# R5 Northwestern vs Harvard DG

# 1NC

### 1NC---T

Topicality---

#### Interpretation---the aff should only win the debate if they can prove an instance of the resolution is true.

#### The USfg is made up of three branches in Washington D.C.

Dictionary of Government and Politics ’98 (Ed. P.H. Collin, p. 292)

United States of America (USA) [ju:’naitid ‘steits av e’merike] noun independent country, a federation of states (originally thirteen, now fifty in North America; the United States Code = book containing all the permanent laws of the USA, arranged in sections according to subject and revised from time to time COMMENT: the federal government (based in Washington D.C.) is formed of a legislature (the Congress) with two chambers (the Senate and House of Representatives), an executive (the President) and a judiciary (the Supreme Court). Each of the fifty states making up the USA has its own legislature and executive (the Governor) as well as its own legal system and constitution

#### Expanding the scope requires Congressional action

King 19 – Attorney, BurnsBarton PLC

Kathryn Hackett King, Defendants State of Arizona, Davidson, and Shannon’s Reply in Support of Motion to Dismiss Complaint, Toomey v. State of Arizona, et al., US District Court for the District of Arizona, January 2019, LexisNexis

In Title VII, Congress made clear it was unlawful for an employer to discriminate “because of sex.” Plaintiff claims the State Defendants discriminated against him because of his transgender status, but as explained in the Motion (with supporting case law), (i) courts cannot expand Title VII without congressional action, and (ii) Congress has repeatedly had the opportunity to enact legislation to add gender identity to Title VII, but has not done so. (Doc. 24, p.9-10). Plaintiff cannot refute that when Title VII does not protect a particular category, legislative action is required to change that.5 Plaintiff argues Congress’s failure to enact new legislation to add gender identity is not relevant because later acts of Congress are not probative of prior legislative intent. But the point is that expanding the scope of a federal statute requires congressional, not judicial, action. Gunnison v. Comm. of Int. Rev., 461 F.2d 496, 499 (7th Cir. 1972) (“Further expansion of the favored treatment specifically provided in §402(a)(2) as an exercise of legislative grace is a function for the Congress, not for the Courts”). Yet here, Congress has failed to act to expand Title VII. Congress’s failure to act demonstrates Title VII does not include unenumerated categories. Bibby v. Phil. Coca Cola, 260 F.3d 257, 265 (3d Cir. 2011) (“Harassment on the basis of sexual orientation has no place in our society….Congress has not yet seen fit, however, to provide protection against such harassment”).

#### “Core antitrust laws” refers to the Sherman and Clayton Act

The Antitrust Division 07 – Law enforcement agency that enforces the U.S. antitrust laws

“Antitrust Division Statement Regarding the Release of the Antitrust Modernization Commission Report,” The Antitrust Division, Department of Justice, April 2007, https://www.justice.gov/archive/atr/public/press\_releases/2007/222344.htm

The AMC has made many specific recommendations in its report, and the Division is in the process of reviewing all of them. The Division commends the AMC for its three primary conclusions:

Free-market competition should remain the touchstone of United States' economic policy. The Commission's conclusion in this regard is a fundamental starting point for policy makers. Over a century of experience has shown that robust competition among businesses, each striving to be increasingly successful, leads to better quality products and services, lower prices, and higher levels of innovation.

The core antitrust laws—Sherman Act sections 1 and 2 and Clayton Act section 7—and their application by the courts and federal enforcement agencies are sound and appropriately safeguard the competitiveness of the U.S. economy.

New or different rules are not needed for industries in which innovation, intellectual property, and technological innovation are central features. Unlike some other areas of the law, the core antitrust laws are general in nature and have been applied to many different industries to protect free-market competition successfully over a long period of time despite changes in the economy and the increasing pace of technological advancement. One of the great benefits of the Sherman and Clayton Acts is their adaptability to new economic conditions without sacrificing their ability to protect competition.

#### “Prohibitions” are laws that forbid action

Sweet 03 – Judge, United States District Court, New York Southern

Robert W. Sweet, Am. Nat'l Fire Ins. Co. v. Mirasco, Inc., 249 F. Supp. 2d 303, United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, March 2003, LexisNexis

In any case, even if the word "embargo" does not stretch so far, there is no doubt that the restriction against the importation of all IBP goods constitutes a "prohibition" under Clause D. HN15 "Prohibition" is defined by Black's Law Dictionary to be "a law or order that forbids a certain action." Black's Law Dictionary 1228 (7th ed. 1999). The dictionary definition is similar: "a declaration or injunction forbidding some action." Webster's New International Dictionary, Unabridged 1978 (2d ed. 1944). The common understanding of the word "prohibition" has similar connotations, with one exception. As Mirasco points out, any governmental action -- including the rejection on which insurance coverage is based -- could potentially be deemed a prohibition under the definitions above as a declaration forbidding the entry of goods. Therefore, a prohibition must be qualitatively different from a rejection. That difference is that the prohibition occurs prior to the government's dealing with the specific cargo at issue and is of a more sweeping nature than the simple administrative function performed by customs officials determining whether or not goods should be permitted into the country. Decree # 6 is such a prohibition, in that it was a law or declaration -- issued prior to, separate from and broader than the Egyptian authorities' administrative determination of whether the M/V Spero cargo should be permitted entry -- that forbids the importation of IBP products.

#### Two impacts---

#### [1]---Role of the neg---the alternative to the resolution is no topic whatsoever---it lets the aff pick the literature base of the day and set arbitrary standards which structurally favors the aff because neg preparation is dependent on predictable stasis. The neg burden to disprove the aff does not exist sans a topical aff, because there is no structural basis for understanding how the negative should engage otherwise. It’s an impact---it does not make coherent sense to burden the neg with disproving the aff if they have not met their burden to prove an instance of the resolution true, and procedural questions are the only thing that the ballot can resolve.

#### [2]---Clash---debates over a controversial stasis point force continual iteration over the course of a year in response to new arguments. A resolutional model guarantees negative teams will always be prepared and have substantive answers to any 1AC, and abandoning it eliminates research incentives since the aff will always change the 1AC before the 2AC

#### Antitrust debates are good---rigorous and iterative research gives us the tools to challenge violent corporate monopolization.

Greer and Rice 21 – Jeremie Greer and Solana Rice are Co-founders and Co-executives of Liberation in a Generation, a national movement-support organization working to build the power of people of color to transform the economy.

Jeremie Greer and Solana Rice, “Anti-Monopoly Activism: Reclaiming Power Through Racial Justice,” *Liberation in a Generation*, March 2021, pp. 3-13, https://www.liberationinageneration.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Anti-Monopoly-Activism\_032021.pdf.

It is critical that grassroots leaders of color are positioned to lead on anti-monopoly policy, as they are uniquely positioned to understand its impact on people of color at the household, community, and societal levels. This gives them a unique perspective in policy ideation efforts that should be valued and validated. These leaders also possess the unique skills to mobilize the people and public power that are necessary to force the government to reclaim its historic role of reining in runaway corporate monopoly power.

We at Liberation in a Generation believe that the power to change our economic systems rests with the organizers of color who are building the political strength of communities of color. Anti-monopoly research and advocacy need to better quantify, center, and reflect what people of color are experiencing and the ways that they are being harmed by monopoly power’s reach. These efforts should also better connect anti-monopoly policy and advocacy as tools to advance the existing priorities of leaders of color, such as the Green New Deal, Medicare for All, closing the racial wealth gap, and a Homes Guarantee. This paper aims to contribute a major step in the long journey of bridging the divide between anti-monopoly researchers and policy advocates and grassroots leaders of color. The first step on that journey is knowledge.

Recognizing that anti-monopoly work is a new policy issue to many grassroots leaders of color, this paper will serve as a primer to 1) educate grassroots leaders on the issue of corporate concentration, 2) connect the issue to racial justice, and 3) recommend a path forward for grassroots leaders as well as the researchers and advocates who need to embrace them. Our hope is that this paper provides a foundation of knowledge that grassroots leaders of color can use to build race-conscious solutions and mobilize for action to rein in runaway corporate monopoly power. To that end, the paper is organized into six sections.

SECTION 1 Monopoly Power Is Corporate Power Magnified and Maximized

In 1975, millions flooded theaters to see the blockbuster thriller Jaws. The story follows a police chief in a small resort town as he risks his life to protect beachgoers from a monstrous man-eating great white shark.

Monopolies are a lot like the shark in Jaws. While enormous, ruthless, dangerous, and scary, the movie’s monster is just a shark, and the police chief uses tools and community to defeat it. Comparatively, while also enormous, ruthless, dangerous, and even scary, monopolies are just corporations, and we, together, can confront them. Their massive power controls the wages we earn, the prices we pay, and the actions of the politicians who are supposed to represent us in DC, the statehouse, and city hall. In a representative democracy, we the people are at the top of the food chain, and it is within our power to make these monopolies fear us— and end their existence in the first place.

Grassroots leaders of color are highly experienced and uniquely skilled at challenging corporate power, and these capacities can and should be used to curb monopoly power. For example, the Athena Coalition8 has successfully leveraged grassroots power to challenge the monopoly power of Amazon, and Color of Change9 has effectively used grassroots digital organizing to challenge the monopoly power of social media platforms such as Facebook. Putting monopolies in the crosshairs of organizers is critical because they best understand the real human and structural devastation caused by monopoly power, which is otherwise all too easily neglected.

Though we believe that grassroots leaders of color have the experience and expertise necessary to challenge monopoly power, the question remains: Why should they lead this fight? Grassroots leaders of color are already engaged in high-stakes battles with the forces of corporate power on fundamental issues, including environmental justice, worker justice, housing justice, prison and police abolition, and voter and democratic justice. We believe that these efforts can be bolstered if anti-monopoly policy development and advocacy were incorporated into these existing efforts but then followed the lead of organizers. For example, the primary opponents of prison and police abolition are private prison monopolies, such as GEO Group and CoreCivic, which profit from the arrest and incarceration of Black and brown people. Opponents of the Green New Deal include energy monopolies BP and ExxonMobile, whose profits are derived from polluting Black and brown communities.10 Finally, opponents of the Homes Guarantee, and its call for creating 12 million units of social housing outside of the for-profit housing market, include big banks that profit from the commodification of affordable and low-income housing. Challenging these opponents by diminishing their monopoly power could prove to be a powerful weapon in the fight to dismantle unchecked corporate power and its real-life economic impact on people of color.

How Corporate Monopolies Show Up in Today’s World

The distinguishing features of monopolies, when compared to your run of the mill corporation (large or small), are the reach and intensity of the corporate power that they wield. Monopoly power turbocharges the ills of corporate power and creates a wider impact of the overlapping consequences for people. In many ways, monopolies are created when corporate power becomes governing power.11 Their sheer size and market dominance allow them to govern markets, and their expansive wealth gives them the power to manipulate prices, crush workers, and steamroll governments. Ultimately, monopolies’ extreme economic power—which they use to gain outsized political power and then more economic power—undermines the collective power of workers, consumers, small businesses, local communities, and governments.

It has become difficult, and inadequate, to rely on legal definitions to identify monopolies. The legal definition of monopolization is highly technical and complicated by centuries of conflicting jurisprudence. It's been narrowed to exclusively focus on the negative impact that anticompetitive actions have on consumers.12 This narrower focus intentionally shielded monopolies from any accountability for anticompetitive harm inflicted on workers, the environment, local communities, government, and democracy. Federal enforcement of monopoly power is confined to the highly specialized legal practice of antitrust law enforcement.13 However, centuries of political power wielded by corporate monopolies and their acolytes (e.g., universities, think tanks, trade associations, and major law firms) have rendered much of antitrust law enforcement toothless.14

In the late 19th and early 20th century, the definition of monopoly was much wider and comprehensive. In this paper, we will expand the definition as well. Recognizing that this definitional work is in many ways a work in progress, we offer our definition as a point of discussion and debate for the larger field of anti-monopoly advocates.

In this paper, we define monopoly as a corporate entity (a single corporation or a group of corporations) whose sheer size and anticompetitive behavior grant it disproportionate economic power and governing influence. This negatively affects the well-being of workers, consumers, markets, local communities, democratic governance, and the planet.

Below are a few major industries that reveal how corporate concentration and monopolistic industries harm the economic lives of workers, consumers, and communities of color.

Big Tech

Four corporations comprise what has come to be known as “Big Tech”: Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Alphabet (the parent company of Google). Each of these technology firms dominate an enormous share of their respective technology markets. Google, for example, controls 90 percent of the internet search market, and it controls the largest video sharing platform on the internet through its ownership of YouTube. Apple controls 50 percent of the cellphone market,15 and Amazon controls 50 percent of all ecommerce. Facebook and its many subsidiaries (such as WhatsApp and Instagram) dominate the social media and online advertising marketplace.16 Other technology firms, including Uber, Lyft, Microsoft, and Netflix, also demonstrate monopolistic, anticompetitive behavior in their respective markets. In many ways, these companies, and the people who control them, are the “robber barons” of our time.

Big Pharma

The world's largest pharmaceutical corporations, including Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, Merck, Gilead, Amgen, and AbbVie, together comprise “Big Pharma.” These monopolies build their profits by controlling the prices of critical life-saving pharmaceuticals (e.g., insulin, drugs that regulate blood pressure, and critical antibiotics) and life-altering medical devices (e.g., heart stents and joint replacement devices). Between 2000 and 2018, a disproportionately small number of pharmaceutical companies made a combined $11 trillion in revenue and $8.6 trillion in gross profits.17 In 2014, the top 10 pharmaceutical companies had 38 percent of the industry’s total sales revenue.18 Much of these profits were gained driving up the price of critical drugs , extorting research and development (R&D) funding from the government, and leveraging Big Pharma’s political influence to weaken government oversight of the industry.19

Big Agriculture

Big Agriculture, or “Big Ag,” refers to monopolies that control major aspects of the global food supply chain. This includes companies such as Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM), Bayer, and John Deere. Though once a diffuse network of small farmers and supply chain companies, recent mergers have created a system comprising a small number of corporations that are crowding out smaller, family-run companies including small farms. Similar to Big Pharma, government subsidies are a massive component of the obscene profits made by Big Ag. Further, as often the largest employer in many small rural towns, these corporations often ruthlessly wield their monopoly power to drive down wages and benefits to workers, skirt government safety regulations, and bully (and even buy out) small farmers.

Big Banks

Known as the “Big Five,” five banks control almost half of the industry’s nearly $15 trillion in financial assets: JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Citigroup, and US Bancorp. Their collective importance to the nation’s financial system has led some to consider them “too big to fail.”20 In fact, in response to the financial crisis of 2008, the federal government provided trillions of dollars in relief to ensure that they did not collapse under the weight of the crisis.21 The Big Five have an incredible influence over the flow of money throughout our economy. They finance critical goods and services, such as housing, higher education, infrastructure, and renewable energy. They also finance extractive elements of our economy, such as fossil fuels and private prisons. But, most importantly, they set the rules for who can and cannot access loan capital, and their exclusionary practices have been widely linked to the growth of racial wealth inequality (as described in Section 3).

#### Debating encourages epistemic humility and cognitive flexibility

Mellers, et al, 18—George Heyman University Professor in the psychology department at the University of Pennsylvania (Barbara, with Philip Tetlock and Hal R. Arkes, “Forecasting tournaments, epistemic humility and attitude depolarization,” Cognition, 30 October 2018, dml)

