# 1NC

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### 1NC

#### Our interpretation is that Azja should not have to negate a team that’s success is built and parasitic upon the labor of Black debaters, as a Senior!

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#### Anti-black violence is a paradigmatic constant that engenders human communities. The 1AC reiterates a chronopolitical grammar of progress that secures complicity for black fungibility.

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I argue that the white supremacy Spencer evinces, in which nonblack persons of color can be contributing members of human community, reinforces the constitutive exclusion of racially black persons from the Historical frame. The rub is that Spencer is not wrong. Racially black persons cannot be-in-time because as pre-human artifacts—the trace of humanism’s race/ism or cut—they bear the weight of Man’s ontological anxieties. The promise of a universal human imago implores nonblack persons of color to make room for themselves not in a vacuum, but in an Historical world (wound) adhered by racial hierarchies, such that by activating the plasticity of racial whiteness as a human recognition, they entrench the constitutive exclusion of racially black minorities from human be(com)ing. To refuse to capitalize on this plasticity, to refuse to reproduce the antiblack sentimentality and violence of Enlightenment Europe would consent to arriving to the table of human civilization too soon—at the dawn of Man, which is how Martin characterizes the African continent—and too late, failing altogether to qualify for the recognitions and protections reserved for human subjects of a civil polity. To be sure, civil rights necessitate human recognition because “civil society” is but a placeholder for the discursive and material organization of Man (i.e., Man’s racial myths and legal categories), and because the political economy of liberal humanism is generated within and through libidinal antiblackness. The episodic and contingent violence that nonblack persons of color experience (for example, in Trump’s America) is the affective lever civil society operates to demand generalized loyalty, obscuring for nonblack minorities the choice whereby they consent to make themselves the instruments of white supremacy. The mechanism through which that loyalty is elicited is not (just) the state’s demand but liberal—libidinal—humanism’s demand for a collective, planetary distancing from and rejection of racial blackness. A white qua not-black human imago is at once the subject of Alt-Right claims to exclusivity and liberal humanism’s claims to inclusivity. Ours is a world in which those who enjoy what Frantz Fanon describes as “ontological resistance”51 (i.e., human qua white recognition) experience, in Trump’s as in Obama’s America, the ebb and flow of human community (i.e., social life), while the excommunicated, or in Wilderson’s hauntingly apt analogy for racially black persons, the “cows”52—as the raw material that makes and sustains our human world-making—are indiscriminately and senselessly, without stipulation or explanation, “accumulated and, if need be, killed,”53 in order to cohere the collective unconscious of our human community and to engender its social markers of Man. Same shit, different day I have already suggested that Trump’s simulated inclusivity betrays the continuity of the office of the American president and that his arrival to the White/Master’s House coheres and testifies to a paradigm sutured by unremarkable and interminable antiblack violence, even or especially as nonblack minority populations experience new violations in Trump’s America. The contingent and selective recognition of nonblack persons of color as white-cum-human beings absolves—gives cover to—the enduring violence whereby the black as a subject-that-is-not-one is defeated by the protections liberal humanism’s political machinery—civil society—erects to safeguard Man in his most vulnerable iterations (i.e., “worker, woman, […] gay, lesbian, and so on”). While racialized violence reduces the nonblack body (of color) to flesh, nonblack persons of color and racially black persons do not occupy comparable space-time coordinates and/or structural positionalities, because humanism’s flesh-making project or race/ism is essentially an antiblack violence. Afro-pessimism teaches us that racially black persons occupy a structural position analogous, if at all, to non-human animal beings54, which like the slave acquire value in/as death—as a meaty carcass consumable/consumed for its parts, including skin, hair,55 bones, organs, and (the story of Henrietta Lacks teaches us) cells. It is for this reason that Wilderson uses the analogy of a meat-packing plant to replace the “negro question” with the “cow question,”56 and why Sexton describes the “paradigmatic condition of black existence in the modern world” as “a perpetual and involuntary openness”57 to the tearing apart and looting of black flesh. Hortense Spillers names the hyper-vulnerability of the unsignified/unsignifiable black flesh to remain from humanism’s cut as a “hieroglyphics.” She clarifies that the “anatomical specifications of rupture” assigned to black flesh invite “the objective description of laboratory prose”58—”eyes beaten out, arms, backs, skulls branded, a left jaw, a right ankle, punctured; teeth missing, as the calculated work of iron, whips, chains, knives … the bullet.”59 Surely, this is not the representational regime of a body [End Page 226] typified by cohesion. Wilderson’s, Sexton’s, and Spillers’ interventions are Afro-pessimistic60 insofar as they dissuade the reader from holding her breath for a political metamorphosis that might finally recognize black humanity. Black fungibility like animal fungibility (perhaps too, like earth-matter fungibility61) will abate only after an epistemological catastrophe disorganizes our relational capacities and dissolves every frame of reference, obliterating the chronopolitical grammar through which those who can become Man, that is to say, who can ascend to the top of a racial hierarchy that is also or primarily a food chain, do so. Franco Barchiesi elaborates the Afro-pessimistic position to remind us that “the shift from multicultural liberalism to nationalistic supremacism” in the hour of Trump “is a change only in the form of Black subjugation.”62 Black persons categorically denied human recognition as a fact and not (just) as an inconvenience of their being “do not merely confront [the] violence”63 nonblack minority populations like immigrants, indigenous persons, and nonblack gender non-conforming persons experience as an event—for example, as a travel ban or the dismissal of marriage and bathroom rights. Rather, black Others as a people forged, Audre Lorde explains, “in the crucibles of difference,”64 are “actually constituted by [violence] through processes of depredation, coercion, and