# Opensource---Round 3---Wake

# 1NC

## OFF

### 1NC---T

#### The resolution should define the division of ground. It was negotiated and announced in advance providing both teams a reasonable opportunity to prepare. Only a textual reading of the resolution provides a predictable basis for research.

#### USFG means the three branches.

OECD 87. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Control and Management of Government Expenditure. 179. Google Book.

1. Political and organizational structure of government The United States America is a federal republic consisting of 50 states. States have their own constitutions and within each State there are at least two additional levels of government, generally designated as counties and cities, towns or villages. The relationships between different levels of government are complex and varied (see Section B for more information). The Federal Government is composed of three branches: the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch. Budgetary decisionmaking is shared primarily by the legislative and executive branches. The general structure of these two branches relative to budget formulation and execution is as follows.

#### ‘Resolved’ means to enact a policy by law.

Words and Phrases 64. Permanent Edition. Definition of the word “resolve,” given by Webster is “to express an opinion or determination by resolution or vote; as ‘it was resolved by the legislature;” It is of similar force to the word “enact,” which is defined by Bouvier as meaning “to establish by law”.

#### ‘Antitrust laws’ are statutes.

Grimes ’20 [Charles W; 2020; editor of this Licensing Update and Law Professor at Ava Maria Law School; Wolters Kluwer, “Licensing Update,” https://www.crowell.com/files/20200401-Licensing-Update-Chapter-13.pdf]

§13.02 ANTITRUST LAW IN THE UNITED STATES

U.S. antitrust law is defined by federal and state statutes, as interpreted by the courts. The core federal statutes are the Sherman Act,1 passed by Congress in 1890, and the Federal Trade Commission2 and Clayton Acts,3 both passed in 1914. The United States Department of Justice (“DOJ”) and the Federal Trade Commission (“FTC” or “Commission”) (together the “agencies”) share enforcement of most areas of federal antitrust law but with some differences in the scope of their authority. The FTC has sole authority to enforce Section 5 of FTC Act, which prohibits (1) unfair methods of competition and (2) unfair or deceptive acts or practices. The FTC almost always pursues claims for anticompetitive conduct as unfair methods of competition and reserves charges of unfair or deceptive acts or practices for consumer protection violations. Though the FTC's authority to challenge unfair methods of competition goes beyond conduct prohibited by the Sherman and Clayton Acts, in practice the FTC brings most unfair methods of competition cases under the same standards that courts apply to Sherman Act claims. The most prominent exception is the invitation to collude offense, which falls outside the scope of the Sherman Act (if the invitation is not accepted, there is no agreement). The FTC challenges invitations to collude as so-called “standalone” violations of Section 5.4 The DOJ has sole authority to pursue criminal violations of the antitrust laws. Most states have their own state antitrust and unfair competition statutes. State law follows federal law to some extent, though as discussed below, may differ from federal law in meaningful ways that vary state to state. State attorneys general and private parties can also typically file suit to enforce both federal and state antitrust law.

#### Their ‘scope’ is defined by government.

Sagers ’15 [Christopher L; 2015; the James A. Thomas Distinguished Professor of Law and Faculty Director of the Cleveland-Marshall Solo Practice Incubator; Handbook on the Scope of Antitrust, “Introduction,” Ch. 1, p. 9]

B. Sources of the Scope of Antitrust Law

The scope of federal antitrust law is governed by three separate authorities: (1) the U.S. Constitution, (2) the language of the antitrust statutes themselves, and (3) the language of other federal statutes and regulations.

#### Vote negative:

#### 1. Clash: debate requires a predictable topic to motivate in depth research that yields the values of negation and argument refinement. Their interp explodes limits, allows affirmative conditionality, and makes debate a one-sided monologue devoid of argumentation which turns the case.

#### 2. Fairness: the neg should win on average 50% of the time. Entering a competitive activity proves their arguments are shaped by a drive to win. The insurmountable advantage of being affirmative under their unfair model is a reason they should lose.

### 1NC---K

#### The 1AC’s revolution in a minor has offered moralism when it needs to offer organization for Climate Maoism – refusal to seize the state from the capitalist class forecloses a dictatorship of the proletariat

Heron & Dean 20 (Kai Heron, editor at ROAR Magazine. Jodi Dean, Professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. “Revolution or Ruin.” E-Flux. Journal #110 - June 2020. <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/110/335242/revolution-or-ruin/> //shree)

Let’s look at this third option more closely. To build towards an eco-communist revolution, we need to avoid both a politics of pure negation and a politics of “critical affirmation.” As Marx argued, revolutions need dialectics. They need us to find what Fredric Jameson calls the “dialectical ambivalence” in capitalism. This means training ourselves to locate aspects of the present that point beyond themselves and towards the communist horizon. Lenin did precisely this after the outbreak of the First World War. Rather than joining with the majority of the socialist parties of the Second International in capitulating to imperialist war, and rather than wallowing in melancholia following the betrayal of so many of his German comrades as they voted for war credits, Lenin saw in the war an opportunity for revolutionary advance. Those interested in the emancipation of the working class needed to fight not for peace but for the dialectical conversion of nationalist war to civil war. The war, and the collapse of the Second International, was the opportunity for something new.

What would it mean to think dialectically about the GND? We think it would mean stripping the policy’s reformist content away from its revolutionary form. For decades environmental movements in the capitalist core have busied themselves fighting for local solutions to global problems: cooperatives, local currencies, urban agriculture, and ethical consumerism. As these experiments blossomed, the climate crisis continued unabated. More pipelines were built, more indigenous land was stolen, more fires raged, and more species flickered out of existence.

In their form the GND and GIR put localism aside. Both recognize that the climate crisis demands a state-led, centrally planned, and global response. They take for granted that we need a state to intervene on behalf of nature and workers against capital. The fact that the GND and GIR promise to do this is what makes capitalists fear them. Those who are excited about the promise of the GND—such as Riofrancos—have similarly turned towards the state as a terrain of struggle and a locus of power. Consciously or not, these movements have learned from the failures of Climate Camp, Occupy, and the Movement of Squares. It is not enough to suspend the normal running of things. Taking responsibility means taking power and organizing society in what Marx called the interests of “freely associated workers,” or more controversially, the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” The struggles to implement the GND and GIR tell us that environmentalists are increasingly aware of the need to seize the state—and the need to develop a fighting organization with the capacity to do so.

Against State Denialism

Ironically, at almost the precise moment that progressive movements have become conscious of the necessity of a climate response operating at the necessary scale, the Marxist left has taken a state-phobic turn. Consider “disaster communism.” Confronted with the choice between ruin or revolution, disaster communism opts for ruin as the path to revolution—without considering the form of association necessary to ensure that the revolution ushers in a more equal, just, and sustainable world rather than insulated groups struggling with each other over resources. In lieu of the revolutionary subject emphasized in the Marxist tradition, disaster communism turns to climate breakdown as the agent of history.

Drawing on Rebecca Solnit’s book A Paradise Built in Hell, a study of how practices of mutual aid and collectivity arise in the aftermath of crises, disaster communists argue that we do not need to seize the state because the state will be washed away, along with the capitalist system itself, as the full force of the climate crisis crashes down around us. While Solnit emphasizes the ephemerality of “disaster communities,” disaster communists ask how these communities might be sustained and even flourish well beyond the punctual point of a climatic disaster wrought by capitalism. Theirs is a vision of communism arising, triumphantly, from capital’s ashes. Vision may be too strong a term here: for the most part, disaster communism is a hope, a screen covering over the need for organization and planning at a scale that can produce a form of life suitable for billions of people and nonhuman species.

Responses to the Covid-19 pandemic illustrate the point. Even as mobilized volunteers and mutual aid can meet real needs by distributing meals, assisting neighbors, and coordinating webinars, they are inadequate to the most demanding tasks of developing and administering tests for the virus, securing hospital beds in intensive care units, producing and distributing respirators, and providing adequate protective equipment at the necessary scale. Mutual aid is inspiring, but it’s not enough—it can’t stop the hoarders and profiteers, pay hospital bills and unemployment insurance, release prisoners and detainees. It doesn’t scale, particularly when the prevailing logic comes from the market. That capital accumulation takes place through dispossession as well as exploitation brings home the real limit of mutual aid: poor and working people do not own the means of production and therefore production does not meet social needs.

Furthermore, in extreme capitalist countries like the US and the UK, social and political diversity means that many do not voluntarily comply with public health recommendations. Employers insist that employees come to work. Students spend spring break at the beach. Individuals approach their own situations in terms of exceptions, reasons why they don’t need to comply with directives. Orders from the state don’t eliminate all these exceptions. But they reduce them substantially, most significantly by preventing employers from requiring workers to put themselves at risk. Were the state used as an instrument of working class power, it would, at a minimum, guarantee that workers would continue to be paid, that the health and well-being of people would be the focus of government attention. The pandemic demonstrates a truth that the left’s responses to climate change have been slow to acknowledge: global problems require a centrally planned response with all the tools that are at the disposal of the state. Failing to seize hospitals, industry, banks, and logistical networks from the capitalist class results in needless death—and gives a green light to disaster capitalism.

Geoff Mann and Joel Wainwright’s 2018 book Climate Leviathan provides another state-phobic response to the climate crisis. Mann and Wainwright predict four possible resolutions to the climate crisis. The first is “Climate Leviathan.” This is a global sovereign power that would act in the interests of capitalist states and global capital to limit the effects of climate breakdown. This is effectively the scenario hoped for by Chakrabarty. The second is “Climate Behemoth.” Here, states cannot agree to constitute a global sovereign power and so the crisis is tackled by international capital in the interests of international capital. The third is “Climate Mao.” In this scenario a single authoritarian sovereign power, most likely China, leads global mitigation and adaptation efforts. Finally, their fourth and preferred scenario is “Climate X.” This would be a so-far-nonexistent social movement that struggles to resolve the crisis in a way that is simultaneously anti-capitalist and anti-sovereign.

Alyssa Battistoni and Patrick Bigger have already written compelling Marxist critiques of Climate Leviathan. We don’t need to rehearse them here. We note, however, that responses to the Covid-19 pandemic have resembled Climate Behemoth and Climate Mao. While the US, UK, and EU have been slow to use state power to coordinate either within or among the themselves, instead following the dictates and interests of capital in their structuring of economic responses to the pandemic, China has modeled both rigorous state action with respect to quarantines and international leadership with respect to provision of medical aid. What’s important for our argument here is that Mann and Wainwright’s state denialism prevents them from conceiving the state as a form for the collective power of working people, an instrument through which we remake the economy in the service of human and nonhuman life.

Jasper Bernes offers a third state-phobic Marxist response to the climate crisis. A proponent of communization theory, Bernes argues that communism means “the immediate abolition of money and wages, of state power, and of administrative centralization.” Absent something like a state, how is a just response to the climate crisis even possible? Should we assume that it will spontaneously emerge as a result of disparate local disaster communisms? Should we assume that access to food, water, living space, and capacities for self-defense will be equally distributed, that by some miracle the immediate abolition of money and wages will leave everyone in the same position? The pandemic gives us insight into the inability of the communization approach to respond to catastrophe: when millions who have been dependent on the wage are without it, they require centralized state power to seize the means of production and distribution and administer both on the scale necessary to meet social needs. The issue isn’t the power of the state. It’s the class wielding state power.

#### Spontaneous, small scale revolutions is folk politics that forecloses institutional counter-hegemony capable of transforming capitalism

Srnicek and Williams 15. (Nick Srnicek, lecturer at City University London, and Alex Williams, lecturer at City University London. Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work. Verso Books: 2015. Pg. 27-31. iBooks.)

DEFINING FOLK POLITICS

What is folk politics? Folk politics names a constellation of ideas and intuitions within the contemporary left that informs the common-sense ways of organising, acting and thinking politics. It is a set of **strategic assumptions** that threatens to **debilitate the left**, **rendering it unable to** scale up, create lasting change or expand beyond particular interests. **Leftist movements under the sway of folk politics are not only unlikely to be successful – they are in fact** incapable of transforming capitalism. The term itself draws upon two senses of ‘folk’. First, it evokes critiques of folk psychology which argue that **our intuitive conceptions of the world are both historically constructed and often mistaken**.11 Secondly, it refers to ‘folk’ as the locus of the small-scale, the authentic, the traditional and the natural. Both of these dimensions are implied in the idea of folk politics.

As a first approximation, we can therefore define folk politics as a collective and historically constructed political common sense that has become **out of joint with** the actual mechanisms of power. As our political, economic, social and “technological world changes, tactics and strategies which were previously capable of transforming collective power into emancipatory gains have now become drained of their effectiveness. As the common sense of today’s left, folk politics often operates intuitively, uncritically and unconsciously. Yet common sense is also historical and mutable. It is worth recalling that today’s familiar forms of organisation and tactics, far from being natural or pre-given, have instead been developed over time in response to specific political problems. Petitions, occupations, strikes, vanguard parties, affinity groups, trade unions: all arose out of particular historical conditions.12 Yet the fact that certain ways of organising and acting were once useful does not guarantee their continued relevance. Many of the tactics and organisational structures that dominate the contemporary left are responses to the experience of state communism, exclusionary trade unions, and the collapse of social democratic parties. Yet the **ideas that made sense in the wake of those moments no longer present effective tools for political transformation.** **Our world has moved on, becoming more complex, abstract, nonlinear and global than ever before.**

Against the abstraction and inhumanity of capitalism, folk politics aims to bring politics down to the ‘human scale’ by emphasising temporal, spatial and conceptual immediacy. At its heart, folk politics is the guiding intuition that **immediacy is always better and often more authentic, with the corollary being a deep suspicion of abstraction and mediation**. In terms of temporal immediacy, contemporary folk politics typically remains reactive (**responding to actions initiated by corporations and governments, rather than initiating actions**);13 ignores long-term strategic goals in favour of tactics (mobilising around **single-issue politics** or emphasising process);14 **prefers practices that are often inherently fleeting** (such as occupations and temporary autonomous zones);15 chooses the familiarities of the past over the unknowns of the future (for instance, the repeated dreams of a return to ‘good’ Keynesian capitalism);16 **and expresses itself as a predilection for the** voluntarist and spontaneous over the institutional (as in the romanticisation of rioting and insurrection).17

In terms of **spatial immediacy**, **folk politics privileges the local as the site of authenticity** (as in the 100-miles diet or local currencies);18 habitually chooses the small over the large (as in the veneration of small-scale communities or local businesses);19 favours projects that are **un-scalable** beyond a small community (for instance, general assemblies and direct democracy);20 **and often** rejects the project of hegemony, valuing withdrawal or exit rather than building a broad counter-hegemony.21 Likewise, folk politics prefers that actions be taken by participants themselves – in its emphasis on direct action, for example – and sees decision-making as something to be carried out by each individual rather than by any representative. **The problems of scale and extension** are either ignored or smoothed over in folk-political thinking.

