# 1NC

## Off-Case

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#### Interpretation: Topical affirmatives must instrumentally defend n expansion of the scope of the United States core antitrust laws to substantially increase prohibitions on anticompetitive business practices.

#### Resolved means a policy

Louisiana House 5

(<http://house.louisiana.gov/house-glossary.htm>)

Resolution A legislative instrument that generally is used for making declarations, stating policies, and making decisions where some other form is not required. A bill includes the constitutionally required enacting clause; a resolution uses the term "resolved". Not subject to a time limit for introduction nor to governor's veto. ( Const. Art. III, §17(B) and House Rules 8.11 , 13.1 , 6.8 , and 7.4)

#### Federal government is the legislative, executive and judicial

US Legal No Date (United States Federal Government Law and Legal Definition https://definitions.uslegal.com/u/united-states-federal-government/)

The United States Federal Government is established by the US Constitution. The Federal Government shares sovereignty over the United Sates with the individual governments of the States of US. The Federal government has three branches: i) the legislature, which is the US Congress, ii) Executive, comprised of the President and Vice president of the US and iii) Judiciary. The US Constitution prescribes a system of separation of powers and ‘checks and balances’ for the smooth functioning of all the three branches of the Federal Government. The US Constitution limits the powers of the Federal Government to the powers assigned to it; all powers not expressly assigned to the Federal Government are reserved to the States or to the people.

#### Should requires action

AHD 2k

(American Heritage Dictionary 2000 (Dictionary.com))

should. The will to do something or have something take place: I shall go out if I feel like it.

#### ‘Its’ means cooperation must be governmental

US District Court 7 (United States District Court for the District of the Virgin Islands, Division of St. Thomas and St. John, “AGF Marine Aviation & Transp. v. Cassin,” *2007 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 90808*, Lexis)

The Court inadvertently used the word "his" when the Court intended to use the word "its." The possessive pronoun was intended to refer to the party preceding its use--AGF. Indeed, that reference is consistent with the undisputed facts in this case, which indicate that Cassin completed an application for the insurance policy and submitted it to his agent, Theodore Tunick & Company ("Tunick"). Tunick, in turn, submitted the application to AGF's underwriting agent, TL Dallas. (See Pl.'s Mem. of Law in Supp. of Mot. for Summ. J. 5.)

#### The “core” antitrust statutes are the Sherman Act, Clayton Act, and FTC Act

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

#### They violate each of the above words’ requirements of government action.

#### A predictable limit is the only way to give the neg a chance to win---radical aff choice shifts the grounds for the debate and puts the aff far ahead. Pre-tournament negative preparation is structured around topical plans as points of offense, which means anything other than a topical plan structurally favors the affirmative.

#### First, fairness---debate requires effective competition between the aff and the neg---the only way for any benefit to be produced from debate is if the judge can make a decision between two sides who have had a relatively equal chance to prepare for a common point of debate.

#### Second, contestation---debate is unique because of the iteration of limited arguments over the course of a season that forces debaters to improve their arguments and reconsider their positions. Every debater is here for different reasons, but all those reasons rely the pedagogical uniqueness of the space and maximizing its benefits. Their topic is unilaterally declared and imprecise, which prevents iteration through shallow debates, unpredictable advocacies, and lack of testing.

#### Policy debates over antitrust are valuable

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IV. Antitrust in Civil Society Competition issues are also part of the general civic discourse separate from the campaign rhetoric and legislative proposals offered by politicians. This is also a significant sign that antitrust has begun to be an important source of small “p” politics that engages substantial segments of the public at large. One example is the increased number of non-technical books intended for a lay audience that deal with the role of antitrust in a healthy economy and democracy. Recent and forthcoming books dealing with these themes include Tim Wu’s “The Curse of Bigness,”109 Matt Stoller’s “Goliath,”110 Maurice Stucke and Ariel Ezrachi’s “Competition Overdose,”111 Zephyr Teachout’s “Break ‘em Up,”112 and David Dayan’s “Monopolized.”113 On the academic side, there are a plethora of government and NGO studies of competition policy on digital competition114 and new works are flourishing which explore the broader ramifications of antitrust and competition in society.115 Long form and more mass-market journalism have also taken up the mantle of exploring the role of antitrust and competition policy. Such diverse magazines as The Atlantic,116 Time, 117 New Republic,118 American Prospect,119 Rolling Stone,120 New York Times magazine,121 Variety,122 National Review, 123 Foreign Policy,124 and other policy and opinion magazines have all run recent stories or profiles of individuals involved in antitrust issues. Before the COVID-19 pandemic effectively monopolized press coverage in the United States, there were thirty-three antitrust related stories on the front page of the New York Times or the front page of its business section over a three-month period in late 2019. 125 A majority of the stories focused on tech giants such as Apple, Microsoft, Google, Amazon, and Facebook.126 In addition, the New York Times also covered stories about mergers, merger policy, local issues such as the Chicago taxi market, and various smaller industries.127 This is separate from coverage during the same period of campaign issues and candidate statements relating to the field. A similar increase in coverage during this same period can be observed anecdotally in more business-oriented publications like Forbes, Barron’s, Wired, and the Wall Street Journal; general newspapers like USA Today, Washington Post, and Huffington Post; more local newspapers; as well as radio and television.128 Web pages and social media accounts on these issues have similarly proliferated on all ideological perspectives.129 Lobbying and public policy groups are growing in number and influence. Beyond the traditional trade associations and general think tanks there are now a number of active groups with antitrust as a large part of their focus. These include the Open Markets Institute, 130 American Antitrust Institute, 131 Anti-Monopoly Fund,132 Institute for Self-Reliance,133 Public Citizen,134 Public Knowledge,135 Demos, 136 and the International Center for Law and Economics.137 At the more technical legal end of the debate, antitrust is similarly flourishing as a field. One sees increased law school hiring in the field for the first time in decades. Academic institutes and centers abound with a wide variety of perspectives ranging from libertarian to enforcement oriented.138 Most major antitrust cases now feature multiple amicus briefs from legal and economic experts on both sides of an issue both in the Supreme Court or the Courts of Appeals.139 Conclusion Antitrust has always been political in nature. Antitrust law provides broad legal commands dealing with how governments and private individuals can challenge different types of market behavior. In this way, antitrust has not changed. Antitrust will never take the place of sports, the Dow Jones index, or the weather for conversation at the breakfast table, but it has become a meaningful part of the political and policy debate for candidates, the legislature, and important segments of civil society. What has changed, however, is the degree that antitrust has reentered the political arena. Once mostly the domain of technocrats, antitrust issues have been proposed and debated by Presidential candidates, political parties, legislators, pundits, journalists, lobby groups, and voters alike. There are also a flurry of serious proposals and investigations that would make significant changes to the current system if adopted. This is all to the good. Even if none of the current proposals come to fruition, the antitrust debate is part of a broader engagement with political economy issues dealing with fundamental concerns such as economic concentration, globalization, income inequality, social and racial justice, and even recently the proper response to the COVID-19 emergency. The many proposals, initiatives, and pressure groups represent at a minimum the return of antitrust as part of the progressive agenda.

#### They can’t get offense---we don’t have the power to impose a norm, only to persuade you that their arguments should be rejected---every debate requires a winner and loser, so voting negative doesn’t reject them from debate, it just says they should make a better argument next time

Amanda Anderson 6, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Humanities and English at Brown University, Spring 2006, “Reply to My Critic(s),” Criticism, Vol. 48, No. 2, p. 281-290

MY RECENT BOOK, The Way We Argue Now, has in a sense two theses. In the first place, the book makes the case for the importance of debate and argument to any vital democratic or pluralistic intellectual culture. This is in many ways an unexceptional position, but the premise of the book is that the claims of reasoned argument are often trumped, within the current intellectual terrain, by appeals to cultural identity and what I gather more broadly under the rubric of ethos, which includes cultural identity but also forms of ethical piety and charismatic authority. In promoting argument as a universal practice keyed to a human capacity for communicative reason, my book is a critique of relativism and identity politics, or the notion that forms of cultural authenticity or group identity have a certain unquestioned legitimacy, one that cannot or should not be subjected to the challenges of reason or principle, precisely because reason and what is often called "false universalism" are, according to this pattern of thinking, always involved in forms of exclusion, power, or domination. My book insists, by contrast, that argument is a form of respect, that the ideals of democracy, whether conceived from a nationalist or an internationalist perspective, rely fundamentally upon procedures of argumentation and debate in order to legitimate themselves and to keep their central institutions vital. And the idea that one should be protected from debate, that argument is somehow injurious to persons if it does not honor their desire to have their basic beliefs and claims and solidarities accepted without challenge, is strenuously opposed. As is the notion that any attempt to ask people to agree upon processes of reason-giving argument is somehow necessarily to impose a coercive norm, one that will disable the free expression and performance of identities, feelings, or solidarities. Disagreement is, by the terms of my book, a form of respect, not a form of disrespect. And by disagreement, I don't mean simply to say that we should expect disagreement rather than agreement, which is a frequently voiced-if misconceived-criticism of Habermas. Of course we should expect disagreement. My point is that we should focus on the moment of dissatisfaction in the face of disagreement-the internal dynamic in argument that imagines argument might be the beginning of a process of persuasion and exchange that could end in agreement (or partial agreement). For those who advocate reconciling ourselves to disagreements rather than arguing them out, by contrast, there is a complacent-and in some versions, even celebratory-attitude toward fixed disagreement. Refusing these options, I make the case for dissatisfied disagreement in the final chapter of the book and argue that people should be willing to justify their positions in dialogue with one another, especially if they hope to live together in a post-traditional pluralist society. One example of the trumping of argument by ethos is the form that was taken by the late stage of the Foucault/Habermas debate, where an appeal to ethos-specifically, an appeal to Foucault's style of ironic or negative critique, often seen as most in evidence in the interviews, where he would playfully refuse labels or evade direct answers-was used to exemplify an alternative to the forms of argument employed by Habermas and like-minded critics. (I should pause to say that I provide this example, and the framing summary of the book that surrounds it, not to take up airtime through expansive self-reference, but because neither of my respondents provided any contextualizing summary of the book's central arguments, though one certainly gets an incremental sense of the book's claims from Bruce Robbins. Because I don't assume that readers of this forum have necessarily read the book, and because I believe that it is the obligation of forum participants to provide sufficient context for their remarks, I will perform this task as economically as I can, with the recognition that it might have carried more weight if provided by a respondent rather than the author.) The Foucauldian counter-critique importantly emphasizes a relation between style and position, but it obscures (1) the importance or value of the Habermasian critique and (2) the possibility that the other side of the debate might have its own ethos to advocate, one that has precisely to do with an ethos of argument, an ideal of reciprocal debate that involves taking distance on one's pre-given forms of identity or the norms of one's community, both so as to talk across differences and to articulate one's claims in relation to shared and even universal ideals. And this leads to the second thesis of the book, the insistence that an emphasis on ethos and character is interestingly present if not widely recognized in contemporary theory, and one of the ways its vitality and existential pertinence makes itself felt (even despite the occurrence of the kinds of unfair trumping moves I have mentioned). We often fail to notice this, because identity has so uniformly come to mean sociological, ascribed, or group identity-race, gender, class, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, and so forth. Instances of the move toward character and ethos include the later Foucault (for whom ethos is a central concept), cosmopolitanism (whose aspiration it is to turn universalism into an ethos), and, more controversially, proceduralist ethics and politics (with its emphasis on sincerity and civility). Another version of this attentiveness to ethos and character appears in contemporary pragmatism, with its insistence on casualness of attitude, or insouciance in the face of contingency-recommendations that get elevated into full-fledged exemplary personae in Richard Rorty's notion of the "ironist" or Barbara Herrnstein Smiths portrait of the "postmodern skeptic." These examples-and the larger claim they support-are meant to defend theory as still living, despite the many reports of its demise, and in fact still interestingly and incessantly re-elaborating its relation to practice. This second aspect of the project is at once descriptive, motivated by the notion that characterology within theory is intrinsically interesting, and critical, in its attempt to identify how characterology can itself be used to cover or evade the claims of rational argument, as in appeals to charismatic authority or in what I identify as narrow personifications of theory (pragmatism, in its insistence on insouciance in the face of contingency, is a prime example of this second form). And as a complement to the critical agenda, there is a reconstructive agenda as well, an attempt to recuperate liberalism and proceduralism, in part by advocating the possibility, as I have suggested, of an ethos of argument. Robbins, in his extraordinarily rich and challenging response, zeroes in immediately on a crucial issue: who is to say exactly when argument is occurring or not, and what do we do when there is disagreement over the fundamentals (the primary one being over what counts as proper reasoning)? Interestingly, Robbins approaches this issue after first observing a certain tension in the book: on the one hand, The Way We Argue Now calls for dialogue, debate, argument; on the other, its project is "potentially something a bit stricter, or pushier: getting us all to agree on what should and should not count as true argument." What this point of entry into the larger issue reveals is a kind of blur that the book, I am now aware, invites. On the one hand, the book anatomizes academic debates, and in doing so is quite "debaterly" This can give the impression that what I mean by argument is a very specific form unique to disciplinary methodologies in higher education. But the book is not generally advocating a narrow practice of formal and philosophical argumentation in the culture at large, however much its author may relish adherence to the principle of non-contradiction in scholarly argument. I take pains to elaborate an ethos of argument that is linked to democratic debate and the forms of dissent that constitutional patriotism allows and even promotes. In this sense, while argument here is necessarily contextualized sociohistorically, the concept is not merely academic. It is a practice seen as integral to specific political forms and institutions in modern democracies, and to the more general activity of critique within modern societies-to the tradition of the public sphere, to speak in broad terms. Additionally, insofar as argument impels one to take distance on embedded customs, norms, and senses of given identity, it is a practice that at once acknowledges identity, the need to understand the perspectives of others, and the shared commitment to commonality and generality, to finding a way to live together under conditions of difference. More than this: the book also discusses at great length and from several different angles the issue that Robbins inexplicably claims I entirely ignore: the question of disagreement about what counts as argument. In the opening essay, "Debatable Performances," I fault the proponents of communicative ethics for not having a broader understanding of public expression, one that would include the disruptions of spectacle and performance. I return to and underscore this point in my final chapter, where I espouse a democratic politics that can embrace and accommodate a wide variety of expressions and modes. This is certainly a discussion of what counts as dialogue and hence argument in the broad sense in which I mean it, and in fact I fully acknowledge that taking distance from cultural norms and given identities can be advanced not only through critical reflection, but through ironic critique and defamiliarizing performance as well. But I do insist-and this is where I take a position on the fundamental disagreements that have arisen with respect to communicative ethics-that when they have an effect, these other dimensions of experience do not remain unreflective, and insofar as they do become reflective, they are contributing to the very form of reasoned analysis that their champions sometimes imagine they must refuse in order to liberate other modes of being (the affective, the narrative, the performative, the nonrational). If a narrative of human rights violation is persuasive in court, or in the broader cultural public sphere, it is because it draws attention to a violation of humanity that is condemned on principle; if a performance jolts people out of their normative understandings of sexuality and gender, it prompts forms of understanding that can be affirmed and communicated and also can be used to justify political positions and legislative agendas.

### 1NC---CP

#### The United States federal government should use antitrust policy to redistribute economic value to black people.

#### That addresses antiblackness ⁠— competes because the aff said the debate is about “who has the best response to anti-blackness”

Vaheesan 20, \*Sandeep Vaheesan is a legal director at the Open Markets Institute, previously served as a regulations counsel at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; (September 16th, 2020, “How Antitrust Perpetuates Structural Racism”, https://theappeal.org/how-antitrust-perpetuates-structural-racism/)

Antitrust law is not destined to remain a tool of racial injustice. Its present perpetuation of hierarchy is a product of the conservative takeover of the federal judiciary and executive branch that began in the 1970s. Supreme Court justices and antitrust officials appointed by Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Reagan reoriented antitrust law to focus on [“consumer welfare”](https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/442/330/) and, to advance this aim, loosened various restrictions on corporate behavior—legal and policy choices that the Clinton and Obama administrations accepted. What judges and technocrats did, the American public can reverse. A reconstructed antitrust would control the size and discretion of corporations and permit workers and independent firms to build power. It would serve as an important weapon against corporate hegemony over the working and small proprietor classes and advance the freedom of people of color in the United States. Take the exploitative system of collegiate sports. College basketball and football players generate billions in annual revenues for their colleges and universities but receive a small fraction of this wealth. College basketball’s March Madness and football’s playoff are among the most popular events in American sports. Operating collectively through the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), colleges capped the compensation of players at [the cost-of-attendance](https://www.kansascity.com/article86062792.html). The [Supreme Court](https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/540/02-682/) called such collusion among rivals “the supreme evil of antitrust.” In practice, players, including the stars, receive around $40,000 of in-kind annual compensation. If colleges competed for players by offering wages and salaries, basketball and football players would earn an [estimated $140,000 or more](https://www.ncpanow.org/studies-and-revenue/study-the-6-billion-heist-robbing-college-athletes-under-the-guise-of-amateurism) on average. The racial injustice of the system is clear: Some members of the [mostly white college coaching ranks](http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database) make millions of dollars annually while the [disproportionately Black athletes](http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-demographics-database) subsist. A May 2020 court decision preserved this system of economic and racial exploitation. Current and former basketball and football players challenged the NCAA’s collusion in an antitrust suit. At [trial](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L9ZWKklU02adLfTLlvD5_CM6oMxZnM2X/view) and on [appeal](https://cases.justia.com/federal/appellate-courts/ca9/19-15566/19-15566-2020-05-18.pdf?ts=1589821264), two federal courts declined to strike down the NCAA’s wage-fixing cartel. (The Open Markets Institute filed [an amicus brief](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e449c8c3ef68d752f3e70dc/t/5eaa1b99525cf600be56805f/1588206498946/OMI-et-al-Brief-in-Alston-v.-NCAA-FILED.pdf) in support of the players on appeal.) They invalidated one piece of the NCAA system—limits on payments related to education—but left the rest intact. Elevating the interests of consumers over workers, the judges reasoned that some fans value watching athletes who are not paid like professionals for their talents and hard work. In other words, two courts sacrificed the players’ interest in the name of catering to viewers’ taste for labor exploitation. Shepherding in the Rocky Mountains is a demanding and thankless job performed by a captive workforce. [Ranchers](https://www.hcn.org/issues/48.3/far-from-home-the-wests-foregin-sheepherders-get-a-pay-raise) in Colorado, Wyoming, and other Western states recruit shepherds from Peru on guest-worker visas. The terms of the visa bind the shepherds to the ranch that employs them, and the workers live under the constant threat of deportation for any or no reason at all. The laws ensure a supply of low-wage, powerless workers for ranchers. Until recently, these shepherds made [less than the standard federal minimum wage](https://www.wsj.com/articles/sheepherders-are-set-to-get-a-raise-1444776966) and endure the harsh elements of the Rockies [without basics](https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/22/us/22wyoming.html) such as electricity, running water, or a toilet. Ranchers view the [shepherds](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-sheep-lawsuit-idUSKCN0R30B520150903) as “indentured servants who should be subject to even criminal sanction if they refuse to work.” While the shepherds work under exceptionally harsh conditions, their employment relationships are quite representative of work arrangements in agriculture: [Farm sector employers](https://foodchainworkers.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Hands-That-Feed-Us-Report.pdf) hire guest workers, mainly from Latin America, with few rights and pay them appallingly low wages. Last year, the federal judiciary dismissed the shepherds’ efforts to modestly improve this system through litigation. A group of shepherds alleged that the ranchers had conspired through two hiring associations to all offer the same lowest possible legal wage for job openings in their state. In the absence of this wage-fixing, the shepherds might have earned an hourly wage of $10 or more instead of [$4.50](https://www.law360.com/articles/753255/shepherds-fight-ranchers-bid-to-nix-wage-fixing-suit). [A trial court](https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/colorado-court-sends-shepherds-wage-11646/) and [court of appeals](https://www.ca10.uscourts.gov/opinions/17/17-1113.pdf) in Colorado tossed the shepherds’ suit, concluding that the shepherds had failed to show collusion among the ranchers even though the ranchers had set the wage through collective action. (The Open Markets Institute [supported](https://www.openmarketsinstitute.org/s/OMI-Brief-in-Llacua-v-WRA-FINAL.pdf) the shepherds’ unsuccessful petition for a rehearing.) As in the NCAA litigation, a mostly white class of actors (ranchers) was permitted to collude and profit at the expense of workers of color. Reports indicate wage-fixing occurs in other food and agricultural sectors too. Fast-food franchises are an important source of work and income for people of color, especially immigrants. [Minorities](https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/usaandmain/2020/02/11/franchises-african-american-small-business-success/2617860001/) are more likely to own a franchise business than a non-franchise business. [Certain chains](https://csnews.com/indian-researcher-suggests-south-asians-dominate-us-c-store-market) are so heavily dependent on South Asians that they have become associated with the community in popular media. Dunkin’, McDonald’s, Subway, and other chains present franchising as a straightforward path to becoming an independent businessperson, exercising autonomy that employees do not enjoy. The reality is quite different. Under a franchise arrangement, the parent company exercises [tight control](https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4918&context=lcp) over franchisees, dictating virtually everything in the franchisee’s operation, including menu, prices, store layout, and hours of operation, and conducting regular audits. Franchisees can lose their business for any or no reason at all, and they continue at the whims of the franchisor and its managers. At the same time as they have little independence, a Subway franchisee, for example, bears the economic loss if their restaurant fails. [Subway](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/28/business/subway-franchisees.html) keeps the power but transfers the risk. The present franchising system is a direct result of judicial reinterpretations of antitrust law. Economist Brian Callaci has studied the legal changes that produced the franchising model in fast food and described the franchising system as [“control without responsibility.”](https://economics.utah.edu/antitrust-conference/session_material/callaci_control.pdf) Due to [a 1977 Supreme Court decision](https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/433/36/) and [subsequent](https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/522/3/) [rulings](https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/551/877/) building on it, firms can control trading partners (distributors, suppliers, franchisees) through contract. They can mandate what a franchisee purchases and sells and on what terms, among other requirements. Franchisors, by depriving franchisees of reasonable margins and discretion over virtually everything except wages, have forced franchisees to rely on a high-turnover, low-wage workforce. Before the 1970s, a firm that wanted to exercise such authority had to directly employ the workers and provide the rights and benefits that come with employment. A firm could not control independent businesses and workers through contract. Unfortunately, exploitative relationships between nominally independent workers and dominant firms have exploded in the new “gig economy.” Low-paid and precarious gig workers are disproportionately people of color. A [study](https://transform.ucsc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/OnDemand-n-OntheEdge_MAY2020.pdf) of ride-hailing drivers and delivery workers in San Francisco found that more than 60 percent were Asian, Black, or Latino. This is in line with national data: A [survey](https://newsroom.uber.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/BSG_Uber_Report.pdf) commissioned by Uber in 2015 reported that about 50 percent of drivers are people of color. Among other anti-worker policies and practices in the sector, Uber and Doordash drivers and Instacart deliverers do not have the right to organize and form unions. The National Labor Relations Act grants a legally enforceable right to unionize to workers in traditional employment relationships. Because Uber and other gig economy firms (mis)classify their workers as independent contractors, however, these workers do not have the right to build collective power. Even as [they](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2933177) attempt to monopolize taxi markets around the world through below-cost pricing and flouting labor laws and taxi regulations, Uber and Lyft have used antitrust law to ensure that their drivers remain atomized and powerless. After the City of Seattle enacted an ordinance granting drivers in the city the right to form unions, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of its members Uber and Lyft, filed a suit alleging that the city was authorizing an antitrust violation. Their theory was that organizing among drivers would constitute a restraint of trade. The Chamber [triumphed](http://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/opinions/2018/05/11/17-35640.pdf) on appeal and ultimately [forced Seattle to revise its ordinance](https://www.geekwire.com/2020/uber-seattle-u-s-chamber-end-legal-dispute-union-law-city-plans-minimum-wage-drivers/) and deny drivers the right to bargain over the central term of employment—wages. The Chamber and Uber and Lyft had an important ally in their legal fight—the federal government. In November 2017, the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) filed a [joint amicus brief](https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/amicus_briefs/chamber-commerce-united-states-america-rasier-llc-v-city-seattle-et-al/seattle_17-35640_-_ftcdoj_amicus_11317.pdf) arguing that Seattle did not have the authority to enact the ordinance and that the drivers’ potential unionization and collective bargaining would violate antitrust law. This anti-worker deployment of antitrust law has a [long, ugly history](https://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3832&context=mlr), dating back to the early years of the Sherman Act. The FTC has brought numerous antitrust suits against [independent](https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/cases-proceedings/131-0168/professional-skaters-association-inc-matter) [contractor](https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/cases-proceedings/131-0118/music-teachers-national-association-inc-matter)s [and](https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/cases-proceedings/151-0159/american-guild-organists) [professional](https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/493/411/)s for [organizing](https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-5th-circuit/1029674.html)—targeting workers outside traditional employment relationships. While the DOJ and the FTC have allowed powerful corporations to take over and dominate entire markets, they crush attempts by independent workers and small firms to challenge that power. Considering these four case studies, Americans fighting for racial and economic justice might simply conclude that repealing the antitrust laws is the right course—they appear impotent against corporate power and are unleashed against workers’ collective power. But this would be a mistake. Present-day antitrust dates only to the [late 1970s](https://harvardlpr.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2017/02/HLP110.pdf). Starting in that decade, the Supreme Court, joined by the DOJ and the FTC of the Reagan administration in the 1980s, rolled back rules on corporate monopolies, mergers, and coercive practices. This intellectual and legal attack on the antitrust of the New Deal and postwar era was [bankrolled by big businesses](http://tuvalu.santafe.edu/~snaidu/papers/ash-chen-naidu-2020-07v4.pdf) and succeeded in creating market rules extraordinarily favorable to the Fortune 500. Antitrust law, which was once a top line cause of populist and progressive movements fighting for a fair and democratic society, did control corporate authority in the past and can do so again. Imagine laws that stopped employers from fixing wages, prevented franchisors from dominating independent franchisees through contract, prohibited firms like Uber from burning through billions of dollars in a campaign to monopolize markets, and protected the rights of workers and independent firms to organize. These rules would break the economic and political dominance of corporate executives and rentiers. Such an antitrust enforcement system, backed by a popular movement, would redistribute power downward from a class of mostly white economic royalists to the multiracial majority in American society.

