Decadence—Position A/G Performance

Decadence 1NC Shell:

I. The Aff (Neg) asks us to simply trust their identity. Such moves discount evidence and reduce epistemology to the value we are demanded to place in our sympathies with the authority of the person. When "performing evidence" substitutes for evidence, the appearance of legitimacy dooms the pursuit of knowledge and propagates decadence.

Lewis Gordon—professor at philosophy, African and Judiac Studies at University of Connecticut Storrs—2006 (*Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times*, p 28-29)

A striking feature (among many) of the contemporary intellectual climate, as I pointed out in the introduction of this book, is the war on evidence. There are many instances of this, but perhaps most memorable are the many "charts" and so-called evidential claims made by Ronald Reagan during his presidency. The so-called evidence he advanced was rarely ever evident. We needn't blame Reagan for this. It was happening everywhere. Think of the scores of pseudo-intellectuals who have mastered the performance of "academese" and the rhetorical advance of evidence like claims. Lying beneath all this are, of course, nihilistic forces, and lying beneath such forces are, as Friedrich Nietzsche diagnosed little more than a century ago, decadent ones. Where truth has collapsed into commonness, then critical thinking isn't necessary, which makes the work of assessing evidence superfluous. The effect is the kind of nonthinking activities against which Ortega y Gasset argued. There are two extremes of this. On the one hand, there is oversimplicity that demands no reflection. On the other hand, there IS the dense, abstruse appearance of expertise that conceals an absence of thought. Both don't require thinking because their ultimate appeal is appearance.

Evidence is paradoxically that which has been hidden but revealed as a conduit for the appearance of another hidden reality. In effect, then, It is an appearance that enables appearance, but it is an appearance that requires thinking in order to appear. In short, it is not an appearance that stimulates thought but a form of thought that stimulates appearance. This means that evidence is always symbolic; it always refers beyond Itself. Because whether affirmed or rejected, it always extends itself publicly for assessment, evidence is peculiarly social. And since it is social, evidence is subject to the complex exchange of intersubjective activities. Evidence must, in other words be subject to norms" and "criteria." By norms, I don't here mean normativity or social prejudices but instead an understanding of where an exceptional instance versus a typical instance of a case holds. This requires further understanding of relevance, which, too, requires the value of distinction. All this together provides a clue to the contemporary problem. When simply the performance of presenting evidence substitutes for evidence, then anything can count as evidence. We see this in scholarly texts where the authors announce the importance of looking at a subject and then later argue as though that announcement itself constituted examination. Think, as well, of some texts in literary and cultural studies with long, run-on commentary in end notes and footnotes that serve no role of substantiating the claims they supposedly demarcate. We also see it in cases where pronouncements of past failures of certain social remedies take the form of perennial truths.

II. The performance of the affirmative is decadent. It turns away from the various ways of knowing the world and ontologizes the language [of the slave (if Afro-pessimists)] as the constitutive foundation of the world and Blackness.

Lewis Gordon—professor of philosophy, African and Judiac Studies at the University of Connecticut—2014 ("Disciplinary Decadence and the Decolonization of Knowledge," Africa Development 39.1: 81-92, 86-88).

Failure to appreciate reality sometimes takes the form of recoiling from it. An inward path of disciplinary solitude eventually leads to what I call disciplinary decadence.12 This is the phenomenon of turning away from living thought, which engages reality and recognises its own limitations, to a deontologised or absolute conception of disciplinary life. The discipline becomes, in solipsistic fashion, the world. And in that world, the main concern is the proper administering of its rules, regulations, or, as Fanon argued, (self-devouring) methods. Becoming 'right' is simply a matter of applying, as fetish, the method

correctly. <u>This is a form of decadence because of the set of considerations that fall to the wayside as the discipline turns into itself and eventually implodes</u>. Decay, although a natural process over the course of time for living things, takes on a paradoxical quality in disciplinary formation. A discipline, e.g., could be in decay through a failure to realise that decay is possible. Like empires, the presumption is that the discipline must outlive all, including its own purpose.