We assume that the future is not perfectly knowable by any political faction—and that political beliefs are better framed as continuous probabilities than as off-on, dogmatic certainties. Although this assumption sounds uncontroversial, it is widely ignored in the heat of political controversies. Content-analytic studies of election campaigns and of debates in elite legislative bodies have found a widespread tendency to express political opinions in sharply dichotomous fashions (Hopkins and King, 2010, Tetlock, 1981, Tetlock et al., 1984). Good-bad, categorical rhetoric is common, and nuanced probability judgments are rare. Americans are more polarized now than at any time in decades (Pew Research Center, 2014, Pew Research Center, 2017). Many of us appear to be Manichaean thinkers to whom probabilistic thinking does not come naturally (Kahneman, 2011). All of which raises a question that is part descriptive and part normative: How feasible is it to induce people to treat their political beliefs as testable probabilistic propositions open to revision in response to dissonant as well as consonant evidence and arguments? A survey of the psychological literature suggests the grounds for pessimism out-number those for optimism. People are often too quick to jump to conclusions from fragmentary evidence (Fiske and Taylor, 1991, Ross, 1977), too slow to update their views in the wake of disconfirming evidence (Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979), too tempted to apply weak “can-I-believe-this?” tests to agreeable claims and tough “must-I-believe-this?” tests to dissonant claims (Belsky & Gilovich, 2010), too prone to over-confidence (Moore & Healy, 2008; Lichtenstein, Fischhoff, & Phillips, 1982) and over-estimation of how much others share their views (Mullen et al., 1985, Ross et al., 1976), and too fond of seeking out the company of like-minded others (Sunstein, 2004) and, once in their company, of embracing increasingly extreme views (Myers and Lamm, 1976, Sunstein, 2007). Whether working individually or in groups, people are often susceptible to self-justifying cycles of reasoning that make them progressively more self-righteous and contemptuous of the competence and morality of the other side (Haidt, 2012). In this gloomy view of citizen reasoning, we are “naïve realists” (Ross, in press) who are fated to be “prisoners of our preconceptions” (Tetlock, 2005). There are however pockets of experimental evidence that give us guarded grounds for optimism that, under well-defined conditions, people can shift into more flexible modes of thinking and treat their political attitudes less as dogmas and more as testable propositions. Debiasing studies have shown that careful engineering of the questioning process and social context can induce people to become more aware of how little they know, more attuned to alternative ways of looking at the same reality, and more skilled at constructively criticizing their own views as well as those of others—all of which are widely seen as essential cognitive virtues of democratic citizenship (Gutmann & Thompson, 2009). We divide the existing work on debiasing citizen reasoning into three categories. First, building on Rozenblit and Keil’s (2002) work on the illusion of explanatory depth, Fernbach et al., 2013, Sloman and Fernbach, 2018 have shown that asking people to explain complex policies, such as transitioning to a single-payer health care system, makes people appreciate the depth of their ignorance which in turn causes them to moderate their policy preferences. It is essential though that the requests be explanations for “how” policies work, not “why” one supports or opposes them—and that the requests fall in utilitarian rather than deontic domains, topics on which people feel that merely invoking feelings or hunches would not count as a sufficient rationale. Second, building on the work of Ross (Lord et al, 1979) and Koriat et al., 1980, Hirt and Markman, 1995 showed that directing people to “consider the opposite” and “consider an alternative strategy” reduces their confidence in the focal hypothesis and allows them to entertain divergent scenarios. Arkes, Faust, Guilmette and Hart (1988) found that this strategy helped neuropsychologists asked to read a case study and assign confidence judgments to three diagnoses. Those who listed at least one piece of evidence consistent with each diagnosis before assigning confidence judgments were less prone to the hindsight bias than those who were told the cause and then asked to imagine the confidence ratings they would have assigned to each causal candidate. Third, building on classic symbolic-interactionist ideas about perspective taking in social interaction (James, 1890, Mead, 1934), many studies have shown that carefully choreographed forms of accountability can induce people to become more “integratively complex” thinkers, that is, people who respect and balance opposing views and resist biases such as belief perseverance and over-confidence (Lerner and Tetlock, 1999, Tetlock and Kim, 1987). But researchers need to ensure that participants know they are accountable before voicing their opinions, and researchers also need to ensure that participants cannot easily guess the opinions of those to whom they must answer. In brief, researchers need to create pre-decisional accountability to an unknown audience—a type of accountability that we do not often encounter in the world but that blocks off cognitively simpler coping strategies, such as attitude shifting toward the evaluative audience (Cialdini, Levy, & Petty, 1976) and defensive bolstering of past attitudinal commitments (Festinger, 1957). This sweet-spot form of accountability boosts the integrative complexity of reasoning in numerous studies (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). People seem to engage in a coping response known as pre-emptive self-criticism, in which they concede legitimacy to a wider range of views (evaluative differentiation) and try to understand how reasonable people can see the same events differently (Schroder et al., 1967, Tetlock, 1983). Having done so, people are also likelier to moderate their beliefs. Across all three lines of investigation, it is striking how careful “debiasing” investigators need to be in designing their interventions to pry open otherwise closed minds. Much hinges on who is requesting explanations for which opinions, how they word their requests and why people think they are being asked. We explore a complementary approach to debiasing political judgment: forecasting tournaments that challenge people to assign accurate probability estimates to a wide range of events. Tournaments are inherently multifaceted manipulations that have arisen in response to the practical demands of real-world organizations to provide policy-makers with timely probability estimates of the consequences of options (Tetlock and Gardner, 2015, Wolfers and Zitzewitz, 2004). When we inspect each facet however, we find close parallels between their intended functions in tournaments and the goals behind debiasing manipulations developed by experimental psychologists. Tournaments put participants in an unusual social world in which all three debiasing factors mentioned above are at work. First, players are strictly accountable for the accuracy of their views, not for offering views that play to the prejudices of the like-minded as is common in the political world. Wishful ideological thinking will quite directly translate into worse performance. Second, tournaments pressure people to acknowledge opposing arguments in the news, as well as gaps in their knowledge, both of which should have effects that parallel those observed in the illusion-of-explanatory-depth research: reduce confidence to more realistic levels and moderate affective preferences. Third, if one’s goal is to do well in a political forecasting tournament, one is well advised to engage in perspective taking, a defining property of actively open-minded thinking (Baron, 2008) and an empirical correlate of top performance in tournaments (“superforecasters”—Tetlock & Gardner, 2015). These parallel lines of work—laboratory debiasing and forecasting tournaments—raise two questions for democratic theory: (a) if political opponents were to participate in forecasting tournaments focused on issues of the day, would they learn to be more circumspect in their beliefs?: (b) if so, would that process also reduce the extremity of their political attitudes, even political preferences with no logical connection to the probabilistic forecasts elicited in the tournament? We present evidence for conditional optimism. Forecasting tournament, participants must learn to cope with the “culture shock” of moving from the hurly-burly of the political world, in which polemics dominate, to the pure-epistemic-accountability world of tournaments. Tournament organizers can help with this adjustment by giving participants guidance on the larger purpose of the exercise, on how to translate inchoate hunches into precise probability metrics and on how the scoring rules convert probability judgments into accuracy scores. In sharp contrast to the vague-verbiage predictions so common in high-visibility, social-media debates in op-eds and blogs, forecasting tournaments do not give bonus points for witty put-downs. They incentivize forecasters to do one thing: getting the best “Brier scores” (Brier, 1950) by being faster than others at putting higher probabilities on things that happen and lower probabilities on things that do not while avoiding the steep scoring penalties that accrue to too hastily declaring outcomes “certain” or “impossible” (Mellers, Stone, Atanasov, et al., 2015). This trade-off is tricky. It requires balancing caution and courage (Tetlock, 2005), where caution refers to skill at making well-calibrated probability judgments that match relevant base rates (e.g., events assigned 70% probabilities happen about 70% of the time) and courage refers to skill at decisively discriminating between signals and noise, events and non-events, as the evidence warrants. Forecasting tournaments are cognitively demanding. 1.1. The Good Judgment Project The largest scale, political-forecasting tournaments to date have been sponsored by IARPA or the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity. From 2011 to 2015, IARPA invested tens of millions of dollars in five university teams, each of which competed to invent the best methods of eliciting and aggregating large numbers of human forecasts in tournaments focused on geopolitical events. Our team, the Good Judgment Project, won these contests. Psychologists and statisticians working together constructed aggregate forecasts on the “right side of maybe” on more than 85% of all daily forecasts on over 500 questions, outperforming even professional intelligence analysts who made predictions on the same questions and had access to classified information (Goldstein, Hartman, Comstock, & Baumgarten, 2018). The Good Judgment Project conducted experiments by randomly assigning forecasters to conditions that tested hypotheses about the drivers of accuracy. We discovered five such drivers: (a) recruitment and retention of better forecasters; (b) cognitive-debiasing training; (c) more engaging work environments, in the form of collaborative teamwork and prediction markets; and (d) better aggregation rules for distilling the wisdom of the crowd (the log-odds-extremizing algorithm of Baron et al., 2014, Satopaa et al., 2014, Satopaa et al., 2014). But the most potent driver was to skim off the top 2% of forecasters at the end of each tournament year and place them in elite, superforecaster teams. Despite skeptics’ predictions to the contrary, superforecasters largely resisted regression to the mean in follow-up years (Mellers, Stone, Murray, et al., 2015). Superforecasters learned to make well-calibrated, high-resolution probability judgments with quite impressive consistency (Moore et al., 2016, Tetlock and Gardner, 2015). They figured out how to treat uncertainty in a nuanced fashion and use more distinctions on the probability scale to express their beliefs. These distinctions turned out to be meaningful. When we examined the loss of accuracy with counterfactual analyses in which forecasters were assumed to use fewer probability distinctions by rounding their predictions to the nearest 10% or 20%, accuracy scores based on rounded forecasts were worse than accuracy scores based on the original forecasts. Rounding forecasts produced a loss of information that took the largest toll on the most accurate participants– superforecasters (Friedman, Baker, Mellers, & Zeckhauser, 2017). 1.2. The spillover hypothesis: beliefs and attitudes Our main goal is testing the hypothesis that the process of making subjective-probability forecasts in tournaments has spillover effects on attitudes toward controversial political issues. From a formal philosophical perspective, these two classes of variables are clearly logically distinct. Forecasts are beliefs about matters of (future) fact, whereas policy attitudes are ultimately value judgments about what society ought to do. But of course that does not imply that fact-grounded forecasts and value-grounded attitudes must also be psychologically distinct. Much hinges on one’s preferred cognitive-affective framework for representing the connections between beliefs (often operationalized as probability judgments in the attitude change literature) and attitudes (operationalized as evaluative or affective judgments). For instance, viewed from the standpoint of attitude theories that stress the primacy of affect and treat cognition (i.e., beliefs) as post hoc justifications for feelings (Haidt, 2001, Zajonc, 1980), our spillover hypothesis is unrealistically optimistic. Tails don’t wag dogs. Changing policy affect is far likelier to change policy beliefs than is changing the beliefs to change attitudes. But viewed from the standpoint of cognition-driven theories that depict attitudes as derivative products of expectancy-value calculations, as in Fishbein and Ajzen’s (1975) theory of reasoned action and in classical decision theory, the spillover hypothesis is reasonable as long as the attitudes are woven into networks of relevant beliefs. If so, when the beliefs moderate, so too should the relevant attitudes. Neither of these theoretical camps would however predict the strong version of the spillover effect that we are proposing: namely, that tournaments can moderate attitudes by changing how people think, a cognitive-stylistic shift in which the more flexible and analytic style of thinking about beliefs encouraged by tournaments spills over into how people make “should” or attitudinal judgments on topics with close-to-zero expectancy-value linkage to the probabilistic beliefs they endorsed in tournaments. To operationalize this idea, imagine we ran a study in which the forecasting questions focused on exactly the same topics as the attitude questions—and we discovered, say, that the (humbling) process of trying to forecast in which cities charter schools boosted test scores caused people to moderate their policy attitudes about charter schools. Few observers would be surprised. But the current design provides a tougher test. There are no strong connections between the forecasting questions and the policy-attitude questions asked at the end of the forecasting year. We test the hypothesis that the cognitively demanding process of participating in a tournament—of having to balance evidence to put well-calibrated probability estimates on, say, third quarter GDP growth or presidential popularity—has a spillover effect when people take normative/”should” attitude positions on unrelated issues such as the minimum wage or voter-identification laws or U.S. policy toward Iran. Tournaments require forecasters to transform their hunches into numbers that roughly conform to the axioms of probability, a nontrivial task. When they do internet searches to discover what high-profile pundits say, they get little help because the “predictions” advanced in such debates are rarely sufficiently explicit to be testable. After all, elites need to preserve their long-term credibility so they tend to avoid numerical probability judgments that could later be mocked as embarrassingly far off (Tetlock & Gardner, 2015). It is safer to make vague-verbiage forecasts, such as “x might well happen” or “there is a distinct possibility of y” that psychological research has shown comfortably straddle both sides of 50/50 or “maybe” (Wallsten, Budescu, & Zwick, 1993). If an event happens, one can say “I warned you it was a distinct possibility” and if the event never happens, one can shrug it off by saying “I merely said it was possible.” To avoid this problem, forecasting tournaments press people to make their beliefs explicit and do what Nate Silver, the founder of the 538 website, routinely does: attach specific numerical probabilities to possible futures. After the 2016 US Presidential election, Silver was chastised for falling on what appeared to be the “wrong side of maybe.” He had placed a 70% probability on a Clinton presidency. Was he wrong? Drawing the correct conclusion requires an understanding that: (a) 70% might have been the best forecast possible at the time; (b) the poll aggregation techniques on which Silver relies were well calibrated, which means that when Silver makes probabilistic predictions of events, those events tend to occur roughly 70% of the time. They will “look wrong” about 30% of the time (Lichtenstein et al., 1982). Unfortunately, the vague-verbiage forecasting habits that confer political safety on pundits also make it extremely difficult, arguably impossible, to become a more realistic appraiser of the probabilities of real-world events. Without measurement of forecasting accuracy, learning can’t take place. To invoke an old Wittgenstein aphorism, the limits of our language are the limits of our world. It is hard to figure out whether probability judgments of 70% are well-calibrated if one is unsure when one made 70% forecasts and unsure of what happened when one did. The potential mind-opening power of forecasting tournaments comes from the fact that they pressure us to recognize the limits of our knowledge and focus on the world as it is, not as we wish it to be. They expose us to the same criticisms that Nate Silver experienced -- being on the “wrong side of maybe.” Forecasting tournaments push people out of their vague-verbiage comfort zone and ask them to quantify uncertainty in as granular a fashion as the problem permits. It is this more tentative and granular mode of thinking inculcated in forecasting tournaments that we hypothesize can spill over into unrelated attitude judgments outside the tournament.

**Successful movement organizing is analogous to mainstream politics – it requires skilled organization, strategic flexibility, effective management, and proto-institutionalism – sacrificing debate as training in favor of being a revolutionary for a weekend ensures failure**

**Heller 17** [Nathan Heller began contributing to The New Yorker in 2011, and joined the magazine as a staff writer in 2013. He has written on a range of subjects, including online education and the TED Conference. He is also a film and television critic, and a contributing editor, at Vogue. Previously, he was a columnist for Slate, where he was a finalist for a National Magazine Award for essays and criticism. Is There Any Point to Protesting? August 21, 2017. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/08/21/is-there-any-point-to-protesting]

Tufekci’s conclusions about the civil-rights movement are **unsettling** because of what they imply. People such as Kauffman portray direct democracy as a scrappy, passionate enterprise: the underrepresented, the oppressed, and the dissatisfied get together and, strengthened by numbers, force change. Tufekci suggests that the **movements that succeed** are actually **proto-institutional**: highly **organized**; **strategically flexible**, due to sinewy **management structures**; and **chummy** with the sorts of people we now call **élites**. The Montgomery N.A.A.C.P. worked with Clifford Durr, a patrician lawyer whom Franklin Roosevelt had appointed to the F.C.C., and whose brother-in-law Hugo Black was a Supreme Court Justice when Browder v. Gayle was heard. The organizers of the **March on Washington** turned to Bobby Kennedy—the U.S. Attorney General and the brother of the sitting President—when Rustin’s prized sound system was sabotaged the day before the protest. Kennedy enlisted the Army Signal Corps to fix it. You can’t get much cozier with the Man than that. Far from speaking truth **to power**, **successful protests** seem to speak truth **through power**. (The principle holds for such successful post-sixties movements as **ACT UP**, with its structure of caucuses and expert working groups. And it forces one to reassess the rise of well-funded “Astroturf” movements such as the Tea Party: successful grassroots lawns, it turns out, have a bit of plastic in them, too.) Democratizing technology may now give the voiceless a means to cry in the streets, but **real results** come to those with the same old privileges—**time**, **money**, **infrastructure**, an ability to **call in favors**—that shape **mainline politics**.

Unsurprisingly, this realization **irks the Jacobins**. Hardt and Negri, as well as Srnicek and Williams, rail at length against “neoliberalism”: a fashionable **bugaboo** on the left, and thus, unfortunately, a term more often flaunted than defined. (Neoliberalism can broadly refer to any program that involves market-liberal policies—privatization, deregulation, etc.—and so includes everything from Thatcher’s social-expenditure reductions to Obama’s global-trade policies. A moratorium on its use would help solidify a lot of gaseous debate.) According to them, neoliberalism lurks everywhere that power resides, beckoning friendly passersby into its drippy gingerbread house. Hardt and Negri **dismiss** “participating in **government**, respecting capitalist discipline, and creating structures for labor and business to collaborate,” because, they say, “**reformism** in this form has proven to be **impossible** and the **social benefits** it promises are an **illusion**.” They favor **antagonistic pressure**, leading to a **revolution** with **no central authority** (a plan perhaps **more promising** in **theory** than in **practice**). Srnicek and Williams don’t reject working with politicians, though they think that real transformation comes from shifts in social expectation, in school curricula, and in the sorts of things that reasonable people discuss on TV (the so-called Overton window). It’s an ambitious approach but not an outlandish one: Bernie Sanders ran a popular campaign, and suddenly socialist projects were on the prime-time docket. Change does arrive through mainstream power, but this just means that your movement should be threaded through the culture’s institutional eye.

The question, then, is what protest is for. Srnicek and Williams, even after all their criticism, aren’t ready to let it go—they describe it as “necessary but insufficient.” Yet they strain to say just how it fits with the idea of class struggle in a postindustrial, smartphone-linked world. “If there is no workplace to disrupt, what can be done?” they wonder. Possibly their telescope is pointing the wrong way round. Much of their book attempts to match the challenges of current life—a shrinking manufacturing sphere, a global labor surplus, a mire of race-inflected socioeconomic traps—with Marx’s quite specific precepts about the nineteenth-century European economy. They define the proletariat as “that group of people who must sell their labor powers to live.” It must be noted that this group—now comprising Olive Garden waiters, coders based in Bangalore, janitors, YouTube stars, twenty-two-year-olds at Goldman Sachs—is really very broad. A truly modern left, one cannot help but think, would be at liberty to shed a manufacturing-era, deterministic framework like Marxism, allegorized and hyperextended far beyond its time. Still, to date no better paradigm for labor economics and uprising has emerged.

What comes **undone** here is the dream of **protest** as an expression of **personal politics**. Those of us whose days are filled with chores and meetings may be deluding ourselves to think that we can rise as “**revolutionaries-for-a-weekend**”—Norman Mailer’s phrase for his own bizarre foray, in 1967, as described in “The Armies of the Night.” Yet that’s not to say the twenty-four-year-old who quits his job and sleeps in a tent to affirm his commitment does more. The **recent studies** make it clear that **protest results** don’t follow the laws of life: **eighty per cent isn’t just showing up**. Instead, **logistics** reign and then constrain. **Outcomes** rely on how you **coördinate** your efforts, and on the **skill** with which you use **existing influence** as help.

If that seems a **deflating** idea, it **only goes to show** how entrenched **self-expressive** protest has become in **political identity**. In one survey, half of Occupy Wall Street allies turned out to be fully employed: even that putatively radical economic movement was largely middle class. (Also, as many noted, it was largely white.) That may be because even the privileged echelons of working America are mad as hell and won’t take it anymore. But it may also be because the **social threshold** for protest-joining is **low**. A running joke in “The Armies of the Night” is that many of the people who went off to demonstrate were affluent egghead types—unsure, self-obsessed, squeamish, and, in many ways, pretty conservative. “There was an air of Ivy League intimacy to the quiet conversations on this walk—it could not really be called a March,” Mailer says. Writing of himself: “He found a friendly face. It was Gordon Rogoff, an old friend from Actors Studio, now teaching at the Yale Drama School; they talked idly about theatrical matters for a while.” This has been the cultural expectation since the late sixties, even as tactical protest has left mainstream power behind. As citizens, we get two chips—one for the ballot box, the other for the soapbox. Many of us feel compelled to make use of them both.

Would casual activists be better off deploying their best skills toward change (teachers teaching, coders coding, celebrities celebritizing) and leaving direct action in the hands of organizational pros? That seems sad, and a good recipe for lax, unchecked, uncoördinated effort. Should they work indirectly—writing letters, calling senators, and politely nagging congresspeople on Twitter? That involves no cool attire or clever signs, and no friends who’ll cheer at every turn. But there’s reason to believe that it works, because even bad legislators pander to their electorates. In a new book, “The Once and Future Liberal” (Harper), Mark Lilla urges a turn back toward governmental process. “The role of social movements in American history, while important, has been seriously inflated by left-leaning activists and historians,” he writes. “The age of movement politics is over, at least for now. We need no more marchers. We need **more mayors**.” Folk politics, tracing a fifty-year **anti-establishmentarian** trend, flatters a certain idea of **heroism**: the system, we think, must be fought by **authentic people**. Yet that outlook is so widely held now that it occupies the highest offices of government. Maybe, in the end, the system is the powerless person’s best bet.

