Enslavement was not merely the antiseptic borrowing of labor—it is not so easy to get a human being to commit their body against its own elemental interest. And so enslavement must be casual wrath and random manglings, the gashing of heads and brains blown out over the river as the body seeks to escape. It must be rape so regular as to be industrial. . . . The spirit and soul are the body and brain, which are destructible—that is precisely why they are so precious. And the soul did not escape. The spirit did not steal away on gospel wings.” Coates implies that the person is the brain, and the brain just another organ to be crushed with the rest of the body’s parts. Earlier in the book, he makes the startling declaration that enslaved people “knew nothing but chains.” I do not deny the violence Coates so eloquently describes here, and I am sympathetic to his atheistic skepticism. But what sustained enslaved African people was a memory of freedom, dreams of seizing it, and conspiracies to enact it – fugitive planning, if you will. If we reduce the enslaved to mere fungible bodies, we cannot possibly understand how they created families, communities, sociality; how they fled and loved and worshiped and defended themselves; how they created the world’s first social democracy. “Trauma is real. But reading black experience through trauma can lead to thinking of ourselves as victims rather than agents.” Moreover, to identify anti-black violence as heritage may be true in a general sense, but it obscures the dialectic that produced and reproduced the violence of a regime dependent on black life for its profitability. It was, after all, the resisting black body that needed “correction.” Violence was used not only to break bodies but to discipline people who refused enslavement. And the impulse to resist is neither involuntary nor solitary. It is a choice made in community, made possible by community, and informed by memory, tradition, and witness. If Africans were entirely compliant and docile, there would have been no need for vast expenditures on corrections, security, and violence. Resistance is our heritage. And resistance is our healing. Through collective struggle, we alter our circumstances; contain, escape, or possibly eviscerate the source of trauma; recover our bodies; reclaim and redeem our dead; and make ourselves whole. It is difficult to see this in a world where words such as trauma, PTSD, micro-aggression, and triggers have virtually replaced oppression, repression, and subjugation. Naomi Wallace, a brilliant playwright whose work explores trauma in the context of race, sexuality, class, war, and empire, muses: “Mainstream America is less threatened by the ‘trauma’ theory because it doesn’t place economic justice at its core and takes the focus out of the realm of justice and into psychology; out of the streets, communities, into the singular experience (even if experienced in common) of the individual.” Similarly, George Lipsitz observes that emphasizing “interiority,” personal pain, and feeling elevates “the cultivation of sympathy over the creation of social justice.” This is partly why demands for reparations to address historical and ongoing racism are so antithetical to modern liberalism. “Through collective struggle, we alter our circumstances; contain, escape, or possibly eviscerate the source of trauma.” Managing trauma does not require dismantling structural racism, which is why university administrators focus on avoiding triggers rather than implementing zero-tolerance policies for racism or sexual assault. Buildings will be renamed and safe spaces for people of color will be created out of a sliver of university real estate, but proposals to eliminate tuition and forgive student debt for the descendants of the dispossessed and the enslaved will be derided as absurd. This is also why diversity and cultural-competency training are the most popular strategies for addressing campus racism. As if racism were a manifestation of our “incompetent” handling of “difference.” If we cannot love the other, we can at least learn to hear, respect, understand, and “tolerate” her. Cultural competency also means reckoning with white privilege, coming to terms with unconscious bias and the myriad ways white folks benefit from current racial arrangements. Powerful as this might be, the solution