In more concrete terms, <u>disciplinary decadence takes the form of one discipline assessing all other disciplines from its supposedly complete standpoint</u>. It is the literary scholar who criticises work in other disciplines as not literary. It is the sociologist who rejects other disciplines as not sociological. It is the historian who asserts history as the foundation of everything. It is the natural scientist that criticises the others for not being scientific. And it is also the philosopher who rejects all for not being properly philosophical. Discipline envy is also a form of disciplinary decadence. It is striking, for instance, how many disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences are now engaged in intellectual history with a focus on the Western philosophical canon. <u>And then there is decadence at methodological levels</u>. Textualism, for example, infects historiography at the level of archival legitimacy. <u>Or worse, in some forms of textualism, the expectation of everything being contained in the text becomes evident in work in the human sciences that announce studying its subject through an analysis exclusively of texts on the subject. There are scholars in race theory, e.g., who seem to think that theorising the subject is a matter of determining what has been said on it by a small set of canonical texts.</u> When appearance is reduced to textuality, what, then, happens to inquiry? What are positivism and certain forms of semiological imitation of mathematical phenomena but science envy? When biologism, sociologism, psychologism, and many others assert themselves, to what, ultimately, are they referring? In the human sciences, the problem becomes particularly acute in the study of problem people. Such people misbehave also in disciplinary terms. <u>The failure to squeeze them into disciplinary dictates, from a disciplinarily decadent perspective, is proof of a problem with the people instead of the discipline. It serves as further proof of the pathological nature of such people</u>.

III. Decadence destroys Black liberation strategies in debate. By reproducing thoughts found in the erroneous ontologization of disciplines, the opposing team reproduces the theory of Western man, the white European man, as the basis of all our thinking about Blackness. These Black theories use white psychology, white anthropology, white gender oppositions of man v. woman, white theories as the foundation of their thinking about anti-Blackness. This is wrong and indicative of the extremity of anti-Blackness which suggests that Blackness at its core is imitative of whiteness. Their critique is ultimately assimilative and useless in formulating the thinking necessary to act and BE Black in the world.

Tommy J. Curry—2014 (Associate Professor and Ray A.Rothrock Fellow of Philosophy and Africana Studies @Texas A&M University, "Black Studies Not Morality: Neo-Liberal Cooptation, and the Challenges to Black Studies Under Intersectional Axioms, in *Emerging Voices of Africana: Disciplinary Resonances,* ed. Michael Tillotson (New Jersey:Third World-Red Sea Press, forthcoming).

<u>There are no liberation strategies against anti-Blackness that can occur within discourses or debates presuming the liberatory processes of dialectic and dialogic remedy if the categories Black people are confined to remain enclosed within the assumptions and predilections of European man</u>. <u>The oppositional logic ignited by the deployment of gender constructions on Black bodies making the Black hetero-male the mimetic equivalent of white patriarchy, as well as the assumptions of Enlightenment liberalism codified as recognition of the plight/invisibility of the racial/gendered/marginalized other, concretizes rather than dispels the mythology of Black pathology</u>. To suggest that within Blackness—the zones of non-Being that precede the genocidal rage of white negrophobia—Black inhumanity is imitative, not only desiring, but confining itself to the existing oppressive relations of white people to the world, is to hold that within Black people unable to live out their existentially known humanity under white supremacy there actually resides multiple axes of self-actualized and hierarchialized power over other non-Beings that remains structured, existing, and a mirroring of white actualized Being. <u>This thesis, which selectively assigns moral revelation and escapism to intersectional subjects, ultimately suggests that Black life, Black existence has no content and substance of its own</u>. <u>It is to theorize Blackness as completely mimetic and</u> <u>impotent to create fundamentally different relations to the world and others outside of the colonial meanings and oppositions taken to be essential to race, class, and gender.</u>

The aforementioned problem of "thinking Blackness," theoretically is the product of what Lewis Gordon (2006) has termed disciplinary decadence, or the inability of thinking to escape the ontology of the disciplines and decadent traditions from which they originate. The weight of Gordon's reflection is not in its corrective vision of thought within the university, but its articulation of the consequences suffered in "our thinking" about Blackness through the codifications of anti-Blackness trapped within the works, texts, and histories of Europe. Blackness, when left to be accounted for within thinking of the Black theorist-observer, and I would add teleological impetus assigned to Black "Man" as homo politicus, and homo economicus, inscribes the racist presumptions of a barbarous Black nature incapable of reflective thought and alternative orders which emerge from their existence that can sustain a civilization. It is to presume that the Black political can only be the imitation, assimilation, and preservation into the realm of Western man. This is why Wynter rejects Western man, gender, white anthropology, precisely because she understands that this is not a matter of focus as if reason is universal, but cultural construction, since reason like man is the contingent product of Europe's aspiration to "BE." Wynter rightly notes,

> it was to be as a function of the West's institutionalization of itself in terms of its then epochally new self-conception or sociogenic code as Absolute Being (whether in its first form as homo politicus, or from the nineteenth century onward, in its purely supernaturalized form as biocentric homo oeconomicus, with both variants over-represented as if they were the human), thereby, that the majority of the darker-skinned peoples of the earth (all of whom were now to be incorporated, willy nilly into the West's epochally new conception of the human and its correlated formulation of a general order of existence) would come to be seen, known, and classified, as we also came to see, know, and classify ourselves, not as other human beings but, instead as Native, Negro, Blackfellas, and ultimately, Nigger Others to the True Human Self of the West's Man (p.146).