Or maybe direct action is something to value independent of its results. No specific demands were made at the Women’s March, in January. The protest produced no concrete outcomes, and it held no legislators to account. And yet the march, which encompassed millions of people on every continent, including Antarctica, cannot be called a failure. At a time when identity is presumed to be clannish and insular, it offered solidarity on a vast scale.

What was the Women’s March about? Empowerment, human rights, discontent—you know. Why did it matter? Because we were there. Self-government remains a **messy**, **fussy**, **slow**, **frustrating** business. We do well to **remind** those working its gears and levers that the public—not just the appalled me but the conjoined us whom the elected serve—is **watching** and **aware**. More than two centuries after our country took its **shaky first steps**, the union is **miles from perfection**. But it is still on its feet, sometimes **striding**, frequently **stumbling**. The march goes on, and someday, not just in our dreams, we’ll make it home.

**It’s necessary for effective activism**

**Han** and Barnett-Loro **18** [Hahrie Han, Department of Political Science, University of California, Santa Barbara. Carina Barnett-Loro, Climate Advocacy Lab, San Francisco. To Support a Stronger Climate Movement, Focus Research on Building Collective Power. December 19, 2018. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcomm.2018.00055/full>]

Building public will to address the climate crisis requires **more** than **shifting** climate change **opinion** or engaging **more people** in activism (Raile et al., 2014). By many measures, the climate movement today is stronger than ever: more people taking actions, more financial resources, and deeper concern. Nonetheless, despite increasingly widespread popular demand for sensible climate solutions (Leiserowitz et al., 2017; Hestres and Nisbet, 2018) and broad organizational infrastructure to support climate activism across most Westernized democracies (Brulle, 2014), public will that **translates** into the **political power** needed to effect meaningful change has been **elusive** (McAdam, 2017). Even the 2014 and 2017 People's Climate Marches that drew hundreds of thousands to the streets, demonstrations in support of the Paris Climate Accords, and large-scale acts of civil disobedience in opposition to the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines have resulted in only short-lived campaign victories. Nearly 10 years after the failure to pass comprehensive climate and clean energy legislation at the federal level, experts largely agree there is “little hope” existing policies are sufficient to address the scale of the crisis (Keohane and Victor, 2011).

How can research help **bridge the gap** not only between **opinion and action**, but also between **action and power**? Many articles in this special edition examine the question of the conditions that make it more likely individuals will take action around climate issues. Indeed, the **gap** between **opinion and action** is **well-known** (Kahan and Carpenter, 2017), and burgeoning research in many fields of social science seeks to bridge it (Rickard et al., 2016; Doherty and Webler, 2016; Feldman and Hart, 2018). One of us works for the Climate Advocacy Lab, which supports field experimentation through direct funding and in-kind research assistance to build our collective understanding of the most effective strategies for moving people into action.

There is less attention, however, to the question of how those **actions** might **translate** into **political influence**. The challenge is this: in most cases, the **null assumption** is that **activism** becomes **power at scale**: that **collective action** is merely the **sum of its parts**, and the **more people** who take action, the more likely a movement is to achieve its goals. All things being equal, it is true that more is better (Madestam et al., 2013). Additional research, however, shows

that for our stickiest social problems (like climate change), **simply having more activists**, money, or other resources is **not sufficient** to **create and sustain** the kind of **large-scale change** needed (Baumgartner et al., 2009; Canes-Wrone, 2015). Instead, we need a social movement that **translates** our **actions into power**. Social movements are a set of “actors and organizations seeking to alter power deficits and to effect transformations through the state by mobilizing regular citizens for sustained political action” (Amenta et al., 2010). Instead of focusing only on resources, movements focus on power. Instead of focusing only on individual action, they focus on collective action. To become a source of power, collective action must be transformative.

How, then, do we build the kind of movements that generate the collective action necessary to shift existing power dynamics? For scholars, what research can help advocates understand how to translate individual actions into the powerful, and transformative collective action necessary to create change? To examine this question, we co-hosted a **conference** that brought social scientists together with climate advocates in the United States. At this convening, movement leaders argued that to better support building a robust climate movement, **research** should **move beyond** traditional public opinion, **communications**, **messaging**, and activism studies **toward** a greater focus on the **strategic leadership** and collective contexts that **translate opinion** and action **into political power**. This paper thus offers a framework, described in Table 1, for synthesizing existing research on movement-building and highlighting the places where additional research is needed. We hope this **framework** can help **focus** more future **research** on the collective, relational contexts and strategic leadership choices necessary to generate collective action that translates into power. In describing the framework, we draw on Slater and Gleason's (2012) typology to show what we know and do not know about supporting movement actors seeking to make more impactful choices.

Assessing the State of Research on Climate Movement Building

How do movement leaders translate supportive public opinion and grassroots activism into political influence? Answering this question rests on first understanding a few key points about social movements. First, movements operate in an environment of uncertainty. For the climate movement, everything from oil spills to hurricanes, domestic elections to international treaties, legal decisions, and market forces can affect the terrain they must navigate. Movement leaders cannot directly control many of these things. Second, policy change is not power. A given policy change will not automatically effect change in the world consistent with movement interests (Hacker, 2004). Moreover, policies can be easily overturned, as exemplified by the transition from Obama to Trump, and immediate rollback of key policies including the Clean Power Plan, restrictions on drilling and mining on public lands, and coal ash protections. To create lasting power, movements need broad constituencies that persist through the ups and downs and whims of different administrations. Third, there is **no direct line** from **activism to power**, because power is a dynamic relationship between movements and their targets. To wield power, movements use their resources to act on the interests of political decision-makers (Hansen, 1991). In fact, some research suggests the advocacy group resources most predictive of large-scale policy change are relationships with decision-makers—more so than lobbying money, campaign contributions, or the number of grassroots members (Baumgartner et al., 2009). Some argue that the climate movement's failure to build and sustain the kind of constituency that would pressure decision-makers contributed to the failure of cap-and-trade legislation in 2010 (Skocpol, 2013).

Given these three factors—persistent uncertainty, the need to focus on power not policy, and the complex interests of movement targets—what are the questions movement leaders need to answer to build a more effective climate movement? We argue that most research has focused either on documenting trends in the political environment in which movements work or on questions of how the movement can focus on building more of its resources (such as more supportive public opinion or more activists). Those questions are important. Particularly in today's uncertain, dynamic political environment, however, we also need research on strategy: how do movements create the leadership capacities and organizational (or “meso-level”) conditions needed to navigate uncertain political situations and shifting relationships, and thus translate resources to power?

Organizations that have successfully wielded power in other issue areas can be instructive in showing why understanding **strategic leadership** and meso-level, collective contexts **matters**. Consider the **gun debate** in the United States. **Polls** show **strong** public **support** for **stricter regulation** of guns, advocates like Michael Bloomberg have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the fight, and protests have brought millions of people into the streets for gun control. **Nonetheless**, the National Rifle Association (NRA) has been **more effective** in translating its activists and resources into political power. Why? First, leaders within the NRA undertook an **intentional campaign** to build an ardent constituency of gun owners that was willing to stand together, again and again, through ups and downs of any political fight, to support gun rights. As recently as the early 1970s, the NRA supported sensible gun regulations. Beginning in the 1970s, however, a group of hardline conservatives took control of leadership of the organization (Melzer, 2009). To build constituency, they used **three key tactics**: **widespread benefits** provided to gun owners from the national organization, strong appeals to identity, and a complex latticework of interpersonal relationships sustained at the local level (LaCombe, forthcoming). Second, leaders **strategically leveraged** this **constituency** to **negotiate relationships** with the **Republican Party**. The recurrent ability of leaders to deliver support from this constituency for policymakers became the basis through which the NRA built high-level relationships with elected officials and the Republican Party, thus cementing its hold over gun policy in the United States. By **linking** **base-building** with **elite politics**, the NRA transformed the political dynamics around gun rights.

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#### Viewing Blackness as negativity reproduces Eurocentric pathologization of Blackness --- this ignores complex, multifaceted Black identities and humanity, and prevents Black self-creation of the social world.

Curry and Utley 16

Tommy J. Curry, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Texas A&M and a Ray Rodrock Fellow. Ebony A. Utley, Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at CSU Long Beach. “Humanizing Blackness: An Interview with Tommy J. Curry,” *Southern Communication Journal*, Vol 81:4, pg. 263-265. July 29, 2016.

Curry: Most people think of Blackness and how we study Blackness as a negative endeavor. It’s always associated with oppression, pathology, suffering. There’s another way that we could look at Blackness as an alternate version of the human being. Like a human being that’s made within history, that really stands within the courage and enduring of slavery, suffering, and poverty—an evolved kind of humanity that’s of the world and not something that stands outside of it. We usually associate humanity with whiteness, reason, virtue, and all of these things that we haven’t really realized in the world. With Blackness you get that quality of the human that is found within triumph, struggle, and resistance. Resistance is a human quality that Black people possess because they’re human, but there is something else about Black humanity that is unique, that comes about because of slavery, Jim Crow, rape, castration. These types of things are peculiar to Black people, and because of that, their humanity, as it interacts with the world, has created this unique thing that we now think of in terms of Blackness.

Utley: Can anyone who accepts the definition of Blackness as the condition of being a human being, consider themselves Black?

Curry: No. When we talk about the quality of Blackness what we’re actually talking about is awareness about the conditions that have been brought about through colonization through racism, through poverty, through disease, through wretchedness. The question is: Do you have it? Do you have the history or the trauma of slavery, or colonization, or genocide? Of being marked, targeted, and exposed? Do you experience the world as a social death, always able to be killed because of the continuous violence towards Black people?

Utley: If an individual is phenotypically Black, but does not experience the word this way, is this person still Black per your definition?

Curry: Yes, because it’s not about the consciousness of “this is the life I’ve lived,” it’s the possibility of existence in this world. I can walk off the cliff and say that I don’t believe in gravity, but I’m not less affected by gravity. If I walk off the cliff, I’m still dead. That’s what I mean. Consider whiteness, even if you’re a poor white person that could be killed by the cops, the question is “Do you live your life as if the very condition of living is formulated on death?” White people, even poor white people, don’t go through moments of life where they know that their disposability is fundamentally necessary for everyone else’s existence. Young black men certainly do. The exploitation of black women certainly makes that true. They’re the disposable and the exploitable. People can say that bad shit happens to other people too, and I’m in complete agreement with that. It doesn’t disown that there are different kinds of experiences, but when you talk about Blackness in America, you’re talking about how groups of people who are descendants of slaves and colonialism whose existence within the empire is conditioned by death. That’s a very different thing. And yet, there’s something in Black people that says resist. That’s the question of how humanity is being created and reformed. We don’t get that complexity. We study Blackness and Black people as if they were a reflection of certain political ideologies, not the consciousness of a people who think that they should actually be able to live, to be citizens, husbands, or wives. These are all complex emotions that exist in human societies that are studied across the world, but are never utilized to study Black people.

Utley: How should we study Black people?

Curry: In my work I refer to that as the culture-logic—an idea to frame how Black people create the world through a co-authoring of the world. How does the human being interact with the world, not as a distant object, but literally how do they make it, form it, contour it so that it reflects their own existence? This replaces things that we talk about now like phenomenology, critical theory, or even basic concepts of metaphysics like ontology or epistemology. Because what we’re talking about is how the world and the human are necessary to create social reality. They don’t exist separate from each other. When we study Blackness we like to study it as a material artifact that’s outside of our perception. So racism becomes an object of our study. It doesn’t become something that is created and co-created. We see Black people’s problems when we study Black people in that way, and it reproduces some of the assumptions of inhumanity. Because if we thought of ourselves as human, then we would create realities just like white people create realities.

Utley: How do white and Black reality creation processes differ?

Curry: White people project themselves into the future all the time. They’re building ideas that are going to set the foundation, like in technology, in astrophysics etc., that set the foundations for generations ahead of them. White people fundamentally believe they’re human, so their advances are grounding for future generations centuries later. Black people can’t speak in that way because we don’t fundamentally believe that Blackness is a foundation to humanity, such that it has anything to contribute to civilization. That’s a very different intellectual space to produce knowledge if you believe that you are simply a fleeting contingent of an environmental circumstance. That you have no separate history, aspiration, or vision for what the world could or could not be. We don’t expect this for other groups of people, but ask Black people what they contribute besides reform of the empire? And they’re like, “We don’t know because that’s not what we teach our scholars to think towards.” We have to refocus our lens in a very serious way.

Utley: Is there one academic discipline that refocuses Blackness better than others?

Curry: No.

Utley: They’re all equally failing?

Curry: Yes. Disciplines are the specific articulations of how we’ve divvied up Western concepts of the human. Sociology is a reflection of how the European man exists within colonial society. Economics is how the European man rationalizes self-interest profiting in colonial societies. Philosophy, how do Western men fit themselves in relationship to all other people who are not as rational or human? Disciplines are merely reflections of different pieces or aspects of one concept of the human. When writing about Blackness we have to challenge ourselves to not study Blackness or race-theory as if it’s one aspect of how Western bourgeois man rationalizes Black lives, which is what I think a lot of our work turns into. The issue is how do we separate from a study based on that separation, not how we regret the distance race puts us from an ideal white notion of humanity.

#### Ontological Blackness is an act of bad faith that creates a self-fulfilling prophecy, viewing a set of historical choices as inevitable --- recognizing the humanity in Blackness is key

Tunstall 13

Dwayne A. Tunstall, Ph.D. in Philosophy from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Associate professor of philosophy at Grand Valley State University, *Doing Philosophy Personally: Thinking about Metaphysics, Theism, and Antiblack Racism.* p. 81-88. 2013

So what is antiblack racism? Seen from the natural attitude, anti-black racism is the totality of the material conditions, socio-cultural attitudes, norms, and practices that depersonalize persons who have been historically identified as black, specifically Africans and those of African descent living throughout the African diaspora. Given that the genealogical approach concentrates on unearthing the material conditions of the formation of social institutions and socio-cultural practices, it is one of the most common approaches to critiquing anti-black racism. These genealogies of antiblack racism usually begin by tracing how Western European nation-states transformed an entire group of persons into property, which could be used to acquire the material resources (for example, sugar, molasses, and cotton) for industrial factories to produce goods. Therefore, they describe anti-black racism as a means of justifying the European colonization of Africa, the Americas, the Caribbean, and anywhere else on the globe where Western Europeans (and later their most successful former colonies, for example, the United States and Australia) could acquire the material resources to fuel their unprecedented level of industrialization and economic expansion. Antiblack racism also justified why it was morally permissible to enslave, and sometimes even annihilate, entire groups of non-Europeans for the sake of establishing colonies, extracting material resources from colonized lands, producing goods and services, and increasing the financial wealth of the colonial nation-states.4

As part of their critique of antiblack racism, these genealogies document the ways in which Africana persons were defined as being less-than-persons in Western societies, even after the end of the transatlantic slave trade, due to modern scientific racism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the continued prevalence of white aesthetic and socio-cultural norms.5 The genealogies also seek to trace how the residue of modern scientific racism and white normativity remain a part of the contemporary landscape, especially in many social science studies on African American communities where African Americans are studies as a "problem people" rather than as persons who have problems.6 Although the conceptual category of blackness usually applies to Africana persons, one could also construct a genealogy of antiblack racism that includes groups of persons who are not identified as Africans or descendents of Africans, for example, Australian Aborigines7 and the dark-skinned, untouchable caste in India.8

Seen phenomenologically, however, antiblack racism is a countless series of self-deceptive choices, individual and societal, where Europeans and persons of European descent act as though their race "is the only race qualified to be considered human or . . . is superior to other races."9 Antiblack racism, then, is simultaneously (a) the consequence of intergenerational choices and practices of depersonalizing targeted groups of persons, specifically Africana persons, due to their racial classification and (b) the originating source of intergenerational acts of depersonalizing targeted groups of persons due to their racial classification. This does not mean that genealogical accounts of anti-black racism are incompatible with an existential phenomenological account of antiblack racism. Indeed, genealogical accounts of anti-black racism can contain many valuable existential phenomenological insights. Yet, an existential phenomenological account of antiblack racism not only focuses on the contingent nature of antiblack racism and its socio-historical and material conditions, but also examines how antiblack racism depersonalizes entire groups of persons and the existential conditions for such depersonalization.

In Gordon's case, his existential phenomenological account of antiblack racism is shaped by his commitment to Africana phenomenology. Africana phenomenology is a type of phenomenology in which phenomenologists investigate those phenomena that constitute Africana existence, particularly the lived experience of antiblack racism by Africana persons and their liberatory efforts to overcome it. 10 Phenomenologists in the Africana phenomenological tradition per- form a phenomenological reduction that they consider to be compatible with, if somewhat different from, Husserlian phenomenology. Rather than suspending their existential judgments about the world to clear a space for investigating the invariant meaning-structures of phenomena we experience, practitioners of Africana phenomenology envision the phenomenological epoché as a means of bracketing the reality of racial categories. Once the mundane existence of these racial categories is put in abeyance, one can then investigate how these racial categories are constituted by examining the lived experiences of Africana persons.

As an Africana phenomenologist, Gordon thinks that any phenomenological method should subject all methods to "ontological suspension (that is, the rejection of their presumed legitimacy). Accordingly, "even phenomenology’s history must be engaged with the cautious eye of ontological suspension. What that means is that its history, whether in its European, Asian, or Africana form, must be seen as factual instances but not as what legitimates phenomenological work."12 Gordon holds this position because he conceives of phenomenology as a radical approach to philosophizing and a post-colonial form of thinking, one which is birthed and nourished by ' 'the spirit of resistance to epistemic colonization."13 This is the spirit in which Gordon constructs his existential phenomenological account of antiblack racism. I am now ready to return to my explication of his account of antiblack racism.

Phenomenologically speaking, what enables persons of European descent and even many Africana persons to perpetuate antiblack racism? Gordon thinks that it is due to bad faith. In fact, Gordon thinks that bad faith is the leading clue for how antiblack racism is constituted and remains active on both the individual and societal levels. To approach antiblack racism through an examination of bad faith, we have to accept the following assumptions:

That human beings are aware, no matter how fugitive that awareness may be, of their freedom in their various situations, that they are free choosers of various aspects of their situations, that they are consequently responsible for their condition on some level, that they have the power to change at least themselves through coming to grips with their situations, and that there exist features of their condition which provide rich areas of interpretive investigation for the analysts or interpreter.14

Once we accept these assumptions, or at least see how these assumptions are plausible ones, we can appreciate Gordon's existential phenomenological account of antiblack racism and explicate it adequately. To facilitate our explication of Gordon's account of antiblack racism, let us regard Gordon's assumptions as plausible ones.

