#### We will now play Mathematics – Mos Def

Yo, it's one universal law but two sides to every story

Three strikes and you be in for life, manditory

Four MC's murdered in the last four years

I ain't tryin to be the fifth one, the millenium is here

Yo it's 6 Million Ways to Die, from the seven deadly thrills

Eight-year olds gettin found with 9 mill's

It's 10 P.M., where your seeds at? What's the deal

He on the hill puffin krill to keep they belly filled

Light in the ass with heavy steel, sights on the pretty shit in life

Young soldiers tryin to earn they next stripe

When the average minimum wage is $5.15

You best believe you gotta find a new ground to get cream

The white unemployment rate, is nearly more than triple for black

so frontliners got they gun in your back

Bubblin crack, jewel theft and robbery to combat poverty

and end up in the global jail economy

Stiffer stipulations attached to each sentence

Budget cutbacks but increased police presence

And even if you get out of prison still livin

join the other five million under state supervision

This is business, no faces just lines and statistics

from your phone, your zip code, to S-S-I digits

#### Mos Def’s Mathematics is a voice for the voiceless. It is power for those in state created ghettos. It is a method of expression that allows bodies marked by difference to overcome barriers.

Nielsen, 10

(Cynthia Nielsen, Villanova University, Ethics, Post-Doc, Fall 2010, “Mos Def on Socially Constructed Subjectivities, Stigmatized Spaces, and the Mutability of “Blackness,” https://www.academia.edu/1320443/Mos\_Def\_on\_Socially\_Constructed\_Subjectivities\_Stigmatized\_Spaces\_and\_the\_Mutability\_of\_Blackness\_, NC)

The body of the song [1] opens with a six line stanza rhythmically interweaving the numbers one through ten in between concrete, historical particulars (i.e. “Charlie Hustle”= Pete Rose; CH is a name taken up by rapper, E-40) to more abstract, universal, and religious allusions (e.g., “Seven firmaments of heaven to hell, 8 Million Stories to tell”). Then in the next stanza [2], Mos moves away from the abstract and becomes more personal. In these nine lines, he highlights how the poetics of a socially conscious hip hop—as a voice for the voiceless—lifts the “powerless up” from the social sinkholes of ghettos and “streets too loud to ever hear freedom ring.” He describes how hip hop as an artistic form of social critique has likewise allowed him to overcome some of the socio-political obstacles faced by African Americans—“Hip-Hop past all your tall social hurdles; like the nationwide projects, prison-industry complex.” Yet, as the last three lines indicate, living in these state-created socially stigmatized “spaces” (projects, ghettos etc.) breeds violence, fear, anxiety, and hopelessness among those forced to reside in these “towering infernos.”

#### Anti-Blackness structurally underpins all violence—while racialized violence is still a daily reality for people caught in the position of the slave, the rhetoric of “oppression” or “exploitation” alone asks only how we might redeem this failed American experiment. There is no analogy for the structural suffering of the slave, meaning authentic engagement with social violence must begin with the anti-human void known as Blackness

Pak, 12

(Yumi, PhD in literature from UC-San Diego, “Outside Relationality: Autobiographical Deformations and the Literary Lineage of Afro-pessimism in 20th and 21st Century African American Literature,” Dissertation through Proquest)