Thus critique, our application and turning of reason/dialogue/consciousness to Blackness is assimilationist; only achieving "Being" hypothetically, as being recognized like a white human because Black people exhibit the same ontological failures of white humanity. Such discussions therefore insist upon the substitution of Blackness for whiteness so that to "Be" in a world that is situated in "Non-Being," is to act, think, be pathological like the biological western man, but as we know this is an inadequate answer to the sociogenic analysis put forth in Frantz Fanon and Aime Cesaire which demand the creation of a NEW MAN and by effect new knowledge and the end of disciplinarity. Black Studies must rededicate itself to positions of Blackness rooted in the aesthetic inclination, the creative potential of Black existence, freed from the disciplinary mandates of Western man and the invention of the Black masculine which haunts the historiography of Black Studies. High theory, (i.e. the liberal, poststructural/ psychoanalytic, intersectional, feminist, reformism of the day) will not do.

Big Ass Impact and Link to Performance:

(__) The Performance of the opposing team simply reproduces the sign (image and meaning) and symbols of the decadent white language. Their alternative depends on the values and anthropology of the white oppressor. In asking for the ballot, appealing to recognition, they reify the Black as imitative of the white, and doom us all to a world more violent than this one.

Lewis Gordon—professor at philosophy, African and Judiac Studies at University of Connecticut Storrs—2006 (*Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times*, p. 88-89).

Fanon was much aware of this in his classic early work, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967a), from which his qualification was announced. In that work, he presented a complex interplay of intratextual naivety with metatextualinsight as he, as in the fashion of Dante's *Inferno,* invited the reader to follow him through each circle of a claustrophobic, hellish condition. The black is a white construction, he admits, that is a consequence of a social world that stands between phylogenetic and ontogenetic forces. Yet creating alternative constructions is not so easy when we take seriously the complexity of the signs and symbols that constitute the language of their transmission. The colonizing signs and symbols arc not simply at the level of what they assert but also at the level of *how* they assert themselves. Thus, epistemological colonization, as we saw in the preceding chapt er, should also be understood as lurking even at the heart of *method.* A major epistemological problem is the degrading quagmire stimulated by the dialectics of recognition. There, blackness stands as imitation instead of originality or source. All imitations face the original as standard, which makes ownership of the promised national language an elusive dream. The link between language and Fanon's sociogenic observation is that language is in principle communicable, which means that it is inherently "public," that it finds its foundations in the social world. Failure at the linguistic and semiotic levels means that there is trouble in the social world, and trouble in the social world means, should one continue to cling to its completeness, its inherent legitimacy, that one should retreat inward , into the bosom of love, of an affirmation of one's worth, for sanctuary.' Yet, there, too, failure awaits so long as, under the guise of love, the desired desire is to be loved not as black but as white through the narcissistic gift of deceiving words. That words of whiteness, words of white recognition as white within the privacy of love are insufficient resistance against the social world calls for a further retreat to the point of constitutional fantasy. He then rehearsed the retreat autobiographically through his own encounters with words of " niggerness," to laughter, words of science, to the rhytmns of negritude to tears, and then wrestling with psychopathological anxieties in a world bereft of normality. Why did Fanon take such a circuitous path in that early work? Because he knew that reality is difficult to bear; which preparation is necessary. Facing such difficulties awakens a critical interrogative consciousness; one that, in the encomium that marks the book's denouement, is appealed to in its author's flesh.