to racism still is shifted to the realm of self-help and human resources, resting on self-improvement or the hiring of a consultant or trainer to help us reach our goal. Cultural-competency training, greater diversity, and demands for multicultural curricula represent both a resistance to and manifestation of our current “postracial” moment. In Are We All Postracial Yet? (2015), David Theo Goldberg correctly sees postracialism as a neoliberal revision of multicultural discourse, whose proposed remedies to address racism would in fact resuscitate late-century multiculturalism. But why hold on to the policies and promises of multiculturalism and diversity, especially since they have done nothing to dislodge white supremacy? Indeed I want to suggest that the triumph of multiculturalism marked a defeat for a radical anti-racist vision. True, multiculturalism emerged in response to struggles waged by the Black Freedom movement and other oppressed groups in the 1960s and ’70s. But the programmatic adoption of diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism vampirized the energy of a radical movement that began by demanding the complete transformation of the social order and the eradication of all forms of racial, gender, sexual, and class hierarchy. The point of liberal multiculturalism was not to address the historical legacies of racism, dispossession, and injustice but rather to bring some people into the fold of a “society no longer seen as racially unjust.” What did it bring us? Black elected officials and black CEOs who helped manage the greatest transfer of wealth to the rich and oversee the continued erosion of the welfare state; the displacement, deportation, and deterioration of black and brown communities; mass incarceration; and planetary war. We talk about breaking glass ceilings in corporate America while building more jail cells for the rest. The triumph of liberal multiculturalism also meant a shift from a radical anti-capitalist critique to a politics of recognition. This means, for example, that we now embrace the right of same-sex couples to marry so long as they do not challenge the institution itself, which is still modeled upon the exchanging of property; likewise we accept the right of people of color, women, and queer people to serve in the military, killing and torturing around the world. “I want to suggest that the triumph of multiculturalism marked a defeat for a radical anti-racist vision.” At the same time, contemporary calls for cultural competence and tolerance reflect neoliberal logic by emphasizing individual responsibility and suffering, shifting race from the public sphere to the psyche. The postracial, Goldberg writes, “renders individuals solely accountable for their own actions and expressions, not for their group’s.” Tolerance in its multicultural guise, as Wendy Brown taught us, is the liberal answer to managing difference but with no corresponding transformation in the conditions that, in the first place, marked certain bodies as suspicious, deviant, abject, or illegible. Tolerance, therefore, depoliticizes genuine struggles for justice and power: Depoliticization involves construing inequality, subordination, marginalization, and social conflict, which all require political analysis and political solutions, as personal and individual, on the one hand, or as natural, religious, or cultural on the other. Tolerance works along both vectors of depoliticization – it personalizes and it naturalizes or culturalizes – and sometimes it intertwines them. But how can we embrace our students and acknowledge their pain while remaining wary of a culture that reduces structural oppression to misunderstanding and psychology? Love, Study, Struggle Taped inside the top drawer of my desk is a small scrap of paper with three words scrawled across it: “Love, Study, Struggle.” It serves as a daily reminder of what I am supposed to be doing. Black study and resistance must begin with love. James Baldwin understood love-as-agency probably better than anyone. For him it meant to love ourselves as black people; it meant making love the motivation for making revolution; it meant envisioning a society where everyone is embraced, where there is no oppression, where every life is valued – even those who may once have been our oppressors. It did not mean seeking white people’s