According to Gordon, bad faith is an effort by human persons to absolve themselves from their responsibility in coconstituting their own lives and their social institutions. The former is individual bad faith, and the latter is institutional bad faith.15 In more Sartrean terms, individual bad faith occurs whenever we deny our role in constituting the meaningfulness of the phenomena we experience. Institutional bad faith, on the other hand, occurs whenever we neglect to recognize how we continually coconstitute with other persons the social institutions in which we live and simply regard these institutions as ready-made entities. In the case of antiblack racism, living in bad faith means that we presuppose that the racial categorical schema from the Western modern era simply exist, and necessarily so. Consequently, in an antiblack society, once persons are classified as black they cannot do anything to transcend their "ontological blackness."16

Even those black persons who apparently transcend their race—for example, Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jordon, and Colin Powell—do so only in circumstances where white persons are willing to grant them the status of "honorary white person." If these "honorary white persons" step outside the circle of white persons who have granted them this status, then they will be treated like any other black person. This was the case with Oprah Winfrey when she was allegedly stopped from entering Hermes, a high-end luxury Paris boutique, on June 14, 2005.17 Her blackness remained invisible until she entered into a situation in which she was no longer identified as an honorary white person. In that situation her blackness became hypervisible, almost blindingly radiant. Nevertheless, Oprah Winfrey the person was concealed underneath the veil of blackness.

To be black in an antiblack world, for Gordon, means more than being hypervisible as the embodiment of an abstraction yet invisible as a person, however. It also means that one is burdened with justifying one's personhood to racist white persons, and to justify one's personhood is to be present to oneself ' 'as a given existent,' '18 that is, an object. He describes how black persons often have to justify their very existence to white persons this way:

The racist, . . . in making the demand [for the black persons to justify their existence], positions himself as self-justified while asking another human [person] to justify his right to exist. Symmetry is already broken down in a situation that demands symmetry. The racist thus elevates himself . . . above the human to the level of God and the Other below humanity. In effect, he says to the Other, "The problem with you is that you are not I. Show me that you have a quality that has an equivalence relation with me.

The black Other is not a Levinasian Other (l'autrui) whom antiblack white racists recognize as a fellow person. For the white antiblack racist, the black Other is less than a person while the antiblack white racist occupies the peculiar position of regarding himself or herself as a self-sufficient and self-justifying being, precisely the characteristics traditionally possessed by the divine in the neo-Platonic and Aristotelian tradition and in many forms of Western monotheism. Nevertheless, white antiblack racists know that they are neither self-sufficient nor self-justifying beings. Yet, they are comfortable in asking entire groups of persons to do something they themselves cannot do. This position can be maintained only by ' 'a misanthropic consciousness" in which the humanity of black persons is eliminated by situating them below the threshold of personhood while white racists elevate them-selves above the threshold of personhood.20

Fanon articulates this phenomenon concisely in The Wretched of the Earth: "Because it is a systematic negation of the other, an unreasonable decision to refuse to the other all the attributes of humanity, colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask the question constantly, 'In reality, who am I?' "21 Fanon's description of colonialism in general is equally applicable to antiblack racism, because antiblack racism demands that black persons ask themselves the same ques- tion.22 Moreover, in an antiblack society, black persons often find themselves asking questions related to Fanon's question, questions such as, Did my employer hire me because I'm qualified or because my employer sought to satisfy EEOC requirements? Did I get into graduate school because I'm qualified or because of their efforts to recruit minority students to their university? These questions haunt many black persons, because antiblack racism has a way of lessening the dignity of black persons, even those persons who have stellar qualifications and experience, by having them second-guess their qualifications and expertise while white mediocrity is excused and tolerated.

Unfortunately, black persons in an antiblack world are not only required to justify their existence, but also to justify their existence given that they are a "problem people." William Bennett's infamous thought experiment in 2005 is a paradigmatic example of portraying African Americans as a problem people. In his thought experiment, Bennett proposed, for the sake of argument, that "if you wanted to reduce crime, you could—if that were your sole purpose—you could abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down."23 To his credit, he immediately said that doing so would be impossible, ridiculous and morally reprehensible."24 Hence, we can agree with columnist Eugene Robison that Bennett did not intentionally advocate the genocidal extermination of African American children in the womb.25

But what led Bennett to propose such a thought experiment in the first place? Bennett explained that he was responding to Steven D. Levitt's Freakonomics where Levitt ' 'argues that the steep drop in crime in the United States over the past 15 years resulted in part from the Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion."26 Eugene Robinson summarizes Levitt's position on this issue in these words: "Levitt's thesis is essentially that unwanted children who grow up poor in single-parent households are more likely than other children to become criminals, and that Roe v. Wade resulted in fewer of these children being born. What he doesn't do in the book is single out black children. "27 However, this does not explain why Bennett associated criminality with African Americans. Given our examination of Gordon's account of antiblack racism thus far, we can explain why Bennett associated criminality with African Americans in his argument against Levitt's position this way: Bennett has uncritically accepted the racist stereotype that African Americans are inherently criminals to such an extent that he did not realize that one of the central premises in his argument presupposed the criminality of African Americans.

The perception of black people as a "problem people" extends beyond unintentional white antiblack racists, however. This perception is held by other black persons toward blacks of lower socioeconomic statuses. Indeed, there are many black persons who interpret the behavior of other black persons through the lens of preconceived racist stereotypes, for example, black men are criminals, and black women are sexually promiscuous and welfare queens.28 The view that black persons are a problem people even affects much of the US national media coverage of African Americans. One of the more recent, high-profile examples of this phenomenon is the coverage of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath in New Orleans. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when many of those left behind went into abandoned grocery stores in search of food, many photographs were taken of them. There were two photographs taken that, if juxtaposed, show how African Americans are depicted as problem people. The first photograph, "circulated by the Associated Press, showed an African American man, wading through the flood, toting a bag and a case of cola. 'A young man,' read the caption, 'walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store.' "29 The second photo- graph, "taken for Getty Images, showed a white couple, also wading through water, and toting a bag and backpacks. 'Two residents,' the caption read, 'wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store.' "30 The caption for the African American photograph makes sense given the common assumption in American society that African Americans, especially young African American men, are criminals. This, in turn, reinforces the view of African Americans as a problem people. This is especially true when we compare the African American photograph to the Euro-American couple. Unlike the young African American man, the couple was not seen through the prism of the racial stereotype, "African Americans are criminals." Instead, their act of theft was deemed acceptable due to emergency circumstances.

This phenomenon of black-persons-seen-as-problem-people can be articulated along these lines:

To view black people as a "problem people" is to view them as undifferentiated blob, a homogeneous bloc on a monolithic conglomerate. Each black person is interchangeable, indistinguishable or substitutable, since all black people are believed to have the same views and values, sentiments and sensibilities. Hence one set of negative stereotypes holds for all of them, no matter how high certain blacks may ascend in the white world…

This problematizing of black humanity deprives black people of individuality, diversity, and heterogeneity. It reduces black folk to abstractions and objects born of white fantasies and insecurities—as exotic or transgressive entities, as hypersexual or criminal animals.31

**Antiblackness is pervasive but not fixed – inward resignation fatalistically reinforces anti-blackness – political commitment is empirically effective and necessary to reverse historical failures and build more ethical relationships – even apparent “failures” pave the way for meaningful sociopolitical revolutions**

**Gordon 17** (Lewis R. Gordon, Professor of Philosophy and Africana Studies, with affiliations in Judaic Studies and Caribbean, Latino/a, and Latin American Studies, at the University of Connecticut at Storrs, Ph.D. from Yale “Thoughts on Afropessimism,” Critical Exchange on Afro pessimism in *Contemporary Political Theory*, December 2017, pages 1-8)

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 (1968) showed, a decline of values during periods of social decay. It emerges when people no longer want to be responsible for their actions. Optimists expect intervention from beyond. Pessimists declare relief is not forthcoming. **Neither** takes responsibility for what is valued. The valuing, however, 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, however, ex post facto**: It 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: 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. 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, nearly erased. Yet there was resistance even in that realm, as Africana and First Nation intellectual history and scholarship attest. 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 understand 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 Hobbes, Locke, 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. **An alternative model**, shared by many groups across southern Africa, 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’’ story across time. 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 energy affords emergence of alternatives. Kinds cannot be known before the actions that birthed them. Abstract as this sounds, **it has much historical support**. Evelyn Simien (2016), 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 could be no 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.’’ 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 and back to every act of resistance from Nat Turner’s Rebellion in the USA, Sharpe’s in Jamaica, or Tula’s in Curac¸ao 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 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. Ironically, if Afropessimism appeals to transcendent intervention, it would collapse into faith. If, however, the argument rejects transcendent intervention and focuses 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. The first is that **politics is a social phenomenon**, which means it requires the **expanding options** of a social world. Turning away from the social world, though a statement about politics, is not, however, in and of itself political. The ancients from whom much western political theory or philosophy claimed affinity had a disparaging term for individuals who resigned themselves from political life: idio¯te¯s, 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. We don’t, however, have to end our etymological journey in ancient Greek. 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 Macedonians, 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, collapses ultimately into a form of **moralism** (private, normative satisfaction) **instead of public responsibility** born of and borne by action. **The second is the importance of power**. Politics makes no sense without it. But what is 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. That institutions in the Americas very rarely attempt establishing positive relations to Blacks is the subtext of Afropessimism and this entire meditation. **The discussion points**, however, **to a demand for political commitment**. Politics itself emerges under different names throughout the history of our species, but the one occasioning the word ‘‘politics’’ is from the Greek po´lis, which refers to ancient Hellenic city-states. It identifies specific kinds of activities conducted inside the city-state, where order necessitated the resolution of conflicts through rules of discourse the violation of which could lead to (civil) war, a breaking down of relations appropriate for ‘‘outsiders.’’ Returning to the Fanonian observation of selves and others, it is clear that imposed limitations on certain groups amounts to impeding or blocking the option of politics. Yet, as a problem occurring within the polity, the problem short of war becomes a political one. Returning to Afropessimistic challenges, the question becomes this: **If** the problem of antiblack racism **is** conceded as political, where antiblack institutions of power have, as their project, the impeding of Black power, which in effect requires barring Black access to political institutions, then antiblack societies are ultimately **threats** also **to politics** defined as the human negotiation of the expansion of human capabilities or more to the point: freedom. **Anti-politics is** one of **the reason**s why **societies in which antiblack racism is hegemonic are also those in which racial moralizing dominates: moralizing stops** **at individuals at the expense of** addressing **institutions** the **transformation of which** would make **immoral individuals irrelevant**. As a political problem, **it demands a political solution**. It is not accidental that Blacks continue to be the continued exemplars of unrealized freedom. As so many from Ida B. Wells-Barnett to Angela Davis (2003) and Michelle Alexander (2010) have shown, the **expansion of privatization and incarceration** is squarely placed in a structure of states and civil societies premised on the limitations of freedom (Blacks) – ironically, as seen in countries such as South Africa and the United States, in the name of freedom. That power is a facilitating or enabling phenomenon, a functional element of the human world, a **viable** response must be the establishing of relations that reach beyond the **singularity** of the body. I bring this up because proponents of Afropessimism might object to this analysis because of its appeal to a **human world**. If that world is abrogated, the site of struggle becomes that which is patently not human. It is not accidental that popular race discourse refers today to ‘‘black bodies,’’ for instance, instead of ‘‘black people.’’ As the human world is discursive, social, and relational, this **abandonment** amounts to an appeal to the **non-relational**, the incommunicability of singularity, and appeals to the body and its reach. At that point, it’s perhaps the psychologist, psychiatrist, or psychoanalyst who would be helpful, as turning radically inward offers the promise of despair, narcissistic delusions of godliness, and, as Fanon also observed, madness. Even if that slippery slope were rejected, the **performative contradiction** of attempting to communicate such singularity or absence thereof **requires**, at least for consistency, the appropriate course of action: **silence**. The remaining question for Afropessimism, especially those who are primarily academics, becomes this: **Why write?** It’s a question for which, in both existential and political terms, I don’t see how an answer could be given from an Afropessimistic perspective without the unfortunate revelation of cynicism. The marketability of Afropessimism is no doubt in the immediate and paradoxical **satisfaction in dissatisfaction** it offers. We are at this point on familiar terrain. As with ancient logical paradoxes denying the viability of time and motion, the best option, after a moment of immobilized reflection, is, eventually, to move on, **even** **where** the pause is itself significant as an encomium of thought.

**An ontological reading of blackness destroys political navigation.**

**Kline 17**(David KLINE, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Religion at Rice University, 17 [“The Pragmatics of Resistance: Framing Anti-Blackness and the Limits of Political Ontology,” Critical Philosophy of Race, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2017)//Xain

Focusing on Wilderson, his absolute prioritization of a political onto-logical structure in which the law relegates Black being into the singular position of social death happens, I contend, at the expense of two significant things that I am hesitant to bracket for the sake of prioritizing political ontology as the sole frame of reference for both analyzing anti-Black racism and thinking resistance within the racialized world. First, it short-circuits an analysis of power that might reveal **not only** how **the** practices**, forms, and** apparatuses of anti-Black racism have historically developed**, changed, and reassembled/reterritorialized in relation to state power, national identity, philosophical discourse, biological discourse, political discourse, and so on—changes that, despite Wilderson’s claim that focusing on these things only “mystify” the question of ontology** (Wilderson 2010, 10), surely have implications for how racial positioning is both thought and resisted in differing historical and socio-political contexts. To the extent that Blackness equals a singular ontological position within a macropolitical structure of antagonism, there is almost no room to bring in the spectrum and flow of social difference and contingency that no doubt spans across Black identity as a legitimate issue of analysis and as a site/sight for the possibility of a range of resisting practices. This bracketing of difference leads him to make some rather sweeping and opaquely abstract claims. For example, discussing a main character’s abortion in a prison cell in the 1976 film Bush Mama, Wilderson says, “Dorothy will abort her baby at the clinic or on the floor of her prison cell, not because she fights for—and either wins [End Page 58] or loses—the right to do so, but because she is one of 35 million accumulated and fungible (owned and exchangeable) objects living among 230 million subjects—which is to say, her will is always already subsumed by the will of civil society” (Wilderson 2010, 128, italics mine). What I want to press here is how Wilderson’s statement, made in the sole frame of atotalizing political ontology **overshadowing all other levels of sociality,** flattens **out the** social difference within**, and even the possibility of,** a micropolitical social field of 35 million Black people **living in the United States**. **Such a flattening reduces the optic of anti-Black racism as well as Black sociality to the frame of political ontology where** Blackness remains stuck in a singular position of abjection**.** The result is a severe analytical limitation in **terms of** the way Blackness (as well as other racial positions) exists across an extremely wide field of sociality **that is** comprised of differing **intensities of** forces **and relational modes** between various **institutional, political, socio-**economic**,** religious, sexual, and other social conjunctures. Within Wilderson’s political ontological frame, **it seems that these conjunctures are excluded—or at least bracketed—as having any bearing at all on how anti-Black power functions and is resisted across highly differentiated contexts**. There is only the binary **ontological distinction** of Black and Human **being; only a macropolitics of sedimented abjection**.

#### Vote negative to reject Blackness as nonbeing --- Black resistance can become free through a search of new tactics and means of existence

Roberts 17

Neil Roberts, Theorizing Freedom, Radicalizing the Black Radical Tradition: On Freedom as Marronage Between Past and Future, Theory & Event, Volume 20, Number 1, January 2017, pp. 212-230, https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.library.georgetown.edu/article/646858/pdf