## Case

### 1NC---Frontline

#### Their criticism homogenizes black people in the US, which displaces pragmatic practices that challenge violence

Kline 17, PhD candidate at Rice (David Kline, 2017, “The Pragmatics of Resistance: Framing Anti-Blackness and the Limits of Political Ontology,” Critical Philosophy of Race, 5.1, Political Ontology and the Limitation of Social Analysis and Legitimate Praxis)

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

#### The alt shirks contestation for the sake of abstraction, which causes political failure and obscures their investment in every structured they’ve critiqued

Mitchell 20, Associate Professor and Feminist Studies Graduate Director, Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Department, UC Santa Cruz (Nick Mitchell, 2020, “The View from Nowhere: On Frank Wilderson’s Afropessimism,” <https://spectrejournal.com/the-view-from-nowhere/>)

\*edited for language

Afropessimism trains its reader in the leaps and bounds of faith necessary for this notion to be entertained. Though Wilderson sheds considerable ink critiquing nonBlacks for analogizing their condition to Black folks, his own understanding of his Blackness gets established through analogy, too. Early on in the book, a young Frank is with his grandmother. They are watching the rebellions in the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Their conversation reads as if a dress rehearsal for Afropessimist philosophy. When, prompted by the billowing smoke and the scenes of looting, young Frank asks Grandmother Jules, “Why are we mad?” The reader is not prompted to question the integrity of the “we” that extends from the mansion in Kenwood—the well-heeled Minneapolis neighborhood that the Wildersons are integrating—to the unspecified Black postindustrial ~~ghetto~~ [zone] that “could have been anywhere and everywhere.”7 Kenwood is nowhere on that map, but it’s a nowhere that extends, by way of a gaze accompanying the presumption of shared affect, to a Black anywhere and everywhere. The presumption of shared feeling does the work of analogy without calling attention to it. When young Frank’s grandmother shouts “Go ahead, son!” at a man depicted on television as a looter, it doesn’t strike the budding Afropessimist as theoretically significant that the looter can neither hear nor speak back. The gap between Frank and Grandmother Jules on one side, and the looter on the other, gets bridged through affective projection, not a solidaristic expression among equals. For Wilderson, the defining features of the violence foundational to modern slavery (and therefore antiBlackness) are its gratuitousness, its freedom from having to serve any rational purpose, and, above all, its personal nature. (I’ll elaborate on this final point below.) Such a theory of violence makes for a situation where a reader who is left skeptical about the conclusions Wilderson draws as a narrator or theorist is encouraged to see herself [themselves] as sort of like Dr. Zhou—as someone unwilling or unable to face that nonsensical violence is precisely what makes Blackness. To insist that antiBlack violence make sense would be to impose onto it an ahistorical rationality. It would force antiBlack violence to be recognizable within the norms of violence that nonBlacks face. So, while there are moments when I questioned whether there might have been other plausible interpretations of many of the book’s pivotal scenes, part of the thrust, it would seem, is to challenge its reader to suspend disbelief. Gratuitous violence doesn’t make sense. That’s the point. It’s a hell of a rhetorical mechanism, and one of the reasons why I advocate for reading Afropessimism with a certain degree of care. Any theoretical formation with a self-defense mechanism that refashions those that disagree with it into a symptom of the problem it is diagnosing has most likely crossed the line from theory into theology. Like Marxists who reflexively label any criticism as petty bourgeois, or Lacanians anxious to read any pushback as the outcome of unconscious repression, there is no way to test it except on the terms that it has itself provided. At times it seems like Wilderson’s reading of the slave relation as a personal one turns the self into an upscaling mechanism. If second wave feminists insisted that the personal was political, Wilderson’s interpretive practice suggests that the personal is always already peculiar-institutional. It provides a means of refashioning one-on-one dynamics and interactions such that they become immediately available for generalization. Wilderson’s descriptions of the concrete seem overwhelmed by an apparent demand to represent people, in the first instance, on the model of archetypes. It is not simply that nonBlack people are always invested in the position of the master in some hazy or general way. Wilderson’s narrations indicate that nonBlack people are invested in the personal character of that relationship in such a way that makes him their slave, in particular.

THE DISAPPEARING STATE

This analytic practice of turning social relations between Black and nonBlack persons, formal and informal, into one organized in the first instance by the slave-master dualism has serious implications for Wilderson’s ability to assess complex relationships. In the art center, his co-worker Sameer, an immigrant from Palestine who seems to share with Frank an interest in revolutionary internationalist politics, is grieving. Sameer has just received news of the death of his cousin who, in a tragic accident, was trying to craft a bomb in Ramallah. As Sameer is relating his grief, he shares stories with Frank about life under settler occupation. Yet the account hinges on Sameer’s comment that, for the Palestinian under occupation confronted with Israeli troops, “shame and humiliation runs even deeper if the Israeli soldier is an Ethiopian Jew.” Wilderson is quick to dispense those questions of the complex and contradictory imbrications of racialization, religion, and nation. He instead makes Sameer’s expression of grief into one not only about Blackness, but about a Blackness that Wilderson, in spite of his geopolitical location, has an obvious and transparent claim to immediate understanding. That Sameer and Frank stand in for the possibility—now, more specifically, the impossibility—of Palestinian-Black solidarity simply goes without saying. Details of actual coalition building needn’t be fussed with. These proportions, and the idea that they can be generalized, must be treated as obvious or unspoken in order to offer the encounter its dramatic framing. With Sameer’s words, Wilderson explains, “The earth gave way. The thought that my place in the unconscious of Palestinians fighting for their freedom was the same dishonorable place I occupied in the minds of Whites in America and Israel chilled me.”8 The assumed personality of the slave relation offers a hair-trigger impulse to abstraction and analogy. With stunning quickness, it turns a state soldier into a slave and a suffering comrade into a theoretical occasion. As selves scale across space and time, they scale up in proportion: Sameer, in his grief, appears to offer unyielding access to a Palestinian collective unconscious that is already fixated on putting the slave in his place. As it scales, the Afropessimist practice of abstraction has to erase, or ignore, a lot of complicating details. The reader is not invited to consider the possibility that Sameer might have meant something quite different, that it might not make sense to analogize the racial organization in a different geopolitical context, or the significance of the fact that a Black person might participate in the consolidation of state power as anything other than its unwilling instrument. The Ethiopian soldier’s gun, for instance, is explained away in a dependent clause. But those who have embraced Afro-pessimism will likely not be swayed by anything I have said above. In the final instance, the Afropessimist imaginary is fueled by a confidence toward which it gestures but rarely states explicitly. The idea is that the virtue of Afropessimism consists in the fact that it does something important for Black people, that it allows Black people to speak deeply repressed truths about the social world, truths that make their nonBlack enemies and allies feel profoundly unsafe. My first response to this repressive hypo- thesis would of course be, “which Black people?” The second would be about the nature of the relationship between speech and action envisioned here. While many who embrace Afropessimist ideas imagine that doing so will animate a radical politics that can live beyond a kind of collective world-historical recognition of antiBlackness, that is not a confidence shared by its principal theorist. He is consistently vague: “[Afropessimism] makes us worthy of our suffering.” Or “Afropessimism is Black people at their best. . . [It] gives us the freedom to say out loud what we would other- wise whisper or deny: that no Blacks are in the world, but, by the same token, there is no world without Blacks.”9 Or, the virtue of the theory exists in the pleasure of scaling itself. Speaking of the relief of being in an all-Black group at a multiracial conference, Wilderson writes, I was able to see and feel how comforting it was for a room full of Black people to move between the spectacle of police violence, to the banality of microaggressions at work and in the classroom, to the experiences of chattel slavery as if the time and intensity of all three were the same.10 Extending the feel-good experience of this proto-Afropessimist scene of affirmation, for Wilderson, is the fact that no one asks any questions, inserts any uncertainty, or demands any specificity when group members talk about the contemporariness of chattel slavery. “Folks cried and laughed and hugged each other and called out loud for the end of the world. No one poured cold water on this by asking, What does that mean—the end of the world?”11 But when the all-Black group’s breakout session ends, they are at an impasse, because they are supposed to talk with their nonBlack “allies” about what happened. Eventually one member of the group suggests what will become their ultimate course of action: “We would go back in and refuse to speak with them. Not a protest, just a silent acknowledgement of the fact that we would not corrupt what we experienced with their demand for articulation between their grammar of suffering and ours.”12 Wilderson offers little insight into the process that led to this decision, partly because the point of the scene is to teach us to read silence in the Afropessimist register. Just as young Frank viewed Grandmother Jules laughing and yelling at the television, the reader is led, by the overwhelming sense of joy and relief in the scene, to read the absence of disagreement as the presence of assent. Silence, here, appears to affirm the criticality of Afropessimism.

THEORY—CRITIQUE—THEORY

In the book’s final pages, Frank tells a student who is visiting his office that “the thing that prevented most students from getting their heads around Afropessimism was the fact that it described a structural problem but offered no structural solution to that problem.”13 My read is different. It is not that Afropessimism offers no solution so much as it substitutes itself for one. It offers knowledge itself as the end, as a good that resides in the place that other theories would put the exhortation to practice—and in practice, to test the theory. This is something different than saying that, when it comes to Afropessimism’s political imaginary, there’s no there there. My point is that in the end, Afropessimism is a view from somewhere, and that somewhere is, perhaps all too obviously, the university. The place where all roads in Afropessimism ultimately lead, that place where theorizing is a valued mode of practice in and of itself, and where it does not need to be justified on any other terms. The modern university does not only enable the practice of diagnosing problems with no solutions to hand, and to develop critiques that do not open immediately onto strategies of redress; it enshrines the right to do so and valorizes the subject that does. Afropessimism claims to offer no sanctuary while its practitioner is in fact modeled on the privileged subject of Enlightenment humanism, which sought to liberate knowing from being judged by the actions it did or did not enable.

#### Prevents political alliances, divides communities, erases black/decolonial thought, and is biological essentialism

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When the author Frank Wilderson III was recently asked in an interview to summarize his third book Afropessimism in one sentence, he replied: ‘With the narrative drive of a captivating novel and the intellectual rigor of critical theory, “Afropessimism” illustrates how black death is necessary for the material and psychic life of the human species’ (Williams, 2020). I partly agree with his characterization: Afropessimism is a mixture of memoir and theory, which intersect in almost every chapter, and the narrative part of this non-linear book does function as ‘captivating novel’. But with the second part of Wilderson’s characterization, namely ‘with the intellectual rigor of critical theory’ and his subsequent core argument about the death of Blacks, I cannot possibly agree. The compelling nature of Wilderson’s prose makes it tempting to overlook the shortcomings of his theorizations. In the end, I came to the conclusion that I find Afropessimism, as expressed in this book, loveless, hopeless and divisive. Moreover, this body of thought, although it claims otherwise, lapses into the old laziness of not being intersectional in any way.1 The insight Wilderson offers us into a contemporary Black boy’s and man’s life from a male perspective is rare these days and he paints his life, recent American political and social history, and his relationships with women with verve, sometimes conjuring up beautiful, vivid images. The book may, according to Vinson Cunningham (2020), be seen as a genre, termed ‘auto-theory’, an attempt to arrive at a philosophy by way of the self. Several African American academics, especially women, have taken up this exciting genre in recent years. A personal narrative is linked to a theoretical deepening of the important themes in a text, which, often have to do with Black death, with fungibility, the absolute substitutability and interchangeability of Black people. Christina Sharpe (2016) does this with In the Wake: On Blackness and Being and Saidiya Hartman (2007) had previously used the genre with Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route. Yet, Hartman (1997), like other authors, will have an axe to grind with Wilderson, because he derives all kinds of important insights and concepts from her work, especially from Scenes of Subjection; Terror, Slavery and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America, which although he references her, also incorporates her into the current of Afropessimism, while she herself emphatically rejects that positioning (Royal Tropical Institute, personal communication, Amsterdam, October 2018).

African American academic thought

In this article, I will undertake a critical reading of Afropessimism, using an intersectional and Black feminist European perspective. First, I give some much-needed context. It exceeds the limitations of this article to give a comprehensive overview of the academic thought that Black America has produced, starting with the first Black sociologist William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868–1963), founder of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), who, educated at Harvard and the Humboldt University in Berlin, was long associated with Atlanta University. His contributions to modern sociology are still not sufficiently appreciated. Whether it concerns the rewriting of American history during the Civil War and the period of Reconstruction, in which he takes as a starting point the important roles that Black people themselves played2 ; his contributions to urban sociology, to Pan-Africanism, to a vision of the future for Black people in America, led by ‘the talented tenth’, or to the description of Black consciousness in the heart-breaking collection of essays The Souls of Black Folk (1903), Du Bois is incorrectly not included among the founders of modern sociology. He is also hardly mentioned, let alone taught in introductory courses in that discipline, in The Netherlands and other European countries. For a description of the meaning of Du Bois and the conflict of ideas with his contemporary and rival Booker T. Washington, I refer to the beautiful study by Aldon Morris (2015), The Scholar Denied. 3 If I now confine myself to the last few decades, intersectionality is important Black American feminist intellectual heritage. Intersectionality was initiated by the second wave of feminists of colour, and in particular by Black feminists, including The Combahee River Collective, Audre Lorde, Patricia Hill Collins and Kimberlé Crenshaw, but Chicana and Asian feminists, such as Cherríe Moraga, Gloria Anzaldúa and Mari Matsuda, have also contributed to it. Crenshaw formulated the term intersectionality in 1989 (Crenshaw, 1989). According to some interpretations, including mine, intersectionality goes back to the ideas of 19th-century Black women, such as the women’s rights activist and abolitionist Sojourner Truth with her famous speech Ain’t I a woman? in Akron, Ohio, in 1851. At a meeting of White women who were fighting only for their own suffrage, she asked again and again, ‘Ain’t I a woman?’4 Intersectionality is the key concept within the discipline Gender and Women’s Studies in the Netherlands. In short, intersectionality means that it is not enough to analyse reality using just one analytical toolbox, whether it concerns gender, race, class, sexuality or another variable, but that all these different grammars of difference work simultaneously, influencing and co-creating each other. They should therefore be studied simultaneously and not alongside or separately from each other.5 Intersectionality is characterized by systematic attention to power differences, by complexity and by a certain ‘elasticity’.6 In my ‘pliable’ view, it is possible for anyone to make intersectional analyses, not only Black women; intersectionality is not only concerned with subjectivity/identity, but lends itself well to the analysis of structural social power relations, and finally, the object of research does not have to be Black, but can very well be applied, for example, to the study of Whiteness or sexuality.