enslavement.”65 Barchiesi’s incisive reading of Wilderson’s “Gramsci’s Black Marx” (2003) makes it clear that Trump’s presidency does not qualify as an historical node, which is to say, does not signify the end of times or a new time/beginning, but rather, evidences the longue durée of black social death as a world-ordering structure, more to the point, as the structure for our be(com) ing-human. It is precisely “the inhumanity of Blackness [that] allows White humans”66 including nonblack persons of color to build institutions, ideologies of freedom, images of rights, and ethical meditations on democracy. Such political and cognitive capacities posit [black] bodies as their inert, “socially dead,” Wilderson writes, yet sentient objects, or outlets of white fantasies of coercion, improvement, imagination, violence, and healing. The inhumanity of [blackness], or the fundamental antagonism between White life and [black] death, is ultimately the condition of existence for the political conflicts, moral dilemmas, and social emergencies of civil society, as well as its aptitude to experience and narrativize history as a succession of events.67 To argue that antiblack violence is paradigmatic—a structure and a constant—is to suggest that reforms to civil society will not abate the violence black Others necessarily must endure to make civil society, more to the point, to make or conceive of a social polity—an “us”—in the first place. Wilderson’s intervention, abridged by Barchiesi to clarify our present moment as altogether typical, insists that the reorganization [End Page 227] of civil society’s parts will not de-escalate the rates at which black persons are indiscriminately maimed and murdered, because black life is not contingently fungible but essentially so, and because the metaphysics and/as metapolitics of black fungibility are not just essential for the making of a socially dead black Other. They are principally and foremost essential for the making of a non-fungible or white-passing “us”.68 The story of that be(com)ing, of a human subject that is “semantically-neurochemically” programmed to enact antiblack “individual and collective behaviors,”69 is located in the hearts and minds of those eligible for human recognition, as a libidinal economy. Insofar as Trump and his henchmen (i.e., Spencer) use liberalism’s seemingly capacious parachute to trap the rights of nonblack minority populations, they mobilize not an American nightmare but one instance in the “ongoing disaster”70 of “the social” that is mobilized by the American Dream. Trump’s hate-mongering is our price of admission not just for a model of the social organized by/as civil society, but for the making of human community (i.e., the “social”), that is to say, for epistemology and ontology itself. Recall Hartman’s argument that “the very effort to pry apart the Negro question and the social question exposes their enduring entanglements”71 as a private relation. Libidinal interests, untouchable by the law but which determine the law72, “[shape] the emergence of the social in the United States”73 as a racially unified site in which the immigrant and savage find the civil rights that correspond with human recognition. While nonblack minorities in Trump’s America are being made to experience, albeit irregularly and provisionally, what Michael Harriot describes as “the America black people have always lived in,”74 which denies human recognition to revoke civil rights, for the black Other who lives in this nowhere or “sunken place,”75 it matters not who steers the American ship. Hillary Clinton’s presidency like Barack Obama’s before hers would have (at best) activated the elasticity whereby nonblack differences (in Obama’s America, gay and trans rights especially) are accommodated by entrenching the constitutive antagonism of racial blackness (such that the hour of the first black presidency testified to the fact that black lives don’t or can’t matter).76 The violent removal of Vietnamese-American doctor and ‘model minority’77 David Dao from United Flight 3411 on April 9, 2017 serves to illustrate what Damon Young of Very Smart Brothas describes as the contingent blackification of nonblack minority populations in Trump’s America. Young resolves that Dao “wasn’t quite [black] for a day,” but that he “was definitely treated like [he was].”78 The wanton and senseless nature of Dao’s physical beating rendered his body (of color) fungible as an event, because this violence defied his treatment otherwise, for example, in Obama’s multiculturalist, ‘post-racial’ America. More specifically, Dao’s psychological suffering in the video seen ‘round the globe evokes the psychosomatic terror (pace Fanon) typical of humanism’s flesh-making project, that is to say, its anti/blackness. The absolute wretchedness whereby Dao cannot articulate his suffering, his demonstration of a “pain [he] can’t live inside of and can’t live without,”79 indeed, of a pain which he cannot signify, contain, or cathect with recourse to “the brush of discourse, or the reflexes of iconography”80 is expressed by the hopelessness with which Dao pleads with his captors to “just kill [him].” We might pause to ask why the video of Dao’s suffering captivated audiences as it did. Certainly, had Dao been black, the violation of his person would not have registered as a scandal. Videos of black suffering have the opposite effect, prompting us to stand not appalled and aghast but agape and mesmerized, chomping at the bit for (pace Hartman) more “scenes of subjection” that might (impossibly) satisfy our unabating human appetite for the flesh of the Other. In addition, scenes of black subjection function to reassure us that the human world will continue to make room for nonblack minority populations by discarding with the being of the black. Our absence from fugitive demands for black life—our sheer disregard of black fungibility, such that some of us can claim in the hour of Trump that “this is the first time [we’ve] protested anything”81—further suggests that black and nonblack minority populations do not wade through the muck and mire of racism together. Even as black persons show up to do our work, “[taking] up so many causes not immediately recognized as black,” for example, “the rights of Palestinians and Indigenous water protectors,”82 and even as nonblack minorities like Dao are violated in ways that testify to the interminability of antiblack political and (as) libidinal violence and to the consequences of that violence for nonblack persons of color, it is the black who has had to do the wading—the sinking and the dying—so that we who are not fungible can do the living.83 What is specific about and underwrites the antiblackness of this moment, if anything, is that audiences view Trump’s violence as exceptional, and in lamenting nonblack suffering in Trump’s America valorize the protections of the liberal state, obscuring its structural antiblackness.