Finally, in terms of **conceptual immediacy**, there is a preference for the everyday over the structural, valorising personal experience over systematic thinking; for feeling over thinking, emphasising individual suffering, or the sensations of enthusiasm and anger experienced during political actions; for the particular over the universal, seeing the latter as intrinsically totalitarian; and for the ethical over the political – as in ethical consumerism, or **moralising critiques** of greedy bankers.22

Organisations and communities are to be transparent, **rejecting in advance any conceptual mediation, or even modest amounts of complexity.** **The classic images of universal emancipation and global change have been transformed into a prioritisation of the suffering of the particular and the authenticity of the local.** As a result, any process of constructing a universal politics is rejected from the outset.

#### Capitalism ensures climate apartheid and extinction

Heron & Dean 20 (Kai Heron, editor at ROAR Magazine. Jodi Dean, Professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. “Revolution or Ruin.” E-Flux. Journal #110 - June 2020. <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/110/335242/revolution-or-ruin/> //shree)

We know how the first paragraph begins. We’ve read about the changing climate for over twenty years, infrequently at first and then daily until we couldn’t deny it any longer. The world is burning. The oceans are heating up and acidifying. Species are dying in the Sixth Great Extinction. Koalas have replaced polar bears as the charismatic species whose dwindling numbers bring us to tears. Millions are displaced and on the move, only to be met with fences, borders, and death.

We’ve read the news and it keeps getting worse. As pandemics spread, as the climate crisis continues unabated, the imperatives of capital prevent state action on anything but protecting banks and corporations. Since 1988, when human-induced climate change was officially recognized by the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the oil and gas sector has doubled its contribution to global warming. The industry emitted as much greenhouse gas over the twenty-eight years after 1988 as it had in the 237 years since the beginning of the industrial age. Regular reports announce that the atmospheric impact of these emissions is manifesting faster than scientists previously expected. The IPCC clock tells us that we have eleven years to prevent warming from rising more than 1.5 degrees above preindustrial levels. Some places on earth already hit that mark in the summer of 2019. “Climate change”—that innocuous moniker preferred by Republican political consultant Frank Lutz and adopted by the George W. Bush administration because “global warming” seemed too apocalyptic—has moved from seeming far away and impossible to being here, now, and undeniable. This has not stopped the United States and Canada from providing economic relief funds in the wake of coronavirus to oil and gas companies.

Those least responsible for climate change, those who have suffered the most from capitalism’s colonizing and imperial drive, are on the frontlines of the climate catastrophe. How to find clean water amidst never-ending drought? How to gather needed herbs, food, and firewood amidst rapid deforestation? How to survive the floods and fires? Centuries of colonialism, exploitation, and war undermine people’s capacities to survive and thrive, hitting poor people, women, children, people with disabilities, already disadvantaged racialized and national minorities, and the elderly hardest of all. According to a UN report, “We risk a ‘climate apartheid’ scenario where the wealthy pay to escape overheating, hunger and conflict while the rest of the world is left to suffer.” Capitalism has always permitted some to flourish by forcing others to fight for survival. The climate crisis—and now the coronavirus—intensifies these dynamics into a global class war. In Marx’s words, “ruin or revolution is the watchword” for our times.

#### Vote neg for Maoist ethics against capitalist apartheid – only unifying the colonial underclass through a People’s Liberation Army can destroywhite capitalist civilization and institute a World Black Dictatorship

Kelley and Etsche 99 (Robin D.G. Kelley, Robin Davis Gibran Kelley (born March 14, 1962) is the Gary B. Nash Professor of American History at UCLA.[1][2] From 2006 to 2011, he was Professor of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California (USC),[3] and from 2003 to 2006 he was the William B. Ransford Professor of Cultural and Historical Studies at Columbia University. From 1994 to 2003, he was a professor of history and Africana Studies at New York University (NYU) as well the chairman of NYU's history department from 2002 to 2003.; and Betsy Etsche, Assistant Prof of American Studies at University of Kansas. “Black Like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution.” Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society. V1 N4. P18-20 //shree) Note: RAM = Revolutionary Action Movement founded by Freeman, Max Stanford, and Wanda Marshall.

Maoism’s emphasis on revolutionary ethics and moral transformation, in theory at least, resonated with black religious traditions (as wells as American Protestantism more generally), and like the Nation of Islam, black Maoists preached self-restraint, order, and discipline. It is quite possible that in the midst of a counterculture that embodied elements of hedonism and drug use, a new wave of student and working-class radicals found Maoist ethics attractive. On his return from China, Robert Williams – in many respects RAM’s founding father – insisted that all young black activists “undergo personal and moral transformation. There is a need for a stringent revolutionary code of moral ethics. Revolutionaries are instruments of righteousness.” For black revolutionaries, the moral and ethical dimension of Mao’s thought centered on the notion of personal transformation. It was a familiar lesson, embodied in the lives of Malcolm X and (later) George Jackson: the idea that one possesses the revolutionary will to transform himself. (These narratives are almost exclusively male despite the growing number of memoirs by radical black women). Whether or not RAM members lived by the “Code of Cadres,” Maoist ethics ultimately served to reinforce Malcolm’s status as a revolutionary role model.

RAM’s twelve-point program called for the development of freedom schools, national black student organizations, rifle clubs, black farmer cooperatives – not just for economic development but to keep “community and guerilla forces going for a while” – and a liberation guerilla army made up of youth and unemployed. RAM placed special emphasis on internationalism, pledging support for national liberation movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as well as the adoption of “Pan-African socialism.” In line with Cruse’s seminal essay, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” RAM members saw themselves as colonial subjects fighting a “colonial war at home.” As Stanford wrote in an internal document, titled “Projects and Problems of the Revolutionary Movement.” (1964), “RAM’s position is that the Afro-American is not a citizen of the USA, denied his rights, but rather he is a colonial subject enslaved. This position says that the Black people in the USA are a captive nation suppressed and that their fight is not for integration into the white community but one of national liberation.”

As colonial subjects with a right to self-determination, RAM saw Afro-America as a de facto member of the nonaligned nations. RAM members even identified themselves as part of the “Bandung world,” going so far as to hold a conference in November 1964 in Nashville called “The Black Revolution’s Relationship to the Bandung World.” In a 1965 article published in RAM’s journal Black America, members started to develop a theory of “Bandung Humanism” or “Revolutionary Black Internationalism,” which argued that the battle between Western imperialism and the Third World – more than the battle between labor and capital – represented the most fundamental contradiction in our time. They linked the African-American freedom struggle with what was happening in China, Zanzibar, Cuba, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Algeria, and they characterized their work as part of Mao’s international strategy of encircling Western capitalist countries and challenging imperialism. After 1966, the term “Bandung Humanism” was dropped entirely and replaced with “Black Internationalism.”

Precisely what “Black Internationalism” meant was laid out in an incredibly bold thirty-six-page pamphlet published by RAM in 1966, titled The World Black Revolution. Loosely patterned on the Communist Manifesto, the pamphlet identified strongly with China against both the capitalist West and the Soviet empire. The “emergence of Revolutionary China began to polarize caste and class contradictions within the world, in both the bourgeoisie [sic] imperialist camp and also in the European bourgeois communist-socialist camp. In other words, China was the wedge that sharpened contradictions between colonial peoples and the West. Rejecting the idea that socialist revolution will arise in the developed countries of the West, RAM insisted that the only true revolutionary solution is the “dictatorship of the world by the Black Underclass through World Black Revolution.” Of course, the authors were not working from today’s definitions; RAM used “underclass” to encompass all peoples of color in Asia, Latin American, Africa, and elsewhere; the “Black Underclass” was merely a synonym for the colonial world. China was in a bitter fight to defend its own freedom. Now the rest of the “black” world must follow suit: The Black Underclass has only one alternative to free itself of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and neo-colonialism; that is to completely destroy Western (bourgeois) civilization (the cities of the world) through a World Black Revolution and establishing a Revolutionary World Black Dictatorship can bring about the end of exploitation of man by mankind and the new revolutionary world be created. To coordinate this revolution, RAM called for the creation of a Black International and the creation of a “People’s Liberation Army on a world scale.” For all of its strident nationalism, The World Black Revolution concludes that black nationalism “is really internationalism.” Only by demolishing white nationalism/white power can liberation be achieved for everyone. Not only will national boundaries be eliminated with the “dictatorship” of the Black Underclass,” but “the need for nationalism in its aggressive form will be eliminated.” This is a pretty remarkable statement given RAM’s social and ideological roots. But rather than representing a unified position, the statement reflects various tensions that persisted through RAM’s history. On one side were nationalists who felt that revolutionaries should fight for the black nation first and build socialism separate from the rest of the United States. On the other side were socialists like James and Grace Boggs who wanted to know who would rule the “white” nation and what such a presence would mean for black freedom. They also rejected efforts to resurrect the “Black Nation” thesis—the old Communist line that in black-majority countries of the South (the “black belt”) have a right to secede from the union. The Boggses contended that the real source of power lies in the cities, not the rural black belt. In January 1965, James Boggs resigned from his post as Ideological Chairman.

## Case

### Presumption---1NC

#### Vote neg on presumption:

#### 1. They have no intrinsic benefit to specifically reading revolution in a minor key within the debate space and thus no reason to affirm their strategy.

#### 2. Movements don’t spill up---competition means you ally yourself with people who vote for you and alienate those who are forced to debate you ensuring the failure of the movement.

#### 3. The regurgitation of knowledge from the 1AC proves that it is not a departure from the status quo, but rather gets coopted by academia.

### 1NC---Case

#### Blackness is not totalizing – institutional meaning is malleable; they forsake relationality for private satisfaction

Gordon 21 (Lewis R Gordon is Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Connecticut at Storrs; Honorary Professor in the Unit for Humanities at Rhodes University, South Africa, and Chairperson of the Awards Committee for the Caribbean Philosophical Association, of which he was the first president. Freedom, Justice, and Decolonization. “Thoughts on Afropessimism.” January 2021. Published by Routledge. ISBN: 978-0-367-63246-5. p 75-81//shree)

The first is that ‘‘an antiblack world’’ is not identical with ‘‘the world is antiblack.’’ My argument is that such a world is an antiblack racist project. It is not the historical achievement of such. Its limitations emerge from a basic fact. Black people and other opponents of such a project fought, and continue to fight against it. The same argument applies to the argument about social death. Such an achievement would have rendered even those authors’ and the reflections I am offering here stillborn. The basic premises of the antiblack world and social death arguments, are, then locked in performative contradictions. Yet, they have rhetorical force. This is evident through the continued growth of its proponents, literature, and forums devoted to it, in which all lay claim to stillborn status.

In Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism, I argued that there are forms of antiblack racism that are also offered under the guise of love. I was writing about whites who exoticize blacks while offering themselves as white sources of black salvation. It was a response to those who regard racism exclusively as acts of demonization. There are also racist forms of valorization. Analyzed in terms of bad faith, where one lies to oneself in an attempt to flee displeasing truths for pleasing falsehoods, exoticists romanticize blacks while affirming white normativity and themselves as principals of reality. These ironic, performative contradictions are features of all forms of racism, where one group is elevated to godlike status and another is pushed below that of human despite both claiming to be human.

Antiblack racism offers whites self-other relations (necessary for ethics) with each other but not so for groups forced in a ‘‘zone of nonbeing’’ below them. Although to be outside is not necessarily to be below, it is so in a system of hierarchy in which above is also interpreted as being within. There is asymmetry where whites and any designated racially superior group stand as others who look downward to those who are not their others or their analogs. Antiblack racism is thus not a problem of blacks being ‘‘others.’’ It’s a problem of their not-being-analogical-selves-and-not-even being-others.

Fanon, in Black Skin, White Masks (1952), reminds us that Blacks among each other live in a world of selves and others. It is in attempted relations with whites under circumstances where whites control the conditions that these problems of dehumanization and subordination occur. Reason in such contexts, as he observes, has a bad habit of walking out when Blacks enter. What are Blacks to do? As reason cannot be forced to recognize Blacks because that would be “violence,” they must ironically reason reasonably with such forms of unreasonable reason. Contradictions loom. Racism is, given these arguments, a project of imposing non-relations as the model of dealing with people designated ‘‘black.’’

In The Damend of the Earth, Fanon goes further and argues that colonialism is an attempt to impose a Manichean structure of contraries instead of a dialectical one of ongoing, human negotiation of contradictions. The former segregates the groups; the latter is produced from interaction. The police, he observes, is the primary mediator between the two models, as their role is the use of force/violence to maintain contraries instead of the human, discursive one of politics and civility requiring the elimination of separation through the interactive, ultimately intimate, dynamics of communication. Such societies draw legitimacy from Black non-existence or invisibility. Black appearance, in other words, would be a violation of those systems. Think of the continued blight of police, extra-judicial killings of blacks and Blacks in those countries. The ongoing model of fascist white rule as the daily condition of blacks is to prevent the emergency of Blacks.