Fanon's philosophy can be summarized by a single conviction: Maturity is fundamental to the human condition, but one cannot achieve maturity without being *actional* which, for Fanon, is tantamount to freedom. Much of his subsequent writings explore this thesis. In *Les Damnes de la terre* (1961 / 1991), this march through concentric layers of hell, echoed in the title's reference to *les damnes,* returns, but now in the context of the wider political question of a geo-const ituted realm. (Although this text is well known in the English-speaking world as *The Wretched of the Earth,* I prefer to use the French title since I ultimately argue that a damned people are not identical with wretchedness. Recall that Fallon begins with the provocative overlook his critical reject ions of the "Greco-Latin pedestal" of Western values. For if those values were instruments of colonization, how can they legitimate themselves as anything other than its salvation? But what happens in a world of suspended values, both old and new? Is it not the case that in a world without values, all is permitted? And what could be more violent than such a world, a world without limits?

Ans to: Performance is not Decadent

(__) To claim that Performance can be used to judge the Debate, or said differently that Debate is performance, is to suggest that Performance, this one idea, is the world that all others must be judged by. This is the exact definition of decadence.

Lewis Gordon—professor at philosophy, African and Judiac Studies at University of Connecticut Storrs—2006 (*Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times*, p. 33)

We now return to the problem of disciplinary decadence. This problem is already raised here by the question of the scope of disciplinary knowledge. Disciplinary decadence. as we have seen, is the process of critical. decay within a field or discipline. In such instances, the proponent ontologizes his or her discipline far beyond its scope. Thus. a decadent scientist criticizes the humanities for not being scientific; a decadent literary scholar criticizes scientists and social scientists for not being literary or textual; a decadent social scientist sins in two direct ions-by criticizing either the humanities for not being social scientific or social science for not being scientific in accord with say, physics or biology. And, of course, the decadent historian criticizes for not being historical; the decadent philosopher criticizes all for not being philosophical. The public dimension of evidence is here subordinated *by* the discipline or fields functioning, literally, as the world. Thus although another discipline or field may offer evidence to the contrary. It could literally, be ignored simply on the basis of not being the point of view of one's discipline or field.

Performance Not Evidence Frontline:

1. **Doing Me is the Link**: The focus on the ideas embedded in the minds and testimony of individuals is not evidence. This reliance on the subjective erases the outside world and legitimates the narcissism of knowledge through disciplinary expansion as the proof of their decadence.

Lewis Gordon—professor at philosophy, African and Judiac Studies at University of Connecticut Storrs—2006 (*Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times*, p 8)

The demise of evidence has collapsed the world of knowledge into near solipsistic subjectivities. It is not only the politician and other public figures who cover their cars. shut their eyelids. and hum out efforts to bring account ability to their words and deeds. In the world of academic work, similar, self-insulating practices have become hegemonic. Instead of being open-ended pursuits of knowledge. many disciplines have become self-circumscribed in their aims and methods in ways that appear ontological. By this I mean that many disciplines lose sight of themselves as efforts to understand the world and have collapsed into the hubris of asserting themselves as the world. Locked in their own subscribed regions-beyond which is quit e simply the end of the world- they shift from articulating their own limits and conditions of possibility to the assertion of their legitimacy in deontological terms- in terms, that is. that are categorical or absolute, in terms that do not require purpose. We return here to disciplinary decadence. Decadence, as we know, is a process of decay. Living things grow, and eventually they begin to decay and then die. Disciplines are functions of the living reality on which they rest. namely, living societies. As social conditions for the life of disciplines decline. so, too, do disciplines. but they do so, I contend over the course of the following reflections primarily through treating the proof of their decay as evidence of their health. Their practitioners delude themselves that the elimination of opposition, the eradication of an outside world, is the achievement of epistemic immortality. Such rationalization is symptomatic of decay. Think by comparison of what it would mean for a thinking subject if there were a resolution of all negation even distinction. The knowledge game would be over.

2**. Performing Evidence is not the same as evidence**: Extend our Gordon Evidence, evidence must be social. We must be able to tell the typical from the exceptional. Their "Doing Me," is an exclusive epistemology where the opposing team is forced, commanded, to accept the truth of their story with little to no ability to find its truth. We are demanded to read all of the round through their narrative, a tendency our Gordon Evidence says is decadent and saturated with narcissistic and nihilistic forces. The world is seen only through their view, we can't escape the egocentrism to truly view oppression.

3. Identity politics focusing on the subject, the me, traps us into an incomplete view of the structures around us leaving us without recourse to a real understanding of racism, sexism, homophobia, or the conditions of oppression. This is decadent.