#### **Focus on “quantum leaps” of becoming pathologizes black bodies as static liabilities that hamper posthuman movement.**

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A Spinozian concern (with or without the Deleuzian mediation) with the body as the ontological ground of Human encounters has become quite appealing to critical theory, especially in the footsteps of the “affective turn” and “nomadic” decenterings of the subject. Perceptions that precarity is ineliminable and persistent severely disrupted older signposts of progress—labor, gender, or national social inclusion—and revealed anxieties with recuperating precarity itself within a relational ontology. The mission seems to be the rescue of “living labor”32 (Virno 1999) as inherent to worker’s bodies belonging to the Human family, leaving to the Slave the permanent, thus deathly, separation of “labor power” from the flesh, and the ensuing impossibility of social inclusion and recognition.33 In Negri’s reflection, it is indeed the possibility of encounter and the promise of relationality that infuse work with a new ontological status, keeping it on the Human side of precarity and preventing it from falling into the abjection of enslavement. Negri’s redemption of work not as labor but as relation thus entails a revitalizing “ontology of work” centered on “immaterial” properties that are “intellectual, communicational, relational, affective, which are expressed by subjects and social movements, thereby leading to production.”34 Critical theory’s conceptual and ethical investment in the encounter as the force deemed to restore potential, becoming, and equlibrium to bodies—singular as well as social—otherwise constantly and vehemently stimulated to be “out of step with themselves,” to recall Simondon’s formulation,35 is thus overtly aimed at conjuring away slaveness as the haunting absence-presence of stasis and permanent disequilibrium without potential. The specter of slaveness is, on the other hand, as constantly and menacingly alluded to, like the abyss out of which Humanity must be kept, in the Spinozian fold of post-Marxist critical theory, as this allusion systematically disavows the structural isomorphism between Slaveness and Blackness. Thus, Frédéric Lordon’s image of neoliberal subjectivities turned into “willing slaves of capital,” self-entrepeneurial actors motivated to pursue their own exploitation, rests not on classical notions of ideology and hegemony, but, Spinozistically, on the hypothesis that the Human’s essential capacity to desire has been twisted toward a fleetingly joyful but ultimately oppressive encounter with capital and consumption.36 In a praising review of Lordon, Jason Read reminds the readers of what is the touchstone of coherence for this peculiar version of the Human “drama of value”: Spinoza considers the historical transformation of desire primarily in terms of the biography of an individual. The movement from bondage, from domination by the affects, to liberation, to the rational comprehension of the affects, is the trajectory of liberation that defines the Ethics. Hartman’s “Venus” provides, of course, a far more structurally accurate and ethically rigorous, because less generically “human,” characterization of the position of being “dominated by affect,” one in which White affect simultaneously determines antiblack violence, the terror of enslavement, and the possibility of desire and encounter for those whose freedom means staying clear of racial bondage. If the ominous evocation of slaveness—on condition that it completely disavows the violence defining racial blackness—is a somewhat unspoken asset in the critical vis of the Spinozian moment, its adamant opposition to the very notion of structural positionality, without which blackness becomes literally unthinkable at an ontological level, is a far more pronounced, perhaps even “programmatic,” aspect in contemporary theorizations of the encounter. For Brian Massumi, for example, the very existence of the social field as something distinct from a thingly “universe” of “death” rests on the “ontogenetic priority” of movement and becoming over stasis and position, a priority practically expressing itself through an expansive notion of affect and desire, not limited to emotions and feelings, but designating bodily intensive capacity for attractions that “affect” singularities in their collective assembling.38 Inspired by Massumi, Rosi Braidotti and Jasbir Puar directly target radical projects they regard as anachronistically wedded to, respectively, “negativity” and “identity” as impediments to an affect-driven post-modern and post-human reconstitution of the social.39 Patrice Douglass has convincingly shown how such critical turns—which I trace back to various influences of Deleuzian Spinozism—delineate their conceptual capaciousness through a deprecating allusion, which is often not even so implicit, to blackness (and, in political terms, Black radicalism and radical Black feminism) as a condition putatively obsessed with immobility, loss, and grief.40 In its very allusiveness and persistent refusal to engage questions of racialized violence and structural positionality raised by Black critique (rather than the more academically en vogue “people-of-color” critique), however, the Spinozian celebration of movement, affect, and becoming is self-fulfilling, since it fixes blackness as conceptually immobile, hence the constitutive outside for the flourishing horizon of Massumi’s, Puar’s, and Braidotti’s joyous and positive Human assemblages. The coerced conceptual immobility and policed practical objecthood of blackness, Douglass concludes, fuel the “theoretical mobility” of critical theory and its manifold desired subjectivities.