An immediate observation of many postcolonies is that antiblack attitudes, practices, and institutions are not exclusively white. Black antiblack dispositions make this clear. In addition to black antiblackness taking the form of white hatred of black people, there is also the adoption of black exoticism. Where this exists, blacks simultaneously receive black love alongside black rejection of agency. Many problems follow. The absence of agency bars maturation, which would reinforce the racial logic of Blacks as in effect wards of whites. Without agency, ethics, liberation, maturation, politics, and responsibility could not be possible. This is because blacks would not actually be able to do anything outside of the sphere of white approbation and commands.

Afropessimism endorses the previous set of observations, but this agreement is supported by a hidden premise of white agency versus black and Black incapacity. They make much of Fanon’s remark that “the Black has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white.” Fanon’s rhetorical flare led many unfortunate souls to misread this remark. As he had already argued that racism is a socially produced phenomenon, his point was that those who produced it take it to be ontological. In other words, such people – in this case whites – do not take seriously that blacks have any ontological resistance to white points of view. Fanon was not arguing that blacks are ontologically beings, or even nonbeings, of that kind. If this were so, he would not have pointed out, in numerous sections of that book, black and Black experiences with each other. The whole point of the chapter in which that remark is made, “The Lived-Experience of the Black,” is to explore blacks’ and Blacks’ points of view. This is a patent rejection of ontological status while pointing to the presumed ontological status of a skewed perspective.

Proponents of Afropessimism might respond that their position on white agency and black incapacity comes from Fanon’s famous remark that though whites created le Negre – the French term for, depending on the context, “negro,” “nigger,” and “black” – it was les Negres who created Negritude. Whites clearly did not create Afropessimism, which Black liberationists should, in agreement celebrate. We should avoid the fallacy, however, of confusing source with outcome. History is not short of bad ideas from good or well-intentioned people. If intrinsically good, each person of African descent would become ethically and epistemologically a switching of the Manichean contraries, which means only changing players instead of the racist game. We come, then, to the crux of the matter. If the goal of Afropessimism is Afropessimism, its achievement would be attitudinal and, in the language of old, stoic – in short, a symptom of antiblack society.

At this point, there are several observations that follow. The first is a diagnosis of the implications of Afropessimism as symptom. The second examines the epistemological implications of Afropessimism. The third is whether a disposition counts as a political act and, if so, is it sufficient for its avowed aims. There are more, but for the sake of brevity, I’ll simply focus on these.

An ironic dimension of pessimism is that it is the other side of optimism. Oddly enough, both are connected to nihilism, which is, as Nietzsche showed, a decline of values during periods of social decay. It emerges when people no longer want to be responsible for their actions. The same problem surfaces in movements. When one such as the Black Liberation movement is suffering from decay, nihilism is symptomatic. Familiar tropes follow. Optimists expect intervention from beyond. Pessimists declare relief is not forthcoming. Neither takes responsibility for what is valued. The valuing is what leads to the second, epistemic point. The presumption that what is at stake is what can be known to determine what can be done is the problem. If such knowledge were possible, the debate would be about who is reading the evidence correctly. Such judgment would be a priori – that is, prior to events actually unfolding. The future, unlike transcendental conditions such as language, signs, and reality, is ex post facto; ot is yet to come. Facing the future, the question isn’t what will be or how do we know what will be but instead the realization that whatever is done will be that on which the future will depend. Rejecting optimism and pessimism, there is a supervening alternative, as we have seen throughout the reflections offered throughout this book – namely, political commitment.

The appeal to political commitment is not only in stream with what French existentialists call l’intellectuel engage´ (committed intellectual) but also reaches back through the history and existential situation of enslaved, racialized ancestors. Many were, in truth, an existential paradox: commitment to action without guarantees. The slave revolts, micro and macro acts of resistance, escapes, and returns help others do the same, the cultivated instability of plantations and other forms of enslavement, and countless other actions, were waged against a gauntlet of forces designed to eliminate any hope of success. The claim of colonialists and enslavers was that the future belonged to them, not to the enslaved and the indigenous. Such people were, in colonial eyes, incapable of ontological resistance. A result of more than 500 years of conquest and 300 years of enslavement was also a (white) rewriting of history in which African and First Nations’ agency was, at least at the level of scholarship, practically erased. Yet there was resistance even in that realm, as Africana and First Nation intellectual history and scholarship attest; what, after all, are Africana, Black, and Indigenous Studies? What, after all, are those many sites of intellectual production and activism outside of hegemonic academies? Such actions set the course for different kinds of struggle today.

Such reflections occasion meditations on the concept of failure. Afropessimism, the existential critique suggests, suffers from a failure to in their analysis of failure. Consider Fanon’s notion of constructive failure, where what doesn’t initially work transforms conditions for something new to emerge. To understand this argument, one must rethink the philosophical anthropology at the heart of a specific line of Euromodern thought on what it means to be human. Atomistic and individual-substance-based, this model, articulated by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and many others, is of a non-relational being that thinks, acts, and moves along a course in which continued movement depends on not colliding with others. Under that model, the human being is a thing that enters a system that facilitates or obstructs its movement. Under this model, the human being is actually a being. An alternative model, shared by many groups across southern Africa, Asia, South America, and even parts of Continental Europe, is a relational version of the human being as part of a larger system of meaning. Actions, from that perspective, are not about whether ‘‘I’’ succeed but instead about ‘‘our’’ unending story across time. Under this model, no human being is a being simpliciter or being-in-her-or-himself-or-themselves. As relational, it means that each human being is a constant negotiation of ongoing efforts to build relationships with others, which means no one actually enters a situation without establishing new situations of action and meaning. Instead of entering a game, their participation requires a different kind of project – especially where the ‘‘game’’ was premised on their exclusion. Thus, where the system or game repels initial participation, such repulsion is a shift in the grammar of how the system functions, especially its dependence on obsequious subjects. Shifted and shifting energy affords emergence of alternatives. Participation, understood in these terms, is never in games but acts of changing them.

Abstract as this sounds, it has much historical support. For example, Evelyn Simien, in her insightful political study Historic Firsts, examines the new set of relations established by Shirley Chisholm’s and Jesse Jackson’s presidential campaigns. There would have been no President Barack Obama without such important predecessors affecting the demographics of voter participation. Simien intentionally focused on the most mainstream example of political life to illustrate this point. Although no exemplar of radicalism, Obama’s ‘‘success’’ emerged from Chisholm and Jackson’s (and many others’) so-called ‘‘failure.” Despite the appalling reactionary response of a right-wing majority in the 114th Congress during the second term of Obama’s presidency and the election of Donald Trump, whose obsession with erasing Obama’s legacy exemplified a form of psychoanalytical little man’s trauma, the historic fact remains that Obama took the helm of a mismanaged executive branch and gave it a level of dignity and intelligence matched by few of its white exemplars. His successors claim for a restored greatness only reveals the joke that is, in fact, any project on which the term “supremacy” is built: the naked racism and mediocrity that followed – there is an amusing photograph of a Klansman holding up a sign declaring his race’s “superior jeans!” – reveal the folly and terror of white megalomania. Beyond presidential electoral politics, there are numerous examples of how prior, radical so-called ‘‘failures’’ transformed relationships that facilitated other kinds of outcome. The trail goes back to the Haitian Revolution, which offered a vision of Black sovereignty that garnered the full force of Euromodern colonial racial alliances to stall, and back to every act of resistance from Nat Turner’s Rebellion in the USA, Sharpe’s in Jamaica, or Tula’s in Curacao and so many other efforts for social transformation to come.

In existential terms, then, many ancestors of the African diaspora embodied what Søren Kierkegaard (1983) calls an existential paradox. All the evidence around them suggested failure and the futility of hope. They first had to make a movement of infinite resignation – that is, resigning themselves to their situation. Yet they must simultaneously act against that situation. Kierkegaard, as we have seen called this seemingly contradictory phenomenon ‘‘faith,’’ but that concept relates more to a relationship with a transcendent, absolute being, which could only be established by a ‘‘leap,’’ as there are no mediations or bridge to the Absolute whose distant is, as Kierkegaard put it, absolutely absolute. Ironically, if the Afropessimist’s argument rejects transcendental intervention and focused on committed political action, of taking responsibility for a future that offers no guarantees, then the movement from infinite resignation becomes existential political action.

At this point, the crucial meditation would be on politics and political action. An attitude of infinite resignation to the world without the leap of committed action would simply be pessimistic or nihilistic. Similarly, an attitude of hope or optimism about the future would lack infinite resignation. We see here the underlying failure of the two approaches. Yet ironically, there is a form of failure at failing in the pessimistic turn versus the optimistic one, since if focused exclusively on resignation as the goal, then the ‘‘act’’ of resignation would have been achieved, which, paradoxically, would be a success; it would be a successful failing of failure. For politics to emerge, however, there are two missing elements in inward pessimistic resignation to consider.

The first is that politics is a social phenomenon, which means it requires the expanding options of a social world. It must transcend the self. Turning away from the social world, though a statement about politics, is not, however, in and of itself political. As we have seen, The ancients from whom much western political theory or philosophy claimed affinity had a disparaging term for individuals who resigned themselves from political life: idiotes, a private person, one not concerned with public affairs, in a word – an idiot. I mention western political theory because that is the hegemonic intellectual context of Afropessimism; I have not come across Afropessimistic writings on thought outside of that framework. We do not have to end our etymological journey in ancient Greek. Recall that extending our linguistic archaeology back a few thousand years we could examine the Middle Kingdom Egyptian word idi (deaf). The presumption, later taken on by the ancient Athenians and other Greek-speaking peoples, was that a lack of hearing entailed isolation, at least in terms of audio speech. The contemporary inward resignation of seeking a form of purity from the loathsome historical reality of racial oppression, in this reading, retreats ultimately into a form of moralism (private, normative satisfaction) instead of public responsibility born of and borne by action. The nonbeing to which Afropessimist refer is also a form of inaudibility.

The second is the importance of power. Politics makes no sense without it. As we have sene throughout our earlier reflections of power, Eurocentric etymology points to the Latin word potis as its source, from which came the word ‘‘potent’’ as in an omnipotent god. If we again look back further, we will notice the Middle Kingdom (2000 BCE–1700 BCE) KMT/ Egyptian word pHty, which refers to godlike strength. Yet for those ancient Northeast Africans, even the gods’ abilities came from a source: In the Coffin Texts, HqAw or heka activates the ka (sometimes translated as soul, spirit, or, in a word ‘‘magic’’), which makes reality. All this amounts to a straightforward thesis on power as the ability with the means to make things happen.

There is an alchemical quality to power. The human world, premised on symbolic communication, brings many forms of meaning into being, and those new meanings afford relationships that build institutions through a world of culture, a phenomenon that Freud (1989) rightly described as ‘‘a prosthetic god.’’ It is godlike because it addresses what humanity historically sought from the gods – protection from the elements, physical maledictions, and social forms of misery. Such power clearly can be abused. It is where those enabling capacities (empowerment) are pushed to the wayside in the hording of social resources into propping up some people as gods that the legitimating practices of cultural cum political institutions decline and stimulate pessimism and nihilism. The institutions in Abya Yala and in Northern countries, such as the United States and Canada, very rarely attempt to establish positive relations to blacks, and Blacks the subtext of Afropessimism and this entire meditation.

#### Institutional access for black women is possible.

Hill Collins 09 – Patricia Hills Collins is a distinguished University Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland, College Park. Accessed May 9,2019. (“Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment.” page 277-280 <https://uniteyouthdublin.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/black-feminist-though-by-patricia-hill-collins.pdf>)

Black churches and schools have aimed to prepare African-Americans for full participation in U.S. society when the laws were changed. African-American women have experienced considerable success not only in getting laws changed, but in stimulating government action to redress past wrongs. The Voting Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1965, and other important federal, state, and local legislation have outlawed discrimination by race, sex, national origin, age, or disability status. This changed legal climate granted African-American women some protection from the widespread discrimination that we faced in the past. At the same time, class-action lawsuits against discriminatory housing, educational, and employment policies have resulted in tangible benefits for many Black women