Because the four authors I examine focus intensively on untangling and retangling the nexus of race, gender, and sexuality in autobiographical narratives, this project originally relied most heavily on the frameworks provided by queer theory and performance studies, as the structural organization and methodology behind both disciplines offered the characteristic of being “‘inter’ – in between... intergenric (sic), interdisciplinary, intercultural – and therefore inherently unstable” (“What is Performance Studies Anyway?” 360). My abstract ideation of the dissertation was one which conceptualized the unloosening of the authors’ respective texts from the ways in which they have been read in particular genres. Yet the investigative progression of my research redirected me to question the despondency I found within Toomer, Himes, Baldwin and Jones’ novels, a despondency and sorrow that seemed to reach beyond the individual and collective purportedly represented in these works. What does it mean, they seem to speculate, to suffer beyond the individual, beyond the collective, and into the far reaches of paradigmatic structure? What does it mean to exist beyond “social oppression” and veer instead into what Frank B. Wilderson, III calls “structural suffering” (Red, White & Black 36)? Briefly, Wilderson utilizes what he calls Frantz Fanon’s splitting of “the hair(s) between social oppression and structural suffering”; in other words, Wilderson refutes the possibility of analogizing blackness with any other positionality in the world. Others may be oppressed, indeed, may suffer experientially, but only the black, the paradigmatic slave, suffers structurally. Afro-pessimism, the theoretical means by which I attempt to answer this query, provides the integral term and parameters with which I bind together queer theory, performance studies, and autobiography studies in order to propose a re-examination of these authors and their texts. The structural suffering of blackness seeps into all elements of American history, culture, and life, and thus I begin my discussion with an analysis of Hortense Spillers’ concept of an American grammar in “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book.” To theorize blackness is to begin with the slave ship, in a space that is in actuality no place.7 In discussing the transportation of human cargo across the Middle Passage, Spillers writes that this physical theft of bodies was “a willful and violent (and unimaginable from this distance) severing of the captive body from its motive will, its active desire” (Spillers 67). She contends here that in this mass gathering and transportation, what becomes illuminated is not only the complete and total deracination of native from soil, but rather the evisceration of subjectivity from blackness, the evacuation of will and desire from the body; in other words, we see that even before the black body there is flesh, “that zero degree of social conceptualization that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse, or the reflexes of iconography” (67). Black flesh, which arrives in the United States to be manipulated and utilized as slave bodies, is “a primary narrative” with its “seared, divided, ripped-apartness, riveted to the ship’s hole, fallen, or ‘escaped’ overboard” (67). These markings – “lacerations, woundings, fissures, tears, scars, openings, ruptures, lesions, rendings, punctures of the flesh” – are indicative of the sheer scale of the structural violence amassed against blackness, and from this beginning Spillers culls an “American grammar” that grounds itself in the “rupture and a radically different kind of cultural continuation,” a grammar that is the fabric of blackness in the United States (67, 68). As Wilderson observes, “Africans went into the ships and came out as Blacks” (Red, White & Black 38). In other words, in the same moment they are (re)born as blacks, they are doomed to death as slaves. This rupture, I argue, is evident in the definitions of slavery set forth by Orlando Patterson in his seminal volume, Slavery and Social Death: natal alienation, general dishonor and openness to gratuitous violence. The captive body, which is constructed with torn flesh, is laid bare to any and all, and it is critical to note here that Patterson, in line with Afro-pessimists, does not align slavery with labor. The slave can – and did – work, but what defines him/her as such is that as a dishonored and violated object, the master’s whims for him/her to work, or not work, can be carried out without ramifications. Rather, the slave’s powerlessness is heightened to the greatest possible capacity, wherein s/he is marked by social death and the “permanent, violent domination” of their selves (Patterson 13). Spillers’ “radically different kind of cultural continuation” finds an articulation of the object status of blackness in the United States, one which impugns the separation of “slave” and “black.” As Jared Sexton and Huey Copeland inquire, “(h)ow might it feel to be... a scandal to ontology, an outrage to every marker of the human? What, in the final analysis, does it mean to suffer?” (Sexton and Copeland 53). Blackness functions as a scandal to ontology because, as Wilderson states, black suffering forms the ethical backbone of civil society. He writes, (c)hattel slavery did not simply reterritorialize the ontology of the African. It also created the Human out of cultural disparate identities from Europe to the East... Put another way, 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 the political ontology of Humanity and the social death of Blacks. (Red, White & Black 20 – 21) Again, the African is made black, and in this murder both ontological and physical, humanity gains its coherence. It is not my intention (nor of other Afro-pessimists) to argue that violence has only ever been committed against black individuals and communities in the United States, or in the world, but rather that the structural suffering that defines blackness, the violence enacted against blackness to maintain its positioning outside of civil society, that demarcates the black as slave, has no horizontal equivalent and, indeed, provides the logical ethos of existence for all othered subjectivities; by this I mean that all other subjects (and I use this word quite intentionally) retain a body and not the zero degree of flesh. As Sexton writes, “we might say of the colonized: you may lose your motherland, but you will not ‘lose your mother’ (Hartman 2007)” (“The Curtain of the Sky” 14). This is precisely why Sexton offers the succinct definition of Afro-pessimism as “a political ontology dividing the Slave from the world of the Human in a constitutive way” (“The Social Life of Social Death” 23). Furthermore, Afro-pessimists contest the idea that the modern world is one wherein the price of labor determines the price of being equally for all people. In this capitalistic reading of the world, we summon blacks back into civil society by utilizing Marxism to assume “a subaltern structured by capital, not by white supremacy” (“Gramsci’s Black Marx” 1). While it is undeniable, of course, that black bodies and labor were used to aid in the economic growth of the United States, we return again to the point that what defines enslavement is accumulation and fungibility, alongside natal alienation, general dishonor, and openness to gratuitous violence; the slave, then, is not constituted as part of the class struggle.8 While it is true “that labor power is exploited and that the worker is alienated in it,” it is also true that “workers labor on the commodity, they are not the commodity itself is, their labor power is” (Red, White & Black 50). The slave is, then, invisible within this matrix, and, to a more detrimental effect, invisible within the ontology of lived subjects entirely. The slave cannot be defined as loss – as can the postcolonial subject, the woman, or the immigrant – but can only be configured as lack, as there is no potential for synthesis within a rubric of antagonism. Wilderson sets up the phrase “rubric of antagonism” in opposition to “rubric of conflict” to clarify the positionality of blacks outside relationality. The former is “an irreconcilable struggle between entities, or positions, the resolution of which is not dialectical but entails the obliteration of one of the positions,” whereas the latter is “a rubric of problems that can be posed and conceptually solved” (Red, White & Black 5). He continues, “(i)f a Black is the very antithesis of a Human subject... then his or her paradigmatic exile is not simply a function of repressive practices on the part of institutions” (9). Integrating Hegel and Marx, and returning to Spillers, Wilderson argues that within this grammar of suffering, the slave is not a laborer but what he calls “anti- Human, against which Humanity establishes, maintains, and renews its coherence, its corporeal integrity” (11). In contrast to imagining the black other in opposition to whiteness, Wilderson and other Afro-pessimists theorize blackness as being absent in the dialectic, as “anti-Human.”