#### Labor focus is a liberal discourse of inclusion that conceals the singularity of Black fungibility.

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For the past few weeks a convergence of social media discussions on reparations, Shona Jackson’s book Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean, and her recent post “Humanity beyond the Regime of Labor,” as well as my own thinking about Black Studies’ engagement with Conquest have all compelled me to think critically about the issue of Black labor.[1] I would like to take a moment to focus on the conceptual limits of labor as an epistemic frame for thinking about Blackness (as bodies and discourse) and its relationship to settler colonialism. I am particularly concerned about the ways that Black labor may crowd out Black fungibility as a conceptual frame for thinking about Blackness within settler colonial discourses.

While many scholars who understand themselves as humanists have long ago conceded that strict or heavy-handed Marxian (political economic) analyses are generally impoverished and wanting; labor as an analytic persists. Indeed, labor as a discourse, or what Shona Jackson would call a “metaphysics” and “ontoepistemology”—a way of living and a way of articulating this mode of living— still haunts our critical theories (Jackson, 2012, p. 217).[2] This is particularly true as scholars undertake the difficult work of understanding and naming how racialized people are situated within White settler colonial states. Configuring People of Color into the calculus of settler colonial relations is onerous and in fact laborious. It is especially difficult when trying to conceptualize the unique location of Blackness. I commend scholars for taking on this task.

In order to do this cumbersome work, scholars tend to rely on the tried and true rubric of labor. Labor becomes the site and mode of incorporating non-Black and non-Indigenous people into settler colonial relations in White settler nation-states. People of Color scholars often rehearse histories of arrival as populations of coerced labor as a way of explaining their presence, as well as distance or proximity to the category of the Settler. Labor also becomes a liberal discourse that allows immigrants and migrants to narrate the terms of their belonging and citizenship within White settler colonial states. In this way, labor functions as another discourse of inclusion. Recently, Jamilah Martin in response to Ta-Nehisi Coates’ article “The Case for Reparations” made a similar and astute point in her blog post “On Reparations: Resisting Inclusion and Co-optation” that reparations work as a discourse of inclusion within the project of American Democracy within the “U.S. anti-Black settler-imperial state.” While the integrationist project of reparations may be a liberal project of inclusion, it also relies on a “teleology of modern labor” (Jackson 2012, p. 147). It holds out hope for Black inclusion into a human family of laborers/workers. Yet, despite the claim of the Black laborer as “subject”, embedded within the metaphysics of labor, the bill H.R. 40 (otherwise known as the Reparations Bill) has not gained traction.