The structural domain of power encompasses how social institutions are organized to reproduce Black women’s subordination over time. One characteristic feature of this domain is its emphasis on large-scale, interlocking social institutions. An impressive array of U.S. social institutions lies at the heart of the structural domain of power. Historically, in the United States, the policies and procedures of the U.S. legal system, labor markets, schools, the housing industry, banking, insurance, the news media, and other social institutions as interdependent entities have worked to disadvantage African-American women. For example, Black women’s long-standing exclusion from the best jobs, schools, health care, and housing illustrates the broad array of social policies designed to exclude Black women from full citizenship rights. These interlocking social institutions have relied on multiple forms of segregation—by race, class, and gender—to produce these unjust results. For AfricanAmerican women, racial segregation has been paramount. Racial segregation rested on the “separate but equal” doctrine established under the 1896 ruling of Plessy v. Ferguson where the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of segregation of groups. This ruling paved the way for a rhetoric of color-blindness (Crenshaw 1997). Under the “separate but equal” doctrine, Blacks and Whites as groups could be segregated as long as the law was color-blind in affording each group equal treatment. Despite the supposed formal equality promised by “separate but equal,” subsequent treatment certainly was separate, but it was anything but equal. As a result, policies and procedures with housing, education, industry, government, the media, and other major social institutions have worked together to exclude Black women from exercising full citizenship rights. Whether this social exclusion has taken the form of relegating Black women to inner-city neighborhoods poorly served by social services, to poorly funded and racially segregated public schools, or to a narrow cluster of jobs in the labor market, the intent was to exclude. Within the structural domain of power, empowerment cannot accrue to individuals and groups without transforming U.S. social institutions that foster this exclusion. Because this domain is large-scale, systemwide, and has operated over a long period of time via interconnected social institutions, segregation of this magnitude cannot be changed overnight. Structural forms of injustice that permeate the entire society yield only grudgingly to change. Since they do so in part when confronted with wide-scale social movements, wars, and revolutions that threaten the social order overall, African-American women’s rights have not been gained solely by gradual reformism. A civil war preceded the abolition of slavery when all efforts to negotiate a settlement failed. Southern states routinely ignored the citizenship rights of Blacks, and even when confronted with the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision that outlawed racial segregation, many dug in their heels and refused to uphold the law. Massive demonstrations, media exposure, and federal troops all were deployed to implement this fundamental policy change. The reemergence of White supremacist organizations in the 1990s, many of which recirculate troubling racist ideologies of prior eras, speaks to the deep-seated resentment attached to Black women, among others, working toward a more just U.S. society. Events such as these indicate how deeply woven into the very fabric of American society ideas about Black women’s subordination appear to be. In the United States, visible social protest of this magnitude, while often required to bring about change, remains more the exception than the rule. For U.S. Black women, social change has more often been gradual and reformist, punctuated by episodes of systemwide upheaval. Trying to change the policies and procedures themselves, typically through social reforms, constitutes an important cluster of strategies within the structural domain. Because the U.S. context contains a commitment to reformist change by changing the laws, Black women have used the legal system in their struggles for structural transformation. African-American women have aimed to challenge the laws that legitimate racial segregation. As Chapter 9’s discussion of Black women’s activism suggests, African-American women have used various strategies to get laws changed. Grassroots organizations, forming national advocacy organizations, and event-specific social protest such as boycotts and sit-ins have all been used, yet changing the laws and the terms of their implementation have formed the focus of change. Even the development of parallel social institutions such as Black churches and schools have aimed to prepare African-Americans for full participation in U.S. society when the laws were changed. African-American women have experienced considerable success not only in getting laws changed, but in stimulating government action to redress past wrongs. The Voting Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1965, and other important federal, state, and local legislation have outlawed discrimination by race, sex, national origin, age, or disability status. This changed legal climate granted African-American women some protection from the widespread discrimination that we faced in the past. At the same time, class-action lawsuits against discriminatory housing, educational, and employment policies have resulted in tangible benefits for many Black women. While necessary, these legal victories may not be enough. Ironically, the same laws designed to protect African-American women from social exclusion have increasingly become used against Black women. In describing new models for equal treatment under the law, Black feminist legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw argues that the rhetoric of color-blindness was not unseated by the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling. Instead, the rhetoric of color-blindness was reformulated to refer to the equal treatment of individuals by not discriminating among them. Under this new rhetoric of color-blindness, equality meant treating all individuals the same, regardless of differences they brought with them due to the effects of past discrimination or even discrimination in other venues. “Having determined, then, that everyone was equal in the sense that everyone had a skin color,” observes Crenshaw, “symmetrical treatment was satisfied by a general rule that nobody’s skin color should be taken into account in governmental decision-making” (Crenshaw 1997, 284). Within this logic, the path to equality lies in ignoring race, gender, and other markers of historical discrimination that might account for any differences that individuals bring to schools and the workplace. As a new rule that maintains long-standing hierarchies of race, class, and gender while appearing to provide equal treatment, this rhetoric of color-blindness has had some noteworthy effects. For one, observes Black feminist legal scholar Patricia Williams (1995), it fosters a certain kind of race thinking among Whites: Because the legal system has now formally equalized individual access to housing, schooling, and jobs, any unequal group results, such as those that characterize gaps between Blacks and Whites, must somehow lie within the individuals themselves or their culture. When joined to its twin of gender neutrality, one claiming that no significant differences distinguish men from women, the rhetoric of color-blindness works to unseat one important strategy of Black women’s resistance within the structural domain. Black women who make claims of discrimination and who demand that policies and procedures may not be as fair as they seem can more easily be dismissed as complainers who want special, unearned favors. Moreover, within a rhetoric of color-blindness that defends the theme of no inherent differences among races, or of gender-neutrality that claims no differences among genders, it becomes difficult to talk of racial and gender differences that stem from discriminatory treatment. The assumption is that the U.S. matrix of domination now provides equal treatment because where it once overtly discriminated by race and gender, it now seemingly ignores them. Beliefs such as these thus allow Whites and men to support a host of punitive policies that reinscribe social heirarchies of race and gender. In her discussion of how racism now relies on encoded language Angela Davis identifies how this rhetoric of color-blindness can operate as a form of “camouflaged racism”: Because race is ostracized from some of the most impassioned political debates of this period, their racialized character becomes increasingly difficult to identify, especially by those who are unable—or do not want— to decipher the encoded language. This means that hidden racist arguments can be mobilized readily across racial boundaries and political alignments. Political positions once easily defined as conservative, liberal, and sometimes even radical therefore have a tendency to lose their dis tinctiveness in the face of the seductions of this camouflaged racism (Davis 1997, 264). Americans can talk of “street crime” and “welfare mothers,” all the while claiming that they are not discussing race at all. Despite the new challenges raised by the rhetoric of color-blindness and gender neutrality, it is important to remember that legal strategies have yielded and most probably will continue to produce victories for African-American women. Historically, much of Black women’s resistance to the policies and procedures of the structural domain of power occurred outside powerful social institutions. Currently, however, African-American women are more often included in these same social institutions that long excluded us. Increasing numbers of African-American women have gained access to higher education, now hold good jobs, and might be considered middle-class if not elite. These women often occupy positions of authority inside schools, corporations, and government agencies. Achieving these results required changing U.S. laws.

#### Critiques of respectability politics are too totalizing

Squires 15, Delano, November 2015, Truth No Chaser, “5 Biggest Problems With the Overuse of “Respectability Politics”.” <http://truthnochaser.com/5-problems-overuse-respectability-politics/> (Founder and Editor, Delano Squires, has written for for Black and Married with Kids (BMWK), The Grio, and the Root on a range of subjects both personal and political. The idea for Truth, No Chaser started from his frustration that public commentary on serious issues is often restricted by personal and political agendas, resulting in conversations that lack a connection to the real world. So regardless of the topic that is being discussed, the goal will remain the same: just speak the truth. //Kegs)

The term “respectability politics” is in danger of becoming irrelevant. The phrase “respectability politics”–the idea that racism can be defeated on the strength of good behavior by black people–is one of the most commonly used terms in discussions of race in America. We heard after Geraldo Rivera suggested Trayvon Martin would still be alive if not for his decision to wear a hoodie the night he was killed. We also read it in thinkpieces about structural inequality and institutional racism. But the term is also frequently used to dismiss suggestions that African Americans should change any aspect of our behavior or culture in order to achieve social, economic, or political progress. It has been used to describe everything from President Obama’s beliefs about the importance of marriage to criticism of black artists who use the “n-word”. Any criticism of black culture, regardless of its intent, will almost certainly get you labeled as an endorser of respectability politics. People who accuse blacks of playing respectability politics are basically saying that culture isn’t as important as we’ve been led to believe. They believe policy is key to changing conditions in communities of color and, to a lesser extent, influencing individual behavior. They believe talking about culture is a distraction from more substantive conversations that ultimately puts too much attention on individuals and groups who have historically been disenfranchised. I disagree. Culture is very important. Just as important, in fact, as policy. And since culture is created, it is fair game to be criticized. And every criticism of culture isn’t necessarily an indication of prejudice. That’s why the ever-growing list of things that will get someone accused of playing respectability politics is very troubling. Here are five reasons using the term to describe any critique of black culture is a hindrance to progress for anyone concerned about the state of the black community. 1. It creates the illusion that the point of critiquing our culture is acceptance by whites The most frustrating thing about how loosely many writers and thinkers talk about respectability politics is that it presumes that black folk who offer any type of cultural critique do so to please whites. I’m sure that is the case for some blacks, especially many of the contributors on Fox News, but I believe most black people want better for our community because we respect ourselves and want to see our collective condition improve. But over and over again, black social critics and pundits will imply or explicitly state that black writers, politicians, and others in the public sphere who question aspects of black culture do so to gain the acceptance, respect, or support of whites. This might sound like a deep sociopolitical analysis but it really isn’t. It’s a projection. When I’m at church or the barbershop or around the dinner table and people start talking about what our community needs to do to improve conditions I never assume the person speaking is trying to impress white folks. So I’m not sure how the respectability politics police draw this conclusion unless they are the ones overly concerned with how black folks look to whites. 2. It frames the promise of physical safety as the purpose of cultural critique Another common misperception is that those who advocate certain types of behavior changes believe they will protect blacks from the effects of racism or guarantee protection from harm. That type of standard is impossible to meet since no one can guarantee the physical safety of any person. Any person can be a victim of crime, regardless of race, class, religion, or gender. Our government has an entire agency dedicated to protecting presidents and their families and even their track record is not perfect. President Obama doesn’t talk about the importance of marriage and fathers because dads are superhuman beings who can stop a gunman’s bullet. He talks about both issues because he knows his personal story and, more importantly, understands that research shows that children who grow up with their married biological parents tend to do better on a range of social, economic, and emotional outcomes than children in single-, step-, or cohabiting-parent households. That doesn’t mean that kids from traditional nuclear families won’t have challenges or that kids from other types of arrangements are destined for failure. Of course no change in behavior, on however large a scale, will guarantee safety but the same can be said about laws and public policies. Not even vaccination mandates produce their intended outcomes 100% of the time but that doesn’t mean they aren’t important. The same can be said about the thoughtful critique of culture. 3. It denies black people the ability to be human first This one really hit me when Baltimore mom Toya Graham became famous for yanking (and smacking) her son out of the streets during the civil unrest in the city. I read articles questioning why a black mother was being celebrated for beating her black child and suggesting that America loves to see black women who reinforce negative stereotypes. One of the problems with such a broad definition of respectability politics is that it often denies black people the ability to exist in our full humanity. The specificity of our race is elevated over the generality of our human experience. I saw Toya Graham acting as a mother concerned about the safety of her son. That’s it. Anything else people projected onto her because of their views on race is reflective of their own perspective. I could just as easily see a mother of a different race or in a different country acting in the same manner. Black people are human. And the inheritance of that humanity includes a full range of human emotions, many of which are not shaped explicitly by race. That’s why I understand the confusion some blacks feel when they criticize certain behaviors they believe are negative and are told their views reinforce white supremacy. Black folk who have issues with the frequent use of “bitch”and “hoe” in rap music aren’t self-loathing sellouts. They are people who understand the power of words and know that a black man who lets these words roll off the tongue without a second thought is unlikely to see a black woman as fully human and worthy of his love, honor, and respect. 4. It dismisses our nuanced understanding of the importance of policy and culture Even though black folk are an important and consistent part of the Democratic base, we exhibit a wide range of social views, many of which may be classified as conservative. One Pew study found African Americans critical of hip hop and our portrayals in television and movies. Another study found that even though black children in 2008 were more likely than whites and Hispanic kids to have a never married parent (41% to 18 and 7%, respectively), blacks were also the most likely to say more single women having kids was bad for society (74% to 70 and 58%, respectively). That same study also found that many African Americans still see discrimination as a real barrier when applying for jobs, housing, applying to college, and even shopping and dining out. This tells me that most black people are objective enough to acknowledge the importance of culture even as we continue to fight against discrimination. That’s what the respectability politics police fail to understand. 5. It presumes that no significant progress can be made until white supremacy is totally eradicated This is one of the more discouraging aspects of how people casually throw out the term respectability politics. Ta-Nehisi Coates, one of the most brilliant writers of our time, has remarked on more than one occasion that he believes there is, nor ever has been, anything wrong with black people that the total eradication of white supremacy can’t fix. While this sounds like music to many of our ears, I think it is neither true nor helpful. If it were, how would we explain the problems found among other racial groups (white male suicide by gun), regions (Vermont heroin epidemic), or class (increased rates of mental illness among rich children)? Or how would it account for the issues different groups face in other countries? I wouldn’t never deny the role persistent, intentional, race-based laws, policies, and practices have had on black people in America. But I also know that black folk are human (see point #3) and that means that not every aspect of the unique culture we created is positive. Those of us who are concerned about the well-being our our community should be able to acknowledge the role that policy and culture play in our everyday lives. And we should be ready and willing to address the things we control even as we continue the fight to uproot unjust systems that directly target or disproportionately impact communities of color, the poor, and other vulnerable populations. I believe in the concept of respectability politics. And I think it should be called out when it rears its head. A person’s fair treatment by the government shouldn’t depend on their academic credentials or family background, or quality or style of their clothes. We all have rights and I would never suggest that only black folk who dress in 3-piece suits should have their rights respected and protected. My only issue is that the term is used much too broadly and has now morphed into a catch-all for criticizing any person who offers a critique of black culture, something that will ultimately have a chilling effect on our ability to honestly address issues in our community.

#### Victim blaming is wrong

Wax 9 (Amy L, Professor of Law @ UPenn. J.D. - Columbia - '87, M.D. - Harvard Medical School - '81, B.S. - Yale - '75. Race, Wrongs, and Remedies: Group Justice in the 21st Century. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. P 5-6//shree, gendered language modified in [brackets])

This conclusion meets understandable resistance. Are not the present troubles of black America the product of slavery and discrimination, imposed by white society? If the answer is yes—as it is generally understood to be—then the logic of remedial justice requires that society makes amends. Because these practices inflicted grievous injuries on an entire people, stressing self-correction necessarily “lets society off the hook.” Since others are responsible for what is wrong, touting self-help works a grave injustice. This objection underlies the outcry against Bill Cosby’s remarks and the abhorrence of victim-blaming. In light of the history of black oppression, implicating the victim in his [their] own recovery is viewed as simple-minded and offensive. The victim-blaming accusation, although understandable, is based on faulty logic. It reflects a failure to distinguish between liability and remedy or to appreciate the difference between identifying the historical roots of problems and devising solutions to them. Specifically, than an individual may be entirely blameless for causing his [their] own injury does not preclude placing much, most, or all of the responsibility on him [them] for fixing his [their] own problems or undoing the harms he [they] have suffered. Indeed, there are situations in which assigning responsibility for repair to the victim is the only viable alternative: the nature of the injury is such that the wrongdoer is simply incapable of undoing that injury completely. Only the victim can cure himself [themselves].