Afropessimism and Afropessimism 2.0

In the last two decades, the most recent Black American academic body of thought and export product ‘Afropessimism’ has emerged, in the form in which it is now presented to us by Frank Wilderson et al. Some critics refer to this new form as Afropessimism 2.0 (AP 2.0), and I will do so, too, because Afropessimism was and still is prevalent in White Western circles and it is related to the ‘unrelentingly negative coverage of Africa in Western news media, especially in terms of its tendency toward arrested development’.7 In this discourse, hopelessness about the African continent and neo-coloniality fight for priority. The denial of the complete superfluousness and counterproductivity of the development industry on the continent is also part of this discourse. From this perspective, Africa is seen as one big tragic mess: ‘corruption, cronyism and ethnic conflict are thought to provide the governing logics of politics and other daily experiences’.8 However, Wilderson et al. do not say a word about this first, widespread movement of Afropessimism, which is strange because AP 2.0 would gain credibility as a theoretical framework, if it were to situate itself and indicate how it relates to this earlier Afropessimism, which was and is deeply rooted in Western culture. This total omission of the original and still ubiquitous Afropessimism is symptomatic and gives a first impression of an ahistorical slant, of intellectual carelessness, of African American exceptionalism, that is, being stuck in an African American framework, ~~blind~~ [ignorant] to knowledge from other parts of the Black Diaspora. British researcher Kevin Ochieng Okoth reproaches Afropessimists 2.0 for erasing all post-war anti-colonial African thought9 – and I would add Négritude from France and decolonial thought, which originates mainly from Latin America. Moreover, other Black authors, such as Frantz Fanon, Orlando Patterson, Silvia Wynter, Hortense Spillers and Saidiya Hartman, are being cannibalized. Finally, there is an apodictic propensity, an unsubstantiated grandstanding, with which there can be no dialogue under penalty of the accusation of ‘anti-Black racism’. AP 2.0 comes from circles of Black Studies or African American Studies and Frank Wilderson III and Jared Sexton are its founders. AP 2.0 is a theoretical lens, a metatheory, which, using Marxism, psychoanalysis, feminism and other critical theories, has the ambition to clarify the irreconcilable difference between, on one hand, the violence of capitalism, gender oppression and White supremacy, and, on the other hand, Anti-Black violence. In this metatheory, the world is divided into People, that is, Whites and their junior partners; that concept includes everyone except White heterosexual men and Black men and women. Junior partners, which quite intentionally already sounds nasty, are people of colour (POC), or Non-Black POC (NBPOC) members of all other minority groups, such as Palestinians and Indigenous people, the working class, all women and LGBTIQs (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, intersex and queer) who are not Black. On the other side of this classification are Blacks, who are not Human. Whites and their junior partners become Human by separating themselves from Blacks, also called, confusingly, BPOC, who are ontologically placed outside the Human order (pp. 78, 84). There can be no analogy or equivalence between the suffering of Blacks and that of Whites and their junior partners and therefore no solidarity. Black suffering is incomparable and unique. One of the core beliefs of AP 2.0 is that there is a fundamental Human need for violence against Blacks, the free, naked violence of social death. The core of AP 2.0 is that being Black equals being a Slave, during slavery, but also afterwards, ‘the afterlife of slavery’, it has remained so, with violence against Blacks being the structuring mechanism of the modern world. Human life depends on the death of Blacks for its existence and cohesion (p. 39). AP 2.0 relies heavily on the work of Jamaican sociologist Orlando Patterson (1982), particularly Slavery and Social Death, in which he introduces the concept of ‘social death’ as a characteristic of the life of Blacks. Social death is what characterizes the position of Blacks: not being a subject, not having property, not being able to assert rights to land or to family. There are three central concepts within AP 2.0 when it comes to Blacks: naked, unpunished violence against them is possible, desirable and completely normalized; total powerlessness and general dishonour; and alienation from birth, in generations before and beyond (p. 177). Black suffering and the death of Blacks is the life force of the world, and that death must be constantly repeated visually. What society needs from Blacks is not their labour force, their country or their sexuality, as is the case with the junior partners, the Marxist proletariat, the (neo)colonial subject, or White and coloured women, respectively, but the affirmation of their Humanity. Because Blacks are excluded from being Human from the outset, they lend cohesion to that Humanity. The Black/Slave is ontologically absent, a living dead person. While Blacks know ‘We are a kind of sentient beings [not persons/subjects] who cannot be wounded or killed, because we are already dead to the world’ (p. 155), Whites and their junior partners think ‘I know I am a Human, because I am not Black’ (p. 175). So the fundamental distinction in AP 2.0 is that between being a Black Non-Person and being a Non-Black Person. Anyone who does not want to see or take account of this fundamental difference is guilty of anti-Black racism. It is important to determine how and for whom the term ‘Black’ is used in AP 2.0. Annie Olaloku-Teriba (2018) devotes an incisive study to this and concludes that there is conceptual ambiguity about who is Black in AP 2.0, because it is never explicitly mentioned, and consequently also about what Anti-Black racism is. Being Black is a stable category that ‘refers to a historically coherent group of people, whose experiences of violence are necessarily linked by a common ethnicity’ (p. 10). Being a Slave is something that is permeated by both being Black and being African (p. 8), ignoring the very different historical circumstances in which different collectivities have come into being – and which is precisely what should be investigated – and thus there is an implicit biological, essentialist conception of being Black. AP 2.0 is essentially an ethnocentric, African American analysis of being Black that applies to all others classified as Slaves. Notwithstanding this conceptual muddiness, Afropessimism is high-profile both within the academy and in circles of Black activists, in the United States and in Europe. At the same time, it is controversial thinking that divides Black communities and communities of colour, internally and in relation to each other. This way of thinking has been initiated by Black men, and recently Black feminists and feminists of colour have been trying to reconcile and bring together AP 2.0 and intersectionality, which are in a complex and often tense relationship with each other (Bilge, 2020). It is still too early for me to say whether this reconciliation project is fruitful; in any case, it is urgent explicitly to mention the merits and shortcomings of AP 2.0, and I have to confess that I have some difficulty seeing the merits. I find it difficult to think how AP 2.0, with its essentialist, unshakeable and irreconcilable division of the world, can be worth saving or rethinking. That is why I find it shocking that many, especially of the younger generation in the Netherlands as well, apparently find AP 2.0 so attractive. This is particularly shocking in the light of a Black, migrant and refugee (BMR) feminist history of the late 1970s and early 1980s, in which solidarity between different groups of women, who initially identified themselves as (politically) Black and later as BMR women, was paramount (Deekman and Hermans, 2001).10 I add that it was BMR women, not BMR men, who developed a joint, protointersectional analysis of their/our situation across all their own and institutional boundaries. Women from the former Dutch East Indies, including from the Moluccan islands, Surinamese-, Antillean-, Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch women worked on change, both within their own women’s groups and communities and with each other. Researcher Chandra Frank recently uncovered a letter from the archives of Atria in which the Black lesbian group Sister Outsider, of which I was a member, introduced ourselves to Audre Lorde after she accepted our invitation to visit us in the Netherlands. The letter makes clear that we are Black lesbian women from South Africa, Suriname and Indonesia. I had forgotten about that letter, which is not dated, but was written sometime in 1983, but when Chandra showed it to me, I realized this is an intersectional analysis, which moreover shows our shared colonial histories with the Netherlands and with each other (Frank, 2019). It was great to see that our joint study sessions, our hours of discussions, and the feverish devouring of Black American and Black British feminist stencils and pamphlets gave us an analysis of the Netherlands that still stands. What is the curious, topical appeal of AP 2.0 to younger generations? I suspect there are three things at play here. I’m following Myriam Aouragh (2018, 2019) and Annie Olaloku-Teriba,11 who point out the complex constellation of political and social factors that have come together in the last two decades. These include a general pull to the right, a weakening of the left, and the usual erasure of BMR men and women and their activities as well as (Black) anti-racist left-wing activism that has now embraced a narrowed conception of anti-racist struggle. Priority has been given to checking and disciplining White, but in particular NBPOC privilege, that personal and individualized measure of ‘undeserved privileges’, instead of paying attention to social justice in a structural sense, to transnational and anti-imperialist perspectives and to intersectionality. In particular, the relationship between race and class requires a well-considered analysis, as developed earlier, from Black Panthers to WOC women’s movements. Apart from the fact that such an approach to anti-racism is more complex, takes a longer breath and calls for alliances, tackling White and – what is seen as – NBPOC Privilege offers the immediate advantage of a positioning that puts supporters of AP 2.0 a priori in the right. After all, the basic principles do not lend themselves to refutation and the accusation of Anti-Black racism is easily made. I will come back to this in the last paragraph, but within AP 2.0, nothing is in fact asked of Black people other than to be Black. In addition, I have to conclude with pain that there is simply a lack of transgenerational knowledge about our own Dutch BMR feminist and anti-racist history, in which the search for alliances and solidarity were so prominent. Audre Lorde (1984) says noteworthy things about that in the collection of essays Sister Outsider: ‘Too often, we pour the energy needed for recognizing and exploring difference into pretending those differences are insurmountable barriers, or that they do not exist at all’ (p. 115). It was precisely externally imposed, essentialist identity constructions that were questioned, while they simultaneously led a double life, in the sense that it was acknowledged that there were, of course, differences between women from different countries of origin, but that those differences should not in any way stand in the way of cooperation. And finally, related to the previous point, I think that the popular misinterpretation of intersectionality, as if it only had to do with subjectivity and identity, is apparently also at issue.

A memoir on Black masculinity

But first let me say something about the successful part of Afropessimism. It is a compelling and beautifully told narrative; an exciting and adventurous coming of age story, a memoir of a Black man in his mid-sixties, who is now a professor in African American Studies and Drama, at the University of California, Irvine. Born in 1957, he gives us a picture of how he experienced the end of the Vietnam War; the Black liberation struggle; accompanied by the soundtrack of end of 1960s, 1970s Black music; and the birth of the AIM, American Indian Movement. Raised as the eldest son in the family of two Black psychologists, who were also activists in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in an overwhelmingly White neighbourhood, he attends a White elementary school, and he never feels at ease either in the neighbourhood or at school. He is always the Other, as when he describes that the mother of a friend, through the friend, asks him ‘what is it like to be a Negro?’ At the same time, it is a privileged childhood, in which the family travels a lot during summer vacations, especially to other American university cities. The parents are constantly on study trips or on trips with an activist purpose. When he is 18, he goes to study at élite Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, where, just before graduation, he gets kicked out for starting a political action for the poorly paid White cleaners and cafeteria staff. When he lives with his considerably older, Black lover Stella, a beautifully described, psychoanalytically analysed quarrel with their White flatmate Josephine, drives them on a hallucinatory escape from their apartment, driven by invisible assailants of an initially obscure nature. He finishes his studies at Dartmouth anyway and then becomes the first Black real estate agent in Minneapolis and earns big money. However, this existence does not give him satisfaction and after a few short episodes as a waiter and as an usher in a museum, he leaves for South Africa, to support the fight of the African National Congress (ANC) against Apartheid. He described his time in South Africa in his second book Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile and Apartheid (2008). He subsequently went back to the university and obtained his PhD, in the process suffering a psychic breakdown. This collapse has great symbolic significance and marks his entry into AP 2.0. His description of international academic conferences and presentations, which he gives as a much sought-after academic, are amusing and recognizable. Occasionally it is rather over the top, as when he compares the comments of his Marxist colleagues at a conference in Berlin, who do not take kindly to AP 2.0, without any irony or noticeable sense of exaggeration, with a lynching party, which he refers to as a ‘mixture of pleasure and psychological renewal’ (p. 74). I would like to dwell a little longer on his period as an usher in the museum, because it provides him with a key experience that will profoundly influence the development of his thinking. In conversation with his fellow hall guard, best friend and fellow revolutionary, the refugee Palestinian Sameer Bishara, the latter reveals that it is one thing to be searched by Israeli soldiers all the time, but that it is intolerable when this is done by Ethiopian Jews (p. 17, and further). Wilderson’s world collapses when he realizes that this means that he occupies the same dishonoured place in the collective unconscious of Palestinians, whom he had until then seen as his brothers in the revolutionary struggle, as he does in that of Whites in America. He concludes that Palestinian insurgents have more in common with the Israeli state and Israeli civil society than with Blacks. Sameer may have lost his country, but that is of a totally different order than the ontological placing of Blacks outside the Human Order. Later, when he has converted to AP 2.0, he systematizes that experience into a theoretically hermetic vision and a worldview in which there can be no equivalence and solidarity between the suffering of Black people and that of Whites and their junior partners, such as Sameer. A number of miraculous things happen here. The ease with which Wilderson lumps all others than Black people together, without applying any differentiations, is astonishing. Whites and their junior partners, who are subordinated and disadvantaged, but do belong to Mankind, have made common cause with each other in their negrophobogenesis, or negrophobia. With this statement, it becomes clear once again that Wilderson does not think intersectionally, but in singular terms. How is it possible to think about all these categories of people without considering the overlaps between them? Take a working-class Black woman: does she fall into the most damned category of Blacks or under the junior partners? Or how should we understand a Black Palestinian? According to Wilderson, their Blackness comes first and that cancels all their other characteristics. In other words, race is a more fundamental, ontological category, while class and gender are just ‘conflicts’ that can be resolved. Furthermore, it is problematic that one extremely unpleasant, racist experience is identified as the genesis of his exclusive vision. The exceptionalism and uniqueness of Black suffering and his anti-Palestinian point of view, part of the broader anti-NBPOC stance, curiously resembles a Zionist argument in which the suffering of Jews cannot be compared or seen in relation to the suffering of other groups. Wilderson’s position is also inconsistent with reality. In a public conversation with Gayatri Spivak in Berlin in June 2018, Angela Davis said about AP 2.0 and Palestinians: When we think of the solidarity work that Palestinian activists did in 2014, when the protest against Ferguson served as a catalyst for a new movement in the US, a Black Freedom Movement, the Black Lives Matter movement, we realize how central Palestinians were to the production of a new historical moment for Black people in the US.12 Another possible interpretation would be that some Palestinians also take part in the older Afropessism or, in my own terms, that they have mastered the dominant cultural archive, but I always want to keep open the possibility that they could liberate themselves from it. There is no such exit with AP 2.0; the relationships between Blacks, their masters and the junior partners are chiselled in marble and there is no escaping it. That is why I call AP 2.0 loveless and hopeless. Finally, what is striking about this fragment and AP 2.0 in general is, as Aouragh (2019) and Olaloku-Teriba (2018) also point out, that it is not so much Whites, but the NBPOC in particular, who, drawing parallels between Black struggles and the struggles of other groups, are the object of his ire. This is not only a break with earlier more comprehensive analyses of anti-racist struggles, it is also hopeless to fool other dominated groups into believing that they are fundamentally and irrevocably implicated in, and benefiting from, the oppression of Blacks. While we are in the midst of the uprising for the murder by a police officer of George Floyd in Minneapolis, it is tempting to think that Black suffering is unique and incomparable, but that suffering is related to other forms of suffering, and it is neither possible nor productive to establish a hierarchy in them.

#### Accumulation of past injustices is not a justification for rejecting political action in the present or future ⁠— it actively prevents emancipatory change

Bevernage 15, Ghent University (Berber Bevernage, October 2015, “THE PAST IS EVIL/EVIL IS PAST: ON RETROSPECTIVE POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY, AND TEMPORAL MANICHAEISM,” History and Theory, Vol. 54, No. 3, October 2015, pages 333-352)

Yet not everybody shares the optimism of people like Soyinka and Barkan. Some commentators claim that retrospective politics often comes at the cost of present and future oriented politics or argue that it tends to be anti-utopian and can therefore hardly be called emancipatory. One of the best-known defenders of this argument is John Torpey, who laments that “‘coming to terms with the past’ in contemporary politics has extensively supplanted the elaboration of visions of the future.”10 Reparations politics, he argues, is often merely a tactical move that characterizes a historical era that is no longer capable of offering “inclusive visions of progressive change,” as, for example, represented by socialism or the American civil rights movement. Sadly, Torpey remarks, the only road to the future in contemporary politics seems to run via the long detour of the disasters of the past.11 Torpey is certainly not the only intellectual expressing these worries. According to historian Pieter Lagrou, “our contemporary societies, for lack of future projects, shrink into a ‘passeist’ culture.”12 In European public discourse, he argues, the focus on crimes of the distant past has become so strong that it tends to marginalize claims of victims of contemporary crimes and human rights violations. Therefore, Lagrou argues, “a commemorative discourse of victimhood is very much the opposite of a constructive and dynamic engagement with the present, but rather a paralyzing regression of democratic debate.”13 Lagrou's argument closely resembles many others that turn against retrospective politics and “victim culture” such as Ian Buruma's warning about the peril of minorities defining themselves exclusively as historical victims and engaging in an “Olympics of suffering”14 and Charles Maier's claims about a “surfeit of memory.”15 These warnings about the perils of a retrospective politics outweighing or even banning politics directed at contemporary injustices or striving for a more just future should be taken seriously. Yet the alternative of an exclusively present- or future-oriented politics disregarding all historical injustice is not desirable either. Contemporary injustice often manifests itself in the form of structural repetition or continuity of injustices with a long history. Moreover, totalitarian versions of progressivist politics have frequently abused the idea of a struggle for a more just future in order to justify past and present suffering. It could even be argued that the rise of dominant restrospective politics has been initiated partly on the basis of disillusionment with the exculpatory mechanisms of progressivist ideology.16 Some indeed claim that much of present-day retrospective politics and the “setting straight” of historical injustices would be unnecessary had totalitarian progressivist politics focused less exclusively on the bright future and shown more sensitivity to the contemporary suffering of its day. This claim certainly makes sense if one thinks of extreme examples such as Stalin's five-year plans and Mao's Great Leap Forward. Yet, as Matthias Frisch rightly argues, the risk of the justification of past and present suffering lurks around the corner wherever progressive logics of history or promises of bright and just futures are not counterbalanced by reflective forms of remembrance.17 Therefore, we should resist dualist thinking that forces us to choose between restitution for historical injustices and struggle for justice in the present or the future. Rather, we should look for types of retrospective politics that do not oppose but complement or reinforce the emancipatory and utopian elements in present- and future-directed politics—and the other way around: present- and future-oriented politics that do not forget about historical injustices. In this paper I want to contribute to this goal by focusing on the issue of retrospective politics and by analyzing how one can differentiate emancipatory or even utopian types of retrospective politics from retrospective politics that I classify here as anti-utopian. I argue that the currently dominant strands of retrospective politics indeed do tend to be anti-utopian and have a very limited emancipatory potential. Moreover, I claim that currently dominant retrospective politics do not radically break with several of the exculpatory intellectual mechanisms that are typically associated with progressivist politics but actually modify and sometimes even radicalize them. In that restricted sense, and only in this sense, it can be argued that currently dominant retrospective politics do not represent a fundamentally new way of dealing with historical evil and the ethics of responsibility. My perspective is not a pessimistic one, however. Besides the currently dominant retrospective politics, there exist other strands of retrospective politics that do have emancipatory or even utopian features and that do not force us to choose between restitution for historical injustices and struggle for justice in the present or the future. Anti-utopianism and ethical “passeism,” I argue, are not inherent or necessary features of all retrospective politics but rather result from a specific, underlying type of historical thought or philosophy of history18 that treats the relation between past, present, and future in antinomic terms and prevents us from understanding “transtemporal” injustices and responsibilities. Sometimes this type of historical thought indeed stimulates a moralistic stance in which the past is charged with the worst of all evil, while the present becomes morally discharged by simple comparison. The latter type of “temporal Manichaeism” can be highly problematic, I argue, because it not only posits that the “past is evil” but also tends to turn this reasoning around and stimulates the wishful thought that “evil is past.”

#### Warren wrecks collective struggle and the alt collapses into individualism

Lloyd 15, assistant professor of religion at Syracuse University (Vincent Lloyd, 2015, “Afro-Pessimism and Christian Hope,” forthcoming in Grace, Governance, and Globalization: Theology and Public Life, edited by Lieven Boeve, Stephan van Erp, Martin Poulsom, Bloomsbury Press, <http://vwlloyd.mysite.syr.edu/afro-pessimism-christian-hope.pdf>)

Deep Racism and Secular Hope

Afro-pessimist scholarship itself rarely turns towards practical questions and rarely asks: what are we to do, or how are we to hope?12

[footnote 12 begins here]

For an exception, concluding that Afro-pessimism must reject hope and embrace nihilism, see Calvin L. Warren, “Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope,” CR: The New Centennial Review 15:1 (2015): 215-248.

[footnote 12 ends here]