H.R. 40’s lack of success partially speaks to the inability of Blackness to become fully legible through human categories like the laborer/worker. Further, it evinces the ways that laborer and worker do not explain the ontological state of Blackness. In Red, White and Black, Wilderson attends to the ways that Afropessimists “have gone considerable lengths to show that, point of fact, slavery is and connotes an ontological status for blackness; and that the constituent elements of slavery are not exploitation and alienation but accumulation and fungibility (Wilderson 2010, 14). The “alienation” and “exploitation” that the human worker experiences through labor are contingent conditions resulting from human conflicts.

Many people can and have occupied these temporary and conditional abased human coordinates. White, Asian and South Asian, Latina/o and Middle Eastern indentured and other kinds of laborers have long inhabited White settler territories and nation-states and, as laborers, immigrants and migrants have all helped build the settler nation. Black laboring bodies have even been used to build the settler nation. However, Black labor is just one kind of use within an open, violent and infinite repertoire of practices of making Black flesh fungible.

One way that I have explained fungibility to my undergraduate students in my course “Gender and Sexuality in the African Diaspora,” is to think about the slave owner Madame Delphine LaLaurie’s use of enslaved bodies in the FX television series, American Horror Story: Coven. LaLaurie uses Black flesh to meet uses and desires beyond those of labor and profit. She runs a torture chamber in order to satisfy lusts that include and exceed the sexual. In one episode, she murders and then uses the blood of an enslaved newborn child as an elixir that wards off the aging process. One gets a sense that the possibilities for Black flesh are unending under her ownership.

The infinite possibilities for fungible Black flesh mark a fundamental distinction between fungible slave bodies and non-Black (exploited) laboring bodies. Further, Black bodies cannot effectively be incorporated into the human category of laborers. If Black laboring bodies were incorporated into the category; “laborer” would have no meaning as a human condition. Blackness is constituted by a fungibility and accumulation that must exist outside the edge and boundary of the laborer-as-human. If there were no Black fungible and accumulable bodies there could be no “wage laborer” that cohered into a proletariat.

While labor as a discourse may work for non-Black and non-Native people of color as a way of interpellating themselves within settler colonial relations, it does not explain Black presence, Black labor or Black use in White settler nation-states. Theories that attempt to triangulate Blackness into the Settler/Native antagonism in White settler states do so by positing Blackness as the labor force that helps make the settler landscape possible.[3] It is true that Black labor literally tills, fences in and cultivates the settler’s land. However, this singular analysis both obscures the issue of Black fungibility and reduces Blackness to a mere tool of settlement rather than a constitutive element of settler colonialism’s conceptual order.

Fungibility represents a key analytic for thinking about Blackness and settler colonialism in White settler nation-states. Black fungible bodies are the conceptual and discursive fodder through which the Settler-Master can even begin to imagine or “think” spatial expansion (King, 2013). The space making practices of settler colonialism require the production of Black flesh as a fungible form of property, not just as a form of labor. In Scenes of Subjection, Saidiya Hartman argues that the enslaved embody the abstract “interchangeability and replaceability” that is endemic to the commodity (Hartman, 1997, p. 21). Beyond, the captive body’s use as labor, the Black body has a figurative and metaphorical value that extends into the realm of the discursive and symbolic. What Hartman names as the “figurative capacities of blackness,” allows the Settler-Master to conceptualize Blackness as the ultimate sign for expansion and unending space within the symbolic economy of settlement (Hartman, 1997, p. 7; and King, forthcoming). Blackness is much more than labor within both slavery’s and settler colonialism’s imaginaries.

Like Hartman, I argue that Blackness’ figurative capacity and interchangeability has a life—or afterlife—within the discursive and spatial projects of settler colonial expansion (King, forthcoming). Settler colonialism requires a symbol of infinite flux in order to animate and imagine its spatial project (King, 2013). In my dissertation, In the Clearing, I argue that Jennifer Morgan’s book Laboring Women: Women and Reproduction in New World Slavery, configures Black women as spatial agents who are [symbolically] essential to the settlement of land during the colonial period in the coastal regions of the South and the West Indies. In fact, the Black female body must be discursively constructed in order to make it possible to even conceive of planting settlements during the “first generations of settlement and slave ownership” in South Carolina and Barbados (Morgan, 2004). Morgan argues that 18th century settlement required particular symbolic constructions and particular uses of the Black female body (Morgan, 2004, p. 26).[4]

Black fungibility represents this space of discursive and conceptual possibility for settler colonial imaginaries. Black fungible bodies work beyond the metrics and “metaphysics of labor” in White settler colonial states (Jackson, 2012, p. 215). Labor becomes a limiting frame for conceptualizing Blackness on White settler colonial terrain. Reimagining Blackness and theorizing anti-Black racism on unusual landscapes requires that we rethink the usefulness of convenient and orthodox epistemic frames. We must venture beyond labor and its limits in order to think about settler colonialism’s anti-Black modalities. Fungibility and other frames deserve our attention as we continue to think about anti-Black racism, Native genocide and the US settler-slave (e)state.