#### Colonization doesn’t explain slavery and arguing it does is obscures slavery as a question of degree rather than kind.

**Sexton 14** Jared Sexton, University of California Irvine, USA “The Vel of Slavery: Tracking the Figure of the Unsovereign” http://planetarities.web.unc.edu/files/2015/01/sexton-unsovereign.pdf

Smith rightly argues that the racist designation of native people as free, albeit uncivilized, precitizens is not a privilege (i.e. proximity to whiteness) in relation to the racist designation of black people as unfree anti-citizens incapable of civilization (i.e. antipode of whiteness) because the civilizing mission through which native peoples are forcibly assimilated into the settler colonial society is, in fact, a form and aspect of genocide. Yet, what is missed in the attempt to demonstrate that Black Studies is also, like Native Studies, concerned with colonization is the plain fact that **colonization is not essential, much less prerequisite, to enslavement**. In other words, to say that it is only through ‘disavowed colonization’ that black people can be ‘ontologically relegated to the status of property’ is a feint, just as it is to suggest that capitalism ‘ultimately commodifies most people’. In this case, enslavement would be enabled by a prior colonization that it extends perforce. If this were true, then slavery as the conversion of person into property would simply be an extreme form of colonization. Or, vice versa, colonization would be an attenuated form of slavery. In either case, **there would be only a difference of degree rather than kind between colonization and slavery**. At any rate, disabusing ourselves of anti-black racism would, for Smith, enable us to see that black struggles against racial slavery are ultimately struggles against colonialism.

**Colonization is not a necessary condition of enslavement** because: 1) slaves need not be colonial subjects, or objects of colonial exploitation, and they do not face the fundamental directive of colonialism, ‘you, work for me’, though slaves often enough labor; and 2) slaves need not be settler colonial subjects, or objects of settler colonial genocide, since they do not face the fundamental directive ‘you, go away’, though slaves often enough are driven from their native land. But the crucial problem with this formulation of the relations between racial slavery, settler colonialism and capitalism (leaving aside any problems with the pillar of Orientalism) has to do with **the drive to confound the position of blacks in order to describe them as exploited and colonized degree zero**. Regarding the latter, Smith writes, ‘Africa is the property of Europe’; Africa rather than the African. As in the reduction of slavery to the exploitation of labor, there is here an elision of the permanent seizure of the body essential to enslavement.15

**What can be done to a captive body? Anything** whatsoever. The loss of sovereignty is a fait accompli, **a byproduct rather than a precondition of enslavement. Genocide is endemic to enslavement** insofar as slavery bans, legally and politically, the reproduction of enslaved peoples as peoples, indigenous or otherwise, whether they are removed from their native land, subjected to direct killing, unlivable conditions, or forced assimilation; or they are kept in place, allowed to live, provided adequate means, or supported in their cultural practices.16 **Native Studies scholars misrecognize ‘the true horror of slavery’ as de-culturalization or the loss of sovereignty because they do not ask what slavery is in the most basic sense** – its local and global histories, its legal and political structures, its social and economic functions, its psychosexual dynamics, and its philosophical consequences. Perhaps they do not want to know anything about it, as they evaluate it through the lens of their own loss and lament and redress it through the promise of their own political imagination. **Slavery is not a loss that the self experiences** – of language, lineage, land, or labor – **but rather the loss of any self that could experience such loss**. Any politics based in resurgence or recovery **is bound to regard the slave as ‘the position of the unthought’** (Hartman and Wilderson, 2003).17

#### Survival strategies trade off with praxis---new futures are possible and necessary to prevent extinction, thinking about them doesn’t footnote past injustice.

Marilyn **Nissim-Sabat 09**. Philosophy professor @ Lewis University. 2009. “Neither Victim nor Survivor: Thinking toward a New Humanity.” pp. 188-191

It is true, as Morrison tells us, that the past is disremembered. It is also tragic that this forgetting of immense human suffering seems to be heretofore concomitant with our need to move forward and integrate or reintegrate ourselves. To this extent, we are all compromised, all condemned to repeat history. Far, far better it would be to remember, and in remembering be, not traumatized, but rather empowered to create the conditions for the possibility of a future for humanity such that there will be no more victims, no more holocausts, and thus no more survivors. The paralysis and total devastation brought about by surviving in a perpetual state of trauma—that is, by not forgetting, is, of course, not a solution either for in such a state constructive or transformative action is impossible. This should not be taken as a critique of the traumatized, for that would indeed be to blame the victims, and doing so is both incorrect and ethically anathema. Rather, it is meant as a critique of those who think that traumatized persons have no resources within that can enable them to move beyond survival toward personal wholeness, even in conjunction with "forgetting. " To deny this is to blame the victims by setting them apart as a special category — those condemned perpetually to relive their trauma and survival of it., and I believe it is, it is not because it is marked by trauma denying implausi- bility, but precisely because it is not a "fairy tale" in the pejorative sense or an If the "fairy tale" ending of Beloved is ambiguous act of "willful optimism." Sethe can achieve subject status. She can be- come a self through her own struggles and with the intervention Of Beloved, Beloved's baby, and Paul D. For Sethe, life can now, after living for eighteen years in a free state, be more than mere survival for she has reconnected with her self before her most devastating traumas, and this enables her to reconnect with the people whom she loves and who love her. Moreover, there is no indication whatsoever in the novel that Sethe and Paul D'S future in this world will be a blissful happily-ever-after, even if it is much, much happier than what really happened to Margaret Garner and the Sixty-Million victims Of the Middle Passage. What really would be a "fairy tale" in the pejorative sense, a fairy tale that is not at all represented in Beloved, is the notion that we, any and all of us, can fully realize our humanity, can become whole, no matter how favorable our circumstances, in a world of continued, pervasive inhumanity. The ending of Beloved shows, therefore, that Paul D and Sethe are enabled to live a meaningful life together because they understood from all of their struggles to survive that they survived partly in virtue of their implicit realization that just surviving was not enough; they were implicitly aware that they are not the animals that slavery held them to be, but human beings. For, they might have survived in slavery, but not living human lives. Just so, Frederick Douglass asserted himself and turned on his overseer Covey when he realized that not his survival but his humanity, his dignity as a human being, was at stake. "I am not the slave of the Slavery that dehumanized my ancestors," wrote Fanon. How can we throw off this slavery? Fanon has his own ideas about this, ideas that are not very different from Toni Morrison's in Beloved. We must abandon the abstract, reified victim-survivor binary, the dialectic of false consciousness. We, as both individual persons and as the human community, must trace the line of fusion that connects our best things—our personhood before victimization and our human future beyond mere survival. "I am not a victim, I'm a survivor," said the lady at the hearings. Read one way, this statement can intimate victim blaming, for, what of those who do not survive? We do not know exactly what the woman who made this statement at the hearing meant; we do not know what the terms 'victim' and 'survivor' meant to her. Nevertheless, this statement is uttered all too often in a culture that has now predetermined that the term ‘victim' means that one's suffering is self-imposed, and that all we can ever do is survive; we are always struggling, no matter what our life circumstance are, rich or poor, powerful or powerless, struggling for survival. Presumably, in rejecting the description of oneself as 'victim' one is asserting one's ability to succeed in the struggle against adversity, succeed, that is, 'survive,' that is, refuse to defeat oneself. But then, if one is always already a survivor,' when does one move beyond just survival into a more human future? Thus, the propaganda in a society like ours that impels us to blame the victims, ourselves and others, is a function of the profound inhumanity of the socioeconomic system in which we are embedded, a system that must be changed through a liberatory praxis, or what Fanon conceived as mature actionality. What I have attempted to show in this paper is that in Beloved Morrison has created a novel imbued with what I have referred to as radical, existential humanism. The existential moment in the novels presentation of the individual embodied human beings in situations that have cultural and historical density, but that have meaning only in and through the inwardness, or consciousness of each person. The sort of existential humanism I have in mind is not of the Sartrean kind that repudiated Husserl’s transcendental subject and transcendental intersubjectivity, but is, rather, the Husserlian mode of existential being in becoming where the subject, or self, or consciousness is shown to be the repository of the open, non-essentialized, a priori, transcendental ground of being and becoming human in an intersubjectively constituted lifeworld. From this point of view, the non-ideologically colonized senses of victim and survivor can be recuperated through the phenomenological suspension of ontological commitments and the methodology of genetic phenomenology. I hardly maintain that this interpretation of the existential dimension of our existence is what Morrison had in mind. I do however hold that it is consistent with her manner of representing human existence. Morrison seems to be attempting to discern the elements that mediate the relation between the individual qua individual and the intersubjective, historical, community without subsuming either pole or relation in the other. It is just this problematic that is most adequately encompassed by Husserlian phenomenology. Nor should the perspective embedded in this paper be interpretated as a reputation of awareness that historical events and institutional, political, and cultural factors are the locus of conditions that generate the horrific crimes against humanity that have occurred throughout recorded history; nor is this perspective denial of the value of collective action or active struggle to create a more human world for all persons. On the contrary, my hope is that heightened awareness of the crippling effects of the pervasiveness in our lives of the ideologically constituted functioning of the victim-survivor binary will empower us, will release our capacity of mature actionality, Is this not the meaning of Fanon’s life and work? What is shown by Morrison and by a large body of postcolonial literature and theory is that the principal factor associated with crimes against humanity is the attempt to deny, through an attempt to eradicate, the humanity of the victim. Dehumanization is a victim blaming stance in that it places responsibility for the abuse on the alleged non-human status of the victims: they get what the “deserve.” And the rationale of the perpetrators (witness Guantanamo Bay) is always these crimes were necessary so that “we” will survive. If we are to survive, and if we are to work toward eliminating the conditions for the possibility of such crimes against humanity, we must realize that the goal of mere survival is a betrayal of our humanity and generates crisis which threaten our very survival. Our humanness is openness to all that which lies before and beyond survival, and beyond the victim blaming that imposes survival as our only possible goal, the only one that we as finite, incomplete beings “deserve.” To believe this, however, is to leave the chain of dehumanization intact. This chain must be broken, for what we deserve is, rather, justice, wholeness, and liberation.

#### Mutual aid is insufficient---history proves that the scale of government programs is better---the alternative cedes the political.

Joanna Wuest 20. Holds the Fund for Reunion–Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellowship in LGBT Studies and is a lecturer at Princeton University. "Mutual Aid Can’t Do It Alone." The Nation. 12-16-2020. https://www.thenation.com/article/society/mutual-aid-pandemic-covid/

It may sound churlish to be skeptical about this rekindled spirit of social generosity. But its anti-statist outlook ought to make mutual aid’s progressive advocates wary. After all, most on the left likely do not want to replace what remains of our welfare state with a gift economy, despite the romanticism attached to that more primitive condition of collaboration. Before we get too attached to mutual aid’s promise, it is worth looking back to the origins of its prominence in the United States, a time before voluntary associations were replaced by the care of the state.

In his 1902 book Mutual Aid, Peter Kropotkin, a Russian aristocrat turned anarchist, challenged the reigning social Darwinism of his time. Eugenicists like Herbert Spencer and Francis Galton had cast all of earthly life as an endless battle among competitive individuals seeking their self-interest. Kropotkin counterposed those dour depictions of the survival of the fittest with a theory of human nature rooted in cooperation. Inspired by his observation of birds, beavers, and other “sociable animals” weathering the brutal Siberian tundra, Kropotkin saw all organic life as defined by a communal management of scarcity and reciprocal care.

Though Kropotkin has been duly criticized for his naive view of human evolution—basically the inversion of the reductive accounts that it opposed—he did accurately observe that the late 19th century was rife with social organizations centered on collective care. This period also saw the first practices of mutual aid in the United States, predominantly taking the form of the fraternal society. By 1910, an estimated one-third of the adult male population belonged to one of these membership-based networks. Friendly societies and local lodges afforded wage replacement for sick workers, care for orphans, assistance for the elderly, and burials. Others like the Grange assembled over 1.5 million farmers to purchase machinery that was owned collectively.

As the Industrial Revolution kicked into full swing and the yeoman farmer and sharecropper alike were uprooted from agrarian life, the fledgling fraternal societies protected this new crop of wage laborers. Although some historians have portrayed the lodges as safe havens for white men alone—such organizations tended to be segregated by race and gender—the fraternal society was a sheer necessity rather than a site for rejuvenating a tattered rural masculinity. Notably, in the new urban landscapes, poor immigrants from Europe and Black sharecroppers from the South quickly formed benevolent associations of their own.

Today conservatives often recall the mutual aid society with rosy nostalgia. They wax poetic about a supposedly preideological era, in which members endeavored to make capital and labor friends and eschewed state solutions to social ills. That view of the history, however, distorts just how intertwined the early trade union movement and mutual aid institutions could be. Some labor federations, like the Knights of Labor, formed lodge-style arrangements to generate solidarity among workers as they struggled against Gilded Age robber barons and agricultural monopolists. Later in the 20th century, groups like the International Workers Order emerged to provide health insurance and medical clinics to its nearly 200,000 members. Today labor unions like the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America carry on that tradition by instructing union stewards to funnel resources to out-of-work members. In this rendering, mutual aid was—and is—less about mere benevolence than it is about the ethos that an injury to one is an injury to all.