Lawrence Grossberg--Morris Davis Distinguished Professor of Communication Studies and Cultural Studies; Adjunct Distinguished Professor of Anthropology; Director of the University Program in Cultural Studies, and Media Studies—2011 ("Identity and Cultural Studies: Is that all There is," in Cultural Studies edited by Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, p.87-107, p. 89-90)

Within cultural studies, investigations of the constitution and politics of identity are often predicated on a distinction, nicely articulated by Hall (1990), between two forms of struggle over -two models of the production of-identities. It is important to recognize that Hall offers this, not as a theoretical distinction, although it certainly can be mapped on to the dispute between essentialists and anti-essentialists, but as a historical and strategic distinction. The first model assumes that there is some intrinsic and essential content to any identity which is defined by either a common origin or a common structure of experience or both. Struggling against existing constructions of a particular identity takes the form of contesting negative images with positive ones, and of trying to discover the 'authentic' and 'original' content of the identity. Basically, the struggle over representations of identity here takes the form of offering one fully constituted, separate and distinct identity in place of another.

The second model emphasizes the impossibility of such fully constituted, separate and distinct identities. It denies the existence of authentic and originary identities based in a universally shared origin or experience. Identities are always relational and incomplete, in process. Any identity depends upon its difference from, its negation of, some other term, even as the identity of the latter term depends upon its difference from, its negation of, the former. As Hall (1991: 21) puts it: 'Identity is a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative. It has to go through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself.' Identity is always a temporary and unstable effect of relations which define identities by marking differences. Thus the emphasis here is on the multiplicity of identities and differences rather than on a singular identity and on the connections or articulations between the fragments or differences. The fact of multiple identities gives rise to the necessity of what Kobena Mercer has called 'the mantra of race, class and gender (1992b: 34). 'The challenge is to be able to theorize more than one difference at once.' This suggests a much more difficult politics, because the sides are not given in advance, nor in neat divisions. As Michele Wallace (1994: 185) . Obviously influenced by Derrida, such a position sees identity as an entirely cultural, even an entirely linguistic, construction.2 While this model certainly suggests that the identity of one term cannot be explored or challenged without a simultaneous investigation of the second term, this is rarely the case in practice. Most work in cultural studies is concerned with investigating and challenging the construction of subaltern, marginalized or dominated identities, although some recent work has begun to explore dominant identities as social constructions. Rarely, however, are the two ever studied together, as the theory would seem to dictate, as mutually constitutive.

4. Their counter-modern/post-colonial politics can't overturn their modernist orientation of cultural studies. Modernity formulates itself by making everything outside of it incorrect and inferior—unfit to challenge its position—the identity of the Affirmative team only traps us in this modernist obsession with negation of others.

Lawrence Grossberg--Morris Davis Distinguished Professor of Communication Studies and Cultural Studies; Adjunct Distinguished Professor of Anthropology; Director of the University Program in Cultural Studies, and Media Studies—2011 ("Identity and Cultural Studies: Is that all There is," in Cultural Studies edited by Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, p.87-107, p. 93)

But, as I have said, I want to contest such <u>theories of identity</u> on broader grounds: namely, that they <u>have failed to open up a space of anti-or even counter-modernity</u>. In other words, <u>they are ultimately unable to contest the formations of modern power at their deepest levels because they remain within the strategic forms of modern logic: difference, individuality, and temporality</u>. Iwill begin by considering the nature of the logic of difference which offers a particular interpretation of the relation between identity and modernity, an interpretation which, by its very logic, denies the possibility of any alternative which might escape its logic (the logic of the modern). <u>Since the modern constitutes its own identity by differentiating itself from an-other (usually tradition as a temporal other or spatial others transformed into temporal others), identity is always constituted out of difference. The modern makes identities into social constructions. And thus a counter-modern politics has to contest the particular relations of identity and difference that have been constructed by, offered and taken up in the modern</u>. Here, we have no choice but to start with questions of difference, and to explore the nature of difference and its relation to identity. <u>This is certainly the dominant response in cultural studies, but the real question is, to what end? If difference is irrevocable, then modernity is inescapable.</u> It may seem somewhat ironic that just as we discover that not only particular identities but identity itself is socially constructed, we organize political struggle within the category of identity, around particular socially constructed identities.

1NC Performance Not Evidence Link Ext:

(__) Evidence points us to reality and stimulates thinking; it is form of understanding. It is necessary to critically engage reality and pull us away from the dilapidated ideas trapped in ideology. Grasping reality beyond the narcissism of the self is necessary to address the conflicts in the world before us and get to the REAL.