#### As a Chinese, female adoptee I recognize the privilege I have living in America. I recognize the opportunities I have going to a good school and living in a good neighborhood.

#### Being ignorant of your privilege and success in relation to whiteness re-inscribes an unspoken and supplemental antiblackness.

Sullivan, 8

(Professor Philosophy, Women’s Studies, and African and African American Studies @ Pennsylvania State University (Shannon Sullivan, Spring 2008, “Whiteness as Wise Provincialism: Royce and the Rehabilitation of a Racial Category,” Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society: A Quarterly Journal in American Philosophy, Vol. 44, No. 2, Project Muse)

Like critical conservationists regarding whiteness, Royce knows that he faces an uphill battle in convincing many of his interlocutors of the value of provincialism. Put positively, provincialism tends to connote a healthy fondness for and pride in local traditions, interests, and customs. More negatively, it means being restricted and limited, sticking to the narrow ideas of a given region or group and being indifferent, perhaps even violently hostile to the ways of outsiders. What connects these different meanings is their sense of being rooted in a particular cultural-geographical place. In Royce’s definition, which emphasizes conscious awareness of this rootedness (an important point to which I will return), a province is a domain that is “sufficiently unified to have a true consciousness of its own unity, to feel a pride in its own ideals and customs, and to possess a sense of its distinction from other(s).” And correspondingly, provincialism is, first, the tendency for a group “to possess its own customs and ideals; secondly, the totality of these customs and ideals themselves; and thirdly the love and pride which leads the inhabitants of a province to cherish as their own these traditions, beliefs and aspirations” (61). (End Page 238) Emphasizing unity, love, and pride, Royce’s definitions steer away from the negative connotations of provincialism. But in Royce’s day—and not much has changed in this regard—it was the negative, or “false,” form of provincialism that most often came to people’s minds when they thought about the value and effects of the concept. As Royce was writing in 1902, the false provincialism, or “sectionalism,” of the United States’ Civil War was a recent memory for many of his readers. In the Civil War, stubborn commitment to one portion of the nation violently opposed it to another portion and threatened to tear the nation apart. Provincialism, which appealed to regional values to disunite, had to be condemned in the name of patriotism, which united in the name of a higher good. Royce’s rhetorical strategy is to take the challenge of defending provincialism head-on: “My main intention is to define the right form and the true office of provincialism—to portray what, if you please, we may call the Higher Provincialism, —to portray it, and then to defend it, to extol it, and to counsel you to further just such provincialism” (65). Royce readily acknowledges that “against the evil forms of sectionalism we shall always have to contend” (64). But he denies that provincialism must always be evil. Going against the grain of most post-Civil War thinking about provincialism, Royce urges that the present state of civilization, both in the world at large, and with us, in America, is such as to define a new social mission which the province alone, but not the nation, is able to fulfil (sic) . . . .(T)he modern world has reached a point where it needs, more than ever before, the vigorous development of a highly organized provincial life. Such a life, if wisely guided, will not mean disloyalty to the nation. (64) Wisely developed, provincialism need not conflict with national loyalty. The two commitments can—and must, Royce insists—flourish together. Likewise, whiteness need not conflict with membership in humanity as a whole. The two identities can—and must—flourish together. The relationship between provincialism and nationalism, as discussed by Royce, serves as a fruitful model for the relationship of whiteness and humanity, and critical conservationists of whiteness should follow Royce’s lead by taking head-on the challenge of critically defending whiteness. Like embracing provincialism, embracing whiteness might seem to be a step backward for the modern world—toward limitation and insularity that breed ignorance, prejudice, and hostility toward others who are different from oneself. Like having a national rather than provincial worldview, seeing oneself as a member of humanity rather than of the white race seems to embody an expansive, outward (End Page 239) orientation that is open to others. But there is a “new social mission” with respect to racial justice that whiteness, and not humanity as a whole, can fulfill. Race relations, especially in the United States, have reached a point where humanity needs a “highly organized” anti-racist whiteness, that is, an anti-racist whiteness that is consciously developed and embraced. How then can we (white people, in particular) wisely guide the development of such whiteness so that it does not result in disloyalty to other races and humanity as a whole? Before addressing this question, let me point out two important differences between whiteness and provincialism as described by Royce. First, while Royce calls for the development of a wise form of provincialism, he is able to appeal to existing “wholesome” forms of provincialism in his defense of the concept. He addresses himself “in the most explicit terms, to men and women who, as I hope and presuppose, are and wish to be, in the wholesome sense, provincial,” and his demand that “the man of the future . . . love his province more than he does to-day” recognizes a nugget of wise provincialism