love and acceptance or seeking belonging in the world created by our oppressor. In The Fire Next Time (1963), he is unequivocal: “I do not know many Negroes who are eager to be ‘accepted’ by white people, still less to be loved by them; they, the blacks, simply don’t wish to be beaten over the head by the whites every instant of our brief passage on this planet.” But here is the catch: if we are committed to genuine freedom, we have no choice but to love all. To love all is to fight relentlessly to end exploitation and oppression everywhere, even on behalf of those who think they hate us. This was Baldwin’s point – perhaps his most misunderstood and reviled point. To love this way requires relentless struggle, deep study, and critique. Limiting our ambit to suffering, resistance, and achievement is not enough. We must go to the root – the historical, political, social, cultural, ideological, material, economic root – of oppression in order to understand its negation, the prospect of our liberation. Going to the root illuminates what is hidden from us, largely because most structures of oppression and all of their various entanglements are simply not visible and not felt. For example, if we argue that state violence is merely a manifestation of anti-blackness because that is what we see and feel, we are left with no theory of the state and have no way of understanding racialized police violence in places such as Atlanta and Detroit, where most cops are black, unless we turn to some metaphysical explanation. For my generation, the formal classroom was never the space for deep critique precisely because it was not a place of love. The classroom was – and still is – a performative space, where faculty and students compete with each other. Through study groups, we created our own intellectual communities held together by principle and love, though the specters of sectarianism, ego, and just-plain childishness blurred our vision and threatened our camaraderie. Still, the political study group was our lifeblood – both on and off campus. We lived by Karl Marx’s pithy 1844 statement: “But if the designing of the future and the proclamation of ready-made solutions for all time is not our affair, then we realize all the more clearly what we have to accomplish in the present – I am speaking of a ruthless criticism of everything existing, ruthless in two senses: The criticism must not be afraid of its own conclusions, nor of conflict with the powers that be.” “If we argue that state violence is merely a manifestation of anti-blackness because that is what we see and feel, we are left with no theory of the state and have no way of understanding racialized police violence.” Study groups introduced me to C. L. R. James, Frantz Fanon, Walter Rodney, Barbara Smith, Angela Davis, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Chancellor Williams, George E. M. James, Shulamith Firestone, Kwame Nkrumah, Kwame Turé, Rosa Luxemburg, Antonio Gramsci, Chinweizu Ibekwe, Amílcar Cabral, and others. These texts were our sources of social critique and weapons in our class war on the bourgeois canon. As self-styled activist-intellectuals, it never occurred to us to refuse to read a text simply because it validated the racism, sexism, free-market ideology, and bourgeois liberalism against which we railed. Nothing was off limits. On the contrary, delving into these works only sharpened our critical faculties. Love and study cannot exist without struggle, and struggle cannot occur solely inside the refuge we call the university. Being grounded in the world we wish to make is fundamental. As I argued in Freedom Dreams nearly fifteen years ago, “Social movements generate new knowledge, new theories, new questions. The most radical ideas often grow out of a concrete intellectual engagement with the problems of aggrieved populations confronting systems of oppression.” Ironically I wrote these words with my students in mind, many of whom were involved in campus struggles, feeling a bit rudderless but believing that the only way to make themselves into authentic activists was to leave the books and radical theories at home or in their dorms. The undercommons offers students a valuable model of study that takes for granted the indivisibility of thought and struggle, not unlike its antecedent, the Mississippi Freedom Schools.