Lewis Gordon—professor at philosophy, African and Judiac Studies at University of Connecticut Storrs—2006 (Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times, p 32)

Yet evidence is a form of understanding. It is not simply the case that something advanced as evidence is evidence. It must be understood as such, which means that it must be put through a process of critical inquiry, a process that requires thinking. The war on thinking has led to a situation in which ideas have become increasingly divorced from reality. And this has become so for good reason: Reality is not always what we want it to be. For some of us, the response is narcissistic rage, where we attempt to force reality to cough lip a version of the self that we prefer. a version of reality that is more palatable. We in effect wage war on reality. As Judith Butler laments in Precarious Life (2003):

I think we can see, however, how moralistic ant i-intellectual trends coupled with distrust of the Left as so many self-flagellating First World elites have produced a situation in which our very capacity to think about the grounds and causes of the current global conflict is considered impermissible. The cry That "there is no excuse for September 11" has become a means by which to stifle any serious public discussion of how US foreign policy has helped to create a world in which such acts of terror are possible. (3)

Evidence is the symptom of repressed reality. It signifies that which is either suppressed or that which we have attempted to suppress. For others, it is an insistent, near-sociopathic denial of the relevance of reality. Evidence, for those who have taken that turn, simply disappears from their purview. For, as in the case of the single-minded solipsist, the individual whose self literally becomes the world, there is no outside, no "others," to offer an open door through which to encounter the appearance of things beyond their control. Evidence is after all, found. Fabrication is. after all , an affront to evidence; it is to present something as evidence that is, in effect not evidence and , in so doing, point the activities of thought away from reality.

Answer to no alternative to disciplinarity:

(__) Gordon's critique advances teleological Suspensions of disciplinarity to decolonize our way of thinking about Black people.

Lewis Gordon—professor of philosophy, African and Judiac Studies at the University of Connecticut—2014 ("Disciplinary Decadence and the Decolonization of Knowledge," Africa Development 39.1: 81-92, 87).

A response to disciplinary decadence (although not often identified as such) has been interdisciplinarity. A problem with this response is that it, too, is a decadent structure. This is because presumed disciplinary completeness of each discipline is compatible with disciplinary decadence. Disciplines could simply work alongside each other like ships passing in the night. A more hopeful route is transdisciplinarity, where disciplines work through each other; yet although more promising, such a route is still susceptible to decadence so long as it fails to bring reality into focus. But doing that raises questions of purpose. It raises considerations that may need to be addressed in spite of disciplinary dictates. I call this process a teleological suspension of disciplinarity. By that, I mean the willingness to go beyond disciplines in the production of knowledge. This 'beyond' is, however, paradoxical. In some instances, it revitalizes an existing discipline. In others, it generates a new one. For example, a teleological suspension of philosophy generates new philosophy in some instances, and in others, it may generate new social thought that may not be philosophical. A teleological suspension of topology, chemistry, and biology could offer much to genetics and other sequencing notions of life. Germane to this special forum, it could also transform ways in which one theorises the relationship of dependency to development.

Teleological suspensions of disciplines are also epistemic decolonial acts. The discussion I have offered thus far places such acts squarely in, although not exclusive to, Africana philosophy. By Africana philosophy, I mean the exploration of modern life as understood through contradictions raised by the lived-reality of African Diasporic people. Because such people are often linked to many other communities whose humanity has been challenged, Africana philosophy is also a philosophy that speaks beyond the Africana community. Among the pressing themes of Africana philosophy are: (1) philosophical anthropology, (2) freedom and liberation, and (3) metacritiques of reason. Their presence in this discussion is evident, but to summarise: The first is raised by the dehumanisation of people (making them into problems) in the modern world; the second pertains to the transformation of (emancipation from) that circumstance; and the third examines whether the first two, especially at the level of the reasons offered in their support, are justified. I cannot provide a detailed discussion of these thematics here because of limited space. Instead, I should like to close with several additional considerations.

Internal Link: Theodicy—Thinking Blackness as Exclusive to itself is Decadent

Assuming reason and rationality can simply lead to new "Blackness" or a new world without a teleological suspension of the old structures of thought is epistemic theodicy. The Affirmative asks you to believe the world is anti-Black to the core, but reason, the deliberate capacity of rationality is untouched. This is colonial methodology and decadence at its finest.