on which to build (65, 67). The development of wise provincialism does not have to be from scratch. In contrast, it is more difficult to pinpoint a nugget of “wholesome” whiteness to use as a starting point for its transformation. Instances of white people who helped slaves and resisted slavery in the United States, for example, certainly can be found—the infamous John Brown is only one such example—but such people often are seen as white race traitors who represent the abolition, not the transformation of whiteness.9 The task of critically conserving whiteness probably will be more difficult than that of critically conserving provincialism since there is not a straightforward or obvious “right form and true office” of whiteness to extol. Second, true to his idealism, Royce describes both provincialism and its development as explicitly conscious phenomena. Royce notes the elasticity of the term “province”—it can designate a small geographical area in contrast with the nation, or it can designate a large geographical, rural area in contrast with a city (57–58)—but it always includes consciousness of the province’s unity and particular identity as this place and not another. Put another way, probably every space, regardless of its size, is distinctive in some way or another. What gives members of a space a provincial attitude is their conscious awareness of, and resulting pride in, that space as the distinctive place that it is. On Royce’s model, someone who is provincial knows that she is, at least in some loose way. The task of developing her provincialism, then, is to develop her rudimentary conscious awareness of her province, to become “more and not less self-conscious, well-established, and earnest” in her provincial outlook (67). In contrast—and here lies the largest difference between provincialism and whiteness—many white people today do not consciously think of themselves as members of this (white) race and not another, not even loosely. Excepting members of white militant groups such as the Ku (End Page 240) Klux Klan or the Creativity Movement, contemporary white people do not tend to have a conscious sense of unity as fellow white people, nor do they consciously invoke or share special ideals, customs, or common memories as white people. They often are perceived and perceive themselves as raceless, as members of the human species at large rather than members of a particular racial group. This does not eliminate their whiteness or their membership in a fairly unified group. Just the opposite: such “racelessness” is one of the marks and privileges of membership in whiteness, especially middle and upper class forms of whiteness. White people can feel a pride in the ideals and customs of whiteness and possess a sense of distinction from people of other races without much, if any conscious awareness of their whiteness and without consciously identifying those ideals and customs as white. To take one brief example, styles and customs of communication in classrooms tend to be raced (as well as classed and gendered), and white styles of discussion, hand-raising, and turn-taking tend to be treated as appropriate while black styles are seen as inappropriate.10 White students often learn to feel proud and validated by their teachers as good students when they participate in these styles, and this almost always happens without either students or teachers consciously identifying their style (or themselves) as white. Such students appear to belong and experience themselves as belonging merely to a group of smart, orderly, responsible students, not to a racialized group. In the United States and Western world more broadly, unconscious habits of whiteness and white privilege have tended to increase after the end of de jure racism.11 Unlike provincialism as described by Royce, whiteness tends to operate more sub- and unconsciously than consciously. But I do not think that this fact spoils wise provincialism as a fruitful model for wise whiteness. First, and reflecting a basic philosophical disagreement that I have with Royce’s idealism, I doubt that provincialism always functions as consciously as Royce suggests it does. The unity, pride, and love that are the hallmarks of provincialism could easily function in the form of unreflective beliefs, habits, preferences, and even bodily comportment. In fact I would argue that many aspects of our provincial loyalties—whatever type of province is at issue—operate on sub- or unconscious levels. In that case, provincialism and whiteness would not be as dissimilar in their operation as Royce’s description implies. Second, even if provincialism tends to consciously unify people while whiteness does not, Royce’s advice that people should attempt to become more, rather than less self-conscious in their provincialism still applies to white people with respect to their whiteness. Given whiteness’s history as a racial category of violent exclusion and oppression, one might think that white people need to focus less on their whiteness, to distance themselves from it. But just the opposite is the case. Given (End Page 241) that distance from racial identification tends to be the covert modus operandi for contemporary forms of white privilege, white people who wish to fight racism need to become more intimately acquainted with their whiteness. Rather than ignore their whiteness, which allows unconscious habits of white privilege to proliferate unchecked, white people need to bring their whiteness to as much conscious awareness as possible (while also realizing that complete self-transparency is never achievable) so that they can try to change what it means.

#### Whiteness is performed. Within debate space it is not simply enough to be ‘antiracist,’ but rather changing the way we perform ourselves in the debate space is the only way to combat whiteness.

Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley et al, 13

(Dr. Shanara R. Reid-Brinkley, PhD, Assistant Professor of Public Address and Advocacy, Director of Debate, William Pitt Debating Union, Amber Kelsie, M.A., Nicholas Brady, 2013, http://resistanceanddebate.wordpress.com/, Accessed 1/25/14, NC)

There is no racism without bodies coded and trained through practice. There are subjectivities that are raced which means that there are bodies that “look white” that are implicated in whiteness. White privilege in this frame can be recognized as an unearned benefit while offering a position of redemption when privilege is used toward anti-racist efforts. Yet, one can simultaneously be engaged in good anti-racist work as a white person, while engaging in political and social actions that reproduce privilege. And yet, we already recognize that whiteness is not just about skin color, though we cannot deny the existence of white-skin privilege. Whiteness is normative—it produces behavioral and performative patterns that sustain the significance of whiteness as a signifier. Bankey critiques what he calls “Reid-Brinkley’s model for resistance in the flesh” as a failed political project with dangerous implications for contemporary debate practice.

#### Hip Hop is an intelligent movement that functions to break down the normative culture of debate and creates a potential for radical communal change.

Dr. Reid-Brinkley, 8

("THE HARSH REALITIES OF “ACTING BLACK”: HOW AFRICAN-AMERICAN POLICY DEBATERS NEGOTIATE REPRESENTATION THROUGH RACIAL PERFORMANCE AND STYLE")

For these debaters, the use of hip hop functions to create an aesthetic community within the often hostile space of the debate community. In essence, the use of this music overwhelms a space that would normally be uncomfortable. I remember walking down the hallway at a national college tournament and being drawn to the deep sounds of a hip hop base beat emanating from the walls. I stood outside and peeped through the small plastic window and it was a young Louisville team. The use of hip hop invaded the quiet and stillness of the tournament hallway as debate rounds are in session. The normal sounds of someone’s rapid fire of words and cacophony of gasps (debaters must take quick and deep breaths periodically to maintain the speed) or muted notes of the timer beeping, papers shuffling, and the screech of chairs sliding against the cold floors were ripped away in an instant. Only the beat remained

#### This Alternative form of knowledge production leads to a double conscious. The inclusion of personal narratives allows us to reflect on out own social location, while alternate forms of knowledge allow us to understand the oppression of others. By teaching code switching we allow intra-communal discussion.

Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley et al, 13

(Dr. Shanara R. Reid-Brinkley, PhD, Assistant Professor of Public Address and Advocacy, Director of Debate, William Pitt Debating Union, Amber Kelsie, M.A., Nicholas Brady, 2013, http://resistanceanddebate.wordpress.com/, Accessed 1/25/14, NC)

Bankey’s positioning of himself at the borderland while excluding (multiply situated) black people in debate from that same space makes little sense to those familiar with the history of race in America. Black people have never not had to be in close relation to whiteness. This is Dubois’ theory of double consciousness (which, though especially emblematic of black experience, is a way of understanding the world that can be learned by non-blacks). Black people have always existed in an in-between space of blackness and whiteness with anti-blackness serving as the context for this relationship. Black folks in America are always already in an interracial relationship with whiteness; this is especially true in the context of debate. The tone of Bankey’s criticism assumes black people exclude white people from their space, but MPJ and other debate practices demonstrate the direct manner in which white people exclude black people from interracial dialogue in the debate space. An even more recent example of how structural racism functions is the exclusion of Elijah Smith, the reigning NDT champ, from the Kentucky Round Robin, and the attempt to change the rules pertaining to transfer students. We are disappointed by this addition to the consistent complaint made by whites that black people must be constantly accessible to whites even while white people disavow the structure of policed segregation in supposedly common spaces. In fact, it seems quite likely that this thesis will inspire debate arguments that produce exclusions of black students rather than an inclusive space of participation. We find it highly unlikely that it will produce an authentic communication or disalienation. There are countless examples of the manner in which black people attempt to meet the communicative and bodily expectations of dominant culture and dominant debate. Code-switching is part and parcel of our interracial romance with debate, an example of our commitment to compromise. Black people often code-switch into “white-people speak” when dealing with white people while using black language and tonal intonations (regionally specific) when in majority black spaces (in fact, it seems that it is when we “speak authentically” in the presence of whites—share ourselves with whites—that we are charged with the crime of being “intentionally” unintelligible). Within debates, (vis-à-vis framework for example) there is a denial or a disavowal of even the possibility of an engagement across rhetorical difference, which is the move Bankey makes. He refuses to code switch in the thesis by not attempting to understand the kinship networks in debate for black people or to engage in rhetorical practices to demonstrate a commitment to engaging difference at the level of method and performance.[9] How often do we encounter white people who can code-switch (and no we don’t mean the latest hip hop slang) into the communicative and socio-political practices of black culture? The black is always already at the borderland. But double consciousness is something that for most people—especially non-blacks—must be learned and practiced. We believe that these kinds of practices and attempts on the part of black people to meet whites more than half-way are evident for those who choose to see. But also we must point out that in communication studies code-switching, the vernacular, counter-publics, and many other concepts evoke the double-sidedness of rhetorical practice in ways that complicate the very notion that there could ever be a pure communication. We therefore invite Bankey to read the Communication Studies section of the library as well as the Black Studies section.

Life will not change for the better absent an assault on the establishment. That doesn’t mean we will live to enjoy the fruits of the revolution but it DOES mean that we should pursue revolutionary suicide because death is inevitable and this is the only one worth pursuing.