Afro-pessimist scholarship is largely descriptive work, taking political events (lynchings and police shootings, for example) as symptomatic of a deeper, racialized metaphysics. There is, however, a broader scholarly conversation about deep pessimism caused by difference that may be instructive. Scholars of Native American studies, immigration, and queer studies have also explored how these categories of difference are deeply embedded in Western culture, but in some cases they have grappled more explicitly with questions of hope. Jonathan Lear has identified a virtue he labels “radical hope” in Native American communities facing the elimination of their ways of life.13 Focusing on Plenty Coups, the last chief of the Crow, Lear studies a context where the social practices that constituted the Crow world were no longer possible. For example, with lands stolen by the US government and traditional means of resolving conflicts disrupted by firearms, the practice of bravery in battle -which involved face painting by a wife, care for horses, and recounting the victory post-battle, so was woven into Crow life in many ways - was no longer possible. To be a Crow meant to do the social practices of the Crow, but when those social practices are foreclosed, Lear echoes Plenty Coups in concluding that “nothing happened.” Crow continued to live, but with their culture gone it was only the barest form of biological existence. The good life, its meaning culturally determined, could no longer be pursued; practical reasoning went haywire when there were no longer goods to be pursued. However, all was not lost. As Lear tells it, Plenty Coup had a dream (significant because it indicates a break with practical reason) which the chief interpreted to mean that the Crow must acknowledge their traditional way of life was coming to an end, but they also must be committed to the notion that the Crow will survive and new social practices and new goods will come about, even if it is impossible to know what they are or how they will come about now. This radical hope rejected as futile practical reasoning, self-destruction, and fantasy. Soberly assessing the world as it is, radical hope persists in acting as if a wholly new world is possible – and so exercises the virtues of adaptability and perceptiveness. Yet radical hope only works, Lear argues, because of the Crow’s premise that God exists and is good. Might radical hope offer a way for Black theology to respond to the problem of Afropessimism? There are clear similarities between the cultural devastation faced by the Native American community Lear studies and the cultural devastation wrought on Blacks through, among other things, the slave trade and the prison system. Unlike the Crow, Black cultural devastation was not a one-off event but, according to the Afro-pessimist critique, is an ongoing process inherent in Euro-American culture itself, continually grinding away at the social practices of Blacks. Or, put another way, the continual pressures on Black individuals and communities tend not simply to take away social practices but to corrupt them, changing them at times from incubators of virtue to incubators of vice (one thinks of the corporate appropriation of Black music or the performance of Black respectability necessary for success in the white business world). Lear’s account of radical hope depends on a robust culture that once, in the nottoo-distant past, existed to fuel hope for the future (this past is the source of the chickadee, the symbol of hope in Plenty Coups’ dream, along with the Crow view of God and the crucial practice of dream interpretation). The Afro-pessimist charges that Western anti-Blackness is so deep-seeded that there was never a robust culture from which such a radical hope could flow; even if there was, the centuries of fruitless hope and embattled community would surely lead to the collapse of the virtue. Another approach to deep racism found in recent secular scholarship is to reject hope altogether. Such approaches propose two different sorts of alternatives: an embrace of grief or an embrace of the present. Anne Cheng’s The Melancholy of Race exemplifies the former approach.14 She agrees that racialization has an enormous, persistent impact – in the context of her study, on African Americans and Asian Americans. She agrees that race shapes the ideological foundations of the West. On her view, the usual response to racism, articulating grievances and pressing for them to be addressed, does not adequately address the depths of the problem; indeed, it masks those depths. By formulating a list of grievances and putting one’s hopes in the possibility that they will be rectified, the racialized subject imagines that she will achieve equality and dignity. Then, she will be just like everyone else: the world will be postracial. Cheng argues that grievances obscure grief, the deeper process that afflicts the psyche of racialized subjects who know they will never be “normal” – and grief distorts the psyche of white subjects as well since white identity is constituted in relation to the racialized other. In the face of deep pessimism, the proper response, on this view, is to look beyond the specific grievances (and hopes) of a racial minority and instead explore the varied ways that the wound of racism sabotages the affective economy of that minority. Acknowledging and interrogating rather than rejecting grief – racial melancholia – is the only way to see the world rightly and so is the prerequisite for any properly directed social or political action. Cheng’s response to deep racial pessimism is decidedly secular and decidedly individualist. Her critique of grievance, which could be read as a critique of hope directed at specific objects or as desire for specific goals masked as hope, is in a sense of critique of idolatry, but her response to idolatry is to reject transcendence altogether in favor of the folds and wrinkles of immanence – of our affective economies. But what if we consider grievances not as ends in themselves but as instrumentally used in collective (anti-racist) struggle? Might the process of collective struggle, and not any particular goal, provide a means of healing psyches damaged by racism? Tracking and probing this damage seems less important than commending the forms of collective practice and community organizing that could cultivate the virtues which serve as a buffer against disabling grief. Indeed, this is a point made forcefully by the first and second generations of Black theologians: Black communities are essentially communities of struggle and, as such, shape character in a way that holds off despair. Like Cheng, Lee Edelman rejects hope and acknowledges the radical exclusions faced by minority communities.15 Edelman is particularly concerned with queer men, and for him queer identity is fundamentally opposed to any future orientation – and so to any hope. The normative, heterosexual world is concerned with the future because it is concerned with reproduction: individuals with reproducing themselves through their children and societies with reproducing themselves from generation to generation. The figure of the child is sanctified, according to Edelman, because she or he represents this reproduction of the way things are. Yet queers, as incapable of reproduction, are excluded from this heteronormative way of seeing the world. Indeed, queers disrupt the smooth reproduction of the ways of the world – and, Edelman contends, they ought to embrace this role. They ought to embrace pleasure in the moment rather than pleasure deferred to the next generation; they will not suffer now so that a child can have a better life. In short, queers are a minority structurally excluded from Western metaphysics, and the proper response for the minority is to happily embrace hopelessness along with all temporality other than the now. Edelman helpfully demonstrates the way that interest in the future is closely tied to selfinterest and to the powers that be in the present. He also helpfully demonstrates the way that minority groups whose exclusion is fundamental to regnant ideology can potentially short-circuit that ideology by refusing to participate in normative future-directed practices. Indeed, there is at times a messianic tone to Edelman’s project, finding the fullness of time in the present moment. Yet the heart of Edelman’s project is an extension of Cheng’s, an extension from the critique of idolatry to the critique of ideology. Where Cheng took issue with specific hopes, Edelman presents himself as taking issue with hope as such – but in fact he is taking issue with hope motivated by present social structures and institutions. In other words, Edelman is warning against an embrace of hope that is really not about the wholly new, hope that advances the interests of the old with the rhetoric of the wholly new. For Edelman, as for Cheng, the only alternative is making ourselves into gods: an even deeper form of idolatry (an even subtler rouse of ideology). Black theologians grappling with Afro-pessimism can learn much from these secular efforts and their sharp critical perspectives, but Black theologians also bring to the problem of racism a view of hope directed towards a God who is irreducible to worldly terms or desires. God the Future of Blacks The quick and easy response of Black theologians to Afro-pessimism is to simply present Christ as the solution. In the Afro-pessimist framework, Black being is an oxymoron: Blackness has no being, is defined by its exclusion from being. Christ raises the dead, turning non-being into being, flesh defined by death into flesh defined by life. Participation in Christ means participation in His resurrection: denying the world’s denial of being. Such a stance does not take the form of overcoming Blackness, of becoming white. That Blackness is defined by death does not mean that whiteness is defined by life. To the contrary, whiteness hubristically claims life, being, on its own – whiteness claims ontology without theology and that is idolatry. Blackness is not outside of being but paradoxically inside and outside at once, being that is not counted as being, that thus disturbs the regime that would define being. J. Kameron Carter, working along these lines, labels Blackness “paraontological.”16 Concealing the being of the slave, or the prisoner, or the native, takes much ideological work, for the principle of Black non-being must overcome the stubbornness of lived reality. Blackness points to the precariousness of ontology, reminds that the present order of being is not natural, not universal. Blackness essentially destabilizes the order of things, so the resurrection of Black being is not the assimilation of Blackness into the order of things, into whiteness, but rather is triumph of the theological over the ontological. What does this mean concretely? The resurrection of Black being means Black agency: Black writing, Black art, Black rhetoric, Black creativity that is unexpected, unauthorized, and, from the perspective of the white world, often unintelligible. The slave writes, the prisoner paints, or the native imagines. The objects of these verbs, these acts, need not be God – indeed cannot be God, for that would be idolatry. Independent of their object, these verbs represent participation in God because they represent the resurrection of non-being into being, Blackness triumphant, Christ triumphant. This account of Black theology responsive to Afro-pessimism is appealing but ultimately deeply flawed. It suffers from individualism, a profoundly secular ailment – the ailment that defines the secular. The creativity and strength of the Black man (for such creative agency is gendered) will save the world from itself. In this theology there is no space for community, for love, or, crucially, for hope. There are no virtues of Blackness developed in community, just the act of individual rebellion against the powers that be. And there is no vision of a future world transformed, just a set of disconnected Black men doing art in their attics, as it were. The Black theologian inclined to such a view may respond that “church” would consist of the informal networks created among these, what Fred Moten calls the “undercommons.”17 But such networks seem a far cry from communities of virtue that could nurture, sustain, and properly order the Black rebellious spirit. Indeed, such a theological perspective suffers from an extreme Christocentrism, the theological vice corresponding to the secular vice of individualism. Christ cleaved from God and Spirit defines all value; indeed, what matters on this account is not even a Christ who loves or suffers but exclusively a Christ who is risen. What is needed is a Black theology responsive to Afro-pessimism but also concerned with the social world, with love, and with justice. The theological reflections of Edward Schillebeeckx offer a useful if unexpected resource to accomplish this task. Of Schillebeeckx’s extensive, learned corpus, I will focus exclusively on one essay, “The New Image of God, Secularization and Man’s Future on Earth,” the final chapter of God the Future of Man. 18 This is a particularly important essay, consolidating much of Schillebeeckx’s thought and clearly developing the themes that are central to much of his writing over the decades before and after. In this essay, Schillebeeckx makes three key points. First, he offers a new way to think about secularization. Christians, instead of lamenting declining church membership rolls, should see secularization as part of a re-orientation away from the past and towards the future. Science and technology hold new possibilities while changing social arrangements create new ways of living. Life no longer consists of repeating the past or interpreting the past for lessons on the present. Instead of looking backwards we now look forwards. To determine what ought to be done now we look less to what has always been done than to what might eventually be done. We act on our hopes instead of on our memories. Schillebeeckx’s second point is that God is, as his book’s title suggests, our future. Where the Christian tradition has embraced the slogan that God is the first and the last, the emphasis has too often been on the first, in the beginning, according to Schillebeeckx. Shifting this emphasis, Schillebeeckx encourages us to think of God as the “wholly New,” that which is to come, and he encourages us to think of Christ as demonstrating that we ourselves can participate in God by creating anew, leaving behind the sin of our past. For Schillebeeckx, God is the future not of any individual but of humanity collectively: our future. Given this second point, Schillebeeckx is able to view modernization and secularization cheerfully. Instead of mourning a decline in religiosity, Schillebeeckx sees secularization bringing with it a better religiosity, one based on a more correct understanding of God. Secularization strips away old idols that tied Christianity to this world, that made God an object of this world, determined by history. The shift in human orientation towards the future that happens with secularization is a shift in orientation towards God. The problem with an orientation towards the future is that humans find themselves unmoored from norms of the past – so it would seem as though anything goes. It is clear how to look backwards for normativity, to judge based on what has been done before, but it is not clear what it would mean to look forwards for normativity. If God is the future of humankind, must this be a God without standards or morality? Schillebeeckx’s third point in “The New Image of God” is meant to address this worry: “The Christian inspiration in socio-economic and political life is therefore directed, by its ‘critical negativity,’ against every image of man whose lines are strictly drawn or which presents itself as a positive and total definition and against the illusory expectation that science and technology are capable of solving the ultimate problems of man’s existence.”19 In short, Schillebeeckx embraces negative theology, or theology as the critique of idolatry (and ideology). The future must remain unnameable. If it is named, as so often happens when humans are oriented towards the future, this must be criticized by theology for so naming ascribes a worldly identity to the divine. Christian hope is distinguished from secular optimism because the former refuses to be sated with any object or concept. Secularization’s reorientation of humans towards the future can be a proper orientation towards God or it can be another form of idolatry, like the orientation to the past. Schillebeeckx’s third point, about negative theology, is necessary to render judgment on whether this future orientation is properly theological. Such judgment is rendered in a community that keeps alive the vision of God as wholly New: in church. Might we think of Black experience as involving a form of secularization? Might the experiences of slavery, segregation, imprisonment, and genocide offer the possibility of shifting Black orientation from the past to the future? Where the social transformations accompanying modernity severed the normative force of the past for whites, the normative force of the past was severed much more directly for Blacks: through violent displacement, incarceration, and death. Mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, were taken away – are being taken away. One response is a nostalgic turn backwards to an impossible past: fantasy images of Africa, newly created rituals to remember “the ancestors,” and, at the intellectual level, a fixation on the experience of slavery as overdetermine(e)ing Black experience.20 Another response is to hope. Here hope means an orientation towards the future, necessitated by the inaccessibility of the past. When God is understood as wholly New, as God is for Schillebeeckx, experience can be said to orient Blacks towards God. Moreover, Schillebeeckx offers “critical negativity,” nurtured in loving community, as a tool to determine when this orientation goes wrong. On this view, Black theology is essentially negative theology on the conceptual level; on the level of practice, it embraces the theological virtues. Moreover, the sudden, severe breaks with the past experienced by Blacks suggest that, for Schillebeeckx, Black theology ought to be paradigmatic for all theology: it offers a much more intense version of the gradual reorientation from backwardslooking to forwards-looking that Schillebeeckx identifies and commends in European modernity. This Schillebeeckxian reading of Black theology is responsive to the worries of Afropessimism because it takes as its starting point that the denial of Black being is deeply entwined with the metaphysics of the West. This is the mechanism, in the realm of ideas, resulting in the violence, in the realm of practice, that severs Blacks from the past. A missing father can be found; an impossible father is irretrievable – resulting in melancholy, or in an orientation towards the future.21 The foreclosure of Black being is not just about police stops and incarceration rates, where humans are treated as non-human. Those practices are authorized by a metaphysics: that is the Afro-pessimist insight. According to such metaphysics, Blacks have no history; they are excluded from the unfolding of being through world history. Black community, and particularly Black religious community, church, gathers individuals who cannot be oriented towards the past and negotiates an orientation towards the future – towards God. That community is founded on the memory and real presence of Christ: the possibility for Black being to be resurrected. Christ offers the foundational norm for that community, a model of how death can become life and a model of how false hopes (in objects, in law, in self) are to be quashed. Together, as community, as Body of Christ, the Black church negotiates proper orientation towards the future – and so properly worships God. Unlike the first generation of Black theology, this Schillebeeckxian inflection of Black theology accounts for the depths of anti-Blackness in the West. Unlike the second generation of Black theology, this Schillebeeckxian approach does not take culture or community as an end point. They do not provide the norms for Black theology; Christ does. But culture and community, for those forcibly detached from their past, provide a way to maintain proper orientation towards the future – to hope rightly. Like the secular theories of deep racism discussed above, the approach outlined here acknowledges how problematic hope is for those enduring intractable wretchedness, but unlike the secular theories theological hope can now be cleaved from idolatrous hope. But is this Schillebeeckxian inflection of Black theology at all political or is the hope it commends simply a religious ethical practice? The critique of idolatry and ideology is always political, and such critique is, first and foremost, the task commended by this account. This critique goes hand in hand with hope. It is a critique of those who would turn police into gods, prisons into hell, and settlers into saviors. The virtue of hope is political because it entails such critique, but it also fuels the activity of communities oriented towards the future, committed to building new practices and institutions together. It is not for theology to specify in advance what those practices and institutions will be – that would be idolatry. The task, rather, is to clear the intellectual space necessary for this essential, life-giving work to be sustained.

#### Pragmatic hope reinvigorates communities, whereas spiritual faith causes divisions ⁠— only the 1AC prevents the internalization of political failure

⁠— AT: Sullivan

⁠— AT: Warren

Stitzlein 18, Professor, University of Cincinnati School of Education (Sarah M. Stitzlein, 2018, "Hoping and Democracy." Contemporary Pragmatis, 15: pages 228-250)

What ought I hope for? This question guides our pursuit of the good life and its answer is often shaped by our social, political, and educational experiences. We aren’t born with ready-made hopes; rather, we shape them through our interactions with others, our growing sense of what is possible as we learn about our environment, and our experiments with the world to see what we can do within it and to change it. Other people play an important role in this process, especially through institutions like schools, social arrangements like families, and political practices like democracy. They shape the traditions and expectations we inherit, as well as the ways in which we test, challenge, and revise what has been passed on to us. Despite this, hope is too often described in individualist terms that fail to encapsulate the full process of hoping and its potential impact on shared living. Many theologians link hope with an individual’s faith in a deity who will act on his or her behalf, 1 some philosophers employ a narrow understanding of hope as an individual’s desire for an outcome in the face of uncertainty, 2 while many more psychologists describe hope as an individual’s use of willpower and “waypower” to achieve clear goals. 3 Instead, I will offer a pragmatist account of hope, which is firmly rooted in the experiences of individuals and grows out of real life circumstances, yet cannot be disconnected from social and political life. 4 I extend my account to show how a pragmatist view of hope is necessarily connected to other people and can be used to enrich our experiences in communities. Moreover, such hope can help us to better face current political struggles and social problems, all the while building a democratic identity together. 5 In this article, I will explain how pragmatism offers an enhanced understanding of hope and its role in our lives together. To examine the ways in which shared hoping and the shared content of our hopes shape our identity and our work together in democracy, I consider both how and what we hope. Unlike other accounts of hope that are largely divorced from life’s circumstances, such as theological accounts that direct our attention to deities and psychological accounts that tell us we must hope for our goals regardless of real world constraints, pragmatist hope is noteworthy because it is firmly rooted in reality. 6 Moreover, a pragmatist account addresses some of the current obstacles we face in American democracy and is capable of transforming or improving them. Perhaps more importantly, such hope can be directly and indirectly cultivated within citizens, thereby offering a feasible way that democratic life can be strengthened.

1 Present Context

Before looking at hope in detail, let’s briefly first take stock of current conditions that relate to hopelessness in personal and political life. In pragmatist spirit, the account I offer here must attend to real conditions. Unfortunately, these are conditions where hope is struggling, where democracy may be in jeopardy, and where the dominant form of hope that we do see is largely privatized. To begin, a recent study using the World Values Survey and other polling sources finds that democratic citizens have “become more cynical about the value of democracy as a political system, less hopeful that anything they do might influence public policy, and more willing to express support for authoritarian alternatives.” 7 Those citizens have increasingly withdrawn from democratic participation, whether that be through formal institutions or alternatives in the public or civic spheres, such as joining in movements or protests. There has been a dramatic shift in how the wealthy view democracy, with 16 percent of them now believing that military rule is a better way of living and an astounding 35 percent of rich young Americans holding such a view. 8 There are likely many factors impacting this current state of affairs and I will touch on a few here. 9 First, in terms of hope most overtly, Alan Mittleman rightly notes that “the legitimacy of politics is damaged in proportion to its failure to fulfil the hopes it has engendered.” 10 Indeed, several recent American candidates ran on messages of hope and yet the visions evoked have often failed to be fulfilled in reality, crushing the heightened expectations of citizens. Politicians often use the rhetoric of hope, but they tend to distort what hope really is and what it requires of citizens, as I will explain later. Instead, they make reference to the supposed destiny of the nation with God as its backer. Or, as in the cases of Barack Obama and Donald Trump, some citizens place their hope in the leader himself, invoking a messianic figure. These forms of hope entail no more citizen action than, perhaps, donating to a campaign or wearing an iconic t-shirt proclaiming “hope.” Instead, I will argue that, rather than passively relying on the hope promised by politicians, citizens must participate in shaping and fulfilling hope, making such hope more genuine and robust. Second, structural violence and inequality, common amongst poor and racial minority communities in America, has wreaked havoc on hope. In some cases, it has eroded hope. 11 In others it has rendered hope exhausting, 12

[footnote 12 begins]

Calvin Warren, “Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope,” cr: The New Centennial Review, 15 (2015), pp. 215–248. Shannon Sullivan, “Setting aside hope: A pragmatist approach to racial justice,” in Pragmatism and Justice, ed. by Susan Dielman, David Rondel, and Christopher Voparil (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[footnote 12 ends]

with marginalized citizens told that they must never give up hope and that they must keep trying to earn a better life for themselves, in part through improving their own character regardless of the stagnant harmful practices of others. Many of those citizens are left either nihilistically without hope or perpetually chasing a vision of justice that is (perhaps sometimes intentionally kept) out of reach. 13

[footnote 13 begins]

Calvin Warren, “Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope,” cr: The New Centennial Review, 15 (2015): 215–248.

[footnote 13 ends]

I intend to describe a form of hope that is more sustainable and more attuned to the real conditions of life that we can control and others where we have limited control. Third, citizenship in America has increasingly become centered on individuals, personal responsibility, entrepreneurship, and private success. Historical accounts of rugged individualism have now joined forces with calls to educate children in grit and expectations that one will fight to earn one’s position and goods in a competitive marketplace. 14 This environment lacks trust in others and discourages collaborative effort. Often those who have not been successful in the past, or do not see viable avenues for being so in the future, fatalistically accept these conditions and become passive about countering or changing them. While others who have enough resources and power to be comfortable with the present conditions, indulge in the privilege of being cynical or apathetic. Some spread these states of hopelessness or jaded negativity through memes and messages on social media, especially about the role and effectiveness of government, rendering cynicism a collective practice. 15 Cynics, left believing that their political efforts are useless or ineffective and perhaps that everyone acts on self-interest, are left to look out merely for themselves, without a sense of responsibility to act on behalf of themselves and others. Indeed, cynics may mock others who do not hold such views as naïve and out of touch with reality. Cynicism functions as a distancing maneuver, separating citizens from each other, from formal democratic institutions, and from civic organizations, where visions of an improved world and action to achieve it tend to occur. My notion of hope aims to span those divides. Finally, what is left of hope has become privatized. 16 This is exacerbated as neoliberalism continues to assert Margaret Thatcher’s claims, “There is no such thing as society, only individuals and families,” and “there is no alternative to the market.” Hope is reduced to a mere drive to achieve one’s own limited dreams, or those of one’s children, typically only through financial terms and material goods. When citizens are rendered isolated competitors, they lose the ability to detect social problems and the motivation to ameliorate them, especially if the effects on one’s self or family are not immediate. Economist Tyler Cowen describes these citizens as the new “complacent class,” who are content with the way things are as long as they are not directly harmed and as long as they can stay surrounded by people and things that confirm their experience of the world. In their complacency, the members of the complacent class are unable to “inspire an electorate with any kind of strong positive visions, other than some marginal adjustments.” 17 I aim to show how hope is better understand as a social and political endeavor that brings us into contact with others as we craft visions of the future. In sum, these changes in citizens’ lives and views debilitate individual citizens and democracy as a whole. They keep us from recognizing and solving collective problems and from leading better lives together. Citizens sit around waiting for reasons to hope, sometimes becoming swept up in campaign rhetoric when election cycles come around, rather than acknowledging that hope is generated through action as subjects working together, as I will argue. I will turn now to depict a pragmatist account of hope that can be formally cultivated in schools and informally in our lives together—a way of hoping together that may better support democratic life in these challenging times.

2 Pragmatist Hope

I offer here a pragmatist account of hope, largely based in the philosophy of John Dewey. Notably, Dewey himself does not provide such an account, even though hope underlies much of his work and was evident in his own personal life as he encountered considerable despair at the loss of two of his children and his wife, while also facing two world wars. I construct a view of hope from Dewey’s well-articulated elements of inquiry, growth, truth, meliorism, and habits. Pragmatism begins with the real and complicated conditions of our world. It brings together intelligent reflection with inquiry, habits, and action so that we can understand and change our environments to better align with our needs and desires. Hope plays an important role in that process.

Inquiry, Growth, and Truth

For Dewey, hope often arises within the midst of despair, when we have lost our way and are struggling to move forward. Dewey describes these moments as “indeterminate situations.” He turns to the process of inquiry via the empirical method to help us explore those situations, consider possible courses of action, and test out various solutions. It is inquiry that helps us to understand, act upon, and reconstruct our environments and our experiences so that we are able to move forward out of the indeterminate situation. In a richly cognitive and often social practice, inquiry invokes curiosity and problem solving to move us out of ruts. Indeed, this method combats the stagnation of fatalism by urging us to formulate and try out solutions. Growth describes how reconstructions of our experiences through inquiry develops physical, intellectual, and moral capacities, actualizing them and helping them inform one another so that they continue in a chain that enables one to live satisfactorily. We grow when we learn from inquiry into indeterminate situations and create ways to re-establish smooth living that carries us from one activity to the next. Many people wrongly assume that growth necessarily has an end—as if it were “movement toward a fixed goal.” 18 We tend to think of growth as only progression toward some specific outcome, such as mastering bicycle riding or graduating from high school. But this way of thinking tends to place the emphasis on the static terminus, rather than focusing on the process of growing as itself educative and worthwhile. Dewey’s alternative view of growth does not neatly and linearly move toward a fixed goal. Instead, he describes trajectories that are more complicated, often shifting with the environment. Moreover, holding onto a fixed goal may be undesirable because doing so employs a limited or possibly foreclosed vision of the future. Instead, as changes occur in one’s environment, Dewey asserts that people must continually inquire into moments of uncertainty and changing circumstances, develop new hypotheses about those situations, and revise their aims. Dewey works with what he calls “ends-in-view,” which are relatively close and feasible, even if difficult to achieve, rather than overarching goals at some final endpoint in the future. Those ends-in-view guide our decisions and hypotheses along the way, keeping us resourceful in the present. In Dewey’s words, the discovery of how things do occur makes it possible to conceive of their happening at will, and gives us a start on selecting and combining the conditions, the means, to command their happening…there must be a realistic study of actual conditions and the mode or law of natural event, in order to give the imagined or ideal object definite form and solid substance—to give it, in short, practicality and constitute it as a working end. 19 For Dewey, ends and means are intelligently considered in light of each other, with both being revisable, and neither abstracted from the other. Each fulfilled end-in-view sustains our hope by highlighting meaningful headway and directing our further action. Ends-in-view later become means to future ends, working in an ongoing continuum. This sustenance of hope differs from theological accounts which are difficult to sustain on faith alone and may leave believers frustrated at an apparent lack of action or improvement. It also differs from positive psychology and grit literature which tends to focus on large, far-off, and challenging goals that one holds tenaciously. Many people think of hope as goal-directed and future-oriented. While objects of hope for pragmatists may temporarily serve as ends-in-view, the practice of hope moves us forward through inquiry and experimentation as we pursue our complicated trajectory. It helps to unify our past, present, and future. Hope, then, is not just about a vision of the future, but rather a way of living in the present that is informed by the past and what is anticipated to come. Whereas utopian views of what could be may actually immobilize one and may exhaust one in the present, pragmatist hope is always tied to what one is doing and feasibly can do in the present, especially when equipped with knowledge of the past. Central to pragmatist philosophy, ideas become true insofar as they “work” for us, fruitfully combine our experiences, and lead us to further experiences that satisfy our needs. Pragmatists are concerned with the concrete differences in our lived experiences that an idea’s being true will make. Pragmatic truth expresses “the successful completing of a worthwhile leading.” 20 Unlike truth as a corresponding match between proposition and reality, pragmatist truth is something that occurs when the goals of human flourishing are satisfied, at least temporarily. Built into these criteria is consideration of the well-being of others, for successful leading through experiences almost always necessarily requires working and communicating with others. Additionally, the differences an idea will make are quite limited, and therefore less truthful, if relevant only to one person. While not a comprehensive vision of the good life, certain norms including equality and just communication are entailed both in these deliberations and the determination of truth. 21 We must consider how to flourish alongside others as we craft our ends-in-view. This differs considerably from other philosophical and psychological accounts of hope based on the desire of objects or states of affairs regardless of whether they are good for us or other people.