### Afro-Pessimism Bad

#### Afro-pessimism bad

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Afro-pessimism is rampant in the hood, but it also lives in academia. Dr. Cornel West, when asked if he would serve in Obama’s White House, said, “[t]hat’s not my calling. Yeah, brother, you find me in a crackhouse before you find me in the White House." Afro-pessimism comes from a painful and brutal history of slavery and its aftermath. And statistics tell us that we still have a lot not to cheer about, like the 14 percent unemployment rate among blacks (nearly double the national average) or the monstrous murder rate in Chicago, where 80 percent of the 500 homicide victims in 2012 were black. We are depressed when we hear that the gap in high school graduation rates for white and black males only narrowed by 3 percent in 10 years, and when we learn that, stunningly, 40.2 percent of all prison inmates are black, even though we are only 13.6 percent of the U.S. population. Those horrors are real. But what is also real is that against unimaginable odds, we are still here. We forged ourselves, with the full, white weight of the Western world bearing down us, into what W.E.B. Du Bois called “a small nation of people.” This black nation is united less by any single African, pre-American past than by what Ralph Ellison termed “an identity of passions.” We are a multicolored branch of humanity that won a centuries-spanning struggle that liberated master and slave. To say that we all emerged in heroic fashion would be a lie. Being human, people tend to go inward and internalize the degradation and lack of hope around them. That, of course, is not an exclusively black thing, as evidenced by the sad condition of Native Americans, Kurds, Roma and many other oppressed people on the planet. While pessimism under unrelenting and brutal conditions is understandable, it ceases to be useful when we refuse to believe that better conditions are possible because believing it sets us up for disappointment. The presidency of Barack Obama becomes too much to process, and we shy away from the work of overhauling negative thinking. We shift into thinking that any kind of African-American advancement is a sham, a trick, a hustle; an unforgivable delusion unfit for those who keep it real. Afro-pessimism is bad enough when it’s just about lack of positive action. But it plays out in our young people in the worst aspects of popular and hip-hop culture, where a black kid is called “acting white” for speaking in non-accented Standard English, and God forbid, excelling in school. Add those incendiary ingredients to the American-as-apple-pie love for violence and you have a recipe for reverse-revolution; where black prison culture is celebrated and rewarded by the larger white community and by the media’s insatiable appetite for black life on the mean streets. The good news is that Afro-pessimism is a cultural response, and though it is shaped by socio-economic forces, it is reversible through the same kind of positive, cultural engineering that all humans are capable of. For starters, Afro-pessimists should consider our political history – as black people, and as Americans. Remember that most of our victories don’t happen overnight. Second, we need to carefully scrutinize the president’s policies and the strategies that underpin them. As the Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson wrote in the New York Times: “Mr. Obama’s writings, politics and personal relations suggest ... that he prefers a three-pronged strategy. First, he is committed to the universalist position that the best way to help the black and Latino poor is to help all disadvantaged people, Appalachian whites included. The outrage of black over-incarceration will be remedied by quietly reforming the justice system … Second, Mr. Obama appears convinced that residential segregation lies at the heart of both black problems and cultural racism. He is a committed integrationist and seems to favor policies intended to move people out of the inner cities. Third, he clearly considers education to be the major solution and has tried to lavishly finance our schools, despite the fiscal crisis. More broadly, he will quietly promote policies that celebrate the common culture of America, emphasizing the extraordinary role of blacks and other minorities in this continuing creation.” Here are two examples that support Patterson’s analysis: 1) the president’s expansion of the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit in 2010, which benefited about 2.2 million African American families and nearly half of all African American children, while extending unemployment insurance to benefit over a million African Americans; and 2) the African-American Education Initiative, an executive order created to improve the “… educational outcomes for African Americans of all ages; and help ensure that African Americans receive a complete and competitive education that prepares them for college, a satisfying career, and productive citizenship.” Examining evidence of Obama’s positive effect on the black community can help lift the veil of Afro-pessimism, and allow us to view his reelection in a more realistic and positive light. Remember, we are witnessing an event that was unimaginable less than 10 years ago. If a black, mixed-race brother raised in Hawaii and Indonesia, with a Muslim-sounding name a few years after 9/11 can win the presidency twice – especially after four years of vicious racist attacks – then simply put, all is possible. We no longer have the option of rising to our lowest expectations.

### Wilderson Wrong (Specific to Schools)

#### (NOTE: this card probably works best as a case module combined with a cap K) Wilderson locks black agency into a state of non-becoming by positing the world as innately anti-black and eliminates the potential for coalitions – radical separatisms’ rejection of material progress through reform cements white supremacy