This was quite unexpected. For starters, I avowedly push against fundamental premises on the meaning of marronage established by historians over the last few centuries and vigorously defended as convention by subsequent historians and anthropologists.9 Two, I assumed, perhaps with naiveté, that scholars in black studies, Caribbean thought, philosophy, and political theory would be the main ones to wrestle with the text initially. That we are having this symposium in Theory & Event indicates a chord, however discordant, has begun to play in the latter field, with the verdict still out on its melody. I’ve also never considered myself a historian, though I agree with others who believe the late modern mythos of a “history”/“theory” binary is erroneous. Theory and history are mutually reinforcing, not opposing.10 We’re never outside of history, and I employ the historical whenever context to present the theoretical warrants it. To millions, there’s an acute sense of urgency of interpreting this all in the Age of Trump. The worry, or perhaps downright climate of fear, is that freedom may not only be on the retreat for those living a 216 Theory & Event free life; but that large populations might never be able to experience what it is to be free. The November 2016 US Presidential election of an undeniable authoritarian reminiscent of Jefferson Davis who relishes in demonstrating his authoritarian personality and doesn’t distinguish between “rule” and “governance” has national, hemispheric, and global repercussions.11 Struggles and resistance to authoritarianism and its mob enforcers have started. And more struggles await us. Yet these obstacles, arduous as they are, aren’t new. They’re the story of slaves. It’s easy to forget that, as long as there’ve been attempts to contain and suppress the enslaved, slaves have resisted arbitrary interference, domination, and sovereign power. In addition, the enslaved have visualized their desired naming, state of society, modes of constitutionalism, blueprints of freedom (vèvè architectonics), interactions with self and others, and non-sovereign ways of being and doing. To reduce the imaginings on freedom of the enslaved either to negative or positive notions, or to a singularity, is to misapprehend freedom’s contours. Humans are plural and multidimensional, and freedom is a relational condition comparative in nature. The actions and creativity of multifaceted individuals and masses in the face of unfreedom have fostered—and continue to foster—imaginings on alternative visions of freedom. Flight is perpetual, constant, never static, and subject to contestation, the outcome of which may be progress or regress. This is hard for some to accept, yet I argue it more accurately reflects the range of human experiences. “But then again,” as I wrote in the book’s fifth chapter, “the absence of a struggle to survive on the landscape would mean that we had never experienced the process of becoming free in the first place.”12 May the lessons of Freedom as Marronage serve as a resource to reassess the past, evaluate our present plight, and prepare for what the future holds. Now let me take a step back. 2. How might we develop a conception of freedom that underscores the historical while revealing the theoretical and generalizable throughout time and space? How can we reconceptualize freedom to bridge the gulf between its hegemonic articulations in the two main traditions in Western thought—negative freedom (freedom as non-interference and non-domination) and positive freedom (freedom as autonomy, self-mastery, generality, and pluralistic humanism)? How may our rethinking repudiate such notions as positing freedom in immutable, static terms; account for individual and collective imaginings of the free life; indict orders of unfreedom, or existence in what Frantz Fanon calls the zone of nonbeing; and discern the possibility for the realization of revolution? Roberts | On Freedom as Marronage Between Past and Future 217 I delved into processes of creolization, conceptions of freedom within and across myriad epochs, and the architecture of the black radical tradition. The breadth of this tradition is transnational, as scholars including Angela Davis, June Jordan, Achille Mbembe, Paul Gilroy, Robin Kelley, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, Lewis Gordon, Fred Moten, Oyèrónke Oy˘ewùmí, Carole Boyce Davies, Hortense Spillers, Christina Sharpe, Walidah Imarisha, and Cedric Robinson have noted, and it contains perceptive insights into the imagination, the interior and the exterior, and interstitial experiences.13 I sought, as a consequence, to gain clarity on our understandings of “black politics,” “radical,” and the “black radical tradition” undergirding how I’ve come to conceive of the free life. Black politics comprises viewpoints, ideologies, and actions spanning the political spectrum. Scholars in the United States, however, unfortunately tend to think of black politics in provincially nationalistic or hemispheric terms. In Not in our Lifetimes, for instance, Michael Dawson defines black politics as “African Americans’ ability to mobilize, influence policy, demand accountability from government officials, and contribute and influence American political discourse, all in the service of black interests.”14 Dawson reaffirms this definition in “The Future of Black Politics” and his Du Bois Lectures Blacks In and Out of the Left. 15 Such a framing obscures genres of black visions between past and future. Black politics includes and exceeds the US and the wider Americas, and there isn’t anything intrinsically radical about its various articulations. As Walter Rodney, Donna Murch, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, and Lester Spence note, the neoliberal turn in black politics, reflections on international development, and black political economy are reminders of the heterogeneity of black agents’ opinions on black interests notwithstanding important areas of issues convergence.16 Black radicalism, however, describes a political tendency within black politics, not merely its critique. To be radical is to be left of center and often in recent years to the left of “progressive”—which is a vague classification of a political disposition that at times encompasses the liberal yet is frequently short of the radical. Just look at which authors The Nation magazine publishes now compared to the 1990s and before and you get the point. If the radical isn’t necessarily a progressive, then is the radical a “militant” as Alain Badiou argues?17 Or something else? In vol. 1 of The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, Garvey writes, “‘Radical’ is a label that is always applied to people who are endeavoring to get freedom.”18 Garvey, though, specifies a compelling outlook on the object of the radical instead of defining the agent. What exactly is a radical? Radical, from the Latin radicalis, originally meant: “Of or relating to a root or to roots.”19 Transformations of the term in Middle English, 218 Theory & Event Middle French, and thirteenth to fifteenth century British English introduced definitions of radical denoting plant roots, a foundational mechanism, bodily organs, humors and moisture vital to human life functioning, and roots of a word. The long eighteenth century, or Age of Revolution, brought about another definitional mutation. Not only did radical come to refer in mathematics to “forming the root of a number or quantity.” For the first time, radical acquired a political valence: “change or action,” “advocating thorough or far-reaching political or social reform,” “representing or supporting an extreme section of a party,” and, most importantly for our purposes, “Now more generally: revolutionary.”20 It’s unsurprising then that Hannah Arendt located the shift from revolution’s astronomical, backward-looking denotation to its modern forward-looking political meaning—a new order of things, a birth, natality—at the same historical moment that radical obtained a political denotation.21 The repercussions of how Arendt wrote about this through exploration into the American and French Revolutions but without reference or analysis of the Haitian Revolution and Arendt’s overall disavowal of the agency of slaves are also crucial for us to comprehend. Black radical thought for centuries has responded to silences as well as the intentional simultaneous acknowledgments and denials of events.22 The black radical tradition, therefore, may be understood as a modern tradition of thought and action begun after transatlantic slavery’s advent, concerned centrally with revolutionary politics, and preoccupied with freedom for the souls of black folk. In Black Marxism, Cedric Robinson furnishes a classic genealogy of it. A distinguishing feature of Robinson’s account is the analysis of “racial capitalism” and the extent to which black radical politics and attendant modes of resistance respond to the phenomenology of unfreedom experienced by blacks in Africa and the African diaspora due to slavery. Robinson examines Marxist theory, thereby distilling a unique lineage of black radicals who were also Marxist scholar-activists. Robinson’s text culminates in case studies of three figures: W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, and Richard Wright. Additionally, Robinson emphasizes movement, situates accurately the tradition’s transnational character, and rejects the bifurcation of theory and history, developing theoretical assertions within meticulously documented historical milieus. While Black Marxism shall remain a vital tome, it does have limitations. Black women radicals, Marxist and otherwise, receive little treatment.23 It also contains a useful but all too concise delineation of marronage that only broaches the surface of its true significance. Subsequent treatises on black feminist thought and the black radical imagination are essential correctives. More rethinking, however, is needed. Roberts | On Freedom as Marronage Between Past and Future 219 Exploring marronage philosophy further offers us a way out of these limitations and a heuristic to radicalize the radical wing of black politics. The radicalization of the black radical tradition highlights how the lives and lessons of the damnés, the enslaved, are essential bulwarks between past and future for revolutionary change and cultivating freedom. Acts of marronage in their different types, and inquiry into the liminal and transitional spaces of slave escape between poles of political imagination, exemplify this. Freedom is not from-to but rather as. So why marronage and how, as Angela Davis asks,24 do we know we’re free? Marronage is a noun that means “flight,” yet it has the effect of a verb. The vocabularies of contemporary philosophy and political theory have been unable to explain the activity of flight and the mechanisms operational in its occurrence. Furthermore, their overwhelming descriptions of unfreedom and freedom as static states belie marronage’s perpetual nature. Marronage defies inertia. The ongoing act of flight, which transpires in multiple dimensions, encompasses what I contend are the four interrelated pillars of distance, movement, property, and purpose, with movement serving as the central fulcrum connecting the others. Whilst facets of these pillars pertain to the turn to diaspora, diaspora cannot capture their full import. The framework of diaspora describes flight either in a single direction or the return to a beginning location in the manner of a boomerang. Yet it assumes transformations aren’t occurring both at and between the points and spaces where an agent leaves and arrives. Additionally, diaspora can’t explain genres of fugitivity, evanescent flight, and intrastate flight focused on attaining the free life via the macro-level reorientation of state institutions and civil society exemplified by revolutions. If, per one of the polemical assertions of my theory, all human beings are born enslaved, then, to borrow from The Matrix and Glissant’s ruminations on antillanité (Caribbeanness), humans negotiate distance, movement, property, and purpose to exit slavery and become free.25 Freedom ossifies in the process of becoming itself. Freedom results from acts of flight informed by our experiences and valences of the psychological, physical, social-structural, cognitive, and metaphysical. Freedom encompasses moments that are episodic, durable, and overlapping. Freedom is, in short, a condition, not a place. The debate between Afro-pessimists and Afro-optimists is indicative of two contemporary positions that take seriously the condition of the enslaved and the question of freedom.26 However, despite differential articulations of their respective camps and divergent opinions on whether slaves ever avoid, in the language of Claudia Rankine, the condition of constant mourning,27 Afro-pessimists and Afro-opti- 220 Theory & Event mists startlingly share a fundamental conviction: the belief that slaves across epochs exist in a state Orlando Patterson prominently calls social death in which, as a consequence of powerlessness, dishonor, and natal alienation, slaves are said to lack an inherent capacity for action.28 To be socially dead is to be a living zombie. To be a racialized slave in late modernity, for instance, is to be a non-agentic being subjected to relentless antiblackness. A slave can never be free, the logic goes, unless a free agent grants terms of the free life to the slave. Classic examples are manumission enacted by a master and emancipation proclamations resulting from a polity’s decree rather than slave resistance. The premises of social death are misguided and antithetical to marronage philosophy. Afro-pessimists and Afro-optimists also mistakenly conflate the notion of social death with Fanon’s concept of the zone of nonbeing. Whilst a slave’s existence in the zone is hellish, the zone of nonbeing is “an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, an incline stripped bare of every essential from which a genuine new departure can emerge.”29 Experience inside the zone of nonbeing actually furnishes the possibility for consciousness-raising, individual and collective flight, and the becoming that is freedom. Acts of marronage demonstrate the intrinsic agency of slaves. It’s the degrees of materialization of purposive movement that in part distinguishes slaves and non-slaves. It’s for these reasons and more why marronage still matters. Discourse on marronage, which distills the aforementioned, conventionally refers to two forms: petit marronage (individual fugitive acts of truancy) and grand marronage (isolationist, autonomous, territorially bounded communities outside the parameters of a regime of unfreedom). These are models of flight normatively accepted in both extant anthropological and historical scholarship on maroon societies and archival documents. Studies on these types of marronage emphasize their manifestation in the Caribbean, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, but they have been and are still present throughout the globe, the United States included. The recent National Geographic feature story on the Great Dismal Swamp and Colson Whitehead’s 2016 National Book Award-winning novel, Underground Railroad, underscore this.30 Underground Railroad issues a searing portrayal of the protagonist-cum-fugitive slave Cora and the communities and activities Cora confronts and participates in. The protagonist takes flight from her plantation in Georgia and traverses the Carolinas, Tennessee, the North, and subsequently a new frontier, often with the assistance of the underground railroad network. Cora’s flight initially is in conjunction with another fellow dreamer and fugitive named Caesar and later it is in the manner of petit marronage on her own. Grand marronage ossifies when Cora reaches Indiana farther into the story. Roberts | On Freedom as Marronage Between Past and Future 221 Whitehead’s underground railroad contains elements of Afrofuturism, particularly in its depiction of the railroad as just that: an actual series of locomotives and underground stations rather than railroad as metaphor commonly understood. Yet this makes sense. Robin Kelley remarks in a forum on black art matters and aesthetics of the black radical tradition that, whilst “Afrofuturism is wonderful,” “it is also a new word for a longer Black radical tradition of Marronage, seeking out free space, liberated territory.”31 Whitehead captures much of this in Cora’s tale.32 Petit and grand marronage, especially the second form and the politics of recognition habitually connected to it,33 nevertheless frequently encounter problems. They don’t aim to dismantle at the structural level the social and political orders of slaveholding polities, thereby remaining unreflective of mass revolutionary politics seeking to shatter the entire fabric of the state of society. Embarking on these modes of flight, however, can be linked to revolutionary processes as the brilliant writings of Frederick Douglass attest, for the psychological, cognitive, and metaphysical valences of freedom are noteworthy in this regard. “Fight versus flight” is often a mantra classifying acts of marronage. I reject this. There are types of flight wherein the fight to exit regimes of slavery are paramount. Sovereign marronage and sociogenic marronage are terms I’ve coined to denote two other types of flight and models of freedom that address mass revolutionary politics unencumbered by an individual’s wants or collective isolationist desires. Whereas sovereign marronage posits freedom emanating from the authority of a sovereign entity such as a lawgiver-political leader and subsequently trickling down to a mass of people, sociogenic marronage refers to the non-sovereign forging of freedom by the masses from the bottom up. Sovereign marronage risks sullying the radicalism of marronage on a mass scale by the very concept of sovereignty that can stunt the input and visions of everyday people. Sociogenic marronage reflects the idealized scale and vision of versions of revolutionary politics, and by extension the most suggestive articulations of politics within the black radical tradition, devoid of hierarchy and the quest for unanimity sovereign moorings foster. Traditions, we must remember, still have multiplicities and competing ideals. Modern traditions after the Treaty of Westphalia operate overwhelmingly within structures of the nation-state. The nation-state, however, doesn’t interrupt marronage. If anything, the nation-state, with its modern and late modern shortcomings, catalyzes marronage in its fugitive and longue-durée challenges to statecraft legitimacy. Structures of rule and governance mutate across time and types of marronage exist prior to, during, and after moments of transformation. 222 Theory & Event I argue the four types of marronage simultaneously manifest themselves in the world. Taken as a whole, they allow us to bridge the gulf between the negative and positive streams of freedom theorizing in Western thought.

#### There is no ontology external to action– anti-Blackness occurs given specific politics that can be challenged via societal contestation – reading it as fait accompli undermines struggle and is analytically imprecise

Valdez et al 20 – Inés Valdez is Associate Professor of Political Science and the Director of the Latina/o Studies Program at Ohio State University.  Mat Coleman is Professor of Geography at the Ohio State University. Amna A. Akbar is a professor of law at The Ohio State University.  ("Law, Police Violence, and Race: Grounding and Embodying the State of Exception." Theory & Event, vol. 23 no. 4, 2020, p. 902-934. Project MUSE [muse.jhu.edu/article/767874](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/767874).

Jared Sexton’s definition of ontology departs from Wilderson in that it is explicitly political; i.e., anti-Blackness is the “outcome of a politics and thereby available to historic challenge through collective struggle.”45 Here, Sexton echoes an earlier wave of critical race scholarship that theorized race not as something fixed but as the contingent ever-contestable-and-shifting product of contests over land, labor, and resources, with affinities to our elaboration of police violence below.46 In the same breath, however, Sexton argues that anti-Blackness is not merely descriptive “because it functions as if it were a metaphysical property across the longue durée of the premodern, modern, and now postmodern eras.”47 In his words, “the application of the law of racial slavery is pervasive, regardless of variance or permutation in its operation across the better part of a millennium.”48 Thus, there is an ambivalence in Sexton’s scholarship. On the one hand, Sexton grounds existing social relations in the “killing and terrorizing” of Blacks and their expulsion “from the human fold” and thus declares the incommensurability between justice and existing anti-Black social and political structures.49 On the other hand, Sexton is interested in understanding how the common sense of the state “cancel[s] understanding” and proposes to instead decenter the state and dwell on the “pervasiveness, terror, gratuitousness” of state practices, and on the subjects that such ritualistic violence produces.50 We say more about the latter in the next section. Social Science and Reformism Given Sexton and Wilderson’s approaches to anti-Blackness as a metaphysical property of modernity and the constitutive ground for its major emancipatory discourses, it is not surprising that they both distrust social scientific research on race. In his work with Martinot, Sexton objects to how the focus on categorization in social scientific theories of race and racism disguises the genocidal power relations that are at the bottom of such systems of hierarchy.51 When the left focuses on class struggle, privilege, and juridical operations, Martinot and Sexton argue, they overlook that one cannot “confront[] the state as a harbinger of sanity” without being co-opted by it.52 Wilderson similarly criticizes how political science and sociology establish an injury in order to then demonstrate “intent, or racism” and then foolishly propose a solution.53 As he puts it, “if a Black is the very antithesis of a Human subject,” and the slave was presupposed as “an enabling vehicle that animated … evolving discourses of [exploited human] emancipation,” then the exclusion of Black people is not simply the result of repressive practices on the part of institutions but a paradigmatic exile.54 In other words, denouncing particular state practices of exclusion presumes the state can reform itself to undo the exile, a more benign view than Wilderson’s, which takes the state and civil society to be parasitic to the slave.55 Wilderson objects to centering police brutality because, he argues, a focus on exceptional violence suggests an inability to understand that Black people are policed all the time, in “captivity from birth to death.”56 Discussions of police brutality, in their very nature, he notes, aim for the empathy of “allies” who can only take “analysis in bitesized pieces.”57 There are by now extensive critiques of how strains of Afropessimism may undermine projects of movement building and multi-racial organizing through its framing of anti-Blackness as a fait accompli (rather than an ongoing project) and its lack of engagement with the Black freedom and anti-colonialist struggles and their intellectual traditions.58 Our focus here is another criticism of this literature, which singles out its disinterest in a theory of the state that would illuminate racialized police violence as a set of sociopolitical processes 59 that can then be the subject of meaningful contestation. Our aim is to bring these critiques closer to the ground by theorizing the everyday mechanics that allow for pervasive police violence to exist within a system of the rule of law. This is not because we trust the power of law to prevent violence, but because we want to understand more precisely how the pairing between law and violence works so seamlessly. In this we depart both from liberal legal accounts that privilege getting the laws right, and approaches that ontologize the pairing between law and anti-Black violence. We aim to show that this pairing is not ontological, but reliant on an identifiable set of actors operating within institutions that sanction particular forms of reason-giving and racial affect that shapeshift over time in response to changing social, political, economic conditions. Thus, we align with Martinot and Sexton’s stance when they dismiss social scientific work that catalogs but does not contest the paradigm of policing. Their aim, as ours, is to displace, rather than dispense with, the “institutional rationalisations of US white supremacy,” and to center practice by illuminating that events seemingly “beyond the rules of society” are “pawned off on us as proper and legitimate” and are ordinary for those at the receiving end of racialized violence.60 This impulse is akin to ours, and to Benjamin’s focus on the experience of the group targeted for violence as a way to radically contest institutions otherwise perceived as legitimate. This critical work, as noted earlier, needs to attend to history not as an unchanging continuity or linear trajectory, but as a resource to illuminate constellations between past and present moments of danger so as to inform radical critique. Theoretically, this means that rather than abandoning the analysis of violent practices of policing, we should engage in a counter-analysis, i.e., an analysis of the material through oppositional theorizing, that can illuminate the “the folds of the state,” i.e., the terrain that racial and class struggle aim to transform.61 In the rest of the paper we analyze the permanence and historical groundedness of police violence , which we conceptualize as constitutively racialized. By this we do not mean to say that the exception is ontologically anti-Black and brown. Instead, constitutively racialized means that racialization is anchored in the contingency of practice. Whereas contingency is often used to describe something as fleeting and/or transitory, we use the word to underscore the historicity and contextual materiality of specific practices. Anti-Blackness and anti-brownness are for us sticky, pervasive, and enduring qualities of the exceptional power of the police, and hence historically contingent.