Gordon—professor of philosophy at Univ. of Conn—2013 (Lewis Gordon, "Race, Theodicy, and Emancipatory Challenges of Blackness," South Atlantic Quarterly 112.4, p. 732-734)

Epistemic theodicy takes the form, however, of demanding the supervenience of consistency models of rationality. In effect, it requires rationalizing reason's obedience. A problem emerges, however, when the scope of this effort includes its own evaluation. It begs the question for rationality to assess its own consistency, since it is consistency itself that is up for evaluation. To evaluate consistency or rationality requires something more, and that is reason. What, in other words, if reason doesn't behave? And what if its delinquency is precisely because, as an evaluator, it must be above, paradoxically even, itself? These kinds of questions reveal the contradictions of metasystems, of any theoretical model that must evaluate itself. But brought down to earth in the context of these reflections, it means addressing the sides of theory that rationality hoped to suppress, and what are they other than their darker sides? Theory, in other words, could articulate the light only because its reach is also into its negations, namely, the zones of nonbeing(for more, see Gordon 2010b).

This understanding leads to rethinking some key features of the emergence of colonized epistemic practices. To identify them as colonized means to admit their suppressed terms, their hidden or feared undersides. The previous meditations on theory bring to the fore considerations of practices of science as well. Here we are in a terrain similar to Du Bois's (1903) reflections on potentiated double consciousness, where the contradictions of false particularities unveil and enlarge the grammatical practices of knowledge—in more prosaic language, the universalizing, as opposed to universal, activities of expanding thought (for discussion, see Henry 2005; and J. A. Gordon 2007). And made plainer: This means blackness, broader in scope, unmasks the false security of whiteness. Reality, in other words, is always bigger than that.

Among the many instances of this unfolding is the constellation of epistemic practices known as the human sciences. One fallacy is the tendency to treat these sciences as "pure," wherein their completeness is demonstrated and then they are methodically "applied" to human beings.8 What is missing is the understanding that "human being" was already racially inflected through the presupposition of epistemic practices premised on normative whiteness. The human sciences emerged, after all, out of the question, What is man?9 But as we have seen, that question emerged through encounters with the extraordinary and the different. When a presumed human "we" meets "them," interrogation emerges on the question of whether "we" are "they." This rupture leads to meditations on the question of standards by which "we" are determined as who or what we are and "they" are the same for what they are. This identity question, however, leads to further meditations on those standards, and in them is the additional problematic of what is a human being (for more, see Gordon 2011c). This philosophical anthropological question, if we will, is rendered more difficult by the epistemic upheavals that emerged from a collapsed theological naturalism.

Internal Link: Theodicy—Thinking Blackness as Exclusive to itself is Decadent

(__) Internal Link: We cannot trust the normative claims (utopia solvency) of the Affirmative. Their justice talk remains trapped in Eurocentric normativity and makes Blackness an exclusive rather than relational concept. The Affirmative advocacy is exclusive and decadent.

Gordon—professor of philosophy at Univ. of Connecticut—2013 (

We are on familiar terrain. For as with the theological and epistemic questions, the normative one faces the problem of theodicean grammar as well. Are the norms for which many of us are fighting in the name of, say, racial justice or liberation from antiblack racism free of normative colonization even where they may be so at an epistemic level? Isn't it presumptuous to think that the decolonization of knowledge has the same norms as its consequence?

We do already have a clue on this potentially vexing problem. Blackness, after all, as the underside of theory, is a relational concept (see Gordon 2010b). To think of blackness means always to imagine it in relation to something else, since to do so is to establish at least a phenomenological relationship of thought to its object or subject (Gordon 2010b; see also Gordon 2011b). This basic relationship offers the critique of the theodicean one, where the role of a god in effect eliminates the rest of the world by becoming an exclusive domain. It requires being without an outside and thus being outside of relations with anything else. The distinction of being-in-relations versus nonrelationality raises a normative difference since blackness, and its relationship not only to the included but also the excluded, promises an everwidening normative range.

An example of this difference is what we could call "justice talk." This activity is often done as if it is all-encompassing but insufficiently addressed. Thus, there is always the search for justice as though every normative arrangement of social institutions has simply fallen short of its virtue, as John Rawls (1971: introduction) espoused through his claim of justice as the primary virtue of institutions. This presumption works, of course, if justice were simply a term already present in every human community and simply standing within the northern European tradition of thought as a term translatable into its correlate in other languages. But translatability often begs many important questions of human difference. It could not only be the case that "justice" was not translated but in fact imposed but also that its scope, even where translatable, is part of a smaller normative field within the framework of the non-European group to which it is posed. If this is correct, then the proponent of justice has the task not only of understanding what is common about justice across human communities but also what could be learned beyond justice across them as well. Where justice is asserted in a theodicean way, this is a terrifying thought, as it requires looking at the underside of justice only as "injustice" instead of what may be "right" or "good" beyond justice.11

Answer To: You are Silencing Me: Autoethnography (The "I" is holographic).