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With ideologies of racial unity functioning as a clear block to the development of mass, antagonistic politics, it is no wonder that the seemingly extremist languages of blackness and anti-blackness seduce intellectuals into reconciliation with the status quo. Of course, in the occasional moments that Afro-Pessimist discourse does discuss the black political class, its tone is one of severe criticism. But this criticism reproduces the political dynamics that led to its rise in the first place: black leaders are castigated for their coalitionism, thus reinforcing the ideology of racial unity that obscures their class positions; and their reformist program of bringing black people greater citizenship rights is rejected in language reminiscent of earlier critiques of integration, obscuring the political incorporation of the black elite that has been taking place since the end of segregation. The ideology of blackness in Wilderson’s Afro-Pessimism functions as a disavowal of the real integration of black elites into “civil society,” now hardly a “white” thing. When the lethal effects of white supremacy are exerted by a racially integrated ruling class, blackness as an anti-political void becomes a convenient subject-position for the performance of marginality. Separatist ideology prevents the construction of unity among the marginalized, the kind of unity which could actually overcome their marginality. In a 2014 radio interview, Wilderson attacked the view that the experience of black people in Ferguson was in any way comparable to that of Palestinians. Attributing this view to “right reactionary white civil society and so-called progressive colored civil society,” he proclaimed: “That’s just bullshit. First, there’s no time period in which black policing and slave domination have ever ended. Second, the Arabs and the Jews are as much a part of the black slave trade – the creation of blackness as social death – as anyone else… anti-blackness is as important and necessary to the formation of Arab psychic life as it is to the formation of Jewish psychic life.” You wouldn’t know from listening to Wilderson that activists in Ferguson had been in close contact with Palestinians, who pointed out that the same tear gas canisters were being fired at them and shared street-fighting tactics learned from bitter experience. A solidarity statement signed by a range of Palestinian activists and organizations declared: “With a Black Power fist in the air, we salute the people of Ferguson and join in your demands for justice.” This solidarity was returned in January when a group of Ferguson activists visited Palestine. Internationalist commitments had helped Baraka to recognize the limits of the strategy of the black united front. In 2008 he had militated in favor of Obama, going as far as to lambast the “anti-Obama rascals” who failed to see his campaign as an opportunity for “drawing the excited masses to the left.” But holding out against the evidence couldn’t last; the 2011 military intervention in Libya confronted Baraka with the internal contradictions between his anti-imperialism and the black united front, even if he did not have the opportunity to travel much further down an alternative theoretical road before his 2014 death. The ruthless political teaching of a poem called “The New Invasion of Africa” turned harshly against Obama, and exposed the historical antagonisms obscured by Wilderson: But that’s how Africa got enslaved by the white A negro selling his own folk, delivering us to slavery In the middle of the night. When will you learn poet And remember it so you know it Imperialism can look like anything Can be quiet and intelligent and even have A pretty wife. But in the end, it is insatiable And if it needs to, it will take your life. “That brother’s meant to cool us out,” he said in “I Liked Us Better.” It was a kind of repetition of the lessons learned from the 1970s, with a marked note of despair at the decline of mass mobilizations and revolutionary ideologies. “I liked us better when we were quick to throw our fists in the air.” Where does it leave us? Wilderson claims that Afro-Pessimism seeks to “destroy the world” rather than build a better one, since the world is irredeemably founded on “anti-blackness.” In reality, this separatist ideology may turn out to provide a new worldview for the emergent bureaucracies in Ferguson and beyond. During the peak of the Black Lives Matter movement, Afro-Pessimist language spread rapidly on Twitter and Tumblr, encouraging a wide range of activists to describe police violence in terms of the suffering imposed upon “black bodies,” and to try to monopolize the very category of death. It was a somewhat stupefying choice of words at a time when black people in Ferguson were constituting part of a global struggle to refuse to accept suffering, to refuse to die. But what should draw our attention is that the “representatives” of the movement who got the most media play included the executive director of the St. Louis Teach for America, an organization that has played a driving role in the privatization of education and the assault on teachers’ unions. In fact, a group of these “representatives” enthusiastically met with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan during his visit to Ferguson – white civil society or not. If such tendencies continue unchecked, the only world that will be destroyed is the one in which poor black students can attend public school, or expect someday to get a job with benefits.

### History Focus Bad

#### Fails to produce emancipatory political change and reifies the squo.

**Bevernage 15** – (October 2015, Berber, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Ghent, “The Past is Evil/Evil is Past: On Retrospective Politics, Philosophy of History, and Temporal Manichaeism,” History and Theory Volume 54, Issue 3, pages 333–352)

Torpey is certainly not the only intellectual expressing these worries. According to historian Pieter Lagrou, “our contemporary societies, for lack of future projects, shrink into a ‘passeist’ culture.”12 In European public discourse, he argues, the focus on crimes of the distant past has become so strong that it tends to marginalize claims of victims of contemporary crimes and human rights violations. Therefore, Lagrou argues, “a commemorative discourse of victimhood is very much the opposite of a constructive and dynamic engagement with the present, but rather a paralyzing regression of democratic debate.”13 Lagrou's argument closely resembles many others that turn against retrospective politics and “victim culture” such as Ian Buruma's warning about the peril of minorities defining themselves exclusively as historical victims and engaging in an “Olympics of suffering”14 and Charles Maier's claims about a “surfeit of memory.”15