Newton, 73

(Huey P. Newton 1973, Co-founder of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, Revolutionary Suicide, pages 2-6)

Connected to reactionary suicide, although even more painful and degrading, is a spiritual death that has been the experience of millions of Black people in the United States. This death is found everywhere today in the Black community. Its victims have ceased to fight the forms of oppression that drink their blood. The common attitude has long been: What’s the use? If a man rises up against a power as great as the United States, he will not survive. Believing this, many Blacks have been driven to a death of the spirit rather than of the flesh, lapsing into lives of quite desperation. Yet all the while, in the heart of every Black, there is the hope that life will somehow change in the future. I do not think that life will change for the better without an assault on the Establishment (The power structure, based on the economic infrastructure, propped up and reinforced by the media and all the secondary educational and cultural institutions.), which goes on exploiting the wretched of the earth. This belief lies at the heart of the concept of revolutionary suicide. Thus it is better to oppose forces that would drive me to self-murder than to endure them. Although I risk the likelihood of death, there is at least the possibility, if not the probability, of changing intolerable conditions. This possibility is important, because much in human existence is based upon hope without any real understanding of the odds. Indeed, we are all—Black and white alike—ill in the same way, mortally ill. But before we die, how shall we live? I say with hope and dignity; and if premature death is the result, that death has a meaning reactionary suicide can never have. It is the price of self-respect. Revolutionary suicide does not mean that I and my comrades have a death wish; it means just the opposite. We have such a strong desire to live with hope and human dignity that existence without them is impossible. When reactionary forces crush us, we must move against these forces, even at the risk of death. We will have to be driven out with a stick. Che Guevara said that to a revolutionary death is the reality and victory the dream. Because the revolutionary lives so dangerously, his survival is a miracle. Bakunin, who spoke for the most militant wing of the First International, made a similar statement in his Revolutionary Catechism. To him, the first lesson a revolutionary must learn is that he is a doomed man. Unless he understands this, he does not grasp the essential meaning of his life. When Fidel Castro and his small band were in Mexico preparing for the Cuban Revolution, many of the comrades had little understanding of Bakunin’s rule. A few hours before they set sail, Fidel went from man to man asking who should be notified in case of death. Only then did the deadly seriousness of the revolution hit home. Their struggle was no longer romantic. The scene had been exciting and animated but when the simple, overwhelming question of death arose everyone fell silent. Many so-called revolutionaries in this country, black and white, are not prepared to accept this reality. The Black Panthers are not suicidal; neither do we romanticize the consequences of revolution in our lifetime. Other so-called revolutionaries cling to an illusion that they might have their revolution and die of old age. That cannot be. I do not expect to live through our revolution, and most serious comrades probably share my realism. Therefore, the expression “revolution in our lifetime” means something different to me than it does to other people who sue it. I think the revolution will grow in my lifetimes, but I do not expect to enjoy its fruits. That would be a contradiction. The reality will be grimmer.

#### Rhetorical silence on privilege allows it to continue its existence as an un acknowledge advantaged. Only a verbal confrontation of this privilege allows genuine criticism.

That is Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley in 2008

("THE HARSH REALITIES OF “ACTING BLACK”: HOW AFRICAN-AMERICAN POLICY DEBATERS NEGOTIATE REPRESENTATION THROUGH RACIAL PERFORMANCE AND STYLE")

For Jones and Floyd, such privilege comes with responsibility. Their educational status gives them entrance into discourse communities from which other blacks, without such status, may be excluded. Thus, according to these debaters, they must use the entrance into these spaces toward bettering the social, economic, and political situations of other blacks. Such a stance is critical, as Green observes: “When we choose to stay silent about our privileges that we hold, we keep it in its maintenance and allow for hegemony by continuing to justify its existence.” You recognizing and confronting your privilege but then you still perpetuate the system by catering to these power relations, not doing anything to challenge the hegemony, not doing anything to break the social connection between social power and knowledge by basically doing what you do. And, I don’t see how that’s putting in praxis, or actually - actually confronting your privilege to make that education true liberation for personal social liberation and social liberation. The Louisville debaters argue that a sincere recognition of privilege will come along with a change in methods of participation that maintain oppression and ensure a lack of diversity.