Meliorism

Pragmatists like Dewey recognize the difficulty of present circumstances, yet approach them practically, rather than idealistically, with thoughtful action, believing that circumstances can be improved. 22 Unlike simple optimists, however, they do not hold that the situation will necessarily work out for the best, but rather they believe people should make efforts to contribute to better outcomes. Such efforts are rarely undertaken alone, instead they are tied to others who are working together to solve problems. In the words of contemporary pragmatist Cornel West, “Optimism adopts the role of the spectator who surveys the evidence in order to infer that things are going to get better. Yet when we know that the evidence does not look good…Hope enacts the stance of the participant who actively struggles against the evidence.” 23 Meliorism entails action in the face of difficulties. Dewey sees hope as a way of living aligned with meliorism, “the idea that at least there is a sufficient basis of goodness in life and its conditions so that by thought and earnest effort we may constantly make better things.” 24 Meliorism is not a belief in inevitable progress, but rather a call to human action, especially in the midst of struggle and uncertainty. Dewey firmly argued that it would be foolish to believe that there is “an automatic and wholesale progress in human affairs,” insisting instead that betterment “depends upon deliberative human foresight and socially constructive work.” 25 Martin Luther King, a champion and practitioner of hope, was enshrined on the floor of Obama’s oval office with his phrase: “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” Importantly, given how many hopes fell flat under the messianic figure of Obama, King later explained in a pragmatist spirit of meliorism, “Human progress never rolls on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right.” 26 We cannot wait until we have a clear picture of our final future goals; rather, we must act now in intelligent ways and through inquiry to bring about better conditions and, thereby, truth. 27 And we must be flexible to change and redirect our efforts as they unfold. Meliorism is an alternative to both pessimism and optimism. It cultivates hope, growth, and better worlds. For some pragmatists, like Colin Koopman, this meliorism-based hope is “the pragmatist affect par excellence: ‘hope is the mood of meliorism’ (27), ‘the characteristic attitude of pragmatism is hope’ (17).” 28

#### Black nihilism is theoretically incoherent and self-defeating — it incorrectly identifies Western thought as anti-black leading to genocidal politics

Hill 18, professor of philosophy at DePaul University in Chicago, Jamaican-Amerian, (Jason D. Hill, 5-18-2018, “The Black Nihilism of Ta-Nehesi Coates,” http://www.spiked-online.com/newsite/article/the-black-nihilism-of-ta-nehisi-coates/21406#.W3BwLtJKg2w)

Black nihilism Yet what is crucial to note is that Coates’ racial pessimism is tied to a larger philosophical movement known as ‘black nihilism’, of which he is not so much its architect as its sycophantic and ardent devotee. Black nihilism is an anti-philosophic movement, intellectually out of focus, and against – as its advocates state – philosophy, hope, metaphysics, epistemology, redemption, liberal democracy, free markets and even the grammar of liberation itself. Its best articulation can be found in Calvin L Warren’s essay ‘Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope’, published in the New Centennial Review in 2015. Warren writes that black nihilism is a political philosophy that advocates an end to black emancipation through politics, and characterises any form of political hope as pointless. ‘Black suffering is an essential part of the world’, Warren writes, ‘and placing hope in the very structure that sustains metaphysical violence, the political, will never resolve anything’. Black nihilism, he continues, speaks of a ‘blackened world’ that will ‘put an end to the word itself’. According to Warren, black nihilism is ‘anti-grammar’, and it resists the appeal to both liberal democracy and its political, social and emancipatory schemata on the grounds that to do so will reproduce the very metaphysical violence that is the source of back suffering. He writes in support of this claim that: ‘The politics of hope must actively refuse the possibility that the “solution” is, in fact, another problem in disguised form: the idea of a “solution” is nothing more than the repetition and disavowal of the problem itself.’ Black emancipation, Warren argues, is predicated on black nihilism, which in turn relies on world destruction. This world destruction is the destruction of, we may assume, whiteness; the very foundation on which anti-blackness has been systemically grounded. He writes that black emancipation is not an opening for future possibilities and political reconfigurations. This is because anti-blackness infuses the fabric of social existence, and so it is ‘impossible to emancipate blacks without literally destroying the world. Moreover, this means that black emancipation will not yield a new world or possibility for reorganisation – black emancipation becomes something like death for the world.’ The nihilistic thrust of this type of thought, articulated by Warren and Coates, is so irrefutably bankrupt that it rejects all categories on which human cognition and, therefore, man’s conceptual mode of human survival are based. Warren states that all philosophy, including metaphysics and epistemology, was created against the backdrop of the non-reasoning black who was thought to be situated outside of history, moral law and consciousness. Warren writes that for the black nihilist, anti-blackness is metaphysics; that metaphysics is unthinkable without anti-blackness because ‘it is the system of thought and organisation that structures the relationship between object/subject, human/animal, rational/irrational and free/enslaves – essentially the categories that constitute the field of ontology’. All social rationalisation, loss of individuality and economic expansionism and technocratic domination depend on anti-blackness. Even epistemology, that branch of philosophy that validates and verifies human knowledge by justifying our beliefs, is a problem for back nihilism. For the black nihilist, the dominant epistemology privileges metaphysical forms of anti-black organisations of knowledge. Warren writes: ‘If we think of epistemology as an anti-black formation, then every appeal to it will reproduce the very metaphysical violence that is the source of black suffering. Nihilistic hermeneutics allows us to fracture epistemology, to chip away at its metaphysical science, and to enunciate from within this fissure.’ In Warren’s view, black nihilism shatters the coherence of anti-black epistemology and cannot be known or rendered legible through traditional epistemology. In other words: ‘Anti-black epistemology is somewhat schizophrenic in its aim. It at once posits blackness as an anti-grammatical entity.’ But where does this leave the black subject? Warren writes – and we see strains of this in Coates’ writings when he says that hope itself and the cognitive machinations out of which hope arises are doomed to failure – that metaphysics engenders forms of violence as a necessity, as a byproduct. Coates sees the American Dream in precisely those terms, as a species of metaphysics. He writes in Between the World and Me, that the dream ‘thrives on generalisations, on limiting the number of possible questions… the dream is the enemy of all art, courageous thinking, and honest writing’. It is, for Coates, the means by which people are seduced into thinking and acting white. Warren takes this line of reasoning to its logical conclusion, when he writes apocryphally and apocalyptically: ‘Thinking itself is structured by anti-blackness from the very start.’ This means that man’s mind, his mode of acquiring knowledge, his reason and thought, are to be rejected as forms of anti-blackness themselves. They are to be regarded as creations of white racists whose universal systems of thought corresponding to an objective reality applicable to all human beings who share a common mode of survival, as human beings, are nothing more than a social compact among white racists to exclude blacks from the human community. The black nihilists have one thing correct. They and their adherents are outside the historical process and the moral law, denying consciousness and a conception of themselves as truly free subjects. But it is not Hegel, Hume and Kant who have condemned them to that station in life. It is they who have betrayed their own constitution as free radical agents, and committed spiritual suicide by negating their radical freedom, usurping their agency and repudiating the only world they have to enhance their modes of continued personal becoming and the creation of an abstract juridical and political personality. The end-of-the-world coda should not be taken lightly. It is code for the destruction, I believe, not of whiteness, which in and of itself is an anti-concept denoting nothing and no one in the world. Since the world of the black nihilist is a crudely reductionist socio-economic and political world of white institutions created by white people tyrannising over the world of all black people, for the black nihilists to speak of an end to black emancipation in terms of an end of the world, is to speak in terms of an end to the white world. The death of the world they write of is the death of all white people. Coates, who to my mind is the most ardent of the black nihilists, wrote in Between The World and Me that in America the problem was not really with the police, ‘but that our country is ruled by majoritarian pigs’. The black nihilists have declared the final answer to the problems of black suffering and black emancipation – an end to the world – which means an end to white people, and the white world and its institutions. It is up to those against whom such apocalyptic judgments have been issued to find the response to this indictment. Their very survival depends on it.

#### They link to their K of liberalism, temporality, and grammar arguments ⁠— independently, projection of a bleak future recoheres suffering

Lillvis 17, associate professor of English at Marshall University (Kristen Lillvis, 2017, “Posthuman Blackness and the Black Female Imagination,” pages 80-92)

Anyanwu's Middle Passage experience—her travel from Africa to colonial New York aboard a slave ship—transforms the shape shifter. While Anyanwu can alter her body from female to male, young to old, and human to animal, the Middle Passage journey signals her conversion from selfpossessed subject to Doro-directed object. The subject-object transition that occurs for the fictional Anyanwu mirrors that of historical captured Africans during the Middle Passage. Toni Morrison, Greg Tate, Calvin L. Warren, and Kodwo Eshun argue that the Middle Passage stands as the moment in history when black subjects became abstracted into metaphysical elements or objects (Gilroy, Small 178; Eshun, "Further" 297-98; Warren 237).' As Warren asserts, "the literal destruction of black bodies" during and following the transatlantic slave voyage enables "the psychic, economic, and philosophical resources for modernity to objectify, forget, and ultimately obliterate Being" (237). With the Middle Passage standing in for the bar that, according to Tate, separates signifier from signified, the black body becomes "objectified, infused with exchange value, and rendered malleable within a sociopolitical order" of white power (Eshun, "Further" 297-98; Warren 226, 237). In order to recognize and overcome the abstraction of black bodies and identities that began with the Middle Passage, new types of consciousness must be developed. If W. E. B. Du Bois's double consciousness describes the ability to recognize the black body's signification in white culture, and Frantz Fanon's triple consciousness marks an awareness of the move from black subject to black object within this system, then the multiple consciousness of black posthumanism and Afrofuturism assists the black individual in viewing the self from outside the system of signification altogether. Eshun asserts that the "triple consciousness, quadruple consciousness" of Afrofuturism makes the black subject privy to "previously inaccessible alienations" ("Further" 298). Eshun's "previously inaccessible alienations" correspond to the abstraction of blackness since the Middle Passage, the positioning of the sign of blackness within the ontology and cosmology of white power. Like Afrofuturism's triple or quadruple consciousness, black posthumanism's multiple consciousness allows the subject to understand and potentially surmount this alienation. Viewing identity as part of but separate from the system of signification corresponds with the posthuman imperative to blur dividing lines but celebrate distinctions between temporalities and subjectivities, an imperative reflected in posthuman constructions of identity and solidarity. Transformative Middle Passage experiences in Butler's science fiction cultivate a posthuman multiple consciousness that allows characters and readers to recognize blackness both within and outside of the ontology and cosmology of white power. As Nadine Flagel argues, "Much speculative fiction is explicitly or implicitly engaged with issues of slavery and freedom, possession and liberation, but divorces these issues from the material conditions of slavery" (224). While Butler features literal and metaphorical Middle Passages in several of her works, including Wild Seed (as mentioned above), Dawn (1987), and "Bloodchild" (1984), in the novel Kindred (1979) Butler directly acknowledges the material conditions of slavery that, as Flagel points out, speculative and science fiction authors all-too-often ignore. Butler's use of time travel in the neo-slave narrative Kindred compels her African American protagonist, Dana Franklin, to undergo alienating notions of racial identity in the past, present, and future. Dana's Middle Passage experiences aid her development of a posthuman multiple consciousness through which she recognizes both temporality and subjectivity as liminal. Although Warren and Eshun argue that black subjectivity exists only in the past—prior to the Middle Passage—and Warren warns that the achievement of black subjectivity in the future would mean the end of blackness as we know it (Eshun, "Further" 298; Warren 244), Dana, as a possessor of posthuman multiple consciousness, resides within a liminal temporality and, as such, understands that black subjectivity exists in those places accepted as well as those denied: the past, present, and future. Additionally, Butler's posthumously published "A Necessary Being" (2014) models posthuman multiple consciousness for readers who may otherwise struggle to view any racial identity as distinct from white supremacy. By depicting power relations in a world unlike ours, Butler enables her readers to understand races and cultures as connected to but differentiated from one another. Specifically, in "A Necessary Being" Butler presents readers with the familiar concept of hierarchies based on skin color, yet through her character development, she dismisses the subsumption of one race under another. Butler's otherworldly protagonist, a blue-fleshed female named Tahneh, sees herself as part of and also distinct from the Kohn culture in which she exists, paradoxically, as both ruler and slave. By considering power systems in this alien environment—an environment distinct from white, Western cosmologies—readers can join Tahneh in cultivating a posthuman multiple consciousness and acknowledging new ways of understanding both self and other identities. The Middle Passage commences a series of psychological, physical, and ontological shifts for captured Africans. Aboard ships and on soil, women, men, and children experience a violence that literally and figuratively disrupts black subjectivity. Valerie Loichot asserts, "The slave family is marked by a series of amputations: an immense and abrupt severing from original African roots and memory; a dismemberment of family units by practices of kidnapping or selling; literal amputations of limbs of fugitive slaves; splits between bodies turned into economic tools of production and mind; substitution of mothering and fathering by breeding; and attempted disassociation of humanity from black subjects" (41). The Middle Passage alters not only black communities and bodies in the past but also black identities in the present. The effects of enslavement on the form and concept of blackness—as Loichot says, the relationship between black subjectivity and humanity—means that the Middle Passage shapes historical and contemporary ideas of race. Theorizing the Middle Passage extends the transatlantic slave trade beyond the four centuries of trauma that triangulated Africa, Europe, and the Americas. For instance, Morrison finds that Middle Passage dislocations foreshadow modernist alienations (Gilroy, Small 178). Tate extends these Middle Passage dislocations to the field of semiotics, arguing that the Middle Passage operates as the bar between signifier and signified (Eshun, "Further" 297-98). Warren furthers Tate's semiotic approach, asserting that the meaninglessness of signification following the Middle Passage institutes a black nihilism. And Eshun "reroutes" the alien abductions of the Middle Passage through contemporary Afrofuturist science fictions in order to offer alternative histories and futures ("Further" 300). Each of these theorists marks the Middle Passage as both a defining, centuries-long moment in history as well as an experience that exceeds the specific time period during which it occurs. Moreover, each theorist recognizes that during and following the Middle Passage, constructions of blackness develop in opposition to, yet support of, whiteness. Theories of black identity provide concrete examples of the paradoxical opposition to and support of white power structures cultivated by constructions of blackness since the Middle Passage. Du Bois's double consciousness describes the internalization of both black- and white-determined ideas of blackness. He explains that the black subject inhabits "a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world" (Du Bois 38). The "other world"—the white world—views the black subject with "amused contempt and pity," which Du Bois argues compels the black subject to observe himself similarly (38). Du Bois's black subject, though situated in opposition to the "other world" of the white subject, supports white power structures with his "longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self" (39)—a self determined by or at least incorporating white-authored notions of humanity. Du Bois describes a system of signification in which whiteness shapes the cultural significance of blackness. Although his assertion of a double consciousness suggests the existence of a "Negro" consciousness distinct from a white "American" consciousness (Du Bois 38), white supremacy shapes both entities. Rejecting the mutual exclusivity of blackness and whiteness in Du Boisian double consciousness, Paul Gilroy argues that Du Bois's theory acknowledges the "transformation and fragmentation of the integral racial self," indicating that although ideas of blackness vary across black communities, "constricting or absolutist understandings of ethnicity" driven by white power structures limit the expression of black humanity (Black 138). As Gilroy asserts, Du Bois's "two warring ideals" have "democratic potential disfigured by white supremacy" (Du Bois 38; Gilroy, Black 113); in other words, whiteness, by cultivating meaning through the opposition of blackness, distorts blackness for blacks and whites. Fanon similarly addresses the supremacy of white power structures in shaping ideas about blackness. However, whereas Du Bois posits a double consciousness, Fanon contends that blacks possess a "triple" personhood or consciousness. Like Du Bois, Fanon argues that the black individual exists as^ a subject and also in relation to the white other. Fanon then adds a third element: via the relation to the white other, the black individual loses subjectivity and occupies object status (84). Fanon expresses his desire to "be a man among other men," but he concludes that he has "made [himself] an object"—the third aspect of his triple consciousness—because "his inferiority comes into being through the other" (85, 83). Fanon's triple consciousness thus offers blacks not only a vision of black and white notions of blackness, as Du Bois's double consciousness does, but also a glimpse of the "other," the larger white power structure that shapes rhetorical concepts of race. Despite labeling white supremacist systems as "other," neither Du Bois nor Fanon argues that blackness influences whiteness in the same way whiteness distorts blackness. Rejecting the equal reflexivity of blackness and whiteness, Fanon assigns triple consciousness specifically to black men and women: Ontology—once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside—does not permit us to understand the being of the black man. For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man. Some critics will take it on themselves to remind us that this proposition has a converse. I say that this is false. The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man. Overnight the Negro has been given two frames of reference within which he has had to place himself. His metaphysics, or, less pretentiously, his customs and the sources on which they were based, were wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilization that did not know and that imposed itself on him. (82-83) Diana Fuss explains that for Fanon, whiteness operates as a "transcendental signifier," a "self-identical, self-reproducing term" that proclaims freedom from blackness as well as "the very category of'race'" (22). Fuss follows Fanon in asserting that whiteness, in mandating independence from racial categories, colonizes blackness and reserves subjectivity for whites alone (Fuss 23). If white power structures regulate the rhetoric of race and the assignation of subjectivity, then blackness—even in its opposition to whiteness— supports white supremacy. Semiotics—what Warren calls the "very structure of meaning in the modern world"—depends upon the existence of blackness and, specifically, the othering of blackness, which takes the concrete form of "anti-black violence" during and following the Middle Passage (226). While Du Bois and Fanon explain through their theories of double and triple consciousness that antiblack violence exists as a byproduct of white supremacist systems, Warren positions black suffering as foundational to semiotics and Western metaphysics (237-38): "If literal black bodies sustain modernity and metaphysics—though various forms of captivity, terror, and subjection," he asks, "then what would emancipation entail for blacks? How do we allow metaphysics to self-consume and weaken when blackness nourishes metaphysics?" (Warren 239). Warren follows Morrison in interweaving the origins of modernity and black oppression, though he extends her premise by arguing that historical and contemporary American culture depends on antiblack violence. Warren's black nihilist philosophy provides no answer to the problem of black suffering within white power structures; however, his argument that blackness contributes to the perpetuation of these structures indicates the need for a new type of consciousness: one that not only recognizes the impact of whiteness on black subjectivity (like Du Bois's double consciousness) and black metaphysics (like Fanon's triple consciousness) but also acknowledges the reflexive relationship of blackness and whiteness within white supremacist systems. Posthuman multiple consciousness affords this perspective. Posthuman multiple consciousness perceives black identities as contributing to but also potentially independent of white, Western metaphysics. In particular, considering identity within the temporal liminality of posthumanism allows the black subject to conceive of a future in which blackness destroys rather than facilitates black objectification. While Warren argues that this type of "'blackened' world" would put an "end to metaphysics" and "the world itself" (244), posthumanism projects nonapocalyptic possibilities for the future as well as the past and present. MULTIPLE CONSCIOUSNESS AND BLACK NIHILISM IN BUTLER'S Kindred When read through the lens of posthuman multiple consciousness, black science fiction—including Afrofuturist texts concerning the oppression of black identities and objectification of black bodies in the past, present, or future—promotes the existence of black subjectivity throughout time. Eshun asserts that Afrofuturism relies on "extraterrestrialityas a hyperbolic trope to explore the historical terms, the everyday implications of forcibly im- v posed dislocation, and the constitution of Black Atlantic subjectivities: from slave to negro to coloured to euolue to black to African to African American" ("Further" 298-99). Black science fiction's alien abductions mirror the black subject's real-world alienations in historical and contemporary white power structures. However, in addition to engaging with the past and present, black science fiction texts blend these time periods with the future to create a liminal temporality. By disrupting "the linear time of progress" and "the temporal logics that condemned black subjects to prehistory"—the time before the Middle Passage and slavery—black science fiction presents "a series of powerful competing futures that infiltrate the present at different rates" (Eshun, "Further" 297). Reading black science fiction through posthuman multiple consciousness shows that although the Middle Passage strips captured Africans of subjectivity, as Tate, Warren, and Eshun assert, the texts' liminal temporality brings black subjectivity into the present and future. In her science fictional neo-slave narrative Kindred, Butler makes posthuman liminality literal through the depiction of time travel. Middle Passage experiences take Butler's characters not across the ocean but through time and space. Dana, Butler's African American protagonist, journeys between 1976 California, her present, and antebellum Maryland, her ancestral past. Even Dana's first trip back to 1811 or 1812 engages with the temporal, spatial, and subjective shifts indicative of the Middle Passage experience. On June 9, 1976—her twenty-sixth birthday—Dana feels "dizzy, nauseated" while organizing books in her new home with her husband, Kevin (Butler, Kindred 13). Dana's books, house, and husband "blur" into nonexistence as trees, a river, and a drowning child come into view (Kindred 13). Present changes to past, indoors to outdoors, and friend to foe—though Dana does not yet understand her fraught relationship with the white child, Rufus—during her voy- age from 1976 to the i8ios. While these shifts seem like the direct exchange of opposites, Butler blurs not only Dana's vision but also the binaries. For instance, Dana draws upon her knowledge of artificial respiration from the present (or the future, considering the perspective of antebellum Dana) to save the child in the past (or the present, again keeping in mind Dana's antebellum point of view). Accordingly, seemingly distinct periods and places overlap for Dana not only during her Middle Passage travels between present and past but also during her time in each temporality. Kindred's liminality allows both Butler's protagonist and her readers to consider race, and, in particular, blackness, within and outside of specific cosmologies of white power. The novel depicts the implications of Dana's blackness during both her personal present and her familial past. As a black woman in 1976, Dana faces racial bigotry and sexual harassment. Her coworker murmurs, "Chocolate and vanilla porn!" when seeing her with Kevin, who is white, and Kevin's sister and brother-in-law as well as Dana's uncle object to the news of their interracial relationship (Kindred 56, no). Although the novel suggests that Dana and Kevin have a happy and healthy marriage, 19705 gender roles relegate Dana to a subordinate position: both Dana and Kevin identify as writers, but Kevin, the "primary breadwinner" (Parham 1322), asks Dana to type his manuscripts. Similarly, Dana notes that after moving into their new house, Kevin leaves her to finish unpacking, since he "had stopped when he got his office in order" (Kindred 12). In both situations, Kevin changes his behavior after he recognizes Dana's discomfort, but Dana, and not Kevin, seeks reconciliation after their fights, and she makes excuses for Kevin's behavior. For example, Dana thinks that the "look" Kevin gives her in response to a passive-aggressive comment is not "as malevolent as it seem[s]" and that he would try "to intimidate [. . .] [sjtrangers" but not her (Kindred 13). Considering these power imbalances, Marc Steinberg argues that Dana and Kevin's relationship "smacks of a kind of servitude," and the "line between slavery and marriage" becomes "blurred" as the novel continues (469). As Dana finds herself beholden to others—including her husband—both in the present and past, the influence ofwhite power structures on black subjectivity becomes apparent to readers. Late-twentieth-century conventions of race and gender intersect with early nineteenth-century customs when Kevin follows Dana through time to the antebellum Upper South. After Rufus meets Kevin and asks the white man, "Does Dana belong to you now?" Kevin affirms the boy's suspicion: "In a way," he answers. "She's my wife" (Kindred 60). The intolerance Dana and Kevin experience as an interracial couple in 1976 likewise returns, anachronistically speaking, in 1819, with Rufus, first, denying the plausibility of their relationship and, second, asserting its illegality. Rufus again conveys the period's white supremacist and patriarchal views when, near the end of the novel, he asks Dana to take the place of Alice—his unwilling wife and Dana's great-great-grandmother—as his lover. Lisa Yaszek notes, "The bargain seems perfectly reasonable to Rufus—after all, Dana and Alice are nearly identical doubles of one another, and black women are supposed to accede ' to the wishes of white men" ("Grim" 1063). Dana's performance as a slave during her time in Maryland exposes her to the physical and emotional violence born of black women's object status. While Dana's position as a black woman within a white power structure shifts as she moves throughout time, her objectification persists. Steinberg asserts that Butler "assumes a non-Western conceptualization of history— one in which history is cyclical, not linear—in order to demonstrate ways in which certain forms of race and gender oppression continue late into the twentieth century and beyond" (467). Steinberg's argument about racism, when broadened to considerations of race in general, reveals that the temporal liminality in Kindred incorporates a subjective liminality: blackness—in relation to and distinct from whiteness and, in particular, white supremacy—holds historical as well as trans-temporal significance. Although Warren argues that the fantasy of political progress, represented by a linear timeline extending into the future of improved race relations, "allows one to disregard the historicity of anti-blackness and its continued legacy" (221), Butler's novel uses liminality rather than linearity to acknowledge white supremacy in the past, present, and future. Specifically, Dana's temporal and subjective liminality imbue her with a posthuman multiple consciousness through which she situates blackness within and outside of white power structures. During her second peregrination between past and present, Dana meets a white patroller who attempts to rape her. Dana's fear propels her forward—or back—to the future, where she finds herself "kicking" and "clawing" Kevin, whom she mistakes for the patroller (Kindred 43). Kevin never physically threatens Dana in the novel, but his whiteness—when considered from her new, temporally liminal perspective—endangers her. Lauren J. Lacey asserts, "Dana has had to become a different kind of subject in order to see herself through the eyes of a white male patroller in the past, and the transition to the present is not particularly simple. Kevin's status as a white male is newly complicated for Dana by her experiences in the past" (75). In discussing Dana observing herself "through the eyes of a white male patroller," Lacey acknowledges Dana's multiple consciousness: Dana believes herself to be a subject, but when considering that the patroller views her as a body to be used, exchangeable for any of the other black female bodies she's "just like" (Kindred 42), she understands her object status. Loichot similarly acknowledges Dana's awareness of her object position, noting that "Dana realizes two important things at once. Her own name and body disappear under the function of the female slave, sexualized object at the mercy of the white master" (44). Dana's knowledge of her subordinate status in the past shapes her view of herself and others in the present when she attacks her husband upon her return to California. She positions blackness within the ontology of whiteness in the past as well as the present when she brings the historicity of her object status into her life with her husband. However, posthuman multiple consciousness not only positions blackness within the ontology of whiteness but also provides a view of blackness divorced from white supremacy. Dana's subjectivity, when considered within the Middle Passage timeline suggested by Tate, Warren, and Eshun, shifts throughout Kindred. Specifically, time travel allows her to simultaneously possess and be denied the subjectivity of Middle Passage prehistory. If, as Eshun argues, black subjectivity exists only in "prehistory"—before the Middle Passage—then the existence of time travel in Kindred means that Dana can neither claim nor be denied subjectivity at any point in the story: her prehistory, like her present and future, is ubiquitous (Eshun, "Further" 297). According to Lacey, temporal liminality in the novel shapes Dana's understanding of herself: "Butler uses the device of time travel to create a narrative that absolutely refuses to see past and present as discrete, closed off, or even formal categories. Dana's life—her home, her life with her husband—are caught up in the demand to see the relationship between past and present as mutually constitutive. Throughout the novel, Butler emphasizes how difficult it is for Dana to 'leave the past behind'" (73). Indeed, Dana cannot "leave the past behind" because she always already inhabits the past: each Middle Passage venture takes Dana to a tripartite temporality. After her initial trip to the antebellum Upper South, Dana's travels to Maryland place her in a future-past—a past more recent than that of her previous visit—which becomes her present. Similarly, Dana's return to the "normalcy" of 1976 California situates her in a future-present—a present more recent than the one she left—which, considering the physical and emotional toll time travel exacts upon her, becomes part of her past. While the historical Middle Passage takes place during Dana's ancestral past, her personal Middle Passage experiences occur in the past, present, and future; accordingly, her "prehistory," her pre-Middle Passage subjectivity, simultaneously occurs within and exceeds all three temporalities. However, Kindred's temporal liminality means that Dana's post-Middll Passage objectification simultaneously occurs within and exceeds past, present, and future. If, as Tate argues, the Middle Passage marks the moment of the black subject's abstraction and objectification—that is, "the bar between signifier and the signified could be understood as standing for the Middle Passage that separated signification (meaning) from sign (letter)" (Eshun, "Further" 297)—then the final chapter of Butler's novel gives the bar physical and spatial significance. During her last trip to the past, Dana stabs Rufus to prevent him from raping her. Simultaneously with Rufus's death, Dana experiences the "terrible, wrenching sickness" of her Middle Passage travels between past and present (Kindred 260). Despite her weakened state, she manages to move Rufus's body off of hers before she travels through time, but his hand remains on her arm. Recounting the process of her return to 1976, Dana reports: "Something harder and stronger than Rufus's hand clamped down on my arm, squeezing it, stiffening it, pressing into it—painlessly, at first—melting into it, meshing with it as though somehow my arm were being absorbed into something. Something cold and nonliving" (Kindred 260-61). The "cold and nonliving" force that grasps Dana's arm and divides her body, permanently, between past and present corresponds to the bar in the system of signification, the bar of the Middle Passage. This bar, which indicates the separation of signifier and signified and, in this instance, the distance between the physical black body and cultural constructions of blackness, transforms Dana's arm—her body—into an object consumed by Rufus in 1831 and her wall in 1976. Dana, thus, experiences not only temporal liminality but also subjective liminality: her pre-Middle Passage subjectivity exists throughout time, just as her post-Middle Passage objectification surpasses the limits of linear temporality. Time travel makes impossible the separation of past, present, and future states of being. Considering the relationship between temporality and identity, Lacey asserts that Dana "literally becomes a multiple subject, defined in and through both the past and the present" (72). Additionally, the future—which cannot be separated from other temporalities in the novel—defines Dana. For instance, Butler's novel, and Dana's story, begins at the end, after Dana returns to 1976 for the last time, without her left arm. While Lisa Long argues that in killing Rufus, Dana "literally kills her past" (470), and Lacey asserts that with Dana losing an arm, "History has taken a piece of Dana's body" (72), the past remains alive for Dana, and the past, along with the present and future, permanently alters her identity. As such, Butler's novel draws a comparison between the blurred boundaries of time and being. This liminal temporality and subjectivity accords with a posthuman multiple consciousness that makes possible an understanding of blackness in relation to the history of white supremacy and also beyond that history. Although Dana finds herself, like other black women, men, and children, oppressed regardless of the time period she inhabits, Butler's temporal and subjective disturbances indicate not the inevitability of antiblack violence but the potential for black freedom, including the freedom from the "transcendental signifier" of whiteness (Fuss 22). Steinberg argues that by depicting time as a circle or "zigzag," "Butler creates an historical possibility of the perception of self (and how it might be affected by matters of possession and ownership)" (472, 475). In addition to inspiring perceptions of the self as determined by dominating forces, liminal temporality encourages Butler's characters and readers to acknowledge subjectivities free from domination as well. With his black nihilist theory, Warren presents the possibility of blackness as distinct from whiteness, although he positions both the achievement and product of this altered state of being as beyond comprehension. Considering, first, the dismantling of white supremacist systems, Warren rejects historical strategies for emancipation, arguing that "every emancipatory strategy that attempted to rescue blackness from anti-blackness inevitably reconstituted and reconfigured the anti-blackness it tried to eliminate" (239). Likewise, he dismisses future-focused solutions, since the promise of a more egalitarian future only promotes the continuation of struggle (Warren 233). In his philosophy of black nihilism, Warren advocates for the rejection of political action in the present as a tactic through which to separate black identity from the American Dream and Western metaphysics. He states, "Black nihilism demands a traversal, but not the traversal that reintegrates 'the subject' (and Being) back into society by shattering fundamental fantasies of metaphysics, but a traversal that disables and invalidates every imaginative and symbolic function" (240). "Because anti-blackness infuses itself into every fabric of social existence," Warren asserts, positioning the black subject outside of white supremacist systems "becomes something like death for the world," which makes sense, if, as he argues, divorcing the black subject from white supremacy "disables and invalidates every imaginative and symbolic function" we know (239, 240). Nevertheless, Warren pushes for a black nihilism that resists statements of purpose or progress, a nihilism that seeks to destroy white supremacy by denying the resuscitation of the past and the hope for the future that have, unwittingly, maintained the systems they seek to move beyond. Yet temporality proves as slippery in Warren's "Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope" as it does Butler's Kindred. Despite Warren's explicit rejection of "[p]rogress" and "futurity" (218), his philosophy fails to extricate itself from the language of Western metaphysics and, specifically, ideas of linear temporality: he must provide background and arrive, despite his protestations, at a "point" by the end of the article (243). However, Warren acknowledges the impossibility of his project: he gets as close to articulating a nonlinear theory of black nihilism—a theory that "does not extinguish hope but reconfigures it"—as semiotics and the conventions of academic writing allow (244). If, as Warren acknowledges, we cannot yet articulate or perhaps even imagine a reconfigured hope, then perhaps the key to freedom lies not in the rejection of temporality but the embrace of it. For instance, if we should not dismiss black suffering by simply hoping for a future more empowering than our present, why should we dismiss emancipation projects by anticipating a future as oppressive as our present? In the tradition of Du Bois and Fanon, who introduce ideas of liminal subjectivity that posthumanists have now applied to all individuals, regardless of race, and Eshun, who considers liminal temporality and subjectivity together, the theory of posthuman blackness provides a view of black subjectivity related to but also distinct from the linear trajectories of Western metaphysics.