These warnings about the perils of a retrospective politics outweighing or even banning politics directed at contemporary injustices or striving for a more just future should be taken seriously. Yet the alternative of an exclusively present- or future-oriented politics disregarding all historical injustice is not desirable either. Contemporary injustice often manifests itself in the form of structural repetition or continuity of injustices with a long history. Moreover, totalitarian versions of progressivist politics have frequently abused the idea of a struggle for a more just future in order to justify past and present suffering. It could even be argued that the rise of dominant restrospective politics has been initiated partly on the basis of disillusionment with the exculpatory mechanisms of progressivist ideology.16 Some indeed claim that much of present-day retrospective politics and the “setting straight” of historical injustices would be unnecessary had totalitarian progressivist politics focused less exclusively on the bright future and shown more sensitivity to the contemporary suffering of its day. This claim certainly makes sense if one thinks of extreme examples such as Stalin's five-year plans and Mao's Great Leap Forward. Yet, as Matthias Frisch rightly argues, the risk of the justification of past and present suffering lurks around the corner wherever progressive logics of history or promises of bright and just futures are not counterbalanced by reflective forms of remembrance.17

Therefore, we should resist dualist thinking that forces us to choose between restitution for historical injustices and struggle for justice in the present or the future. Rather, we should look for types of retrospective politics that do not oppose but complement or reinforce the emancipatory and utopian elements in present- and future-directed politics—and the other way around: present- and future-oriented politics that do not forget about historical injustices.

In this paper I want to contribute to this goal by focusing on the issue of retrospective politics and by analyzing how one can differentiate emancipatory or even utopian types of retrospective politics from retrospective politics that I classify here as anti-utopian. I argue that the currently dominant strands of retrospective politics indeed do tend to be anti-utopian and have a very limited emancipatory potential. Moreover, I claim that currently dominant retrospective politics do not radically break with several of the exculpatory intellectual mechanisms that are typically associated with progressivist politics but actually modify and sometimes even radicalize them. In that restricted sense, and only in this sense, it can be argued that currently dominant retrospective politics do not represent a fundamentally new way of dealing with historical evil and the ethics of responsibility.

My perspective is not a pessimistic one, however. Besides the currently dominant retrospective politics, there exist other strands of retrospective politics that do have emancipatory or even utopian features and that do not force us to choose between restitution for historical injustices and struggle for justice in the present or the future. Anti-utopianism and ethical “passeism,” I argue, are not inherent or necessary features of all retrospective politics but rather result from a specific, underlying type of historical thought or philosophy of history18 that treats the relation between past, present, and future in antinomic terms and prevents us from understanding “transtemporal” injustices and responsibilities. Sometimes this type of historical thought indeed stimulates a moralistic stance in which the past is charged with the worst of all evil, while the present becomes morally discharged by simple comparison. The latter type of “temporal Manichaeism” can be highly problematic, I argue, because it not only posits that the “past is evil” but also tends to turn this reasoning around and stimulates the wishful thought that “evil is past.”

### Pessimism Alt Bad

#### The alternative results in nihilism and reproduces its impacts

Lloyd 16 (Vincent, Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies Villanova University, Black Natural Law, Oxford University Press, p. ebook)