#### The alternative affirms an insurgent black feminine otherwise that disarticulates Man’s chronopolitical order.

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If Afro-pessimism is necessarily a black feminism—Wilderson explains, “Afro-pessimism is made possible by the critical labors of a particular strand of Black feminism, a la [Saidiya] Hartman and [Hortense] Spillers”137—then its critique, which elaborates “the world, and maybe even the whole possibility of and desire for a world” as the “master’s tools” of Audre Lorde’s intervention,138 arms the black feminist argument with ammunition to forge a cosmology typified not by plentitude but by lack. This cosmology is grounded not by phallic signification but by a “perpetual and involuntary openness,” which—Sexton teaches us—is “the “paradigmatic condition of black existence in the modern world.”139 The notable difference between an Afro-pessimistic approach and a black feminist one, if any, is that Afro-pessimism accepts and leans into the paradigmatic structure of black antagonism, accepting the Historical alienation that typifies social death, it bears clarifying, not as a closed door to social life but as a portal into an/Other sociality—off the record. Without a name or referent, the “elsewhere and elsewhen” of black social life, which “sprouts out of the wet places in [our] eyes…the waiting places in [our] palms, [and] the tremble holding in [our mouths],”140 finds refuge in black femininity because (pace Spillers) the immateriality of gender in the black instance does not default the metaphysics of racial blackness to phallic masculinity but to invaginated femininity. Speaking to a different audience, Lewis Gordon explains that the racially black man as (pace Spillers) the personification “female flesh ungendered” is always already feminine. He writes,

The black man is caught. He cannot reject his femininity without simultaneously rejecting his blackness, for his femininity stands as a consequence of his blackness and vice versa. Standing in front of a white [human] wall, he appears as a hole, as a gaping, feminine symbol to be filled, closed up, by the being who has being.141

Doubly penetrable as hole—as the invaginated Other of Freud’s phallocentrism and the human-animal Other Fanon describes—the black (feminine) is a figure that awaits signification interminably. Powerless to “escape concealment under the brush of discourse, or the reflexes of iconography,”142 the black (feminine) conjures Other ways of being and knowing that “can be felt and perceived even though—or especially if—[they] remain unrecognizable or unintelligible to our current common senses.”143 Excommunicated from the historical frame, the black (feminine) gives sanctuary to our freedom dreams. Hers is the safe harbor that guards black life from humanism’s thieving reach. And, as “the historical evocation of chaos”144—as (pace Fanon) an im/ possibility for time—the black (feminine) rages against the machine to disarticulate the “historical categories” that engender human be(com) ing in the first place.

In an exchange with Wilderson, Hartman summons the life and writings of Harriet A. Jacobs to claim the non-negotiable centrality of the black feminine as “the space of death, where negation is the captive’s central possibility for action.”145 Black femininity as a “content [that] exceeds […] expression”146—recall that the black (feminine) “[presents as] a virtual blank” and has no shape or meaning—models the social life of social death and is the harbinger of an occult Otherwise. That is to say, the black (feminine) is pregnant/impregnable with possibilities for a non-Historical becoming. She disarticulates the spatialization of time qua the racialization of time to “[interrupt] the habitual formation of bodies;”147 her #blackgirlmagic indexes an/Other time—a gestational time—to induce “chaos” for the record and the record-keeper alike. Following Annie Menzel’s reading of maternal generativity, the black feminine as the site of maternity—the black womb—invokes “unspeakable violence with insurgent horizon.”148 Not just void, the black feminine-cum-maternal engenders another space for living, not in-time but divested from time as the marker of forward-movement and teleological development. Hers is not the time of History (i.e., Man’s chronopolitical order), which Walter Benjamin describes as a “homogenous, empty time”149 that dialectically (re)produces “the ‘time of the now’”150 in/as the time of tomorrow—of futurity, or humanism. Rather, hers is an embryonic and gestational time, which like the slow and stalled time of captivity qua the oceanic is the insurgent and occult time of waiting/wading and wanting.151 While the birth canal, in Christina Sharpe’s pointed rendering, is a “domestic middle passage” that “[disfigures] black maternity, [turning] the womb into a factory (producing blackness as abjection much like the slave ship’s hold and the prison)” and demanding from the black mother the reproductive labor of chattel slavery—Sharpe explains that the birth canal “[ushers children] into her condition; her non-status, her non-being-ness”152—the black womb, as a container for gestation and not the vehicle for entry, specifically, as embryonic space-time suspends black life to nurture its emergent but not-yet-emerging Otherwise.