#### Sexton is wrong and links to our indicts of ontology

Spickard 9, PhD, Professor at UC Santa Barbara (Paul Spickard, 1-2-2009, “Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism (review),” American Studies, 50)

One of the major developments in ethnic studies over the past two decades has been the idea (and sometimes the advocacy) of multiraciality. From a theoretical perspective, this has stemmed from a post-structuralist attempt to deconstruct the categories created by the European Enlightenment and its colonial enterprise around the world. From a personal perspective, it has been driven by the life experiences in the last half-century of a growing number of people who have and acknowledge mixed parentage. The leading figures in this scholarly movement are probably Maria Root and G. Reginald Daniel, but the writers are many and include figures as eminent as Gary Nash and Randall Kennedy. A small but dedicated group of writers has resisted this trend: chiefly Rainier Spencer, Jon Michael Spencer, and Lewis Gordon. They have raised no controversy, perhaps because their books are not well written, and perhaps because their arguments do not make a great deal of sense. It is not that there is nothing wrong with the literature and the people movement surrounding multiraciality. Some writers and social activists do tend to wax rhapsodic about the glories of intermarriage and multiracial identity as social panacea. A couple of not-very-thoughtful activists (Charles Byrd and Susan Graham) have been coopted by the Gingrichian right (to be fair, one must point out that most multiracialists are on the left). And, most importantly, there is a tension between some Black intellectuals and the multiracial idea over the lingering fear that, for some people, adopting a multiracial identity is a dodge to avoid being Black. If so, that might tend to sap the strength of a monoracially-defined movement for Black community empowerment. With Amalgamation Schemes, Jared Sexton is trying to stir up some controversy. He presents a facile, sophisticated, and theoretically informed intelligence, and he picks a fight from the start. His title suggests that the study of multiraciality is some kind of plot, or at the very least an illegitimate enterprise. His tone is angry and accusatory on every page. It is difficult to get to the grounds of his argument, because the cloud of invective is so thick, and because his writing is abstract, referential, and at key points vague. For Sexton (as for the Spencers and Gordon) race is about Blackness, in the United States and around the world. That is silly, for there are other racialized relationships. In the U.S., native peoples were racialized by European intruders in all the ways that Africans were, and more: they were nearly extinguished. To take just one example from many around the world, Han Chinese have racialized Tibetans historically in all the ways (including slavery) that Whites have racialized Blacks and Indians in the United States. So there is a problem with Sexton's concept of race as Blackness. There is also a problem with his insistence on monoraciality. For Sexton and the others, one cannot be mixed or multiple; one must choose ever and only to be Black. I don't have a problem with that as a political choice, but to insist that it is the only possibility flies in the face of a great deal of human experience, and it ignores the history of how modern racial ideas emerged. Sexton does point out, as do many writers, the flawed tendencies in multiracial advocacy mentioned in the second paragraph above. But he imputes them to the whole movement and to the subject of study, and that is not a fair assessment. The main problem is that Sexton argues from conclusion to evidence, rather than the other way around. That is, he begins with the conclusion that the multiracial idea is bad, retrograde, and must be resisted. And then he cherry-picks his evidence to fit his conclusion. He spends much of his time on weaker writers such as Gregory Stephens and Stephen Talty who have been tangential to the multiracial literature. When he addresses stronger figures like Daniel, Root, Nash, and Kennedy, he carefully selects his quotes to fit his argument, and misrepresents their positions by doing so. Sexton also makes some pretty outrageous claims. He takes the fact that people who study multiracial identities are often studying aspects of family life (such as the shaping of a child's identity), and twists that to charge them with homophobia and nuclear family-ism. That is simply not accurate for any of the main writers in the field. The same is true for his argument by innuendo that scholars of multiraciality somehow advocate mail-order bride services. And sometimes Sexton simply resorts to ad hominem attacks on the motives and personal lives of the writers themselves. It is a pretty tawdry exercise. That is unfortunate, because Sexton appears bright and might have written a much better book detailing his hesitations about some tendencies in the multiracial movement. He might even have opened up a new direction for productive study of racial commitment amid complexity. Sexton does make several observations that are worth thinking about, and surely this intellectual movement, like any other, needs to think critically about itself. Sadly, this is not that book.

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### 2NC---T: O/V

### 2NC---AT: Counter Intrepretation

#### The AFF encourages white altruism. That trades off with structural challenges to racism.

Myerson 18, Indiana-based community organizer with Hoosier Action. (Jesse A., “White Anti-Racism Must Be Based in Solidarity, Not Altruism,” The Nation, https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/white-anti-racism-must-be-based-in-solidarity-not-altruism/)

Politicians may engineer coups d’état, brutal austerity, or covert wars in Africa and Haiti; they may enact policies that intensify poverty, incarceration, and pollution that disproportionately hurt black and brown people in the United States, but these are not sufficient to irrefutably verify that they are “a racist.” Only public speech acts can do that, since, as Fleming continued in her Twitter thread, “the problem, for many whites, isn’t white racism or dominance —the problem is a failed public performance of being ‘non-racist.’” In this formulation, racism is not a system but an inherent quality within an individual, proof of which comes when they publicly espouse racist views or use racist language. By formally classifying Trump “a racist” (“calling him out”), well-to-do liberals are able to implicitly deem themselves “non-racists” while keeping the pervasiveness of the attitude that Africa and Haiti are shitholes where it belongs: swept well under the rug. But racism is not an individual quality; it is a hierarchical system of distributed power that gets mediated through people’s acts. As black-power activist Stokely Carmichael is quoted as saying, “If a white man wants to lynch me, that’s his problem. If he’s got the power to lynch me, that’s my problem.” Affluent liberals, however diligently inoffensive their public speech, have less to be proud of in a framework wherein politicians are praised not for having the correct opinion but for leading collective action toward redistributing power. The question then shifts away from whether a person has good politics and toward whether a person wages good politics. The dominant liberal conception of white anti-racism emphasizes altruism. In this mode, white people must set aside our own self-interest in order to extend kindness to those less fortunate. Humanitarian assistance is rewarded, and those who practice it are hailed for their self-sacrifice and generosity. White people are encouraged to defer, shrink, and assist. It is not our fight, the white-altruism mode says, so we must strive to decenter ourselves and support black people’s “advancement” as peripheral allies, doing what kindnesses we can to compensate them for the privileges we enjoy. We must reliably articulate non-racist positions using suitably non-racist terminology, correct white people who fail to do these, and under no circumstances use racist language out in the open. Not that people shouldn’t interrupt racist personal acts or respect the expertise of people of color regarding how racism plays out in their lives and communities, but that alone does not constitute a strategy. At best, these interruptions and this deference are a woefully inadequate response to systemic racism. At worst, white altruism is a recipe for disaster. Not only does it treat racism as personal flaw rather than a system of power; it also insists that white people have an obligation to help black communities “advance,” a construction that is vulnerable to white people’s misconceptions of what constitutes “advancement.” Without being anchored to a goal of redistributing power, altruism is often carried along by the prevailing currents of racist capitalism.

#### Relegating white allyship to the role of surrendering makes it impossible to challenge structural racism beyond the individual.

Petersen-Smith and Brian Bean 15, Petersen-Smith is Michael Ratner Middle East Fellow at IPS, Bean is socialist activist and writer.(Khury, “FIGHTING RACISM AND THE LIMITS OF “ALLY-SHIP”,” https://socialistworker.org/2015/05/14/fighting-racism-and-the-limits-of-allyship

THE TERM "ally," as it is used by proponents of social justice, can mean different things to different people. To some, the role of allies is to "shut up and listen" to people of color, as the activist and blogger Mia McKenzie wrote on the Black Girl Dangerous website. In this conception, allies must necessarily defer completely to people of color regarding the nature of racism and strategies for fighting it. The role of white allies is to passively support the activity of Black activists. Alternatively, there are those who argue that the role of allies flows from the power that white people (some extend this analysis to people of color who are not Black) have as a result of privileges they supposedly enjoy in a system of white supremacy. Here, being an ally involves accessing that privilege to make anti-racist decisions from positions of power that benefit people of color. White allies become the agents for dismantling racism, while Blacks and other people of color are the passive recipients of their efforts. While these two approaches to ally-ship diverge, they both flow from a relationship in which white allies and people of color are relegated to "supporters" and "supported," rather than working together to confront racism. The problems with this become apparent in practice. To cite one example, In August of last year, while the people of Ferguson rose up in response to the murder of Mike Brown, an organizing meeting of anti-police brutality activists began with a discussion of what was taking place. As this group of activists shared their reflections, an interesting pattern emerged. Almost all of the people who were white, while only a fraction of the room, spent their time talking about their reaction as a white person, how their white friends and family were responding, and how it was necessary to engage the racists who demonstrated support for Mike Brown's murderer Darren Wilson and teach them the error of their ways. This was a room filled with well-intentioned and committed activists, but it was notable that as the country was experiencing the most sustained Black rebellion in decades and the long-running epidemic of police murder of people of color had finally gained attention--when even the mainstream media were forced to question the level of repression used by the state--the conversation in this room became about the experience of whites. What contributed to a conversation of anti-racists being re-centered from Black people rising up against violence by the state against bullet, baton, and gas to the individual experience of white people? With so much to reflect upon in this historical moment, the prescription that an analysis of white people's role in the movement is the paramount task of these activists it shifts the conversation to this. The problem wasn't with any of the individuals involved, but that the conception of allyship as the framework to understand the fight against oppression led white activists to view everything through the lens of their identity, rather than their solidarity with the struggle. This perspective is rooted in an approach to oppression and racism that often limits the struggle to interpersonal interactions, and that downplays the structures of power that produce racism and other oppressions. The ironic and contradictory effect was to focus attention on "white allies," as opposed to the oppression that people strive to dismantle, and the history and politics of past struggles that must be learned and discussed to guide the fights of today. PEOPLE EMBRACE the idea of ally-ship in an effort to build solidarity, and this is a positive thing. And many prescriptions for activists put forward in the name of ally-ship are practices that should be uncontroversial in any movement. Suggestions to listen, to read more and to be mindful of dynamics in organizing spaces are important. No one likes an arrogant person who dominates a meeting and gets in the way of effective organizing. We should also challenge any attempt to push aside a discussion of racism or sexism in the name of "unity." Real unity requires confronting oppression directly and as a central political priority. We want the voices of women and people of color to be central to our movements, not sidelined. Our problem is with the one-sided focus on interpersonal dynamics that has a distorting effect on our understanding of racism and how to fight it. This makes it appear as though racism originates within white individuals. Without an acknowledgment of the historical and structural mechanisms that produce racism, political action and discussion can be reduced to confessing and talking about oneself. As feminist activist and co-founder of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence Andrea Smith writes in her essay "The Problem with Privilege": In my experience working with a multitude of antiracist organizing projects over the years, I frequently found myself participating in various workshops in which participants were asked to reflect on their gender/race/sexuality/class/etc. privilege. These workshops had a bit of a self-help orientation to them: "I am so and so, and I have x privilege." It was never quite clear what the point of these confessions were. It was not as if other participants did not know the confessor in question had her/his proclaimed privilege. It did not appear that these individual confessions actually led to any political projects to dismantle the structures of domination that enabled their privilege. Rather, the confessions became the political project themselves. A description of the role of allies by Keith Edwards in an essay "Aspiring Social Justice Ally Development: a Conceptual Model" highlights the tendency for development to be seen as solely a matter of self-reflection: Rather than being defensive, allies actively seek out critique, not only to be effective allies, but also as a means to realizing their own humanity. Allies are open to feedback not only as a way to helping the other, but also as a means to illuminate their own oppressive socialization and privilege, a necessary part of the ongoing process of liberating members of the privileged group from their own internalized dominant socialization. What is missing from this description of being an ally is activism--activity to challenge racism beyond one's self. The project of being an ally against oppression becomes primarily a moral one to be a good person. This is a far cry from, for example, the mass social struggles of the 1960s, when, for example, the movement against Jim Crow segregation and myriad other forms of institutionalized racism involved a Black-led rebellion against racist laws and institutions. The difference between a collective confrontation with police, courts, laws and social institutions, and a personal effort to rid one's self of racist ideas, while confronting others who espouse them, isn't just a difference of scale. It is a different project. WHEN THE importance of social change through mass struggle is lost, so is the critique of oppressive institutions. In "Motivating People from Privileged Groups to Support Social Justice," Diane Goodman writes, "[I]n order to attain educational and social reforms, we need to enlist the support of people from privileged groups, including those who are policymakers, administrators, teachers, parents, community members, and students."