What does the black natural law tradition have to say to such systemic injustice? It can name this injustice, as Douglass does. It can explain how a perverse legal system degrades and dehumanizes. But at this point, the resources of the tradition would seem to be exhausted. With no specific unjust laws to target, the only hope for political change would be apocalypticism. The entire system of laws would need to be overturned and God’s law implemented n its place. This radical impulse toward revolution or eschaion is at odds with the measured, politically strategic instincts of the tradition. When too much is demanded too quickly, without practical wisdom and political calculus, we tend to deviate from natural law. This apparent impasse between the scope of the problem and the deliberateness of the strategy for remediation may very well explain the collapse of the black natural law tradition. After slavery, ¡t quickly became clear that a host of racist laws persisted and that these could be targeted. The deep problems with the legal system itself that Douglass identified could wait until the lower-hanging fruit had been picked. After the end of legal segregation, there were no longer specific laws to target that indisputably ran against natural law. One response was to set aside substantial engagement with natural law in favor of either a literary realm disconnected from the political (Baldwin, Lorde) or the crude pragmatism of electoral politics (Obama). Tithe natural law tradition were to persist, it would be forced to confront pervasive injustice in the legal system—and that, it would seem, beckons apocalypse. Recently, this last option has gained traction in the scholarly community under the name of Afro-pessimism.3 Theorists under this banner have investigated the persistence, through many shifting forms, of anti-black racism throughout the history of the West. They claim that Western metaphysics or theology has rooted deep within it a commitment to the dehumanization of black bodies. The very concept of the human has been defined in such a way as to exclude blacks. Black life is a life foreclosed, at every moment present but ignored, counted only to be condemned. Slavery and segregation were, in this view, symptoms of a deeper problem, just as the racism of the legal system is a symptom. Within this totalizing rubric, the disease of anti- blackness is so intransigent that there is no hope.4 Or, in a theological register, the only hope is for apocalypse: for a time when all worldly laws will be struck down, when the law of God will be implemented, and when black bodies will be resurrected. Although Afro-pessimist theorists may be committed in principle to resisting racism—given the intense foreclosure of black humanity, black life itself comes to be coterminous with resistance—there is neither a sense that practical wisdom is needed to engage with the social and political world nor a sense that normative conclusions can he drawn from any form of reflection on human nature. Practical wisdom buys into the logic of white supremacy when what is needed is for that logic to be upended. Reflection on human nature ¡s impossible because the foreclosure of black humanity has been so thorough. We are left waiting for the apocalypse. Afro-pessimism results in a solipsistic retreat into the supposedly foreclosed self. White supremacy cuts off or perverts all possibilities for black sociality on this theory. It similarly cuts off or perverts all possibilities for intergenerational transmission; What is left is the individual, black and alone, facing the indestructible behemoth of white supremacy. The individual will try to resist, will try to take up David’s slingshot. But with no criteria by which to know justice, with his or her own sense of self always mangled by the crushing force of white supremacy, there are few pebbles to throw and no one with whom to consult to learn how to fashion a slingshot. All that is left is to pray or retreat into memories—or memoirs. Must the black natural law tradition really collapse when faced with the challenge of a racist legal system? I see no reason why this must be so. Consider again what black natural law most centrally entails: ideology critique and social movement organizing. These are the responses that necessarily follow from proper reflection on human nature and its distortions. Both of these are called for and are very possible responses to a racist legal system. Upon seeing a chain gang outside her train window, Anna Julia Cooper responds by calling for the creation of a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Humans. That is to say, she calls for organizing, and she does it in a text that performs ideology critique, calling into question the wisdom of the world. The black natural law tradition embraces the need for robust institutions in the black community to cultivate right perception of natural law, and it puts front and center the role of intergenerational transmission in cultivating such right perception. What, then, of the worry that the systemic violence of the American legal system leaves black natural law flummoxed because it presents no point of attack, no single law that can be compared unfavorably with natural law? Such points of attack could serve two purposes. On the one hand, they could motivate calls for justice. The canonical formulations of black natural law do not begin by attacking specific laws, however. They begin by reflecting on how human nature is distorted by institutions, laws, and social norms. The second purpose that an attack on specific laws might serve is to offer a way of implementing natural law. But the black natural law tradition emphasizes the need for practical wisdom and patience in the implementation of natural law. The Montgomery bus boycott initially did not demand integration: it demanded first-come, first-served seating on buses, whites from the front and blacks from the back. Douglass remained a slave, patiently waiting for the right opportunity to escape all the while building community with his fellows, even after triumphing in his fight with Covey and thus confirming his right to freedom. Specific laws may be attacked, but only at the proper moment. The challenge of Americas racist legal system offers an opportunity to confirm and refine the black natural law tradition. Focusing on one or another law to be fixed tempts us to forget what is most basic in that tradition: ideology critique and social movement organizing. Confronting the racist legal system teaches blacks to look suspiciously on the wisdom of the world, to work together to build power, and to patiently wait until the right moment to rise up and destroy the demonic forces that hold more than a million of our black brothers and sisters in cages.