(__)The self is not evidence. It is not a study of any actual social condition, and while it may be valuable to clarify social research, it is not in and of itself, evidence of anything about a people. In fact, it is merely holographic, and illusion meant to escape verifiable standards of knowledge.

Robert L. Krizek—Associate Professor of Communication at Saint Louis University—2003 (Ethnography as the Excavation of Personal Narrative, *Expressions of Ethnography* ed. Robin P. Clair, 141-151, 144-145)

For me, whatever else ethnography is, its "doing" requires the researcher to go "there" to understand "them." It's what I learned from Agar (1980), and Lofland and Lofland (1984), and Spradley (1979, 1980). In fact, I unknowingly might even be borrowing the phrase "go there to understand them" from one of them. Please realize, however, that while I believe an ethnographer must go "there" to understand "them," I recognize that part of going "there" might include, in many research undertakings, staying "here," and part of understanding "them" might include a reflexive examination of "me." Under no circumstances, however, at least for me, does ethnography, including the ethnographic excavation of personal narratives, involve simply staying "here" and understanding or studying "me." As such, and here might be some controversy, I find the label autoethnography problematic if, for the social researcher, it means only staying "here" and studying or understanding "me."

I do not, however, find the knowledge gained from self-reflection, introspection, autobiography, or autobiology (Payne, 1996) problematic or of questionable worth. In fact, I believe just the opposite. All knowledge is valuable if it helps the social researcher as a reader or writer gain insight into the human condition. And yet, each different form of knowledge calls for a different set of criteria for judging it and, likewise, each different form of knowledge allows for different types of claims to be made. So while all forms of knowledge are valuable, for me ethnographic knowledge is gained ultimately by going "there," which allows for claims to be made about "them" (remembering "here" may be part of "there" and "me" may be part of "them"). One final note on knowledge and claims. The knowledge gained from staying "here" and understanding "me" can be holographic by nature (see Talbot, 1991) in that in each part we recognize the whole. Knowledge gained from going "there" and understanding "them" (or "we"), however, used to support or supplement the "here" and "me" knowledge, or vice versa, can be much more powerful than knowledge gleaned from the holographic image of "me" when making claims about the social collective.

1NC IMPACT CARD EXTENSION:

Decadence allows the colonization of methods, thinking, and destroys the possibility of a decolonized ethics of the oppressed to overturn.

Lewis Gordon—professor of philosophy, African and Judiac Studies at the University of Connecticut—2014 ("Disciplinary Decadence and the Decolonization of Knowledge," Africa Development 39.1: 81-92, 88).

The first is regarding the political significance of this critique. For politics to exist, there must be discursive opposition over relations of power. Such activity involves communicative possibilities that rely on the suspension of violent or repressive forces. In effect, that makes politics also a condition of appearance. To be political is to emerge, to appear, to exist. Colonisation involves the elimination of discursive opposition between the dominant group and the subordinated group. A consequence of this is the attempted elimination of speech (a fundamental activity of political life) with a trail of concomitant conditions of its possibility. It is not that colonised groups fail to speak. It is that their speaking lacks appearance or mediation; it is not transformed into speech. The erasure of speech calls for the elimination of such conditions of its appearance such as gestural sites and the constellation of muscles that facilitates speech – namely, the face. As faceless, problem people are derailed from the dialectics of recognition, of self and other, with the consequence of neither self nor other. Since ethical life requires others, a challenge is here raised against models of decolonial practice that centre ethics. The additional challenge, then, is to cultivate the options necessary for both political and ethical life. To present that call as an ethical one would lead to a similar problem of coloniality as did, say, the problem of method raised by Fanon. European modernity has, in other words, subverted ethics. As with the critique of epistemology as first philosophy, ethics, too, as first philosophy must be called into question. It is not that ethics must be rejected. It simply faces its teleological suspension, especially where, if maintained, it presupposes instead of challenging colonial relations. Even conceptions of the ethical that demand deference to the Other run into trouble here since some groups, such as blacks and Indians/Native Americans, are often not even the Other. This means, then, that the ethical proviso faces irrelevance without the political conditions of its possibility. This is a major challenge to liberal hegemony, which calls for ethical foundations of political life, in European modernity. It turns it upside down. But in doing so, it also means that ethics-centred approaches, even in the name of liberation, face a similar fate.