### 2NC---AT: DA Identity

### 2NC---T: Impact

### 2NC---AT: DA Exclusion

### 2NC---T: TVA

#### 1ac evidence specifically cites failed labor unions which a plan could solve

**Bledsoe & Wright ’19****,** Bledsoe, A. and Wright, W. J. (2019) ‘The anti-Blackness of global capital’, Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 37(1), pp. 8–26. doi: 10.1177/026377581880510

Global capital and its effects Expressions of violence are often the result of structural arrangements. **Much of** the **routinized violence** of the present day **is tied to** localized manifestations of **global capitalism**. These manifestations have **resulted in new social and spatial relations**, labor regimes, and specific practices of organizing and managing built and “natural” environments, as well as the populations therein. Regarding Afro-descendant populations, these changes result in new manifestations of violence. Cowen and Lewis (2016) argue that anti-Blackness takes on specific characteristics based on “shifts in the social order.” These shifts are part of emerging global political economic trends. Phenomena like white flight, urban renewal, and Black spatial displacement—which have affected the lived experiences of Black populations in the United States—are examples of how urban spaces in the United States have shifted in their social, economic, and material makeup over the past five decades. While capitalism has always had a global reach, the late 20th century saw capitalist power achieve unprecedented levels of influence. This **consolidation of capitalist power** occurred, in part, **as a response to the struggles of** racialized populations and workers’ unions which, in the mid to late 20th century, demanded dignified employment, livable wages, social programs, and land reform, among other things (Gilmore, 2007: 39–40; Harvey, 2007: 7; Kaufman, 2013; Woods, 2017: 188). As a result of the organizing capabilities and political demands made by those in labor movements, the Civil Rights movement, the Black Power movement, and land reform activists, new manifestations of capitalism emerged that worked to reverse and appropriate the gains made by these movements and reify the influence of capitalist actors. Huey Newton diagnosed this phenomenon in 1971, noting that **capital** (specifically within the United States) **has** not only expanded its territorial boundaries but also **shifted its forms of control** such **that there exists a global capitalist power that controls “all the world’s lands and people”** (Newton, 2002: 186–187 emphasis in original). According to Newton, one effect of the expanding reach of global capitalism is that the roles of nation-states fundamentally change. While previously nation-states maintained greater control of the political and economic aspects of their territory, the increased power of capital now means that nation-states’ “self-determination, economic determination, and cultural determination have been transformed by the imperialists of the ruling circle” (Newton, 2002: 170). More specifically, the governing role of **the nation-state has become subordinated to** the agenda of **capital**(ists), so that corporations’ actions “directly structure and articulate territories and populations. They tend to make nation-states merely instruments to record the flows of the commodities, monies, and populations that they set in motion” (Hardt and Negri, 2000: 31). In addition, sovereign state actions such as policing, military interventions, state and municipal funding, and taxes (or lack thereof) are increasingly influenced by, and manipulated for, the propagation of global capital. In short, expressions of state sovereignty are co-opted to benefit capital. As global purveyors of capital increasingly replace the nation-state as controllers of sovereign space, the various populations within these formerly bounded territories become subject to a number of shifts. In order to counter labor organizing, capital uses the “spatial fix” to find labor pools and regulations that it can more profitably exploit (Harvey, 2001). This manifests in phenomena like capital flight and “outsourcing,” in which production moves to new locations. It is, in part, through such arrangements that the deindustrialization of cities like Detroit, Milwaukee, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh occurred, as the owners of the means of production moved manufacturing facilities to areas with cheaper sources of labor and less stringent financial and environmental regulations (Boggs, 1968). A result of this geographic rearrangement of production is that labor practices which previously provided stable, long-term, unionized jobs are replaced by “flexible” arrangements defined by temporary, low-paid, insecure, and nonunionized employment. Simultaneously, precarious laborers, now under- and unemployed, occupy neighborhoods where land precipitously drops in value. With time, these undervalued locations become sites of real estate speculation and urban renewal (Marable, 2000; Taylor, 2016). These effects often take on both class and racial characteristics. Newton (2002), for instance, notes how globalized capital leads to increasing numbers of Blacks falling into the category of the lumpenproletariat (196; 210). Classed subordination is not the only (nor necessarily the most fundamental) form of oppression Black people face, however. Indeed, in the modern epoch, **anti-Blackness does not** simply “**follow” global capitalism**. Rather, through perpetual and multifaceted enactments of violence, **anti-Blackness makes possible the** **accumulation necessary for capitalist reproduction.** Violent forms of domination accompany (and make possible) the reproduction of global capitalism. This violence targets all manner of people, specifically those who do not exhibit a form of humanity normalized under Western modernity (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) and gender nonconforming folk, Muslims, Latinx, and undoc- umented immigrants) or a manner of spatiality that adheres to the tenets of capitalist notions of individual ownership (Mitchell, 2003). Under this new phase of capitalism, ever-expanding groups of people are subjected to precarious life (Mbembe, 2017). Still, **experiences of anti-Blackness remain unique,** as the openness of Black people to **violence and** the assumed **a-spatial nature of Black populations** remain **constitutive factors of the modern world.** The logics underpinning anti-Black violence are inheritances of chattel slavery. These logics cast Black geographies as empty and threatening, open to occupation, and subject to surveillance and assault. Indeed, capitalism’s perpetuation relies as much on anti-Blackness as it ever has. The following section seeks to clarify the ways in which **anti-Blackness makes capital accumulation possible.**

#### Antitrust law can be used to combat inequality in the Global South

Waked 20, holds an S.J.D. (Doctor of Judicial Science) and an LL.M. from Harvard Law School, an LL.B. from Cairo University Law School, and a BA in Economics from the American University in Cairo. (Dina, 2-28-2020, “Antitrust as Public Interest Law: Redistribution, Equity, and Social Justice,” The Antitrust Bulletin, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003603X19898624)

Antitrust laws are sufficiently malleable to achieve goals far beyond the narrow efficiency-based goals that have dominated antitrust over the past 60 years.1 Using antitrust to achieve other than efficiency-based goals has often been advocated for development purposes, especially for countries in the Global South.2 Although developing countries merit a specially tailored antitrust policy that addresses their special needs of development and poverty eradication, the rise of global inequality “globalizes” the special status of antitrust in developing countries. Over the past decades, inequality has continued to rise, and even the economies that saw high levels of growth witnessed rampant income disparity as trickle-down economics failed, and entrenched local elites and multinationals captured most of the surplus value generated through higher growth rates. This has led to an unprecedented rise of populism, global unrest, and uprisings that have demanded and/or promised policies and rhetoric that include the forgotten masses. The rise of inequality has also led to deep discussions about possible solutions, from Global Taxation,3 the narrowing of the social welfare state, trade wars, to protectionism and industrial policy. This article is an attempt to bring to the discussion the antitrust laws as a means to reduce poverty and address inequality. It acknowledges, at the outset, that antitrust laws can only play a small role in addressing inequality, and an even smaller role in eradicating it. Albeit small, it is a role that is not to be underestimated. Antitrust laws, after all, are laws that shape markets, impact prices that firms set and consumer pay, and often dictate how firms and market players behave. Using antitrust laws to address inequality draws upon alternative goals that I have once proscribed to developing countries,4 but now I deem suitable to reach beyond the Global South. To unpack antitrust law as a market tool suitable to address inequality starts with a rejection of the efficiency-only purpose of antitrust by framing it as public interest law. Studying antitrust as public interest law over time shows how the narrowing of the public interest, to be sought under antitrust enforcement, allowed the efficiency-only discourse to reign its policy. Once we frame antitrust as public interest law, we can explore the means to use antitrust law to address inequality. The paper is divided into four parts. Part I is centered on the efficiency versus non-efficiency reach of antitrust. Part II frames antitrust as public interest law and draws upon its history. Part III discusses how antitrust as public interest law can address inequality. Part IV concludes.

# 1NR

## Case

### 1NR---Case

#### Wilderson-Warren is a contradiction

Sexton 19, PhD, Associate Professor of African American Studies and Film and Media Studies at the University of California, Irvine; October 2019. (Jared, “Affirmation in the Dark: Racial Slavery and Philosophical Pessimism”, The Comparatist, Volume 43, <https://doi.org/10.1353/com.2019.0005>, pg. 105-106)

While rightly identifying the task before us as “the imagination of black existence without Being,”10 which is to say existence without the prospect of becoming legible as beings (whatever the conventional desire to do so), Warren then steps beyond the afro-pessimist refusal of prescription and prognosis. Wilderson ends Red, White, and Black with this précis: “To say we must be free of air, while admitting to knowing no other source of breath, is what I have tried to do here” (338). Warren, by contrast, would invite us to adopt a disposition: endurance. To endure means to remain in existence, of course, but it also means to suffer patiently, a subsidiary prescription that would seem orthogonal to the urgency, and occasionally the haste, that otherwise animates the text. Moreover, the apocalyptic revolutionary forecast seems not only overstated, but also overwrought. Human life is not all life, and the world is not the earth. All of existence is finite, whether it is living or nonliving, human or nonhuman, but imagining it without Being does not require imagining it destroyed. It entails imagining it in and as the ruins of Being, after the end of the world, in an entirely other relation to the nothing from whence it comes. And herein we find something of the spacing between afro-pessimism and black nihilism: not at the level of analysis or conclusion or even implication, but rather at the level of opening and closing gesture. When faced with an antiblack world, do you call it eternally fallen because within it you are damned? And do you endure it as such, in pursuit of black spirit, waiting out an earthly purgatory, cleansing yourself of the sins of a (futile) desire for Being? Or does a world-destroying black thinking not allow for some other understanding of damnation? Alas, there are resources older and more incendiary than any memory, individual or collective. You can lose yourself and your damnation in the same unending, sinking feeling.11

[Footnotes]

10 As it stands, afro-pessimism, or the political ontology of anti-blackness, is already a description of “black existence without Being,” so the repeated call for an imagination of such existence under the heading of a black mysticism to come cannot avoid begging the question. Perhaps what remains to be imagined is not existence without Being as such, but what can be done *with* it, rather than what can be done *about* it; that is, how damnation, in the Fanonian sense, might be a blessing in disguise, dressed up in “that lamentable livery built up over centuries of incomprehension” (Fanon xvi).

11 Consider, on this point, the joke that recurs in Mathieu Kassovitz’s exceptional 1995 film, La haine. Hubert, one of the three protagonists, relays a story about a man who falls from the roof of a tall building and on the way down he says to himself, over and over: “jusqu’ici tout va bien [so far, so good].”

#### Sexton is wrong and links to our indicts of ontology

Spickard 9, PhD, Professor at UC Santa Barbara (Paul Spickard, 1-2-2009, “Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism (review),” American Studies, 50)

One of the major developments in ethnic studies over the past two decades has been the idea (and sometimes the advocacy) of multiraciality. From a theoretical perspective, this has stemmed from a post-structuralist attempt to deconstruct the categories created by the European Enlightenment and its colonial enterprise around the world. From a personal perspective, it has been driven by the life experiences in the last half-century of a growing number of people who have and acknowledge mixed parentage. The leading figures in this scholarly movement are probably Maria Root and G. Reginald Daniel, but the writers are many and include figures as eminent as Gary Nash and Randall Kennedy. A small but dedicated group of writers has resisted this trend: chiefly Rainier Spencer, Jon Michael Spencer, and Lewis Gordon. They have raised no controversy, perhaps because their books are not well written, and perhaps because their arguments do not make a great deal of sense. It is not that there is nothing wrong with the literature and the people movement surrounding multiraciality. Some writers and social activists do tend to wax rhapsodic about the glories of intermarriage and multiracial identity as social panacea. A couple of not-very-thoughtful activists (Charles Byrd and Susan Graham) have been coopted by the Gingrichian right (to be fair, one must point out that most multiracialists are on the left). And, most importantly, there is a tension between some Black intellectuals and the multiracial idea over the lingering fear that, for some people, adopting a multiracial identity is a dodge to avoid being Black. If so, that might tend to sap the strength of a monoracially-defined movement for Black community empowerment. With Amalgamation Schemes, Jared Sexton is trying to stir up some controversy. He presents a facile, sophisticated, and theoretically informed intelligence, and he picks a fight from the start. His title suggests that the study of multiraciality is some kind of plot, or at the very least an illegitimate enterprise. His tone is angry and accusatory on every page. It is difficult to get to the grounds of his argument, because the cloud of invective is so thick, and because his writing is abstract, referential, and at key points vague. For Sexton (as for the Spencers and Gordon) race is about Blackness, in the United States and around the world. That is silly, for there are other racialized relationships. In the U.S., native peoples were racialized by European intruders in all the ways that Africans were, and more: they were nearly extinguished. To take just one example from many around the world, Han Chinese have racialized Tibetans historically in all the ways (including slavery) that Whites have racialized Blacks and Indians in the United States. So there is a problem with Sexton's concept of race as Blackness. There is also a problem with his insistence on monoraciality. For Sexton and the others, one cannot be mixed or multiple; one must choose ever and only to be Black. I don't have a problem with that as a political choice, but to insist that it is the only possibility flies in the face of a great deal of human experience, and it ignores the history of how modern racial ideas emerged. Sexton does point out, as do many writers, the flawed tendencies in multiracial advocacy mentioned in the second paragraph above. But he imputes them to the whole movement and to the subject of study, and that is not a fair assessment. The main problem is that Sexton argues from conclusion to evidence, rather than the other way around. That is, he begins with the conclusion that the multiracial idea is bad, retrograde, and must be resisted. And then he cherry-picks his evidence to fit his conclusion. He spends much of his time on weaker writers such as Gregory Stephens and Stephen Talty who have been tangential to the multiracial literature. When he addresses stronger figures like Daniel, Root, Nash, and Kennedy, he carefully selects his quotes to fit his argument, and misrepresents their positions by doing so. Sexton also makes some pretty outrageous claims. He takes the fact that people who study multiracial identities are often studying aspects of family life (such as the shaping of a child's identity), and twists that to charge them with homophobia and nuclear family-ism. That is simply not accurate for any of the main writers in the field. The same is true for his argument by innuendo that scholars of multiraciality somehow advocate mail-order bride services. And sometimes Sexton simply resorts to ad hominem attacks on the motives and personal lives of the writers themselves. It is a pretty tawdry exercise. That is unfortunate, because Sexton appears bright and might have written a much better book detailing his hesitations about some tendencies in the multiracial movement. He might even have opened up a new direction for productive study of racial commitment amid complexity. Sexton does make several observations that are worth thinking about, and surely this intellectual movement, like any other, needs to think critically about itself. Sadly, this is not that book.

#### Black nihilism is theoretically incoherent and self-defeating — it incorrectly identifies Western thought as anti-black leading to genocidal politics

Hill 18, professor of philosophy at DePaul University in Chicago, Jamaican-Amerian, (Jason D. Hill, 5-18-2018, “The Black Nihilism of Ta-Nehesi Coates,” http://www.spiked-online.com/newsite/article/the-black-nihilism-of-ta-nehisi-coates/21406#.W3BwLtJKg2w)

Black nihilism Yet what is crucial to note is that Coates’ racial pessimism is tied to a larger philosophical movement known as ‘black nihilism’, of which he is not so much its architect as its sycophantic and ardent devotee. Black nihilism is an anti-philosophic movement, intellectually out of focus, and against – as its advocates state – philosophy, hope, metaphysics, epistemology, redemption, liberal democracy, free markets and even the grammar of liberation itself. Its best articulation can be found in Calvin L Warren’s essay ‘Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope’, published in the New Centennial Review in 2015. Warren writes that black nihilism is a political philosophy that advocates an end to black emancipation through politics, and characterises any form of political hope as pointless. ‘Black suffering is an essential part of the world’, Warren writes, ‘and placing hope in the very structure that sustains metaphysical violence, the political, will never resolve anything’. Black nihilism, he continues, speaks of a ‘blackened world’ that will ‘put an end to the word itself’. According to Warren, black nihilism is ‘anti-grammar’, and it resists the appeal to both liberal democracy and its political, social and emancipatory schemata on the grounds that to do so will reproduce the very metaphysical violence that is the source of back suffering. He writes in support of this claim that: ‘The politics of hope must actively refuse the possibility that the “solution” is, in fact, another problem in disguised form: the idea of a “solution” is nothing more than the repetition and disavowal of the problem itself.’ Black emancipation, Warren argues, is predicated on black nihilism, which in turn relies on world destruction. This world destruction is the destruction of, we may assume, whiteness; the very foundation on which anti-blackness has been systemically grounded. He writes that black emancipation is not an opening for future possibilities and political reconfigurations. This is because anti-blackness infuses the fabric of social existence, and so it is ‘impossible to emancipate blacks without literally destroying the world. Moreover, this means that black emancipation will not yield a new world or possibility for reorganisation – black emancipation becomes something like death for the world.’ The nihilistic thrust of this type of thought, articulated by Warren and Coates, is so irrefutably bankrupt that it rejects all categories on which human cognition and, therefore, man’s conceptual mode of human survival are based. Warren states that all philosophy, including metaphysics and epistemology, was created against the backdrop of the non-reasoning black who was thought to be situated outside of history, moral law and consciousness. Warren writes that for the black nihilist, anti-blackness is metaphysics; that metaphysics is unthinkable without anti-blackness because ‘it is the system of thought and organisation that structures the relationship between object/subject, human/animal, rational/irrational and free/enslaves – essentially the categories that constitute the field of ontology’. All social rationalisation, loss of individuality and economic expansionism and technocratic domination depend on anti-blackness. Even epistemology, that branch of philosophy that validates and verifies human knowledge by justifying our beliefs, is a problem for back nihilism. For the black nihilist, the dominant epistemology privileges metaphysical forms of anti-black organisations of knowledge. Warren writes: ‘If we think of epistemology as an anti-black formation, then every appeal to it will reproduce the very metaphysical violence that is the source of black suffering. Nihilistic hermeneutics allows us to fracture epistemology, to chip away at its metaphysical science, and to enunciate from within this fissure.’ In Warren’s view, black nihilism shatters the coherence of anti-black epistemology and cannot be known or rendered legible through traditional epistemology. In other words: ‘Anti-black epistemology is somewhat schizophrenic in its aim. It at once posits blackness as an anti-grammatical entity.’ But where does this leave the black subject? Warren writes – and we see strains of this in Coates’ writings when he says that hope itself and the cognitive machinations out of which hope arises are doomed to failure – that metaphysics engenders forms of violence as a necessity, as a byproduct. Coates sees the American Dream in precisely those terms, as a species of metaphysics. He writes in Between the World and Me, that the dream ‘thrives on generalisations, on limiting the number of possible questions… the dream is the enemy of all art, courageous thinking, and honest writing’. It is, for Coates, the means by which people are seduced into thinking and acting white. Warren takes this line of reasoning to its logical conclusion, when he writes apocryphally and apocalyptically: ‘Thinking itself is structured by anti-blackness from the very start.’ This means that man’s mind, his mode of acquiring knowledge, his reason and thought, are to be rejected as forms of anti-blackness themselves. They are to be regarded as creations of white racists whose universal systems of thought corresponding to an objective reality applicable to all human beings who share a common mode of survival, as human beings, are nothing more than a social compact among white racists to exclude blacks from the human community. The black nihilists have one thing correct. They and their adherents are outside the historical process and the moral law, denying consciousness and a conception of themselves as truly free subjects. But it is not Hegel, Hume and Kant who have condemned them to that station in life. It is they who have betrayed their own constitution as free radical agents, and committed spiritual suicide by negating their radical freedom, usurping their agency and repudiating the only world they have to enhance their modes of continued personal becoming and the creation of an abstract juridical and political personality. The end-of-the-world coda should not be taken lightly. It is code for the destruction, I believe, not of whiteness, which in and of itself is an anti-concept denoting nothing and no one in the world. Since the world of the black nihilist is a crudely reductionist socio-economic and political world of white institutions created by white people tyrannising over the world of all black people, for the black nihilists to speak of an end to black emancipation in terms of an end of the world, is to speak in terms of an end to the white world. The death of the world they write of is the death of all white people. Coates, who to my mind is the most ardent of the black nihilists, wrote in Between The World and Me that in America the problem was not really with the police, ‘but that our country is ruled by majoritarian pigs’. The black nihilists have declared the final answer to the problems of black suffering and black emancipation – an end to the world – which means an end to white people, and the white world and its institutions. It is up to those against whom such apocalyptic judgments have been issued to find the response to this indictment. Their very survival depends on it.