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**Even if they are correct that black people can never escape oppression, a telos of freedom is a much better alternative---political Nihilism makes the ontological understanding of blackness ineffective if not engaging in political action which is the only way to utilize white institutions and use it against them**

[Shannon **Sullivan 17**] (Setting Aside Hope: A Pragmatist Approach to Racial Justice, In Pragmatism and Justice, Chair of Philosophy and Professor of Philosophy and Health Psychology at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, pg 231-245,) Full Date: xx-xx-2017 {PR/MoState} Accessed: 12-9-2017

In the twenty-first century, significant racial inequalities and anti-black violence continue to be rampant in the United States. Decades, even centuries, of political and legal struggle have done little to change that fact. This chapter will argue that black Americans need new tactics and strategies for responding to the white class privilege and white supremacy that fundamentally structure the country.1 They need to increase the number and type of tools in their racial justice toolkit, expanding beyond liberal faith in civil rights and white people's good intentions to cooperate with racial change. **The political and legal work** that **black and other people of color** (along with some white people) **have done to eliminate antiblack racism isn't working**. Pragmatists in particular need to be able to face up to that fact given that we value the practical work that ideas, concepts, and truths can do. Why then, as Calvin Warren pragmatically asks in the epigraph above, would we expect people fighting racism to keep doing the same thing? Why would anyone hope that the same failed actions and strategies would turn out any different in the future? **This kind of hope can function as a cruel optimism** that "works" by keeping black people focused on the very thing that undercuts their flourishing (Warren 2015, 221**). In line with Warren's concerns, I argue** that **black Americans' hope** that **political struggle can achieve racial justice tends to be a harmful emotion they should avoid.** I make my case in a pragmatist spirit that opposes Cornel West's influential argument for black hope. In contrast to West, I contend that **pragmatists and others concerned about racial injustice would do better to draw on** Derrick Bell's **racial realism and Warren's black nihilism to develop alternative strategies for addressing antiblack racism**. In related ways. **Bell and Warren urge their readers to reckon with the permanence of racism** and to give up hope that additional political struggle will eliminate it. After exploring their complementary accounts, I augment them with concrete evidence from the health sciences that black hope can be physically harmful to black people, weathering their bodies and damaging their psychosomatic health such that they are less able to withstand the inequities of antiblack racism. I conclude by arguing for the advantages of reading Bell's and Warren's claims about the permanence of racism pragmatically, that is, by assessing the truth of their claims via their effects. **The result is** the working hypothesis that **black people will have a much greater chance of developing new practices, habits, and strategies of flourishing in an antiblack world if they no longer hope** that **political struggle will eliminate racism**. The United States continues to struggle with deeply ingrained racial inequalities and wildly flagrant acts of racialized injustice even after abolishing its Jim Crow laws in the 1960s. From 2014 to 2016, for example, the United States was rocked by news of the violent deaths of unarmed black people at the hands of white police officers: Michael Brown in Ferguson. Missouri: Eric Garner in New York; Tamir Rice in Cleveland. Ohio: Walter Scott in North Charleston, South Carolina; and the list could go on. (For analysis, see Zack 2015.) Their deaths were soon followed by the fatal shooting of nine black people in a church in Charleston. South Carolina, by the alleged white supremacist Dylan Roof; the burning of several prominent black churches in the South as a possible backlash to calls for South Carolina to stop flying the Confederate flag; and the police shooting of Keith Scott in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Terence Crutcher in Tulsa. Oklahoma. The shocking violence against black Americans has occurred against a backdrop of chronic and growing racial inequality that the elimination of legal segregation has done little to address. Examples include the fact that in 2012, African American women made 64 cents for every dollar that a non-Hispanic while man made (Kerby 2013). Racial disparities in health also exist, for example in disproportionately higher rates of coronary artery disease, diabetes, stroke. HIV/AIDS, and infant mortality for African Americans (Smedley et al., no date). As of 2005. African Americans were incarcerated at nearly six times the rate of white people (Mauer and King 2007). Black families regularly are the targets of child welfare services that shift black children into foster homes, a process that fuels the school-to-prison pipeline since children in foster homes are significantly more likely to go to prison than children who remain with their parents/families (Roberts 2002). A racialized aesthetics continues to benefit while people and penalize people of color: white beauty standards are normative, especially for women, positioning dark-skinned and black women as "the beauty don'ts" in contrast to white women as "the beauty dos" (Bossip 2015). This list could go on. In the face of this discouraging present-day picture, hope for a better future would seem to be vital. Black hope in particular would appear crucial for enabling black people to carry on in the face of ongoing white domination and racial inequities. On this view, hope for a better world, a world that does not yet exist but that serves as a guiding ideal, is needed to provide the emotional fuel for the hard work that it will take to get closer to that world. To switch metaphors, black hope would seem to emotionally counterbalance the despair that white economic, social, geographical, and other forms of privilege will never end, both the despair of black people who suffer from white racism and that of white people who call for racism's demise. As Patrick Shade has argued. "Hoping can be sustaining, nurturing—indeed, advantageous. ... And so (in a cynical world) we should salvage the good name of hope and actively promote its life at every turn" (2001, 6, 202). While Shade's pragmatist theory makes clear that hope must be grounded in present realities, it also depicts hope as tied inextricably to better possibilities in the future. Shade's positive view of hope complements that of Cornel West. Fighting what he calls "the specter of despair [that] haunts America," West (2005) has made the most influential case for the importance of hope for African American people and communities. His criticism of black nihilism develops a conception of hope that is as deeply existentialist as it is pragmatist: it responds to the absurdity of a world that is built on the injustices and cruelties of white slavery, white segregation, white supremacy, and white class privilege. Even more important from West's perspective, his conception of hope offers an alternative to the despair that he worries has pervaded African American lives. West appreciates that other emotions such as rage can serve as an antidote to despair, but he instead counsels hope. According to West (1993), the source of the "nihilistic threat" to and "major enemy of black survival in America is neither oppression nor exploitation but rather the loss of hope." For West, hope is the emotion that best describes black Americans’ history of struggle and that can keep black people sane in the ongoing struggles of the present. It is communal and inclusive, striving to make the world a more just place for everyone and particularly to "sustain black solidarity in the midst of a hostile society" (West 1999, 437). West's hope is for the end of the "existential alienation, isolation and separation" that is entangled with racist discourses and that plagues many Western cultures (1999, 263). To its credit, West's particular account of hope is not Pollyannaish. For West, hope is not equivalent to optimism or to any other merely positive feeling. Optimism isn't tough enough to do the job that black people need, as West (2005) charges: "Optimism adopts the role of the spectator who surveys the evidence in order to infer that things are going to get better. Yet we know that the evidence does not look good. The dominant tendencies of our day are unregulated global capitalism, racial balkanization, social breakdown, and individual depression." In contrast, hope is actively participant and grounded, but also not bound by what the evidence tells us. Unlike optimism. West explains, "hope looks at the evidence and says, It doesn't look good at all. Doesn't look good at all. Gonna go beyond the evidence to create new possibilities based on visions that become contagious to allow people to engage in heroic actions always against the odds, no guarantee whatsoever.' That's hope" (quoted in A. Smith 2006, 160). Optimism also tends to run out of energy when the going gets difficult. "When you talk about hope, you have to be a long distance runner," West (2008, 209) insists, because it is going to take time and hard work to make racial progress in the United States. On West's view, however, significant progress has been made. He would sharply characterize as "narrow" the view that things are no better for black people today than they were in the days of slavery. He argues that "progressive formations have been the history of black folk" and that additional "progressive possibilities are reemerging" in the twenty-first century (2008, 214). For West, the road toward racial equality might be long, hard, and even difficult to discern, but it can and does lead to a genuinely democratic America that lives up to its constitutional promise of freedom and liberty for all. Black people are crucial to the realization of this possibility according to West, and thus they need to buoy themselves up with hope. In West's opinion, Americans need to acknowledge "the degree to which black people in America provide one of the fundamental keys to the future, if the future is going to be about freedom and equality" (2008. 194). West's ideal of deep democracy in America thus is fueled by black people's "hope linked to combative spirituality," which empowers black people to "go against the grain and muster the love and will to resist" (2008. 209). For all the absurdity of white domination and West's refusal to be optimistic about its defeat, West's notion of communal hope—like that of most pragmatists, I would surmise—is deeply humanist. I use "humanism" here in the sense that Albert Camus (1991) characterizes it. As Camus would charge, West's humanism refuses to believe in the permanence of white racism and/or that the evil of white racism cannot someday be overcome by human struggle. (I will return to Camus below in the context of Bell's work.) Or perhaps it would be more accurate to call West's progressivism as much religious as it is pragmatist because of the prophetic Christianity that informs it. Human beings alone might not be able to overcome racist evil; they might need religious help to do so. Either way, however, West's existential progressivism/pragmatism is grounded in a conviction that the right thing will happen in the end. However bad things look now, however difficult it is to envision a happy ending, we can go beyond the evidence and engage in heroic actions to create a better future. Racial inequalities might still exist, so the progressive story continues, but think about how our ancestors went against the odds and overcame chattel slavery and Jim Crow. With ongoing political struggle, we also can do that—we can make the leap. We today can improve the world's racial situation even further. Don't give up hope: racial justice can and will be achieved someday. But what if someday never comes? What if, as Bell has argued, the political, legal, and historical circumstances of the United States have made "racism ... an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society" and thus "Black people will never gain full equality in this country" (1992a, ix, 12; see also Bell 1992b)? In that case, ongoing hope that political struggle will end racism is a farce: a joke that mocks black people without their realizing it, hoodwinking them into thinking that better times are on the horizon if they only will suffer and struggle more to reach them. According to Bell, that's a fair assessment of where things stand in the United States at the end of the twentieth century, and by extension at the beginning of the twenty-first. Federal civil rights laws and policies, such as affirmative action, the desegregation of US schools, voting rights acts (which, notably, were eliminated by the US Supreme Court in October 2013), and fair housing acts, have failed to overcome the devastating legacy of chattel slavery in the United States. Bell writes in 1992 that the income gap between the rich and poor—a very racially colored gap—was nearing a crisis point, but the gap he was concerned about is a mere sliver compared to the chasm of racial disparities in wealth that exist today (Bell 1992a, 8-9). The economic recession of 2008 was particularly hard on black households in the United States; by 2010 the median net household worth of white American families was twenty-two times that of black American families (Luhby 2012). The water fountain signs in the United States that say "colored" and "white" may have disappeared, but post-segregation changes such as these do not mean that racial discrimination has disappeared, or even necessarily been weakened. They might mean merely that the form of racial discrimination has changed and, moreover, changed into something largely unofficial and delivered via race-neutral policies and language that only makes white class privilege more difficult to identify and combat. In that case, as Bell predicts, "even those herculean efforts we hail as successful will produce no more than temporary 'peaks of progress,' short-lived victories that slide into irrelevance as racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain white dominance" (1992b, 373). Black Americans need to accept that white racism is as virulent as ever and that they will always have a "permanent subordinate status" in their country (1992a, 12). Bell realized very soon after the civil rights era that the idea that the United States is making progress against racism tends merely to inflate the egos and assuage the guilt of good white liberals. "The worship of equality rules benefits whites by preserving a benevolent but fictional self-image, and such worship benefits blacks by preserving hope," Bell observes and then adds, "but I think we've arrived at a place in history where the harms of such worship outweigh its benefits" (1992a, 101). Along with the belief that white people and institutions will ever regard or treat black people as equals, black people need to jettison the hopeful expectation that white racism will ever end. **Acknowledging "the permanence of [black people's] subordinate status" in the** United States, **Bell explains, "allows [black Americans] to avoid despair, and frees [them] to imagine and implement racial strategies that can bring fulfillment and even triumph**" (1992b. 373-374). **Most people**—especially, but not only white people—**have yet to acknowledge how resilient white domination is** in the United States. From chattel slavery to Jim Crow to "the new Jim Crow" (Alexander 2012), the more white domination changes, the more it stays the same. "Supposedly, the generation that murdered Trayvon Martin and Renisha McBride is much better than the generation that murdered Emmett Till" Warren dryly remarks, and this so-called improvement is supposed to encourage black people that even more "progress" in black lives—and deaths—can be achieved (2015, 217). As Warren's quip suggests, by participating in hopeful political struggle for a future filled with racial equality that likely never will be present, West's existential pragmatism not only unintentionally benefits white people. It also harms black people by enacting what Warren calls "the politics of hope," which establishes an insidiously false dichotomy between hope and nihilism. On the logic of political hope, if a person or group of people doesn't have a hopeful relationship to the future, then they must be sunk in nihilistic despair. The politics of hope thus "terrifies with the dread of 'no alternative,'" which operates not just via the binary of hope/despair but also by the complementary binaries of "problem/solution" and "action/inaction" (2015. 222). If one hopes and takes action, one can find a future solution to today's problems. According to the politics of hope, hope is necessary for motivating political action to find answers to racial problems. Giving up hope thus raises the specter of inaction, of doing nothing and thus accepting the racist status quo. Hopelessness thus is the equivalent of a failed relationship to the future, which in turn is the equivalent of refusing to fight racial injustice. The lure of the always-not-yet solution to present-day racial problems is symptomatic of the metaphysical nature of political hope, according to Warren. Political hope's future object of racial justice is "not tethered to real history," which makes it an "object of political fantasy" rather than an achievable goal (Warren 2015, 221). "The objective of the Political is to keep blacks in relation to this political object—in an unending pursuit of it," Warren explains, and this pursuit "strengthens the very anti-black system that would pulverize black being" (2015, 221). Black people's political struggle for this fantastical freedom enables modern societies to pride themselves on their advanced civilization; in this way, black suffering is necessary for modernity's promises of progress. Freedom as modernity knows it was created by means of chattel slavery, and thus "black emancipation is world destructive" for modernity and its ideals (Patterson 1982; see also Warren 2015, 239). Black suffering cannot be ended without the known world coming to an end, and so the world uses black hope to keep black suffering in place (Warren 2015, 242). While Warren's argument against the politics of hope primarily targets its metaphysical nature, the destruction of black bodies that he analyzes is no mere abstraction. Neither, of course, are the intractable racial inequalities described by Bell. In both cases, antiblackness involves "the literal destruction of black bodies that provide the psychic, economic, and philosophical resources for modernity to objectify, forget, and ultimately obliterate Being (nonmetaphysical Being)" (Warren 2015. 327). This occurred initially through the transatlantic transformation of human beings into things (slaves) and then subsequently through other social, legal, and extralegal ways of annihilating black people and communities, including political tactics such as poll taxes, literacy tests, and the convict leasing system (2015,216). Recent developments in the medical health sciences reveal another material way to see how the metaphysical, legal, and economic destruction of black people via hope is both literal and physical. A concrete connection between hope and poor health and death exists for black Americans, and I now turn to that connection to bodily situate Bell's and Warren's accounts. Psychologists and other social scientists in the United Slates recently have focused on how African Americans cope with so-called mundane racism: not the big-booted racism of chattel slavery, lynching, or even legalized segregation, but rather the more mundane and subtle or "invisible" racial attacks that increasingly are being documented in post-Jim Crow America. Examples include the student who rolls his eyes in class when he realizes that the black woman at the front of the room will be his professor or the black person checking out at the grocery store who gets hassled to show several forms of identification to cash her check when the white person in front of her did not. In many ways, microaggressions such as these are minor in comparison to the major assaults that African Americans historically have experienced and still do experience. At minimum, racial microaggressions are not spectacularly horrific in the way that the overt violence of shootings and chokeholds is. But just because we tend not to notice the destructiveness of racial microaggressions does not mean they are trivial. Racial microaggressions can be deadly, although we (especially white people) often don't recognize or want to acknowledge their violent effects. De facto white class privilege in the form of racial microaggressions contributes to people of color's "racial battle fatigue," which entails "the constant use or redirection of energy for coping against mundane racism which depletes psychological and physiological resources needed in other important, creative, and productive areas of life" (Smith. Hung, and Franklin 2012, 40). Racial battle fatigue has been linked empirically to depression, tension, and generalized anxiety disorder in African Americans, and the stress associated with all of these psychological problems also contributes to physiological weathering that harms black health, contributing to high rates of hypertension, cardiovascular disease, pre-term birth rates, and infant mortality to name a few (Smith, Hung and Franklin 2012. 37. 40; D. Smith 2012). The effects of white racism literally get inside and help constitute the bodies of black people in harmful ways. They wear down the body's various systems by creating a high allostatic load via stressors that accumulate over time. The results are health problems such as disproportionately high rates of pre-term birth, infant mortality, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and accelerated physiological aging (Blitstein 2009). Racism hurts—literally—and it also kills in ways that are subtler but no less deadly than the lyncher's noose or the neighbor's bullet (Drexler 2007). These effects, moreover, can be transgenerational. physiologically passed onto subsequent generations through various epigenetic changes (Sullivan 2013). So what can black people do to mitigate the harmful effects of de facto white supremacy and racial microaggressions and to ward off racial battle fatigue? As the same study documents, the first answer is simply for them to realize the need for coping strategies that build resilience. Black people living in countries that formally have eliminated racial discrimination and yet that are still informally structured by white class privilege need to actively seek out ways to manage and resist racial battle fatigue. The second answer is that collective methods of coping are much more effective than individual ones. Social support systems that, for example, provide communal spaces for emotional expression and processing of experiences of racial microaggressions were most effective in helping African American people cope with race-related stress, as one recent study demonstrated about African American college students (Smith, Hung, and Franklin 2012. 39). This advice might seem rather obvious, but it turns out that students in the study with high levels of hope that they could achieve their goals in life, school, and work generally did not use active coping strategies. They tended not to seek out social support or find venues in which they could share their experiences of white racism with others. The explanation for this behavior is that hope on the part of black students was empirically correlated with a sense of personal efficacy: the more that students thought they could individually surmount obstacles in their path, the greater their sense of hope for the future, and vice versa. And the greater their hope and sense of individual efficacy, the less likely a person was to seek out communities and networks with other black people. On the flip side, low-hope individuals did actively seek out social support systems. Because they did not have much hope that they could overcome the race-based obstacles in their path, they tended to seek out collective avenues for expressing their anger and frustration and for taking action against racism (Smith, Hung, and Franklin 2012. 39). The upshot here is that black hope not only did not serve as an effective coping strategy for black people, but it actually decreased the likelihood that they would seek out coping strategies that were effective. This study of a mixed-gender group of African American college students is supported by another study focusing on African American men. which underscores that hope is not always or necessarily a healthy response to an unjust world. African American men with high to moderate levels of hope that racial justice would prevail experienced more stress when confronted with racial microaggressions than did African American men with low to moderate levels of hopefulness (Smith. Hung, and Franklin 2012. 50). It was low-hope African American men who best recognized the pervasiveness of racist discrimination in US society and thus developed racial socialization techniques that allowed them to keep the pernicious effects of racism at bay long enough to develop counterstrategies to it (2012. 50). While some scientific studies that do not consider race have lauded the health benefits of hope, demonstrating how hope can help the body reduce physical pain by triggering the release of natural analgesics such as endorphins and enkephalins (Groopman 2005. 175-179). we should not necessarily universalize these conclusions. "Hope [simply] does not have the same function in the context of African American men dealing with race-related stress and racial microaggressions as it does in previously studied contexts" and thus promoting hope as a way for black Americans to combat the effects of white racism can be counterproductive to racial justice (Smith. Hung, and Franklin 2012,51). It can tear down, rather than undergird black people by indirectly damaging their health and leading them to neglect effective social strategies for coping with white racism. These studies provide concrete support for the claim that black hope is not a good alternative to the despair diagnosed by West in black American communities. It does not tend to help African Americans cope well with the insidious effects of white racism, and it even can contribute to a decline in black people's psychological and physiological health. While West likely is right that black communities are crucial for black people to be able to withstand antiblack racism, it is important to note, in accordance with the above studies, that **those communities that helped mitigate the harmful physiological effects of antiblack racism were not particularly based on hoping. They instead were based on coping**. They were collective outlets for sharing experiences of and venting frustration about stressful racial encounters, for example, **which is not the same thing as generating hope that antiblack racism can be eliminated**. **What might black communities that cope look like?** For starters, **"coping**" as used here **does not mean surrendering**, selling out, **or merely getting by. Communities that cope would be communities that recognize that "nothing has worked" against antiblack racism and that black people "have exhausted the discourses of humanism and the strategies of equality**" (Warren 2015.228). I want to underscore the pragmatic significance of this recognition. **Pragmatically understood, the value of things is found in their effects**—**including** the ultimate effect of **whether they enable flourishing** (Sullivan 2001)—and **the effect of humanism hasn't been the flourishing of black people**. Pursuing strategies of racial equality hasn't worked. These realizations are important for the effects they can have: they allow a very different set of strategies in relationship to antiblack racism to emerge. Rather than defeatist, letting go of the goal of racial equality can be liberating and invigorating for black people. It can free them up to envision new goals, to develop new truths about how best to respond to racism, and thus to stop banging their heads against a wall that will not budge. "Casting off the equality ideology." Bell urges, "will lift the sights----From this broadened perspective on events and problems, [black people] can better appreciate and cope with racial subordination" (1992b, 378). For example. Bell claims that rather than spend energy and time trying to fully integrate American schools—which still has not happened sixty years after Brown v. Board of Education and has been reversed in some major cities (see, e.g., Michelson, Smith, and Nelson 2015)—black people should work on raising money for and strengthening all-black schools (1992a. 63). More generally, racial realism would urge that black people devise strategies that acknowledge the "white self-interest principle": white people will never do anything to improve the lives of black people unless it first and foremost benefits themselves as well, particularly economically (Bell 1992a. 54). In many ways, **then, successfully fighting white racism is a very crude, nonsophisticated business. It isn't about devising fancy moral arguments** or ideal forms of jurisprudence; **it** instead **involves "making a shameless appeal to the predictable self-interest of whites"** and their wallets (1992a. 107). One could add that **it** also **relies on the** predictable **self-delusion**, self-grandeur, and racial ignorance **of while people**. Bell (1992a, 62) argues that black people—both individuals and communities—need to be like Brer Rabbit of the Uncle Remus stories, who tricks Brer Fox into setting him free by convincing Brer Fox that throwing Brer Rabbit into the briar patch is the worst thing that Brer Fox could ever do to him. Brer Fox acts in what he thinks is his own best interest—an interest in harming Brer Rabbit by keeping him captive—and in so doing, he does the very thing that enables Brer Rabbit to escape. A masterful tactician at manipulating the canine ignorance and solipsistic focus of Brer Fox. Brer Rabbit doesn't rely on rational argumentation, nor does he depend on the law or any universal rights of animal kind to obtain his freedom. He instead is ruthlessly realistic about the malicious self-interest that motivates Brer Fox, and for that reason he is able to devise an effective strategy for getting out of his clutches. Brer Rabbit doesn't succeed in making any sort of large-scale or structural change in the relationship between foxes and rabbits, nor does he particularly hope to. He instead focuses practically on how to save his life in the midst of a particular struggle with Brer Fox. and through his struggle, he is able to flourish even if the overarching tyranny of foxes has not been eliminated. **Because struggle is central to racial realism, racial realism is neither passive nor apathetic. It is not nihilist** in the sense that West uses the term. But neither is it **hopeful.** Even though they might bear a superficial similarity, the struggle involved in racial realism isn't the same struggle encouraged by West's politics of hope. The struggle of political hope is for the fantastical object of a future without antiblack racism**. It insists** that "**legitimate action takes place in the political" and** that "**a refusal to 'do polities' is equivalent to 'doing nothing'**" (Warren 2015, 223). **The struggle of racial realism, in contrast, doesn't involve believing that the right thing will win out.** Bell's racial realism invokes a different kind of existentialism than that of West, appealing to Camus (Bell 1992a, x). As Camus's main character from The Plague (1991) understands, one resists and must resist the plague—whether in the form of mass death, the Nazi Holocaust, or in this case white class privilege and white supremacy—even though, or perhaps precisely because, one cannot conquer it. There is no ultimate progress or victory to anticipate, no matter whether human struggle is assisted by the divine. The plague might be beaten back for a while, but it always will return. Fighting it is absurd if the goal of the fight is to eliminate it. On Camus's view, one fights the plague for different reasons, ones **that have to do with affirming the dignity and value of humanity**. Likewise, on Bell's view, **black people's "struggle for freedom, is** bottom, **a manifestation of our humanity that survives and grows stronger through resistance to oppression**, **even if that oppression is never overcome**" (1992b. 378). If **this is a kind of humanism**, it is **absurd rather than progressive**.