Much like our present Covid care networks, mutual aid communities historically thrived during moments of crisis. Take the 1870s financial panics, in which a generation of workers lost their wages and savings. No longer willing to trust commercial institutions with their livelihoods, Americans turned to mutual savings banks and similar organizations that provided life insurance policies and other safeguards against sudden ruin. As a protracted depression followed the panics, many societies centralized their operations in order to serve a national membership base. By the advent of the 20th century, mutual aid had evolved from small kinship-style communities into a harbinger of the welfare state to come.

Despite their best efforts, mutual aid societies were not enough to stave off the worst of these crises. Slowly, as veterans’ organizations, federations of women’s clubs, and labor unions put pressure on the federal and state governments, early social welfare policies, including mothers’ and veterans’ pensions and state-guaranteed workers’ compensation, began to overtake the friendly societies.

By the time of the Wall Street crash of 1929, the inadequacy of mutual aid was becoming painfully apparent. In a rejection of small-scale efforts to tackle a colossus, the New Deal agenda of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration began an unprecedented expansion of social spending. In pairing pro-labor legislation like the National Labor Relations Act with social programs, the New Deal allowed unions to provide support for their members while shaping the state for progressive ends. Whereas in the past the American Federation of Labor turned its back on legislative reform for fear of undermining union power and accepting less than could be won at the bargaining table, the trade union movement began to play an essential role in constructing the welfare state. Labor advocates welcomed the relative inclusivity of New Deal reforms, happily ditching the old fraternal societies, which often raised dues rates on or barred entirely those employed in hazard-prone professions.

By the start of FDR’s Second New Deal in 1935, the mutual aid society had been superseded by a new nexus of state and social institutions more capable, protective, and widespread than any voluntarist variant that came before it.

If the New Deal rendered mutual aid obsolete, the welfare state’s subsequent fissuring and rollback have been largely responsible for the rebirth of the private-sphere social safety net. The tenuous nature of the New Deal coalition is partly to blame. Though federal social spending soon far eclipsed mutual aid coverage, Southern Democrats were successful in exempting massive numbers of Black and white agricultural workers from government largesse. Women were also excluded from programs like old age insurance, consigned instead to the far less generous benefits administered by states.

The situation of labor changed drastically, too, in the immediate post–New Deal era. Whereas the 1930s had been hospitable to a two-front fight aimed at both bosses and the state, the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 and the dawn of McCarthyism deterred many trade unionists from pursuing further such battles. While labor was forced into a defensive crouch, the liberal stewards of the New Deal order increasingly abandoned pro-worker policies for market-friendly ones. Turning their attention from full employment and single-payer health care, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson spent the 1960s implementing monetary and trade policies that laid the groundwork for our current wage stagnation and tariff wars.

This all set the stage for the New Left’s intense suspicions of the state—and a pivot to practices of community care. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was an exemplar of this tradition. Cofounders Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale grounded the party’s work in nearly two dozen service-to-the-people survival programs, the corollary of a broader agenda to educate, organize, and foment revolutionary activity. As Newton recounted, such programs were meant to illuminate capitalism’s inability to fulfill the people’s daily needs.

One of the most effective of these projects was the Free for Children breakfast program. Within a year of its launch in 1969, the Panthers had fed over 20,000 youths in 19 cities. The program was so successful that it was mimicked by California Governor Ronald Reagan, who expanded the state’s nutrition assistance programs to counter the Black Panthers’ influence.

The Panthers’ free breakfast brigade is still remembered fondly; this year Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York recalled its legacy, comparing her office’s Covid-19 relief outreach to the breakfast program. But admirers of the Panthers often overstate the impact of their undeniably noble work. Despite her claim that the Panthers pressured the federal government to authorize a free breakfast program in 1975, the Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service rolled out the first of several pilot programs three years before the Panthers’. (It was made permanent in the year Ocasio-Cortez cited.) Since 1946, the department has been offering its free and reduced-price National School Lunch program, a replacement for a patchwork array of volunteer ventures.

Still, much more important than debates over which came first are the issues of scale and routes toward systemic reform. While the Panthers fed an astounding number of children across an impressive geographic range, their 1969 record was dwarfed by the more than 500,000 kids the federal government served free and reduced-price breakfasts the following year. (The program currently feeds 14 million children.) Compared with the suite of aid programs launched by the Great Society and the War on Poverty, the Panthers’ service-to-the-people projects were a drop in the bucket.

But scale wasn’t their only goal. Unlike organizers of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom like A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin—who conjoined labor, civil rights, and demands for a federal minimum wage and jobs program—the Panthers were interested in building dual power institutions that would one day compete with the state. As party member Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin explained, their aim was to bypass the state by building “our communities into dual power communes, from which we can wage a protracted struggle with capitalism and its agents.”

But as the Panthers’ influence waned, an increasing number of self-styled community leaders became integrated into a political and entrepreneurial elite that largely neglected policies that would materially benefit the working-class Black population. Some would even come to assist a revanchist capitalist class in pillaging the welfare state and breaking the back of labor. There is a striking parallel between these developments and the trajectory of 19th century ethnically organized mutual aid outfits and related small-business ventures, which just as often evolved into capitalist enterprises and municipal political machines as they did vehicles for reform. And while a handful of those groups paved the way for strong unions and welfare policies, Black power came onto the scene at a time when the American left was enervated and there were few similar opportunities for egalitarian influence. A left-wing politics of mutual aid and self-care gave way to accommodation and brokerage.

By the late 20th century, liberals pushed for a more limited deployment of the state, inaugurating the practice of leasing out state functions to private entities like nonprofits. By the late 1970s, an all-out assault on labor and the welfare state began to roll back 20th-century workers’ wins.

As the United States went into lockdown last spring, the country entered a pandemic-induced recession with scant social protections. Faced with a hollowed-out welfare state and inadequate relief from the federal government’s initial stimulus, Americans had no choice but to rely on the generosity of their neighbors, friends, and colleagues. Since March, people from weekend volunteers to full-time anarchists have done extraordinary things to distribute food staples and provide shelter for those who found themselves hungry and homeless. Still, given that nearly a quarter of American households with children are carrying rental debt and that a permanent exodus of the poor and working class from major urban hubs is underway, such efforts are confined mainly to the margins.

Weathering the current crisis requires nurturing useful hope while avoiding palliative delusions. That means ditching our magical thinking about the sustainability of those mass mobilizations of goodwill that make the nightly news and pepper the pages of left-wing periodicals (both of which neglect the fact that charitable giving actually plummets during recessions). It also means recognizing that crises are excellent opportunities for revanchist right-wing forces to further raze state institutions and slam the lid on cries for justice. When labor-left movements were strong and could afford to go on the offense, the Great Depression created an opening for reform. If there is a lesson from mutual aid’s role in these past triumphs, it is that such community work was subordinated to the tasks of invigorating trade unions and pushing the state to enact universal programs.

Kropotkin was not wrong about our natural inclination to cooperate. But how we organize and nurture that cooperative instinct is crucial. A crisis can bring us together to rebuild durable structures for the collective good. It can also exacerbate the dog-eat-dog mentality that neoliberalism has cultivated for decades. Our country is coming to resemble a long-sought libertarian fantasy, with only atomized acts of compassion for those left out. We would do well to guard against this despotic individualism—the natural condition of the social without the state—and to be sober about what spurred this renaissance of mutual aid and what it portends.

### 1NC---Turn

#### Centering the Atlantic slave trade in discourse reproduces the hegemony of Western history – the model needs to de-Atlanticized

**Zeleza 10** Paul Tiyambe Zeleza is the dean of the Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts and Presidential Professor of African American Studies and History at Loyola Marymount University. He served as the director of the Center for African Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and was the Liberal Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor and head of the Department of African American Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. African Diasporas: Toward a Global History https://muse.jhu.edu/article/384918

It has become increasingly clear to me that as the field grows, the need to clarify the terms of discourse and analysis is **more imperative than ever**. The first issue concerns **hegemonies** in African diaspora studies: the where, when, what, why, and who is privileged in the field. The second involves the need to clarify the key concepts we use in structuring our methodological and theoretical frameworks. Conceptual clarification entails specifying our intellectual and ideological interests, identifying disciplinary and interdisciplinary influences, and problematizing our analytical metaphors and interpretive analogies.

Among scholars of African diasporas in Asia and Europe, common critiques are heard against the domination of the **Afro-Atlantic model and the African Americanization of Afro-Europe and Afro-Asia**. There is no question that **the Atlantic model dominates African diaspora studies**, which focus on movements from western Africa to the Americas through the forced migrations of the **Atlantic slave trade** and are **preoccupied with the construction of "black" identities**. But African American hegemony in diaspora studies both in the Americas and in its export to other world regions is not simply a question of what could be called, to paraphrase Gordon Lewis's (1999) term, epistemological bad faith. The hegemony or universalizing ambitions of the Atlantic model are based partly on the sheer size of the Afro-Atlantic diasporas in the Americas, which currently number more than 160 million people (more than 100 million in South America, 40 million in North American, and 22 million in the Caribbean).

They are also embedded in the very cultural and economic hegemony of the United States. This has become a **heated issue** at international diaspora conferences, as Darlene Clark Hine et al. (2009) and Carole Boyce Davies (2008) note in their recent publications, Black Europe and the African Diaspora and the three-volume Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora, respectively. This was also evident at the First International Conference on the African Diaspora in Asia held in Goa, India, in January 2006 (Prasad & Angenot 2008).

During my travels, I often had to fend off suspicions that I had come to propagate exclusively American conceptions of African diasporas, and I agree with both Hine et al. and Davies that such critiques and suspicions cannot be wished away. We need to confront the **asymmetries in knowledge** [End Page 4] **production about African diasporas in different world regions**, desist from imposing models derived from specific African American experiences, and understand how much there is to gain from **truly comparative perspectives and historiographies**.

This is the source of my argument that **we need to de-Atlanticize and de-Americanize the histories of African diasporas**. In order for the field to grow, it is critical that the Afro-Atlantic and U.S. African American models of African diaspora studies be **provincialized rather than universalized**, as is the tendency among many of us in the U.S. and Anglophone academies for whom the world beyond our borders can **only be simulated copies of our own** and for those elsewhere who are anxious to signal their cosmopolitan familiarity with the intellectual products of the world's largest academic system by producing mimic histories.

#### The very paradigm of blackness is Eurocentric – the discourse of the Atlantic reduces “Africa” to “sub-Saharan Africa” and erases other African diasporas.

**Zeleza 10** Paul Tiyambe Zeleza is the dean of the Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts and Presidential Professor of African American Studies and History at Loyola Marymount University. He served as the director of the Center for African Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and was the Liberal Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor and head of the Department of African American Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. African Diasporas: Toward a Global History https://muse.jhu.edu/article/384918

This implies that our conception of "African diasporas" crucially depends on **how we define these very terms**, and these definitions in turn have national and transnational contexts that frame them. This is merely to stress the obvious point that **hegemonic ideas ride on the hegemonies of material power**. This is why the Afro-Atlantic and the African American models are dominant, but it is for the same reason that they **should not be applied to other world regions unquestioningly**, however accurately they capture and explain the historical experiences and struggles in the Afro-Atlantic world and the United States. Even internally, as we all know, these models are not cast in the iron grid of methodological and theoretical rigidity. But as is often the case with discursive exports, they acquire the conceits of suffocating homogeneity as they cross the Atlantic to foreign lands.

The Atlantic model is problematic when applied to other world regions and periods in part because it is premised on a conception of "**Africa" as "sub-Saharan Africa**," a racialized construct that haunted African studies [End Page 6] in Euroamerica over the last century and that some African scholars have **desperately sought to deconstruct**. This reflects the dominance in the Euro-American academy of the Atlantic model and of race in the fields of African studies in general and African diaspora studies in particular. Quite predictably, "**black" is the paradigmatic trope** in Afro-Atlantic diaspora studies, the pivot around which discourses of "African" diaspora identities, subjectivities, transnationalisms, engagements, or dialogues are framed and **debated**.

This is quite evident in several recent studies. Let me just mention three, all published in 2009. The first is Patrick Manning's The African Diaspora: A History Through Culture, which despite its global ambitions remains **trapped in Eurocentric cartographic conceptions of Africa as sub-Saharan Africa and American preoccupations with the black diaspora.** The others openly **substitute "Africa" with "black."** The two-volume Encyclopedia of Blacks in European History and Culture (Martone 2009) focuses on the historical experiences in Europe of peoples from sub-Saharan Africa except where an Afrocentric claim cannot be resisted and North Africa is sneaked in. In Black Europe and the African Diaspora by Hine at al., the mostly U.S.-based authors have great difficulty in explaining what they mean by "Black Europe," and their African diaspora in Europe excludes North Africans, who surely do have a claim to an African origin and identity as much as the descendants of diasporans from the Americas who have relocated to Europe or the offspring of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, there has been a proliferation of studies on "Black Europe" that are largely patterned on "Black America" and remain trapped in the racialized discourses and imaginaries of **American studies**. Ironically, "Black Europe" has continued to be inscribed long after "Black Americans" have become African Americans.

The conflation of African diaspora formations with the histories and geographies of Atlantic slavery disregards the histories of **other African diasporas in the Americas**, both during the period of the slave trade and after. To begin with, it fails to problematize the identity of the very Iberians—the Spanish and Portuguese—who began the conquest of the Americas. Among them were **peoples of African descent** who had been resident in Iberia for centuries. On my trip to Spain this summer, an Afro-Spanish scholar and activist insisted that Spanish identity only fully dis-Africanized itself following the country's inclusion in the European project (Toasije 2009). The joke that Africa began at the Pyrenees articulates Spain's and Portugal's mixed historical heritage from the Moors (or, according to some, Muslims, Arabs, or Berbers—the designations are themselves quite revealing) who conquered and ruled large parts of the peninsula between 711 and 1492. In the view of Anouar Majid (2000:77), a Moroccan scholar, Al Andalus could be considered "essentially an African kingdom in Europe." Recent work on the migrations of the Moriscos, Ladinos, and even Cape Verdians to the Americas is pertinent in this regard (Garafalo forthcoming; Molina & López 2001). [End Page 7]

The findings on the free Afro-Iberian migrations to the Americas serve to qualify, but do not of course displace, the centrality of forced migrations from western Africa to the Americas. But in its universalizing ambitions, the Afro-Atlantic model easily yields to a Eurocentric conception of Africa in which Africa, Hegel's (1956:91) "Africa proper," entails sub-Saharan Africa and African diasporas are **exclusively "black," a paradigm** that leads to a **preoccupation with the formation of black racial identities among African diasporas**. This model also ignores the formation of "new" African diasporas out of voluntary migrations since the abolition of slavery and especially since decolonization.