#### They link to their K of liberalism, temporality, and grammar arguments ⁠— independently, projection of a bleak future recoheres suffering

Lillvis 17, associate professor of English at Marshall University (Kristen Lillvis, 2017, “Posthuman Blackness and the Black Female Imagination,” pages 80-92)

Anyanwu's Middle Passage experience—her travel from Africa to colonial New York aboard a slave ship—transforms the shape shifter. While Anyanwu can alter her body from female to male, young to old, and human to animal, the Middle Passage journey signals her conversion from selfpossessed subject to Doro-directed object. The subject-object transition that occurs for the fictional Anyanwu mirrors that of historical captured Africans during the Middle Passage. Toni Morrison, Greg Tate, Calvin L. Warren, and Kodwo Eshun argue that the Middle Passage stands as the moment in history when black subjects became abstracted into metaphysical elements or objects (Gilroy, Small 178; Eshun, "Further" 297-98; Warren 237).' As Warren asserts, "the literal destruction of black bodies" during and following the transatlantic slave voyage enables "the psychic, economic, and philosophical resources for modernity to objectify, forget, and ultimately obliterate Being" (237). With the Middle Passage standing in for the bar that, according to Tate, separates signifier from signified, the black body becomes "objectified, infused with exchange value, and rendered malleable within a sociopolitical order" of white power (Eshun, "Further" 297-98; Warren 226, 237). In order to recognize and overcome the abstraction of black bodies and identities that began with the Middle Passage, new types of consciousness must be developed. If W. E. B. Du Bois's double consciousness describes the ability to recognize the black body's signification in white culture, and Frantz Fanon's triple consciousness marks an awareness of the move from black subject to black object within this system, then the multiple consciousness of black posthumanism and Afrofuturism assists the black individual in viewing the self from outside the system of signification altogether. Eshun asserts that the "triple consciousness, quadruple consciousness" of Afrofuturism makes the black subject privy to "previously inaccessible alienations" ("Further" 298). Eshun's "previously inaccessible alienations" correspond to the abstraction of blackness since the Middle Passage, the positioning of the sign of blackness within the ontology and cosmology of white power. Like Afrofuturism's triple or quadruple consciousness, black posthumanism's multiple consciousness allows the subject to understand and potentially surmount this alienation. Viewing identity as part of but separate from the system of signification corresponds with the posthuman imperative to blur dividing lines but celebrate distinctions between temporalities and subjectivities, an imperative reflected in posthuman constructions of identity and solidarity. Transformative Middle Passage experiences in Butler's science fiction cultivate a posthuman multiple consciousness that allows characters and readers to recognize blackness both within and outside of the ontology and cosmology of white power. As Nadine Flagel argues, "Much speculative fiction is explicitly or implicitly engaged with issues of slavery and freedom, possession and liberation, but divorces these issues from the material conditions of slavery" (224). While Butler features literal and metaphorical Middle Passages in several of her works, including Wild Seed (as mentioned above), Dawn (1987), and "Bloodchild" (1984), in the novel Kindred (1979) Butler directly acknowledges the material conditions of slavery that, as Flagel points out, speculative and science fiction authors all-too-often ignore. Butler's use of time travel in the neo-slave narrative Kindred compels her African American protagonist, Dana Franklin, to undergo alienating notions of racial identity in the past, present, and future. Dana's Middle Passage experiences aid her development of a posthuman multiple consciousness through which she recognizes both temporality and subjectivity as liminal. Although Warren and Eshun argue that black subjectivity exists only in the past—prior to the Middle Passage—and Warren warns that the achievement of black subjectivity in the future would mean the end of blackness as we know it (Eshun, "Further" 298; Warren 244), Dana, as a possessor of posthuman multiple consciousness, resides within a liminal temporality and, as such, understands that black subjectivity exists in those places accepted as well as those denied: the past, present, and future. Additionally, Butler's posthumously published "A Necessary Being" (2014) models posthuman multiple consciousness for readers who may otherwise struggle to view any racial identity as distinct from white supremacy. By depicting power relations in a world unlike ours, Butler enables her readers to understand races and cultures as connected to but differentiated from one another. Specifically, in "A Necessary Being" Butler presents readers with the familiar concept of hierarchies based on skin color, yet through her character development, she dismisses the subsumption of one race under another. Butler's otherworldly protagonist, a blue-fleshed female named Tahneh, sees herself as part of and also distinct from the Kohn culture in which she exists, paradoxically, as both ruler and slave. By considering power systems in this alien environment—an environment distinct from white, Western cosmologies—readers can join Tahneh in cultivating a posthuman multiple consciousness and acknowledging new ways of understanding both self and other identities. The Middle Passage commences a series of psychological, physical, and ontological shifts for captured Africans. Aboard ships and on soil, women, men, and children experience a violence that literally and figuratively disrupts black subjectivity. Valerie Loichot asserts, "The slave family is marked by a series of amputations: an immense and abrupt severing from original African roots and memory; a dismemberment of family units by practices of kidnapping or selling; literal amputations of limbs of fugitive slaves; splits between bodies turned into economic tools of production and mind; substitution of mothering and fathering by breeding; and attempted disassociation of humanity from black subjects" (41). The Middle Passage alters not only black communities and bodies in the past but also black identities in the present. The effects of enslavement on the form and concept of blackness—as Loichot says, the relationship between black subjectivity and humanity—means that the Middle Passage shapes historical and contemporary ideas of race. Theorizing the Middle Passage extends the transatlantic slave trade beyond the four centuries of trauma that triangulated Africa, Europe, and the Americas. For instance, Morrison finds that Middle Passage dislocations foreshadow modernist alienations (Gilroy, Small 178). Tate extends these Middle Passage dislocations to the field of semiotics, arguing that the Middle Passage operates as the bar between signifier and signified (Eshun, "Further" 297-98). Warren furthers Tate's semiotic approach, asserting that the meaninglessness of signification following the Middle Passage institutes a black nihilism. And Eshun "reroutes" the alien abductions of the Middle Passage through contemporary Afrofuturist science fictions in order to offer alternative histories and futures ("Further" 300). Each of these theorists marks the Middle Passage as both a defining, centuries-long moment in history as well as an experience that exceeds the specific time period during which it occurs. Moreover, each theorist recognizes that during and following the Middle Passage, constructions of blackness develop in opposition to, yet support of, whiteness. Theories of black identity provide concrete examples of the paradoxical opposition to and support of white power structures cultivated by constructions of blackness since the Middle Passage. Du Bois's double consciousness describes the internalization of both black- and white-determined ideas of blackness. He explains that the black subject inhabits "a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world" (Du Bois 38). The "other world"—the white world—views the black subject with "amused contempt and pity," which Du Bois argues compels the black subject to observe himself similarly (38). Du Bois's black subject, though situated in opposition to the "other world" of the white subject, supports white power structures with his "longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self" (39)—a self determined by or at least incorporating white-authored notions of humanity. Du Bois describes a system of signification in which whiteness shapes the cultural significance of blackness. Although his assertion of a double consciousness suggests the existence of a "Negro" consciousness distinct from a white "American" consciousness (Du Bois 38), white supremacy shapes both entities. Rejecting the mutual exclusivity of blackness and whiteness in Du Boisian double consciousness, Paul Gilroy argues that Du Bois's theory acknowledges the "transformation and fragmentation of the integral racial self," indicating that although ideas of blackness vary across black communities, "constricting or absolutist understandings of ethnicity" driven by white power structures limit the expression of black humanity (Black 138). As Gilroy asserts, Du Bois's "two warring ideals" have "democratic potential disfigured by white supremacy" (Du Bois 38; Gilroy, Black 113); in other words, whiteness, by cultivating meaning through the opposition of blackness, distorts blackness for blacks and whites. Fanon similarly addresses the supremacy of white power structures in shaping ideas about blackness. However, whereas Du Bois posits a double consciousness, Fanon contends that blacks possess a "triple" personhood or consciousness. Like Du Bois, Fanon argues that the black individual exists as^ a subject and also in relation to the white other. Fanon then adds a third element: via the relation to the white other, the black individual loses subjectivity and occupies object status (84). Fanon expresses his desire to "be a man among other men," but he concludes that he has "made [himself] an object"—the third aspect of his triple consciousness—because "his inferiority comes into being through the other" (85, 83). Fanon's triple consciousness thus offers blacks not only a vision of black and white notions of blackness, as Du Bois's double consciousness does, but also a glimpse of the "other," the larger white power structure that shapes rhetorical concepts of race. Despite labeling white supremacist systems as "other," neither Du Bois nor Fanon argues that blackness influences whiteness in the same way whiteness distorts blackness. Rejecting the equal reflexivity of blackness and whiteness, Fanon assigns triple consciousness specifically to black men and women: Ontology—once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside—does not permit us to understand the being of the black man. For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man. Some critics will take it on themselves to remind us that this proposition has a converse. I say that this is false. The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man. Overnight the Negro has been given two frames of reference within which he has had to place himself. His metaphysics, or, less pretentiously, his customs and the sources on which they were based, were wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilization that did not know and that imposed itself on him. (82-83) Diana Fuss explains that for Fanon, whiteness operates as a "transcendental signifier," a "self-identical, self-reproducing term" that proclaims freedom from blackness as well as "the very category of'race'" (22). Fuss follows Fanon in asserting that whiteness, in mandating independence from racial categories, colonizes blackness and reserves subjectivity for whites alone (Fuss 23). If white power structures regulate the rhetoric of race and the assignation of subjectivity, then blackness—even in its opposition to whiteness— supports white supremacy. Semiotics—what Warren calls the "very structure of meaning in the modern world"—depends upon the existence of blackness and, specifically, the othering of blackness, which takes the concrete form of "anti-black violence" during and following the Middle Passage (226). While Du Bois and Fanon explain through their theories of double and triple consciousness that antiblack violence exists as a byproduct of white supremacist systems, Warren positions black suffering as foundational to semiotics and Western metaphysics (237-38): "If literal black bodies sustain modernity and metaphysics—though various forms of captivity, terror, and subjection," he asks, "then what would emancipation entail for blacks? How do we allow metaphysics to self-consume and weaken when blackness nourishes metaphysics?" (Warren 239). Warren follows Morrison in interweaving the origins of modernity and black oppression, though he extends her premise by arguing that historical and contemporary American culture depends on antiblack violence. Warren's black nihilist philosophy provides no answer to the problem of black suffering within white power structures; however, his argument that blackness contributes to the perpetuation of these structures indicates the need for a new type of consciousness: one that not only recognizes the impact of whiteness on black subjectivity (like Du Bois's double consciousness) and black metaphysics (like Fanon's triple consciousness) but also acknowledges the reflexive relationship of blackness and whiteness within white supremacist systems. Posthuman multiple consciousness affords this perspective. Posthuman multiple consciousness perceives black identities as contributing to but also potentially independent of white, Western metaphysics. In particular, considering identity within the temporal liminality of posthumanism allows the black subject to conceive of a future in which blackness destroys rather than facilitates black objectification. While Warren argues that this type of "'blackened' world" would put an "end to metaphysics" and "the world itself" (244), posthumanism projects nonapocalyptic possibilities for the future as well as the past and present. MULTIPLE CONSCIOUSNESS AND BLACK NIHILISM IN BUTLER'S Kindred When read through the lens of posthuman multiple consciousness, black science fiction—including Afrofuturist texts concerning the oppression of black identities and objectification of black bodies in the past, present, or future—promotes the existence of black subjectivity throughout time. Eshun asserts that Afrofuturism relies on "extraterrestrialityas a hyperbolic trope to explore the historical terms, the everyday implications of forcibly im- v posed dislocation, and the constitution of Black Atlantic subjectivities: from slave to negro to coloured to euolue to black to African to African American" ("Further" 298-99). Black science fiction's alien abductions mirror the black subject's real-world alienations in historical and contemporary white power structures. However, in addition to engaging with the past and present, black science fiction texts blend these time periods with the future to create a liminal temporality. By disrupting "the linear time of progress" and "the temporal logics that condemned black subjects to prehistory"—the time before the Middle Passage and slavery—black science fiction presents "a series of powerful competing futures that infiltrate the present at different rates" (Eshun, "Further" 297). Reading black science fiction through posthuman multiple consciousness shows that although the Middle Passage strips captured Africans of subjectivity, as Tate, Warren, and Eshun assert, the texts' liminal temporality brings black subjectivity into the present and future. In her science fictional neo-slave narrative Kindred, Butler makes posthuman liminality literal through the depiction of time travel. Middle Passage experiences take Butler's characters not across the ocean but through time and space. Dana, Butler's African American protagonist, journeys between 1976 California, her present, and antebellum Maryland, her ancestral past. Even Dana's first trip back to 1811 or 1812 engages with the temporal, spatial, and subjective shifts indicative of the Middle Passage experience. On June 9, 1976—her twenty-sixth birthday—Dana feels "dizzy, nauseated" while organizing books in her new home with her husband, Kevin (Butler, Kindred 13). Dana's books, house, and husband "blur" into nonexistence as trees, a river, and a drowning child come into view (Kindred 13). Present changes to past, indoors to outdoors, and friend to foe—though Dana does not yet understand her fraught relationship with the white child, Rufus—during her voy- age from 1976 to the i8ios. While these shifts seem like the direct exchange of opposites, Butler blurs not only Dana's vision but also the binaries. For instance, Dana draws upon her knowledge of artificial respiration from the present (or the future, considering the perspective of antebellum Dana) to save the child in the past (or the present, again keeping in mind Dana's antebellum point of view). Accordingly, seemingly distinct periods and places overlap for Dana not only during her Middle Passage travels between present and past but also during her time in each temporality. Kindred's liminality allows both Butler's protagonist and her readers to consider race, and, in particular, blackness, within and outside of specific cosmologies of white power. The novel depicts the implications of Dana's blackness during both her personal present and her familial past. As a black woman in 1976, Dana faces racial bigotry and sexual harassment. Her coworker murmurs, "Chocolate and vanilla porn!" when seeing her with Kevin, who is white, and Kevin's sister and brother-in-law as well as Dana's uncle object to the news of their interracial relationship (Kindred 56, no). Although the novel suggests that Dana and Kevin have a happy and healthy marriage, 19705 gender roles relegate Dana to a subordinate position: both Dana and Kevin identify as writers, but Kevin, the "primary breadwinner" (Parham 1322), asks Dana to type his manuscripts. Similarly, Dana notes that after moving into their new house, Kevin leaves her to finish unpacking, since he "had stopped when he got his office in order" (Kindred 12). In both situations, Kevin changes his behavior after he recognizes Dana's discomfort, but Dana, and not Kevin, seeks reconciliation after their fights, and she makes excuses for Kevin's behavior. For example, Dana thinks that the "look" Kevin gives her in response to a passive-aggressive comment is not "as malevolent as it seem[s]" and that he would try "to intimidate [. . .] [sjtrangers" but not her (Kindred 13). Considering these power imbalances, Marc Steinberg argues that Dana and Kevin's relationship "smacks of a kind of servitude," and the "line between slavery and marriage" becomes "blurred" as the novel continues (469). As Dana finds herself beholden to others—including her husband—both in the present and past, the influence ofwhite power structures on black subjectivity becomes apparent to readers. Late-twentieth-century conventions of race and gender intersect with early nineteenth-century customs when Kevin follows Dana through time to the antebellum Upper South. After Rufus meets Kevin and asks the white man, "Does Dana belong to you now?" Kevin affirms the boy's suspicion: "In a way," he answers. "She's my wife" (Kindred 60). The intolerance Dana and Kevin experience as an interracial couple in 1976 likewise returns, anachronistically speaking, in 1819, with Rufus, first, denying the plausibility of their relationship and, second, asserting its illegality. Rufus again conveys the period's white supremacist and patriarchal views when, near the end of the novel, he asks Dana to take the place of Alice—his unwilling wife and Dana's great-great-grandmother—as his lover. Lisa Yaszek notes, "The bargain seems perfectly reasonable to Rufus—after all, Dana and Alice are nearly identical doubles of one another, and black women are supposed to accede ' to the wishes of white men" ("Grim" 1063). Dana's performance as a slave during her time in Maryland exposes her to the physical and emotional violence born of black women's object status. While Dana's position as a black woman within a white power structure shifts as she moves throughout time, her objectification persists. Steinberg asserts that Butler "assumes a non-Western conceptualization of history— one in which history is cyclical, not linear—in order to demonstrate ways in which certain forms of race and gender oppression continue late into the twentieth century and beyond" (467). Steinberg's argument about racism, when broadened to considerations of race in general, reveals that the temporal liminality in Kindred incorporates a subjective liminality: blackness—in relation to and distinct from whiteness and, in particular, white supremacy—holds historical as well as trans-temporal significance. Although Warren argues that the fantasy of political progress, represented by a linear timeline extending into the future of improved race relations, "allows one to disregard the historicity of anti-blackness and its continued legacy" (221), Butler's novel uses liminality rather than linearity to acknowledge white supremacy in the past, present, and future. Specifically, Dana's temporal and subjective liminality imbue her with a posthuman multiple consciousness through which she situates blackness within and outside of white power structures. During her second peregrination between past and present, Dana meets a white patroller who attempts to rape her. Dana's fear propels her forward—or back—to the future, where she finds herself "kicking" and "clawing" Kevin, whom she mistakes for the patroller (Kindred 43). Kevin never physically threatens Dana in the novel, but his whiteness—when considered from her new, temporally liminal perspective—endangers her. Lauren J. Lacey asserts, "Dana has had to become a different kind of subject in order to see herself through the eyes of a white male patroller in the past, and the transition to the present is not particularly simple. Kevin's status as a white male is newly complicated for Dana by her experiences in the past" (75). In discussing Dana observing herself "through the eyes of a white male patroller," Lacey acknowledges Dana's multiple consciousness: Dana believes herself to be a subject, but when considering that the patroller views her as a body to be used, exchangeable for any of the other black female bodies she's "just like" (Kindred 42), she understands her object status. Loichot similarly acknowledges Dana's awareness of her object position, noting that "Dana realizes two important things at once. Her own name and body disappear under the function of the female slave, sexualized object at the mercy of the white master" (44). Dana's knowledge of her subordinate status in the past shapes her view of herself and others in the present when she attacks her husband upon her return to California. She positions blackness within the ontology of whiteness in the past as well as the present when she brings the historicity of her object status into her life with her husband. However, posthuman multiple consciousness not only positions blackness within the ontology of whiteness but also provides a view of blackness divorced from white supremacy. Dana's subjectivity, when considered within the Middle Passage timeline suggested by Tate, Warren, and Eshun, shifts throughout Kindred. Specifically, time travel allows her to simultaneously possess and be denied the subjectivity of Middle Passage prehistory. If, as Eshun argues, black subjectivity exists only in "prehistory"—before the Middle Passage—then the existence of time travel in Kindred means that Dana can neither claim nor be denied subjectivity at any point in the story: her prehistory, like her present and future, is ubiquitous (Eshun, "Further" 297). According to Lacey, temporal liminality in the novel shapes Dana's understanding of herself: "Butler uses the device of time travel to create a narrative that absolutely refuses to see past and present as discrete, closed off, or even formal categories. Dana's life—her home, her life with her husband—are caught up in the demand to see the relationship between past and present as mutually constitutive. Throughout the novel, Butler emphasizes how difficult it is for Dana to 'leave the past behind'" (73). Indeed, Dana cannot "leave the past behind" because she always already inhabits the past: each Middle Passage venture takes Dana to a tripartite temporality. After her initial trip to the antebellum Upper South, Dana's travels to Maryland place her in a future-past—a past more recent than that of her previous visit—which becomes her present. Similarly, Dana's return to the "normalcy" of 1976 California situates her in a future-present—a present more recent than the one she left—which, considering the physical and emotional toll time travel exacts upon her, becomes part of her past. While the historical Middle Passage takes place during Dana's ancestral past, her personal Middle Passage experiences occur in the past, present, and future; accordingly, her "prehistory," her pre-Middle Passage subjectivity, simultaneously occurs within and exceeds all three temporalities. However, Kindred's temporal liminality means that Dana's post-Middll Passage objectification simultaneously occurs within and exceeds past, present, and future. If, as Tate argues, the Middle Passage marks the moment of the black subject's abstraction and objectification—that is, "the bar between signifier and the signified could be understood as standing for the Middle Passage that separated signification (meaning) from sign (letter)" (Eshun, "Further" 297)—then the final chapter of Butler's novel gives the bar physical and spatial significance. During her last trip to the past, Dana stabs Rufus to prevent him from raping her. Simultaneously with Rufus's death, Dana experiences the "terrible, wrenching sickness" of her Middle Passage travels between past and present (Kindred 260). Despite her weakened state, she manages to move Rufus's body off of hers before she travels through time, but his hand remains on her arm. Recounting the process of her return to 1976, Dana reports: "Something harder and stronger than Rufus's hand clamped down on my arm, squeezing it, stiffening it, pressing into it—painlessly, at first—melting into it, meshing with it as though somehow my arm were being absorbed into something. Something cold and nonliving" (Kindred 260-61). The "cold and nonliving" force that grasps Dana's arm and divides her body, permanently, between past and present corresponds to the bar in the system of signification, the bar of the Middle Passage. This bar, which indicates the separation of signifier and signified and, in this instance, the distance between the physical black body and cultural constructions of blackness, transforms Dana's arm—her body—into an object consumed by Rufus in 1831 and her wall in 1976. Dana, thus, experiences not only temporal liminality but also subjective liminality: her pre-Middle Passage subjectivity exists throughout time, just as her post-Middle Passage objectification surpasses the limits of linear temporality. Time travel makes impossible the separation of past, present, and future states of being. Considering the relationship between temporality and identity, Lacey asserts that Dana "literally becomes a multiple subject, defined in and through both the past and the present" (72). Additionally, the future—which cannot be separated from other temporalities in the novel—defines Dana. For instance, Butler's novel, and Dana's story, begins at the end, after Dana returns to 1976 for the last time, without her left arm. While Lisa Long argues that in killing Rufus, Dana "literally kills her past" (470), and Lacey asserts that with Dana losing an arm, "History has taken a piece of Dana's body" (72), the past remains alive for Dana, and the past, along with the present and future, permanently alters her identity. As such, Butler's novel draws a comparison between the blurred boundaries of time and being. This liminal temporality and subjectivity accords with a posthuman multiple consciousness that makes possible an understanding of blackness in relation to the history of white supremacy and also beyond that history. Although Dana finds herself, like other black women, men, and children, oppressed regardless of the time period she inhabits, Butler's temporal and subjective disturbances indicate not the inevitability of antiblack violence but the potential for black freedom, including the freedom from the "transcendental signifier" of whiteness (Fuss 22). Steinberg argues that by depicting time as a circle or "zigzag," "Butler creates an historical possibility of the perception of self (and how it might be affected by matters of possession and ownership)" (472, 475). In addition to inspiring perceptions of the self as determined by dominating forces, liminal temporality encourages Butler's characters and readers to acknowledge subjectivities free from domination as well. With his black nihilist theory, Warren presents the possibility of blackness as distinct from whiteness, although he positions both the achievement and product of this altered state of being as beyond comprehension. Considering, first, the dismantling of white supremacist systems, Warren rejects historical strategies for emancipation, arguing that "every emancipatory strategy that attempted to rescue blackness from anti-blackness inevitably reconstituted and reconfigured the anti-blackness it tried to eliminate" (239). Likewise, he dismisses future-focused solutions, since the promise of a more egalitarian future only promotes the continuation of struggle (Warren 233). In his philosophy of black nihilism, Warren advocates for the rejection of political action in the present as a tactic through which to separate black identity from the American Dream and Western metaphysics. He states, "Black nihilism demands a traversal, but not the traversal that reintegrates 'the subject' (and Being) back into society by shattering fundamental fantasies of metaphysics, but a traversal that disables and invalidates every imaginative and symbolic function" (240). "Because anti-blackness infuses itself into every fabric of social existence," Warren asserts, positioning the black subject outside of white supremacist systems "becomes something like death for the world," which makes sense, if, as he argues, divorcing the black subject from white supremacy "disables and invalidates every imaginative and symbolic function" we know (239, 240). Nevertheless, Warren pushes for a black nihilism that resists statements of purpose or progress, a nihilism that seeks to destroy white supremacy by denying the resuscitation of the past and the hope for the future that have, unwittingly, maintained the systems they seek to move beyond. Yet temporality proves as slippery in Warren's "Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope" as it does Butler's Kindred. Despite Warren's explicit rejection of "[p]rogress" and "futurity" (218), his philosophy fails to extricate itself from the language of Western metaphysics and, specifically, ideas of linear temporality: he must provide background and arrive, despite his protestations, at a "point" by the end of the article (243). However, Warren acknowledges the impossibility of his project: he gets as close to articulating a nonlinear theory of black nihilism—a theory that "does not extinguish hope but reconfigures it"—as semiotics and the conventions of academic writing allow (244). If, as Warren acknowledges, we cannot yet articulate or perhaps even imagine a reconfigured hope, then perhaps the key to freedom lies not in the rejection of temporality but the embrace of it. For instance, if we should not dismiss black suffering by simply hoping for a future more empowering than our present, why should we dismiss emancipation projects by anticipating a future as oppressive as our present? In the tradition of Du Bois and Fanon, who introduce ideas of liminal subjectivity that posthumanists have now applied to all individuals, regardless of race, and Eshun, who considers liminal temporality and subjectivity together, the theory of posthuman blackness provides a view of black subjectivity related to but also distinct from the linear trajectories of Western metaphysics.