#### hope creates moments of spiritual rejuvenation by forming affective investments into the project of political change. Total despair is a reflexive form of naïve cynicism that denies the work of engaged activists. Incremental change provides breaks within a bleaker system of racism that link turns their arguments

May 2005 Todd, Phil Prof @ Clemson “To Change the World, To Celebrate Life” PHILOSOPHY & SOCIAL CRITICISM • vol 31 nos 5–6 • pp. 517–531

And what happens from there? From the meetings, from the rallies, from the petitions and the teach-ins? What happens next? There is, after all, always a next. If you win this time – end aid to the contras, divest from apartheid South Africa, force debt-forgiveness by technologically advanced countries – there is always more to do. There is the de-unionization of workers, there are gay rights, there is Burma, there are the Palestinians, the Tibetans. There will always be Tibetans, even if they aren’t in Tibet, even if they aren’t Asian. But is that the only question: Next? Or is that just the question we focus on? What’s the next move in this campaign, what’s the next campaign? Isn’t there more going on than that? After all, **engaging in political organizing is a practice**, or a group of practices. **It contributes to making you who you are. It’s where the power is, and where your life is, and where the intersection of your life and those of others** (many of whom you will never meet, even if it’s for their sake that you’re involved) and the buildings and streets of your town is. **This moment when you are seeking to change the world**, whether by making a suggestion in a meeting or singing at a rally or marching in silence or asking for a signature on a petition, is not a moment in which you don’t exist. It’s not a moment of yours that you sacrifice for others so that it no longer belongs to you. It remains a moment of your life, sedimenting in you to make you what you will become, emerging out of a past that is yours as well. What will you make of it, this moment? How will you be with others, those others around you who also do not cease to exist when they begin to organize or to protest or to resist? The illusion is to think that this has nothing to do with you. You’ve made a decision to participate in world-changing. Will that be all there is to it? Will it seem to you a simple sacrifice, for this small period of time, of who you are for the sake of others? Are you, for this moment, a political ascetic? Asceticism like that is dangerous. Freedom lies not in our distance from the world but in the historically fragile and contingent ways we are folded into it, just as we ourselves are folds of it. If we take Merleau-Ponty’s Being not as a rigid foundation or a truth behind appearances but as the historical folding and refolding of a univocity, then our freedom lies in the possibility of other foldings. Merleau-Ponty is not insensitive to this point. His elusive concept of the invisible seems to gesture in this direction. Of painting, he writes: the proper essence of the visible is to have a layer of invisibility in the strict sense, which it makes present as a certain absence . . . There is that which reaches the eye directly, the frontal properties of the visible; but there is also that which reaches it from below . . . and that which reaches it from above . . . where it no longer participates in the heaviness of origins but in free accomplishments.9 Elsewhere, in The Visible and the Invisible, he says: if . . . the surface of the visible, is doubled up over its whole extension with an invisible reserve; and if, finally, in our flesh as the flesh of things, the actual, empirical, ontic visible, by a sort of folding back, invagination, or padding, exhibits a visibility, a possibility that is not the shadow of the actual but its principle . . . an interior horizon and an exterior horizon between which the actual visible is a partitioning and which, nonetheless, open indefinitely only upon other visibles . . .10 What are we to make of these references? We can, to be sure, see the hand of Heidegger in them. But we may also, and for present purposes more relevantly, see an intersection with Foucault’s work on freedom. There is an ontology of freedom at work here, one that situates freedom not in the private reserve of an individual but in the unfinished character of any historical situation. There is more to our historical juncture, as there is to a painting, than appears to us on the surface of its visibility. The trick is to recognize this, and to take advantage of it, not only with our thoughts but with our lives. And that is why, in the end, there can be no such thing as a sad revolutionary. To seek to change the world is to offer a new form of life-celebration. It is to articulate a fresh way of being, which is at once a way of seeing, thinking, acting, and being acted upon. It is to fold Being once again upon itself, this time at a new point, to see what that might yield. There is, as Foucault often reminds us, no guarantee that this fold will not itself turn out to contain the intolerable. In a complex world with which we are inescapably entwined, a world we cannot view from above or outside, there is no certainty about the results of our experiments. Our politics are constructed from the same vulnerability that is the stuff of our art and our daily practices. But to refuse to experiment is to resign oneself to the intolerable; it is to abandon both the struggle to change the world and the opportunity to celebrate living within it. And to seek one aspect without the other – life-celebration without world-changing, world-changing without life-celebration – is to refuse to acknowledge the chiasm of body and world that is the wellspring of both. If we are to celebrate our lives, if we are to change our world, then perhaps the best place to begin to think is our bodies, which are the openings to celebration and to change, and perhaps the point at which the war within us that I spoke of earlier can be both waged and resolved. That is the fragile beauty that, in their different ways, both Merleau- Ponty and Foucault have placed before us. The question before us is whether, in our lives and in our politics, we can be worthy of it.

**Libidinal explanations of antiblackness flatten individual possibility and positions black existence as responsible for violence**

**Cheah 11** (Pheng Cheah Rhetoric @ Berkeley ’11 “Crises of Money” in Creolization of Theory eds. Françoise Lionnet, Shu-mei Shih p. 84-93)

In this chapter, I examine the creolization of the psychoanalytic concept of trauma as it becomes transposed in colonial space in the writings of Frantz Fanon. I outline some of the central presuppositions of Fanon's application of the concept of trauma to the critique of colonialism. I then consider how Fanon's creolization of the concept of trauma into an analytical principle for understanding colonial power and oppression must itself be **radically questioned** in contemporary globalization. The second section of the chapter proceeds by testing these presuppositions through an examination of a series of events in Asia that on the surface seem to lend themselves perfectly to the vocabulary of trauma: the financial crises that afflicted East and Southeast Asia that were triggered by the assault on the Thai baht by currency speculators, on May 14-15, 1997. I then conclude with a brief indication of some future directions for postcolonial cultural critique. Let me place two caveats at the threshold. First, I am not questioning the usefulness of trauma as a category of clinical practice or meta-psychological theory. I am **only** concerned with the **limits** of that concept as it has been taken up in postcolonial **cultural critique** for understanding the **operations of power** in the contemporary world. Second, a comprehensive discussion of the causes and devastating consequences of the Asian financial crisis is beyond the scope of this chapter, and, indeed, beyond my abilities. When we practice cultural critique, the best we can do is to offer a grid of intelligibility for understanding a concrete situation in a certain political interest. There is an enormous body of political-economic analysis concerned with the financial crisis. I have no disciplinary expertise in political economy, but I can learn from this literature and use it to reevaluate and tinker with the basic presuppositions of postcolonial theory so that it can be less hubristic and more in touch with postindustrial global capitalism. Such a process of transformative transposition is in principle open-ended. A critic must always stop within the limits of what he or she believes to be "the current conjuncture." But that coupure is as determined as it is arbitrary. No theoretical analysis can be interminable. Trauma in Postcolonial Cultural Critique: Fanon's Creolization of Freud on Trauma The concept of trauma **originates from** the etiology of neurosis. In its earliest formulation by **Freud** in his collaborative work with Josef Breuer, trauma originates in the affect of fright that accompanies an accidental event or physical injury. When such a distressing affect is not adequately processed by the affected subject by means of responsive action, adequate representation, or verbalization (abreaction), it is converted into a repressed memory. The memory of the affect then becomes a psychical trauma and the cause behind the formation of various kinds of neurotic symptoms. In Freud's words, "a trauma would have to be defined as an accretion of excitation in the nervous system, which the latter has been unable to dispose of adequately by motor reaction" ("Extracts," 137). "Any impression which the nervous system has difficulty in disposing of by means of associative thinking or of motor reaction becomes a psychical trauma" (154). It is important to emphasize that the trauma is not the mere physical event but the memory of the psychical affect the event induces. In cases of trauma, the repressed memory of the affect becomes lodged or encrypted within the psyche and continues to act long after the passing of the physical event.' As Breuer and Freud put it, "The psychical trauma- or more precisely the memory of the trauma-acts [ wirkt]like a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still operative [gegenwiirtig wirkendes Agens]" ("vM," 85; 6). The psychical trauma thus functions like a parasite that will continually weaken its host or, better yet, a spirit whose continuing effectivity will repeatedly undermine the self-control of the living body it has possessed. For present purposes, two features of Freud's early understanding of trauma are important. First, even before his formulation of the concept of libido or sexual energy, Freud suggested in his individual case studies that trauma should be analyzed in terms of quantified excitations (Erregungen) that impinge on the nervous system and leave a residue or trace because they have not been discharged either through abreaction or thought activity: "We regard hysterical symptoms as the effects and residues of excitations which have impacted on [beeinfluflt] the nervous system as traumas. It is impossible any longer at this point to avoid introducing the idea of quantities (even though not measurable ones). We must regard the process as though a sum of excitation impinging on the nervous system is transformed into chronic symptoms in so far as it has not been employed for external action in proportion to its amount" ("Frau Emmy," 141; 86). These accumulating excitations are transformed or converted into chronic somatic symptoms, and where the transformation is incomplete, "some part at least of the affect that accompanies the trauma persists [ verbleibt] in consciousness as a component of the subject's state of feeling [Stimmung]" (142; 86-87). Second, Freud argues that trauma involves a radical decentering of the ego that causes it to cede the autonomy of its intentional actions. The psychical trauma occurs because **the ego** **expels** an idea that is in **contradiction** with itself, which it does by repressing it into the unconscious. The traumatic moment proper, then, is the one at which the contradiction forces itself upon the ego [der Widerspruch sich dem Ich aufdriingt] and at which the latter decides on the expulsion [ Verweisung] of the contradictory idea [Vorstellung]. That idea is not annihilated by an expulsion of this kind, but merely repressed into the unconscious. When this process occurs for the first time there comes into being a nucleus and centre of crystallization for the formation [Bildung] of a psychical group divorced from the ego-a group around which everything which would imply an acceptance of the contradictory idea subsequently collects. The splitting of consciousness in these cases of acquired hysteria is accordingly a deliberate and intentional one, at least often introduced by a volitional act. The actual outcome is something other than what the subject [das Individuum] intended: he wanted to do away with [aujheben] an idea, as though it had never appeared, but all he succeeds in doing is to isolate it psychically. ("MiB Lucy R.," 182; 123) In this intentional act of repression, the ego unwittingly undermines its own autonomy by splitting itself. It creates or forms a psychical abscess that is divorced from itself, and this abscess can be filled with other memories and associations that are linked to the contradictory idea it seeks to banish. The contradictory idea therefore becomes an other within the self that has a life of its own. We should therefore understand trauma as a form of radical heteronomy where the trace or mnemic residue of something that originates from outside the subject (the accident or physical injury) takes shape within the very inside of the subject as an alterity or otherness, an alien power that undermines its self-control. This means that trauma is **always already** a matter of domination (Herrschajt) and power (Macht). It concerns domination of an a priori kind, domination that **precedes any historical form** of social or political domination, because it is always about the security and self-mastery-one might even say the sovereignty-of the ego, the protection of an interiority from anything that impacts on or falls on this inside from the outside. The more elaborate account of trauma in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1940) emphasizes once again its psychical character. It is not "direct damage to the molecular structure or even to the histological structure of the elements of the nervous system" but concerns effects produced on the mental apparatus, "the organ of the mind [ Seelenorgan] by the breach in the shield against stimuli [Reizschutzes] and by the problems that follow in its train." 2 What is important here is not just the excitation caused by the external stimulus but the ability of the mental apparatus to protect itself against such excitations through anticipation and defense mechanisms such as libidinal cathexes that can bind excitations. Trauma occurs when the ego's capacity for security is compromised, when the protective shield it erects against the outside world is penetrated. This is the first step of the ego's loss of self-mastery, when its system of defense begins to break down. "We describe as 'traumatic' any excitations from outside which are powerful [stark] enough to break through the protective shield .... The concept of trauma necessarily implies a connection of this kind with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli [ wirksame Reizabhaltung]. Such an event as an external trauma is bound to provoke a disturbance on a large scale in the functioning of the organism's energy and to set in motion every possible defensive means [Abwehrmittel]" (JL, 29; 301). Precisely because trauma is the breakdown of the psychical security system, it is connected to fright (Schreck) instead of mere fear (Furcht) or anxiety (Angst).3 Fright refers to a state of encountering danger without any prior preparation because such danger, like the pure event, comes upon one completely by surprise. The mental apparatus is here completely vulnerable because its defenses are not up. In contradistinction, anxiety, which is a state of expecting danger or preparing for it, can never lead to traumatic neurosis because "it protects its subject against fright and so against fright-neuroses" (JL, 10; 282). Indeed, preparedness for anxiety and the hypercathexis of the receptive system that accompanies it "represents the ultimate line of defense of the shield against stimuli [die letzte Linie des Reizschutzes darstellt]" (JL, 32; 303)·4 We cannot simply say that the vocabulary of security and protection and the imagery of a defensive position in war that permeates Freud's distinction between "systems that are unprepared and systems that are well prepared through being hypercathected" are merely metaphorical (JL, 32, 303). It may very well be that the phenomenon of security that is a crucial theme in the political philosophy of Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, and Locke, among many others, is merely the projection or extension of the security of the mental apparatus-its defensive or protective mechanisms in relation to stimuli-in the realm of social-anthropological existence.5 One can under stand psychical security as a pre-positive form of security that precedes any historical form of social or political security and the loss of self-mastery and autonomy in traumatic neuroses as a form of pre-positive domination by another that can function as an opening and foothold for social and political domination. In other words, the security of an individual psyche's interiority in its interaction with the external world and its management of internal excitations is the basis for historical forms of sociality and political community. Conversely, psychical insecurity or trauma is also the basis for violence and domination qua the determinate negation of community and belonging. This is a theme that is **radicalized** in Lacan's theory of aggressivity as an **original tendency** of the **ego's** paranoiac **structure** (see Lacan 1977). Let us now turn to consider how Frantz Fanon deploys the concept of trauma for the political critique of colonial racist violence. In Black Skin, White Masks, the concept is modified in two related ways **even as its governing motif**, the protection of interiority, remains intact. On the one hand, Fanon finds Freud's concept of trauma illuminating because it locates the origins of neuroses in specific psychical traumas or pathogenic experiences (Erlebnisse) back to which symptoms can be traced through psychoanalytic treatment.6 On the other hand, Fanon suggests that psychoanalysis is only of limited usefulness for the analysis of colonial racism because its primary focus is on the individual. "Freud insisted that the individual factor be taken into account through psychoanalysis. He substituted for a phylogenetic theory the ontogenetic perspective. It will be seen that the black man's alienation is not an individual question. Beside phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny" (BSWM, n). "For the black man .. . historical and economic realities come into the picture" (BSWM, 1611125). The psychical trauma caused by colonial racism therefore involves a twofold deformation of the classical concept of trauma. First, the traumatic **experience** of colonial racism (as emblematized by identity-fixing racial slurs or appellations such as "dirty nigger" or "look, a Negro," or racist images that circulate in popular culture) is **registered** by an individual who experiences it **not as a unique individual** but as a member of a larger group, the colonized black man. Second, the weakness or impotence of the individual's mental apparatus, its lack of preparation and inability to bind trauma-related excitations through hypercathexis, is caused by material sociopolitical circumstances, namely, the context of colonial domination, in which **the black man is always already constituted as** an **inadequate or injured subject**. In other words, the excessive excitation and the resulting trauma are induced **not by an isolated** accidental **event** or unexpected injury but by the **formative impact** of the social context of colonial domination on individual consciousness, especially the extreme exploitation, deprivation, and immiseration brought about by colonial violence and the decimation of traditional values and binding communal norms. In Fanon's words, "The arrival of the white man in Madagascar shattered not only [the Malagasy's] horizons but its psychological mechanisms .... An island like Madagascar, invaded overnight by 'pioneers of civilization,' even if those pioneers conducted themselves as well as they knew how, suffered the loss of its basic structure . . .. The landing of the white man on Madagascar inflicted injury without measure. The consequences of that irruption of Europeans onto Madagascar were not psychological alone, since, as every authority has observed, there are inner relationships between consciousness and the social context" (BSWM, 97). We can call this kind of incessant quotidian trauma that characterizes colonialism "structural" or "systemic" trauma because.its unceasing or continuous character arises from the oppressive processes of a structure or system that is imposed on a subject, which is forced to inhabit that structure or system.7 The three terms Fanon deploys for the analysis of colonial trauma are "the collective unconscious," "collective catharsis," and the "historico-racial" or "racial-epidermal schema." In Fanon's reconstruction, the Jungian postulate of a collective unconscious refers to the immoral impulses and shameful desires of a civilization or society as a collective subject that have been repressed. If this collective unconscious is territorially situated in terms of a specific civilization, then in the European collective unconscious, the principle of evil is projected onto African people (BSWM, 190). With the onset of colonialism, the European collective unconscious and all its archetypes are imposed on the African, who therefore identifies with the white man and European civilization and repudiates his blackness as a signifier of evil and immorality.8 But because the black man in colonial society is repeatedly reminded of, and is compelled to recognize, his blackness, this ambiguity of being and repudiating blackness cannot be repressed. Instead it must be endured and suffered in daily conscious existence. This is an important component of the systemic character of colonial trauma. In Fanon's words, "the negro lives an ambiguity that is extraordinarily neurotic. .. . [He] recognizes that he is living an error" (BSWM, 192). Unlike "normal" trauma, if one can say that, colonial trauma is not hidden, forgotten, or repressed.9 Instead, colonial trauma has subjugated the black person's very consciousness and colonized every facet of his daily existence such that he consciously lives and suffers his entire body as an open sore. This radical or hyperbolic neurosis is exacerbated by the fact that collective **catharsis is not possible for the black person**. Collective catharsis refers to a channel or outlet that enables the release of collective aggressive forces that have accumulated in children (nswM, 145). Comic books and adventure stories are cultural forms of media or mediation that enable catharsis through the child's identification with the protagonist, whose aggressive behavior is directed at the villain. But since the villain is always figured as black, and the black child identifies with the white protagonist and adopts his attitude and truths, the black child develops the same self-destructive and suicidal consciousness found in the systemic trauma of the black adult. Here, as in the case of the collective unconscious, the systematic circulation of colonial-racist cultural images, significations, and representations is the structural cause of quotidian suffering and victimage. Indeed, such images and representations are part of the mechanism of individuation of the black person. They actively fabricate his individual body in all its sensuous corporeality by creating a "historico-racial schema," a "corporeal malediction" that obstructs the formation of a genuine corporeal schema through which a genuine, autonomous dialectical relation between body and world can take place (BSWM, m). In Fanon's poignant words, "the white man ... had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories" (ns WM, m). Here too, the entire body of the black person, or more precisely, its image, is the **immediate, real cause** of traumatic suffering: "I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood?" (nswM, 112). The trauma associated with the colonial experience thus stretches the classical psychoanalytic concept in at least three ways. First, it is a systemic form of trauma that is incessant or planned. Instead of being generated by an isolated event of injury, the trauma issues from social, political, and economic structures. Second, the traumatic cause (blackness) is not repressed or forgotten. It is patently and obviously part of the realm of conscious per ception and is openly recognized. Third, **since the** traumatic cause is not repressed, the **subordination** of the ego to the trauma as an alterity **is not intermittent** or partial. The black man is completely dominated by the other, that is, the white man's image of the black body. These three traits of colonial trauma indicate that it **is not** **amenable** to a merely therapeutic resolution. In the colonial situation, the verbalization of trauma **does not** lead to the better management of excitations. **Instead**, the verbal **recognition** by the black person that he is blackis a **further deepening and exacerbation** ofthetrauma. **It depletes and eviscerates the subject further.**