Over the last two decades, more African migrants have been arriving in the United States than during the Atlantic slave trade. As shown in the recent capacious collection by Isidore Okpewho and Nkiru Nzegwu, The New African Diaspora (2009), the mobilities, experiences, identities, and dialogues of these diasporas **differ and intersect** with those of the historic Afro-Atlantic diasporas in complex and contradictory ways.6 The very existence of intercultural and intertextual diaspora spaces in which they find themselves ensures complex negotiations and performances of racial, national, ethnic, and gender identities that are neither already fixed in the diaspora nor imported from Africa. And of course we know **the identities of the historic Afro-Atlantic diaporas are not frozen**; they have continually been reconstructed and reshaped by changing economic, social, cultural, and political contexts, and through the dialogic and dialectical interplay of material and discursive processes, the shifting structures of power, and the agencies of resistance.

But even for the historic Afro-Atlantic diasporas, some scholars object to the regionalization of the African American model in which the U.S. experience and modes of racialization and identity formation are often generalized to the rest of the Americas, even though Afro-Latin America, which is more than twice as large as Afro-North America, has its own quite distinctive histories. Paul Gilroy's influential Black Atlantic (1993), which ignores both Africa and Afro-Latin America, **exemplifies this Anglophone analytical conceit**. Let me hasten to add that in recent years many U.S. diaspora scholars have produced excellent comparative studies of Afro-Atlantic diaspora histories and anthropologies. The works by Sheila Walker (2001), George Andrews (2004), and Kevin Yelvington (2006) readily come to mind.

Historical Mappings

The Afro-Atlantic model is **clearly inadequate** when applied to the much older and more complicated histories of African interactions with, and diasporas in, Europe and Asia. I am struck by the amount of **intellectual energy expended** in trying to restrict the histories of African movements to Europe and Asia, and to force the formation of African diasporas in these regions into the Atlantic model by seeing their movements primarily in [End Page 8] **terms of slavery** and sub-Saharan Africans. "Africa" and "Africans" of course **include "blacks" but are not confined to them**, and before the twentieth century some Africans went to Europe and Asia as enslaved people, but not all, perhaps not even the majority, and their identities were not always framed by American-style regimes of racialization. Other social inscriptions and ideologies such as religion sometimes played a more salient role.

Systematic studies of African diasporas in Europe and Asia are a recent phenomenon. Both are inspired by some of the same forces noted earlier. In the case of Europe, additional impetus has been provided by the increased African migrations over the last few decades and by European anxieties, which have manifested themselves both in the development of multiculturalism as public policy and in xenophobic violence. In Europe the definitional challenges are thrown into particularly sharp relief: do we talk of "black" or "African" diasporas, "Black Europe" or "Afro-Europe"? Some of the scholarship on "Black Europe," "Black Britain," "Black France," and so on, is illuminating, but much of it, which seems to borrow uncritically from the Atlantic model, is clearly problematic. These works are often written by African American scholars, specialists in African American studies, or Afro-European scholars who have discovered their epistemic and existential blackness on **American campuses** and **remained in the United States**; an example of the latter is Pap Ndiaye (2008), the Afro-French historian, whose celebrated La Condition Noire was inspired by his studies of African American history.7

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## Case

#### Lived experience does not create perfect analysis.

Marquis Bey 19. Assistant Professor of African American Studies and English at Northwestern University. “On Lived Experience”. https://www.aaihs.org/on-lived-experience/

These musings on the phrasal darling of the Left (at least from my vantage), “lived experience,” are quite fraught, to say the absolute least. I must be clear here, and everywhere, that it is not at all a phrase I wish to dispense with. It is not a phrase I think is harmful, nor is it a phrase the use of which is cringe-worthy for me (unlike another Leftist darling: intersectionality, my outlook on which has been beautifully corrupted by my colleague Jennifer Nash’s book). It is not a phrase I wish to jettison wholesale. Do not misunderstand me, please, I beg of you. Please.

It is, however, a phrase I want to have a talk with; it is a phrase that I want to put a little bit of a squeeze on. I’ve felt enervated by its use as of late because it seems to have reached, for me, a point of exhaustion and, in that exhaustion, a crucial deprivation of efficacy. As I understand it, “lived experience” is largely deployed by marginalized and minoritized people who rightly insert the experiential knowledge they’ve claimed via engaging in the world and being subject to racially-, gender-, etc. specific effects. As a quintessential example, look to Aisha Ahmad’s Twitter thread, where Ahmad ends the series of thoughts with a flourishing “This is MY lived experience.” Innocent and justice-seeking enough, right?

And reader, I would respond with an affirmative “Right.” I really would, usually, mostly, almost-sorta-kinda. What causes my hesitance is how such a phrase reverberates when in fact I don’t want to say, “Right.” My hesitance is the result of knowing that, like most things, sometimes — if you’ll allow a filmic allusion to a demi-god of an actress — it’s complicated. I want to say sometimes that, you know, I actually don’t care if you had that lived experience — you, my friend, are misguided. (And that’s me being nice.)

Back to Twitter.

Under the handle @prisonculture, this radical abolitionist Twitter user posted the following at 6:50pm on a lovely late September evening:

… having lived experience once again DOES NOT mean you have an analysis of your experience. It’s not inherent. This has become a real issue in organizing. Finally, you need co-strugglers to win. You can’t win with just one group of people.

I beamed at the kind of seen-ness that can only happen when those stuffed-down iconoclasms you thought were an internalized white supremacy or dormant hops onto the ruggedly individualist bandwagon are affirmed by the very radicals with whom you hoped you were still in alignment. The popular deployment of lived experiences collapses analysis into it in ways that skew problematically to me. That is, it is often assumed that lived experience is the analysis. It is not. Having something happen to you does not necessitate that you know precisely what happened to you, why it happened to you, how it came to happen to you, who else it has happened to, or how we might make it never happen again.

I wonder, too, how lived experience might disallow coalitional thinking, how it might disallow struggling with and among others. One’s own lived experience cannot be the foundation and reach of one’s politicality — the scope of which is also still in question, which is to say, does the poor-Black-cis-woman-single mother of four-from Newark, New Jersey’s lived experience encompass the lived experience of all poor people, all poor Black people, all poor Black cis people, all poor Black cis women, all poor Black cis women single mothers, all poor Black cis women single mothers of exactly four … ? You see what I’m getting at.

Lived experience might sometimes not allow for what Maria Popova called Audre Lorde’s theorization of “kinship across difference,” or what Sarah Jane Cervenak and J. Kameron Carton have termed “sociality without exclusion,” a way to be in coalitional solidarity without differentiation — or, not having the same lived experience — as a criterion of exclusion.

I falter a bit when I think about how the assertion of marginalized lived experience is a rejoinder, a necessary clapback to the universalizing mechanisms endemic to hegemonic and normative world-making. Inasmuch as the particularity of whiteness, cis masculinity, straightness, and the like normalize and universalize themselves as the lay of the land, where the deviation from which is marked as an aberrational breach falling into abjection, for, say, a Black woman to claim her lived experience as a way to refute such universalizing gestures is valiant indeed. It is a reminder that the world, that reality as such, is not the exact parameter of what Great White Men have conceived it as.

But there is also a way that, I don’t know, Black dudes claiming their lived experience as the beginning and end of the conversation disallows critique and further plumbing of the mechanisms at play. Interestingly, lived experience sometimes comes to serve as empirical truth unable to be discussed further because, as your neighborhood white liberal who wants to do and say all the right things will bark in nauseating perpetuity, “Your experience is valid.” But validity is not equal to being correct (or is it, in which case we’ll need to rethink the use of that phrase too). I’m like, can it be valid and still wrong?

And I hope the answer is Yes. I really do, for if it is not then one may never be able to critique the woman who says her lived experience has taught her that men are just being nice when they incessantly flirt with you or catcall you at 3am when you’re walking home. We may never be able to put the brakes on the Black dude who says his lived experience is that racism is a thing of the past. We may never get to tell the Latinx trans woman that her lived experience of there being two and only two genders and her god just made a tiny mistake is something to which we might want to in fact say, No, no, no.

In short, simply because we have been accosted by oppressions of various sorts does not make us exorbitantly wise. We do not become experts on the totality of oppressive systems if we happen to be affected by those systems. There must be more. The “more” supplements, or lovingly critiques, the pervasive habit of “plac[ing] importance on taking individuals’ words at face value and honouring their expressed experience (that is, the lived experience they say they are having),” Kai Cheng Thom writes in the context of queer communities, because this practice “seem[s] to be the norm in capital-C Community,” is “reactive and unhelpful in a lot of situations.”

## K

#### Ending capitalism is key --- Hartman agrees

Catherine Damman interviewing Saidya Hartman 20. “Saidiya Hartman on insurgent histories and the abolitionist imaginary.” 7-14-2020. Art Forum https://www.artforum.com/interviews/saidiya-hartman-83579.

What we see now is a translation of Black suffering into white pedagogy. In this extreme moment, the casual violence that can result in a loss of life—a police officer literally killing a Black man with the weight of his knees on the other’s neck—becomes a flash point for a certain kind of white liberal conscience, like: “Oh my god! We’re living in a racist order! How can I find out more about this?” That question is a symptom of the structure that produces Floyd’s death. Then there’s the other set of demands: “Educate me about the order in which we live.” And it’s like: “Oh, but you’ve been living in this order. Your security, your wealth, your good life, has depended on it.” So, it’s crazy-making. The largest loss of Black property since the Great Depression was a consequence of the subprime mortgage crisis, and proliferating acts of racist state violence occurred under a Black president. The largest incarcerated population in the world; the election of 2016 and the publicly avowed embrace of white supremacy by 45—all of these things we know, right? We know the racially exclusive character of white neighborhoods; how in urban centers upper-class people monopolize public resources to ensure their futures and their children’s futures over and against other children. I’m a New Yorker—the city has the most racially segregated school system in the country. The Obama and Clinton voters are invested in a school system that disadvantages Black and brown children and they resist even the smallest efforts to make it more equitable. The possessive investment in whiteness can’t be rectified by learning “how to be more antiracist.” It requires a radical divestment in the project of whiteness and a redistribution of wealth and resources. It requires abolition, the abolition of the carceral world, the abolition of capitalism. What is required is a remaking of the social order, and nothing short of that is going to make a difference.

#### Cap turns fungibility – market logics transform persons to things and legitimize dual logics of commodification and gratuitous punishment

Mallipeddi 16 – Assistant Professor of English at Hunter College [Ramesh, *Spectacular Suffering*, University of Virginia Press, pp. 3-4]

I begin with a juxtaposition of Dickson and Equiano because they encapsulate this book's two central lines of inquiry. Spectacular Suffering focuses on moments of witnessing slavery in the long eighteenth century and the structures of sentimental affect that invariably attend these moments. First, my analysis approaches the problem of slavery as a problem of embodiment, evidenced both in Dickson's visceral response to the scarred, fettered slave and in Equiano's rage against the potential flogging he may receive. This foregrounding of bodily experience is a central element in sentimental representations of slave distress, since the two features of Atlantic slavery-commodification and punishment-are fundamentally concerned with the transformations of the body, with the subjection of the raced body to the regimes of the market and to plantation discipline. From its inception, the Atlantic slave trade and mercantile capital transformed persons into things, human beings into commodities, singular selves into exchangeable units. Plantation slavery, in turn, intensified the commodifying operations of the slave trade by turning captive Africans into fungible possessions, depriving the enslaved of any rights to their bodies. As the episodes from Sloane and Dickson reveal, West Indian slave laws categorized Africans as their master's property, granting the latter virtually unlimited punitive power. The movement of sympathetic feeling is frequently a direct corollary of the objectifying operations of mercantile capital, on one hand, and the exercise of slaveholder disciplinary authority, on the other. It is by counterposing the singular body to the abstract commodity, the particular to the typical, and taking affective property in the slaves in opposition to the claims of legal proprietorship assumed by the slaveholders that metropolitan observers such as Dickson registered their disquiet over enslavement.