#### Focus on international conflicts only ignores the living apocalypse for people of color under the domestic warfare of white supremacy

Rodriguez, 8

(Dylan, PhD in Ethnic Studies Program of the University of California Berkeley and Associate Professor of Ethnic Studies at University of California Riverside, “ABOLITION NOW! TEN YEARS OF STRATEGY AND STRUGGLE AGAINST THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX”, AK Press 2008)

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 criminalization, 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 anticolonial 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. Lest we fall victim to a certain political nostalgia that is often induced by such illuminating Fanonist exhortations, we ought to clarify the premises of the social “mission” that our generation of US based progressive organizing has undertaken. In the vicinity of the constantly retrenching social welfare apparatuses of the US state, much of the most urgent and immediate work of community-based organizing has revolved around service provision. Importantly, this pragmatic focus also builds a certain progressive ethic of voluntarism that constructs the model activist as a variation on older liberal notions of the “good citizen.” Following Fanon, the question is whether and how this mission ought to be fulfilled or betrayed. I believe that to respond to this political problem requires an analysis and conceptualization of “the state” that is far more complex and laborious than we usually allow in our ordinary rush of obligations to build campaigns, organize communities, and write grant proposals. In fact, I think one pragmatic step toward an abolitionist politics involves the development of grassroots pedagogies (such as reading groups, in-home workshops, inter-organization and inter-movement critical dialogues) that will compel us to teach ourselves about the different ways that the state works in the context of domestic warfare, so that we no longer treat it simplistically. We require, in other words, a scholarly activist framework to understand that the state can and must be radically confronted on multiple fronts by an abolitionist politics. In so many ways, the US progressive/left establishment is filling the void created by what Ruthie Gilmore has called the violent "abandonments" of the state, which forfeits and implodes its own social welfare capacities (which were already insufficient at best) while transforming and (productively) exploding its domestic warmaking functionalities (guided by a " frightening willingness to engage in human sacrifice"). Yet, at the same time that the state has been openly galvanizing itself to declare and wage violent struggle against strategically targeted local populations, the establishment left remains relatively unwilling and therefore institutionally unable to address the questions of social survival, grassroots mobilization, radical social justice, and social transformation on the concrete and everyday terms of the very domestic war(s) that the state has so openly and repeatedly declared as the premises of its own coherence We can broadly understand that "the state" is in many ways a conceptual term that refers to a mind-boggling array of geographic, political, and institutional relations of power and domination. It is, in that sense, a term of abstraction : certainly the state is "real," but it is so massive and institutionally stretched that it simply cannot be understood and "seen" in its totality. The way we come to comprehend the state's realness-or differently put, the way the state makes itself comprehensible, intelligible, and materially identifiable to ordinary people-is through its own self narrations and institutional mobilizations. Consider the narrative and institutional dimensions of the "war on drugs," for example. New Y ork City mayor Edward Koch, in a gesture of masculine challenge to the Reagan- era Feds, offers a prime example of such a narration in a 1986 op-ed piece published on the widely-read pages of The New York Times: I propose the following steps as a coordinated Federal response to (the war on drugs) : Use the full resources of the military for drug interdiction. The Posse Comitatus doctrine, which restricts participation of the military in civilian law enforcement, must be modified so that the military can be used for narcotics control . . . Enact a Federal death penalty for drug wholesalers. Life sentences, harsh fines, forfeitures of assets, billions spent on education and therapy all have failed to deter the drug wholesaler. The death penalty would. Capital punishment is an extraordinary remedy, but we are facing an extraordinary peril . . . Designate United States narcotics prisons. The Bureau of Prisons should designate separate facilities for drug offenders. Segregating such prisoners from others, preferably i n remote locations such a s the Yukon or desert areas, might motivate drug offenders to abandon their trade. Enhance the Federal agencies combating the drug problem. The Attorney General should greatly increase the number of drug enforcement agents in New York and other cities. He should direct the Federal Bureau of Investigation to devote substantial manpower against the cocaine trade and should see to it that the Immigration and Naturalization Service is capable of detecting and deporting aliens convicted of drug crimes in far better numbers than it now does. Enact the state and local narcotics control assistance act of 1986. This bill provides $750 million annually for five years to assist state and local jurisdictions increase their capacities for enforcement, corrections, education and prosecution. These proposals offer no certainty for success in the fight against drugs, of course. If we are to succeed, however, it is essential that we persuade the Federal Government to recognize its responsibility to lead the way. Edward Koch's manifesto reflects an important dimension of the broader institutional, cultural, and political activities that build the state as a mechanism of self-legitimating violence: the state (here momentarily manifest in the person of the New York City Mayor) constantly tells stories about itself, facilitated by a politically willing and accomplice corporate media. This storytelling-which through repetition and saturation assembles the popular "common sense" of domestic warfare-is inseparable from the on-the-ground shifting, rearranging, and recommitting of resources and institutional power that we witness in the everyday mobilizations of a state waging intense, localized, militarized struggle against its declared internal enemies. Consider, for example, how pronouncements like those of Koch, Reagan, and Bratton seem to always be accompanied by the operational innovation of different varieties of covert ops, urban guerilla war, and counterintelligence warfare that specifically emerge through the state's declared domestic wars on crime/drugs/gangs/etc. Hence, it is no coincidence that Mayor Koch's editorial makes the stunning appeal to withdraw ("modify") the