**There is no libidinal economic drive of blackness – they fundamentally misread Fanon – which means there is hope for black bodies**

[Peter **Hudis 15**] (Frantz Fanon: Philospher of the Barricades, pg 35-37, Emory Libraries, Professor of Philosphy and the Humanties at Oakton Community College) Full Date: xx-xx-2015 {PR/MoState} Accessed: 12-7-2018

**Fanon**’s vantage point upon the world is his situated experience. He **is trying to understand the** inner **psychic life of racism, not provide an account of the structure of human existence** as a whole. **Racism is not**, of course, **an integral part of the human psyche; it is a Social construct that has a psychic impact. Any effort to comprehend** social distress that accompanies **racism by reference to some a priori structure—be it** the **Oedipal** Complex **or the Collective Unconscious—is doomed to failure**. [END PAGE 35] Carl **Jung sought to** deepen and **go beyond Freud's approach by arguing that the subconscious is grounded in a universal layer of the psyche—which he called “the collective unconscious.” This refers to inherited patterns of thought that exist in all human minds, regardless of specific culture or upbringing**, and which manifest themselves in dreams, fairy tales, and myths. Jung referred to these universal patterns as “archetypes.” It may seem, on a superficial reading, that Fanon is drawing from Jung, since he discusses how white people tend to unconsciously assimilate views of blacks that are based on negative stereotypes. Even the most “progressive” white tends to think of blacks a certain way (such as “emotional,” “physical,” or “aggressive”), even as they disavow any racist animus on their part. However, **Fanon denies that such collective delusions are part of a psychic structure; they are not permanent features of the mind. They are habits acquired from a series of social and cultural impositions. While they constitute a kind a collective unconscious on the part of many white people, they are not grounded in any universal “archetype.”** The unconscious prejudices of whites do not derive from genes or nature, nor do they derive from some form independent of culture or upbringing. **Fanon contends that Jung “confuses habit with instinct.”**21 **Fanon objects to** Jung’s **“collective unconscious” for the same reason that he rejects the notion of a black ontology. His phenomenological approach brackets out ontological claims on both a social and psychological level insofar as the examination of race and racism is concerned**. He writes, “Neither Freud nor Adler nor even the cosmic Jung took the black man into consideration in the course of his research.”22 This does not mean that Fanon rejects their contributions tout court. He does not deny the existence of the unconscious. He only denies that the inferiority complex of blacks operates on an unconscious level. He does not reject the Oedipal Complex. He only denies that it explains (especially in the West Indies) the proclivity of the black “slave” to mimic the values of the white “master.” And as seen from his positive remarks on Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, he does not reject the idea of psychic structure. He only denies that it can substitute for an historical understanding of the origin of [END PAGE 36] neuroses .23 **Fanon adopts a socio-genetic approach to a study of the psyche because that is what is adequate for the object of his analysis**. **For Fanon, it is the relationship between the socio-economic and psychological that is of critical import. He makes it clear**, insofar as the subject matter of his study is concerned, that **the socio-economic is first of all responsible for affective disorders**: “First, economic. Then, internalization or rather epidermalization of this inferiority.”24 **Fanon never misses an opportunity to remind us that racism owes its origin to specific economic relations of domination**- **such as slavery**, colonialism, and the effort to coopt sections of the working class into serving the needs of capital. It is hard to mistake the Marxist influence here. It does not follow, however, that what comes first in the order of time has conceptual or strategic priority. The inferiority complex is originally born from economic subjugation, but it takes on a life of its own and expresses itself in terms that surpass the economic. Both sides of the problem-the socio-economic and psychological-must be combatted in tandem: “The black man must wage the struggle on two levels; whereas historically these levels are mutually dependent, any unilateral liberation is flawed, and the worst mistake would be to believe their mutual dependence automatic.”25 On these grounds **he argues that the problem of racism cannot be solved on a psychological level. It is not an “individual” problem; it is a social one. But neither can it be solved on a social level** that ores the psychological. It is small wonder that although his name never appears in the book, Fanon was enamored of the work of Wilhelm Reich. This important Freudian-Marxist would no doubt feel affinity with **Fanon's comment, “Genuine disalienation will have been achieved only when things, in the most materialist sense, have resumed their rightful place.”**27

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#### It’s necessary for effective activism

Han and Barnett-Loro 18 [Hahrie Han, Department of Political Science, University of California, Santa Barbara. Carina Barnett-Loro, Climate Advocacy Lab, San Francisco. To Support a Stronger Climate Movement, Focus Research on Building Collective Power. December 19, 2018. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcomm.2018.00055/full]

Building public will to address the climate crisis requires more than shifting climate change opinion or engaging more people in activism (Raile et al., 2014). By many measures, the climate movement today is stronger than ever: more people taking actions, more financial resources, and deeper concern. Nonetheless, despite increasingly widespread popular demand for sensible climate solutions (Leiserowitz et al., 2017; Hestres and Nisbet, 2018) and broad organizational infrastructure to support climate activism across most Westernized democracies (Brulle, 2014), public will that translates into the political power needed to effect meaningful change has been elusive (McAdam, 2017). Even the 2014 and 2017 People's Climate Marches that drew hundreds of thousands to the streets, demonstrations in support of the Paris Climate Accords, and large-scale acts of civil disobedience in opposition to the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines have resulted in only short-lived campaign victories. Nearly 10 years after the failure to pass comprehensive climate and clean energy legislation at the federal level, experts largely agree there is “little hope” existing policies are sufficient to address the scale of the crisis (Keohane and Victor, 2011).

How can research help bridge the gap not only between opinion and action, but also between action and power? Many articles in this special edition examine the question of the conditions that make it more likely individuals will take action around climate issues. Indeed, the gap between opinion and action is well-known (Kahan and Carpenter, 2017), and burgeoning research in many fields of social science seeks to bridge it (Rickard et al., 2016; Doherty and Webler, 2016; Feldman and Hart, 2018). One of us works for the Climate Advocacy Lab, which supports field experimentation through direct funding and in-kind research assistance to build our collective understanding of the most effective strategies for moving people into action.

There is less attention, however, to the question of how those actions might translate into political influence. The challenge is this: in most cases, the null assumption is that activism becomes power at scale: that collective action is merely the sum of its parts, and the more people who take action, the more likely a movement is to achieve its goals. All things being equal, it is true that more is better (Madestam et al., 2013). Additional research, however, shows

that for our stickiest social problems (like climate change), simply having more activists, money, or other resources is not sufficient to create and sustain the kind of large-scale change needed (Baumgartner et al., 2009; Canes-Wrone, 2015). Instead, we need a social movement that translates our actions into power. Social movements are a set of “actors and organizations seeking to alter power deficits and to effect transformations through the state by mobilizing regular citizens for sustained political action” (Amenta et al., 2010). Instead of focusing only on resources, movements focus on power. Instead of focusing only on individual action, they focus on collective action. To become a source of power, collective action must be transformative.

How, then, do we build the kind of movements that generate the collective action necessary to shift existing power dynamics? For scholars, what research can help advocates understand how to translate individual actions into the powerful, and transformative collective action necessary to create change? To examine this question, we co-hosted a conference that brought social scientists together with climate advocates in the United States. At this convening, movement leaders argued that to better support building a robust climate movement, research should move beyond traditional public opinion, communications, messaging, and activism studies toward a greater focus on the strategic leadership and collective contexts that translate opinion and action into political power. This paper thus offers a framework, described in Table 1, for synthesizing existing research on movement-building and highlighting the places where additional research is needed. We hope this framework can help focus more future research on the collective, relational contexts and strategic leadership choices necessary to generate collective action that translates into power. In describing the framework, we draw on Slater and Gleason's (2012) typology to show what we know and do not know about supporting movement actors seeking to make more impactful choices.

Assessing the State of Research on Climate Movement Building

How do movement leaders translate supportive public opinion and grassroots activism into political influence? Answering this question rests on first understanding a few key points about social movements. First, movements operate in an environment of uncertainty. For the climate movement, everything from oil spills to hurricanes, domestic elections to international treaties, legal decisions, and market forces can affect the terrain they must navigate. Movement leaders cannot directly control many of these things. Second, policy change is not power. A given policy change will not automatically effect change in the world consistent with movement interests (Hacker, 2004). Moreover, policies can be easily overturned, as exemplified by the transition from Obama to Trump, and immediate rollback of key policies including the Clean Power Plan, restrictions on drilling and mining on public lands, and coal ash protections. To create lasting power, movements need broad constituencies that persist through the ups and downs and whims of different administrations. Third, there is no direct line from activism to power, because power is a dynamic relationship between movements and their targets. To wield power, movements use their resources to act on the interests of political decision-makers (Hansen, 1991). In fact, some research suggests the advocacy group resources most predictive of large-scale policy change are relationships with decision-makers—more so than lobbying money, campaign contributions, or the number of grassroots members (Baumgartner et al., 2009). Some argue that the climate movement's failure to build and sustain the kind of constituency that would pressure decision-makers contributed to the failure of cap-and-trade legislation in 2010 (Skocpol, 2013).

Given these three factors—persistent uncertainty, the need to focus on power not policy, and the complex interests of movement targets—what are the questions movement leaders need to answer to build a more effective climate movement? We argue that most research has focused either on documenting trends in the political environment in which movements work or on questions of how the movement can focus on building more of its resources (such as more supportive public opinion or more activists). Those questions are important. Particularly in today's uncertain, dynamic political environment, however, we also need research on strategy: how do movements create the leadership capacities and organizational (or “meso-level”) conditions needed to navigate uncertain political situations and shifting relationships, and thus translate resources to power?

Organizations that have successfully wielded power in other issue areas can be instructive in showing why understanding strategic leadership and meso-level, collective contexts matters. Consider the gun debate in the United States. Polls show strong public support for stricter regulation of guns, advocates like Michael Bloomberg have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the fight, and protests have brought millions of people into the streets for gun control. Nonetheless, the National Rifle Association (NRA) has been more effective in translating its activists and resources into political power. Why? First, leaders within the NRA undertook an intentional campaign to build an ardent constituency of gun owners that was willing to stand together, again and again, through ups and downs of any political fight, to support gun rights. As recently as the early 1970s, the NRA supported sensible gun regulations. Beginning in the 1970s, however, a group of hardline conservatives took control of leadership of the organization (Melzer, 2009). To build constituency, they used three key tactics: widespread benefits provided to gun owners from the national organization, strong appeals to identity, and a complex latticework of interpersonal relationships sustained at the local level (LaCombe, forthcoming). Second, leaders strategically leveraged this constituency to negotiate relationships with the Republican Party. The recurrent ability of leaders to deliver support from this constituency for policymakers became the basis through which the NRA built high-level relationships with elected officials and the Republican Party, thus cementing its hold over gun policy in the United States. By linking base-building with elite politics, the NRA transformed the political dynamics around gun rights.

#### Demands on the state don’t tie us to the government or its legitimacy

Saul **Newman**, PhD, Professor of Political Theory, Goldsmith University, London, **’11** (*The Politics of Postanarchism*, pg. 114)

Despite the obvious pitfalls of the Leninist vanguard strategy, we should nevertheless take Zizek's challenge to Critchley seriously: that, in other words, the problem with the strategy of working outside the state is that it **may essentially leave the state intact**, and entail an irresponsible and even **self-indulgent politics of demand** that hides a secret reliance on the state to take care of the everyday running of society. Is there some truth to this claim? There are two aspects that I would like to address here. First, the notion of demand: making certain demands on the state - say for higher wages, equal rights for excluded groups, to not go to war or an **end to draconian policing** - is one of the **basic strategies** of social movements and radical groups. Making such demands **does not necessarily mean working within the state or reaffirming its legitimacy.** On the **contrary**, demands are made from a position **outside the established political order,** and they often **exceed the question of the implementation** of this or that specific measure. They implicitly **call into question the legitimacy** and even the sovereignty of the state by highlighting fundamental inconsistencies between, for instance, a formal constitutional order that guarantees certain rights and equalities, and state practices that in reality violate and deny them. Jacques Ranciere gives a succinct example of this when he discusses Olympe de Gouges, who, at the time of the French Revolution, demanded that women be given the right to go to the Assembly. In doing so, she demonstrated the inconsistency between the promise of equality - invoked in a general sense and yet denied in the particular by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen - and the political order which was formally based on this: Women could make a twofold demonstration. They could demonstrate that they were deprived of the rights that they had, thanks to the Declaration of Rights. And they could demonstrate, through their public action, that they had the rights that the constitution denied to them, that they could enact those rights. So they could act as subjects of the Rights of Man in the precise sense that 1 have mentioned. They acted as subjects that did not have the rights that they had and had the rights that they had not.21