#### 2 – History – Marxism is black-inclusive – they occlude the history of sharecropper unions and Haymarket Square where blacks seized political power, of Fannie Lou Hamer who pushed for minimum wage for black women and quare domestic workers – refusing to seize political power for cultural strategies like [method] fails

Ferguson 15 (Stephen C., Assoc. Prof. in Liberal Studies @ North Carolina A & T State U., *Philosophy of African American Studies: Nothing Left of Blackness*, p. 7-14)

Marxism in Ebony Materialist Philosophical Inquiry and Black Studies In any academic discipline, there exist varying, oftentimes even conflicting, conceptual frameworks, theoretical approaches, and methods. Black Studies is no different. In light of the theoretical works prominent today, however, a number of students in AAS might easily conclude that philosophical idealism is the only school of thought. To the contrary, Black Leftist activists were significant players during the early period of Black Studies. The first introductory textbooks in African American Studies were written by Marxist/socialist scholars and activists; for instance, Peoples College's Introduction to Afro-American Studies and Clarence Munford's Production Relations, Class and Black Liberation: A Marxist Perspective in Afro-American Studies. Communist like Jack O'Dell and Robert Rhodes taught African American Studies courses at the Antioch College branch campus in Washington, D. C. And pioneering Black historian and "antibourgeois gadfly" Earl Thorpe - chair of the history department at North Carolina College - was recruited to teach courses on "Marxism and Black Liberation" for the Black Studies program at Duke University.23 However, today, Leftist thought is marginal to the politics and philosophy of Black Studies. Socialism and Marxism-Leninism are integral parts of African American history and culture. Of course, Marxist scholar/activists contributed to African American intellectual history and culture long before what is, in more formal terms, considered the advent of Black Studies during the late 1960s. In the tradition of Hubert Harrison, Susie Revels Cayton, Maude White Katz, Richard B. Moore, Paul Robeson, Oliver Cox, Eugene Holmes, Abram Harris, Claudia Jones, Walter Rodney, Angela Davis, and John McClendon, there is a need to bring the Black working-class-men and women-back into AAS. A materialist philosophy inquiry into Black Studies is grounded on three presuppositions. A materialist conception of epistemology and ontology presumes that there is a reality independent of our consciousness. A materialist ontology asserts the primacy of material reality over consciousness. And a materialist epistemology posits that this reality is knowable and knowledge or what is cognitive (social consciousness) corresponds to and thus ideally approximates this material reality. Lastly, a materialist philosophy presupposes that the social world is a stratified ontology of which class relations (i.e., social relations of production) form the ground for understanding social processes. The call for a materialist conception of science and epistemology should not be seen as a call for an essentialist ascription of AAS, wherein it is viewed only as a social scientific enterprise devoid of cultural studies. The current popularity of cultural studies, often in collaboration with various species of historicism and postmodernist trends, fosters a separation between cultural studies and social relations of production. As a school of thought, it gives less attention to the material conditions that give rise to African American culture and relativizes the objective character of the Black experience. In my estimation, the Black working-class has become lost in the whirlwind of cultural idealism. Contemporary Black cultural theory – under the spell of poststructuralism and Afrocentricity – has declared: class is dead! All that exists is intersectionality and a "matrix of domination," in which everyone is oppressed – women, men, capitalist, workers, children, ad infinitum. And there is a tendency in Black Studies to transform the Black workingclass into some obscure gray matter known as the consumer, the multitude, or – my favorite from the "friends of the poor" – the Black underclass.24 The relevance and importance of the Black working-class must be brought to the forefront of Black Studies.25 This would entail discarding analytical notions such as "cultural deprivation," "human capital," "culture of poverty," "nihilism," "feminization of poverty," "intersectionality," "underclass," "cultural pathology,

" and "menticide" that have served to explain the contemporary and historical crisis that confronts the Black working-class. We must discard the cultural idealism of Maulana Karenga, Corne! West, Jawanza Kunjufu, Marimba Ani, Patricia Hill Collins, Molefi Asante, and William Julius Wilson who perceive the "Negro Question'' as an ideological or axiological crisis, for example, as alienation from ancient African values, the loss of a "love ethic," or the lack of human capital. When we view the “Negro Question” as preeminently ideological, moral, or cultural, we ultimately discount the determinate role of material contradictions rooted in class contradictions. As Robert Allen astutely noted, " ... the question is not politics or no politics; rather it is which politics? Whom will Black Studies serve? Will it be truly democratic in its intellectual and political vision, or will it become 'apolitical' and acquiesce to a narrow, elitist and bourgeois view of education?"26 Black Studies and the Question of Western Civilization Revisited C. L. R. James wrote what could be considered a Marxist manifesto for Black Studies in 1969. Speaking at Federal City College, James argues, at the level of theory, that Black Studies should be anti-racist and anti-imperialist in character, but not anti-white. From James's perspective, there is no intellectual space in Black Studies for philosophies of Blackness in which ancient African civilizations, values, and cultural perspectives constitute a "presuppositionless beginning" for Black Studies.27 He parts company with Black nationalists and their contemporary progeny (e.g., Afrocentrists) who argue that every culture rests on a metaphysical, permanent substratum that gives rise to a particular system of thought. He cogently proclaims: We need a careful systematic building up of historical, economic, political, literary ideas, knowledge and information, on the Negro question ... Because it is only where we have Bolshevik ideas, Marxist ideas, Marxist knowledge, Marxist history, Marxist perspectives, that you are certain to drive out bourgeois ideas, bourgeois history, bourgeois perspectives which are so powerful on the question of the races in the United States.28 [Italics Added] For James, the antithesis between bourgeois ideology and proletarian ideology is essential to the development, direction, and aim of Black Studies. James is often viewed as someone who was head-over-heels in love with Western culture and/or civilization. Yet, it is important to note that dialectical and historical materialism (or Marxism-Leninism) constitutes the conceptual and theoretical framework for his assessment of "The Fate of Humanity." In a 1939 article, "Revolution and the Negro" James boldly avows, "What we as Marxists have to see is the tremendous role played by Negroes in the transformation of Western civilization from feudalism to capitalism. It is only from this vantage-point that we shall be able to appreciate (and prepare for) the still greater role they must of necessity play in the transition from capitalism to socialism."29 James's classic works such as The Black ]acobins and A History of Pan-African Revolt are ardently attentive to the fact that slavery, colonialism, and imperialism are part and parcel of capitalism. Moreover, the revolutionary resistance of people of African descent ostensibly indicates the critical role of Black people as actors or subjects of history and the dialectical development of Western civilization. In unswerving disapproval of Hegel's views about Africans and their place outside of world history, James meticulously documents and effectively demonstrates that-far from being removed from world historical event-African people and their descendants in the diaspora transformed the landscape of world history in a monumental fashion.3° Yet, James's historiography is not some form of racial vindicationism, which claims that ancient African civilization is the real source of Black historic magnitude and ultimately collective identity. Rather James offers insights into the Black struggles against slavery and colonialism as manifestations of the antagonistic contradictions within the modern (bourgeois) stage of world history. Cultural idealism has no place within James's worldview and consequently his philosophy of history. James's philosophy of history is not anti-European, anti-Western, or anti-white; his philosophy of history is stridently anti-slavery, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, and anticapitalist.31 James introduces a conceptual distinction between what is European and what is Eurocentrism. Moreover, he did not accept the abstract concept of the West as monolithic, devoid of internal class relations and contradictory class interests. Black sociologist Alex Dupuy points out that James's dialectical analysis takes into consideration the tremendous value of European culture and its influence on the African diaspora, and vice versa.32 Dupuy argues, "James was redefining the meaning of Western culture away from its Eurocentric understanding. For [James], West Indians were a modern and Western people, though they were not European, a point [James] made in many of his writings, e.g., his semiautobiography, Beyond a Boundary (1963)." 33 James resolutely rejected any outlook that requires Black Studies to be grounded on a uniquely formulated Black perspective (e.g., Senghor's Negritude or Karenga's Kawaida or Asante's Afrocentricity). Dupuy points out that James does not "reject African culture in favor of Western culture." 34 Rather, James's analysis is based on "a historical materialist understanding of culture" and the recognition that "the predominant influences in the Caribbean were those of Western Europe."35 As Dupuy insightfully notes, "The Black ]acobins remains ... one of the most succinct critiques of the barbarism of Western European imperialism but also of the promise of bourgeois civilization."36 Any philosophy of AAS worth its salt should follow in the "Giant Steps" of C. L. R. James. Embracing an ethnophilosophy that is anti-European is as fruitful as masturbation. It may be pleasurable, perhaps even therapeutic, but it won't give birth to a scientific approach to Black Studies. "And that Black Fist becomes a Red Spark" Black Studies and Black Working-Class Studies37 In a post-Cold War world, the "spectre of communism" has apparently been exorcised and laid to rest. There is the widespread belief that we have witnessed the death-knell of Marxism. So, why argue for the legitimacy of and necessity for Marxism in Black Studies? No doubt this has been a hotly debated question both in the Black Liberation movement and in Black Studies for a considerable time. I tend to agree with Brian Lloyd: "I presume that we are witnessing, not the death of Marxism, but the end of the first period during which Marxists managed to seize and, for a time, wield state power. That it has fewer adherents at the end than during other phases of this period, and that as many of them can be found in universities as in factories or fields, is neither disheartening as is imaged by some of its proponents nor as amusing as is supposed by all of its detractors."38 It has become the custom to summarily dismiss Marxism as a viable methodological approach and philosophical perspective for Black Studies. Most of the adversarial postures toward Marxism-Leninism in Black Studies have discounted the value of a materialist dialectical philosophy of liberation, class analysis, class struggle, proletarian internationalism, and the scientific socialist principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Despite the sharp divergence of their political views, Harold Cruse, Cedric Robinson, Cornel West, Marimba Ani, Patricia Hill Collins, and Charles Mills have condemned Marx and Marxism for everything from economic determinism to class reductionism to historical teleology and any number of other "conceits." We even find Asante making such puerile statements such as the following: "In fact, we have no history of a communist movement in the United States where communists put their bodies and l.ives on the line as African Americans did."39 Contrary to Asante's claim, scholars such as Mark Naison, Ted Vincent, Erik S. McDuffie, Gerald Horne, Carole Boyce Davies, Robin Kelley, Minkah Makalani, and Mark Solomon in addition to autobiographies by Harry Haywood, Hosea Hudson, and Michael Hamlin offer a much more nuanced picture of communism, socialism, and Marxism-Leninism in Black life and culture. Over the years, scholarship in labor studies and Black Studies has revealed the historical legacy of Black worker militancy. As we travel through the annals of Black history, we unearth Peter Clark's crucial involvement in the Great Railway Strike of 1877, Lucy Parsons's unflinching engagement in the Haymarket Square struggle, the heroic efforts of Ralph Gray, Tommy Gray, Eula Gray, Al Murphy, and scores of Black sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and agricultural laborers to organize the predominantly Black underground organization the Share Croppers Union, A. Philip Randolph's tireless efforts with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Ferdinand Smith's vanguard role in the National Maritime Union and Paul Robeson's monumental efforts to use folk music to entertain Spanish Civil War loyalists and striking workers as he gave support to international socialist solidarity. We could mention the steadfast leadership of Velma Hopkins and Moranda Smith in the 1947 strike at the Reynolds Tobacco Company in Winston Salem, North Carolina. There were Black postal workers like Cleveland Morgan, a member of New York Branch 36 of the National Association of Letter Carriers, who played a seminal role in the nationwide 1970 postal wildcat strike. We could also mention the historic efforts of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers to organize wildcat strikes in Detroit, Michigan. And, in more recent times, we could mention working-class Black women who have fought against the attack on public services, such as public housing and welfare. We should not ignore the fact that many of these activists were socialists, and quite a few were Marxist-Leninist in their ideological outlook. The scholarship of Clarence Lang, John Arena, Adolph Reed, Barbara Ransby, Rhonda Y. Williams, and Joe Trotter has demonstrated the historic importance of the Black working-class to African American history and culture. They bring to light the centrality of class struggle and conflict as determinate features of what makes up the Black working-class. World capitalism gave birth to the Black working-class. The initial accumulation of large sums of capital, which in turn, was invested in the exploitation of European workers, derived from the slave trade and the plantation system in the so-called New World. In volume one of Capital, Marx so famously wrote "capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt."40 The ruthless exploitation of Black bodies, in a manner of speaking, became the proverbial goose that lays golden eggs, possessing the magical ability to increase the magnitude of capital. Incidentally, the profitability of the "proverbial goose" prompted slaveholder Thomas Jefferson to remark, "it would never do to destroy the goose."41 Leaving the decks of the slave ship, "In the Name of Jesus," large numbers of Wolof, Mande, Fulani, and Mandingo were bound together by chains, from neck to neck and wrist to wrist.42 Out of the diversity of African ethnic groups a new synthesis was formed under the brutal system of capitalist slavery, giving birth to African Americans. The incessant "demand for Black labor" by Northern industrial capital and the plantation bourgeoisie fueled world capitalist development. Black slaves toiled in textile mills, shipyards, sawmills, and coalmines from Virginia to Mississippi. Black women labored on tobacco fields in the Carolina piedmont and picked cotton on plantations along the coast of Georgia. Black men like Tom Molineaux and Black women like Sylvia DuBois were given release time from slave labor in order to engage in athletic labor (as boxers) to bring entertainment and profits to slaveholders and the larger white Southern community. 43 From the seventeenth century to the twenty-first century, from slave plantations to auto factories, Black women, men, and children labored under the hard times of capitalist exploitation. The brutal forces unleashed by the capitalist drive for surplus value laid the foundation for the development of African American life and culture, from religion to music.44 Presently, we are witnessing, from New York to North Carolina to Missouri to Wisconsin to California, concerted attacks on public sector workers in order to resolve the economic crisis ravaging US capitalism. We cannot ignore the fact that Black people are prominent in the leadership as well as in the rank and file in a great number of these mass demonstrations. In cities throughout the country, working-class men and women, Black, white, and Latino, are being blown away by police officers who are ultimately protected by the rule of law. In the aftermath of the murders of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Aiyanna Jones, Yvette Smith, Rekia Boyd, and Eric Garner, Black working people are not silently standing by while the "Lords of Capital" via their "special bodies of armed men'' – with military weapons and tanks – confront them in the streets. This seminal point is lost on Black critics of Marxism during the past 90 years. As numerous studies in AAS have demonstrated, the working-class is not one-dimensional, exclusively composed of white people. The working-class is composed of women, men, and children, in addition to being multinational in character. Marxist studies of Black working-class life and culture are needed now more than ever because in the souls of the Black working-class the grapes of wrarh are filling and growing heavy. As Karl Marx so famously put it, "The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism of the weapon, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses."45 Philosophy of African American Studies, I hope, wilt serve a prolegomena to the Herculean task of developing a philosophy of AAS from the standpoint of materialism. How well I have backed up this reaffirmation of philosophical materialism and revolutionary socialism with good arguments I leave it to my readers to judge. But the attempt to do so provides an answer-satisfactory to me at least-to justify writing this book.