Taking inspiration from Spillers’ exhortation in “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe” (1987) to “make a place for” the black (feminine) as a “[non-Historical] social subject,” not to make room for her in “the ranks of gendered femaleness”—in humanism’s liberal folds—but to claim her “insurgent ground,”153 which Menzel describes as Spillers’ call for a “maternal temporality of continuous upheaval,”154 I submit, in closing, that the black feminine qua maternal, as Rizvana Bradley describes her, a “(w)holeness”155 that, as Toni Morrison memorably insists, “consistently [defies] classification,”156 is at once void (i.e., socially dead) and pregnant (i.e., with social life). She summons the revolution that we—all of us, black and nonblack persons (of color) alike—seek, not (just) as a salve for Trump’s violence but as the escape hatch we can use to flee the White/Master’s house, the violence of liberal humanism as the architect of chattel slavery and colonialism, and the container for human be(com)ing—History—that constrains our movements generally. To live in the space-time of the black womb’s oceanic is to be swallowed up by the infinite expanse of racial blackness. As the site of an/Other social, this embryonic space-time disarticulates Man’s chronopolitical order and is the “elsewhere and elsewhen” that we have been looking for, to date, in the wrong place—in the letter of the law of a civil society that operationalizes humanism’s race/ism. We might find our freedom instead in the black mother, who uses the resources she does not have to hold and to carry, indeed, to make life-generat-ing black poetry from the grammar of this wor(l)d’s insatiably violent antiblack prose.

#### There’s no grammar to explain back suffering. Voting negative foregrounds scholarship that better articulates black suffering as a prerequisite to political strategizing.

Sexton 10, Professor of African American Studies and Film and Media Studies at the University of California, Irvine. (Jared, “African American Studies”, published in *A Concise Companion to American Studies*, pg. 220-221, Blackwell Publishing Ltd)

The latter task – the trenchant interrogation of racial blackness and/in the formulations of modernity and its leitmotif of freedom – was advanced immeasurably by Professors Lindon Barrett, Denise Ferreira da Silva, and Ronald Judy, each in their own way. Yet, as Wilderson again makes plain in his Red, White, and Black (2009), the grand and anxious question of freedom is preceded, logically and ontologically, by a perhaps more confounding question: what does it mean to suffer? To address such a query sufficiently is to disregard the official impatience that envelopes it. Of course, this sentiment of expediency plays to an understandably popular urgency that emanates from the severity of everyday life for the vast majority of black people and the attendant status anxiety of the so-called new black middle class. However, black creative intellectuals have done less and less talking about our pain of late and probably a bit too much posturing about our plans. If anything, we have a surplus of plans! What we do not have is a language – much less a political culture – that adequately articulates both the variance and commonality of our positions and our predicaments. African American Studies is perhaps more inarticulate about the dimensions and details of black suffering today, in an era marked by transnationalism and multi-racialism, than it has been at any other historical juncture. I am speaking here of suffering in its fullest sense: not only as pain, which everyone experiences – say, the pain of alienation and exploitation – but also as that which blacks must bear, uniquely and singularly, that which we must stand and stand alone (see Sexton 2007).

The proposal and invitation continues:

The yield of this gathering will be to assemble leading scholars alongside emergent voices in the field of African American Studies in order to reflect critically upon the mutual implication of a proliferate and diverse racial formation with the living legacies of the black radical tradition in the age of American empire. The symposium seeks to depart from prevailing frameworks for comparative ethnic studies – that is, discerning how the respective experiences of blacks and other people of color are similar or dissimilar and what have been their historic interactions – to consider how the matrix of enslavement, which is to say the invention of “propertized human being” (Harris 1993), has not only shaped myriad forms of oppression and marginalization, but has compromised their modes of resistance and [their] claims to independence as well. If there is an overarching objective here, it is to properly illuminate what might be termed the obscurity of black suffering, to rescue it from the murky backwaters of persistent invisibility as well as the high-definition distortions of glaring and fascinated light.

Proper illumination is a catchy byline, an instance of wishful thinking, if ever there was one. But can we not speak of it more charitably, perhaps as a stratagem? Or as a spur that exercises the limits of our thinking?