Posse Comitatus principle, to allow the Federal government's formal mobilization of its global war apparatus for battle in the homeland neighborhoods of the war on drugs. To reference our example even more closely, we can begin to see how the ramped-up policing and massive imprisonment of Black and Latino youth in Koch's 1980s New York were ena bled and normalized by his and others' attempts to story tell the legal empowerment and cultural valorization of the police, such that the nuts-and-bolts operation of the prison industrial complex was lubricated by the multiple moral parables of domestic warfare. This process of producing the state as an active, tangible, and identifiable structure of power and dominance, through the work of self-narration and concrete mobilizations of institutional capacity, is what some scholars call "statecraft." Generally, the state materializes and becomes comprehensible to us through these definitive moments of crafting: that is, we come to identify the state as a series of active political and institutional projects. So, if the state's self-narration inundates us with depictions of its policing and juridical arms as the righteously punitive and justifiably violent front lines of an overlapping series of comprehensive, militarized, and culturally valorized domestic wars-for my generation, the "war on drugs," the generation prior, the "war on crime," and the current generation, localized "wars on gangs" and their planetary rearticulation in the "war on terror"-then it is the material processes of war, from the writing of public policy to the hyper-weaponization of the police, that commonly represents the existence of the state as we come to normally "know" it. Given that domestic warfare composes both the common narrative language and concrete material production of the state, the question remains as to why the establishment left has not confronted this statecraft with the degree of absolute emergency that the condition implies (war!). Perhaps it is because we are underestimating the skill and reach of the state as a pedagogical (teaching) apparatus, replete with room for contradiction and relatively sanctioned spaces for " dissent" and counter-state organizing. Italian political prisoner Antonio Gramsci 's thoughts on the formation of the contemporary pedagogical state are instructive here: The State does have and request consent, but it also "educates" this consent, by means of the political and syndical associations; these, however, are private organisms, left to the private initiative of the ruling class. Although Gramsci was writing these words in the early 1900s, he had already identified the institutional symbiosis that would eventually produce the non-profit industrial complex. The historical record of the last three decades shows that liberal foundations such as the Ford, Mellon, Rockefeller, Soros and other financial entities h ave become politically central to "the private initiative of the ruling class" and have in fact funded a breath-taking number of organizations, grassroots campaigns, and progressive political interests. The questions I wish to insert here, however, are whether the financially enabling gestures of foundations also 1) exert a politically disciplinary or repressive force on contemporary social movements and community based organizations, while 2) nurturing an ideological and structural allegiance to the state that preempts a more creative, radical, abolitionist politics. Several social movement scholars have argued that the "channeling mechanisms" of the non-profit industrial complex "may now far outweigh the effect of direct social control by states in explaining the . . . orthodox tactics, and moderate goals of much collective action in modern America." The non-profit apparatus and its symbiotic relationship to the state amount to a sophisticated technology of political repression and social control, accompanying and facilitating the ideological and institutional mobilizations of a domestic war waging state. Avowedly progressive, radical, leftist, and even some misnamed "revolutionary" groups find it opportune to assimilate into this state-sanctioned organizational paradigm, as it simultaneously allows them to establish a relatively stable financial and operational infrastructure while avoiding the transience, messiness, and possible legal complication of working under decentralized, informal, or even "underground" auspices. Thus, the aforementioned authors suggest that the emergence of the state-proctored non-profit industry "suggests a historical movement away from direct, cruder forms (of state repression) , toward more subtle forms of state social control of social movements." The regularity with which progressive organizations immediately forfeit the crucial political and conceptual possibilities of abolishing domestic warfare is a direct reflection of the extent to which domestic war has been fashioned into the everyday, "normal " reality of the state. By extension, the non-profit industrial complex, which is fundamentally guided by the logic of being state-sanctioned (and often state-funded), also reflects this common reality: the operative assumptions of domestic warfare are taken for granted because they form and inform the popular consensus. Effectively contradicting, decentering, and transforming the popular consensus (for example, destabilizing assertive assumptions common to progressive movements and organizations such as "we have to control/get rid of gangs," "we need prisons," or "we want better police") is, in this context, dangerously difficult work. Although, the truth of the matter is that the establishment US left, in ways both spoken and presumed, may actually agree with the political, moral, and ideological premises of domestic warfare. Leaders as well as rank-and-file members in avowedly progressive organizations can and must reflect on how they might actually be supporting and reproducing existing forms of racism, white supremacy, state violence, and domestic warfare in the process of throwing their resources behind what they perceive as "winnable victories," in the lexicon of venerable community organizer Saul Alinsky. Our historical moment suggests the need for a principled political rupturing of existing techniques and strategies that fetishize and fixate on the negotiation, massaging, and management of the worst outcomes of domestic warfare. One political move long overdue is toward grassroots pedagogies of radical dis-identification with the state, in the trajectory of an anti-nationalism or anti-patriotism, that reorients a progressive identification with the creative possibilities of insurgency (this is to consider " insurgency" as a politics that pushes beyond the defensive maneuvering of "resistance"). Reading a few a few lines down from our first invoking of Fanon's call to collective, liberatory action is clarifying here: "For us who are determined to break the back of colonialism, our historic mission is to authorize every revolt, every desperate act, and every attack aborted or drowned in blood."