In her ground-breaking Scenes of Subjection, Saidiya Hartman calls our attention to the ease with which scenes of spectacular violence against the black body – what she terms “inaugural moment[s] in the formation of the enslaved” – are reiterated in discourses both academic and popular, “the casualness,” she writes, “with which they are circulated, and the consequences of this routine display of the slave’s ravaged body”:

Rather than inciting indignation, too often they immure us to pain by virtue of their familiarity – the oft-repeated or restored character of these accounts and our distance from them are signaled by the theatrical language usually resorted to in describing these instances – and especially because they reinforce the spectacular character of black suffering. [. . .] At issue here is the precariousness of empathy and the uncertain line between witness and spectator. Only more obscene than the brutality unleashed at the whipping post is the demand that this suffering be materialized and evidenced by the display of the tortured body or endless recitations of the ghastly and terrible. In light of this, how does one give expression to these outrages without exacerbating the indifference to suffering that is the consequence of the benumbing spectacle or contend with narcissistic identification that obliterates the other or the prurience that too often is the response of such displays. (Hartman 1997: 4)

To put it bluntly, how does one engage with black suffering at all without simply erasing it – refusing it, absorbing it, appropriating it – in the very same gesture? Hartman’s inventive response to what might appear, at first glance, to be a rhetorical question or a cruel joke (that is, making a case with evidence that is, strictly speaking, inadmissible) is to move away from the expected “invocations of the shocking and the terrible” and to look, alternately, at “scenes in which terror can hardly be discerned,” “the terror of the mundane and quotidian,” what she phrases appositely as “the diffusion of terror.” What she finds, if calling it a “finding” is not immediately to betray it, is the recapitulation – the repetition and summation – of this spectacular primal scene across the entirety of the social text of racial slavery and its aftermath. That is to say, it is never the case that this terror is not present. It saturates the field of encounter. It is ubiquitous and yet it is, perhaps for the same reason, barely discernible. One wonders thus: how might the discussion of this dispersed, ambient terror become any more compelling than that which is condensed and acute? The point being not that blacks enter the wrong evidence or pursue the wrong argument, but rather that they are disallowed from entering evidence or building arguments in the first place, barred, as it were, from bringing charges and levying claims of grievance or injury as such. Again, what does it mean to suffer, in this way? This “challenge,” as Hartman modestly calls it, of giving expression to the inexpressible is taken up again in Fred Moten’s remarkable text, In the Break. In fact, it is the discrepancy between subjection and objection that launches the accomplishment of a project opened and closed around the impossibility and the inevitability of “the resistance of the object” (Moten 2003: 1). That, at least, is how it sounds to me. What is disquieting and provocative in this exchange is what I take to be a certain turning away from the implications of Hartman’s precarious distinction between witness and spectator, a positional instability that is not mitigated by transpositions in the sonic register, nor, for that matter, in the performance arts more generally (Barrett 1999; Weheliye 2005).

## Case

### 1NC---Case

#### Black abjection is origin of speculative finance capital. The aff whitewashes the anti-black genesis and nature of technocratic mapping.

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W. E. B. Du Bois suggested the white worker’s choice and the black slave’s absence of choice were important components of the capitalistic distinction between blackness and whiteness. Du Bois argued white workers always held out hope that “they themselves might also become planters by saving money, by investment, by the power of good luck.”71 Black slaves come into existence not as exploited, which is to say “free” to sell their labor (choice), but expropriated in ways that mirror the extraction of natural resources.72 Another way to say this is that the slave, much like the tree or cattle, for Frank Wilderson,73 is the ground on which human capitalist exploitation stands. Julia Ott’s comprehensive review of research on slave capital bears this out: the transatlantic slave trade and slave-based Southern US commodity production created modern capitalism, financing transformations in technology, industry, and economy more thoroughly than any other capital input.74

Ian Baucom explains the connection between the objecthood of black slave bodies and the economic rationality of finance.75 According to Baucom, it was the transatlantic slave trade that birthed the modern financial calculation of value through insurance on slaves. The value of slave bodies as chattel, which could, if circumstances demanded, be cast overboard from a slave ship facing turbulent seas, was guaranteed in advance for the owners of slave ships by insurance policies. The calculation of the cost of that insurance was a foundational form of what Baucom variously terms “actuarial historicism” or “theoretical realism,” which are forms of rationality that “ground value in the loss of the singular and the invention of the average.”76 In other words, insurance on slave bodies evacuated their singularity more completely even than enslavement, rendering them placeholders of value, which could be converted into paper money either through exchange or through the exercise of an insurance contract once they were cast overboard. For Baucom, the modern credit economy and finance capitalism itself are founded on the reification of speculative values that the insured transatlantic trade in black slaves inaugurated. In his formulation, it is the white slave trader or actuary who can see through the “thingliness” of the objects of slavery to calculate their speculative value, embodying the “speculative culture of finance capital” that has much in common with the economic rationality invoked in the calculation of the abstract cost of “free” checking accounts, despite their very real lived costs for poor customers.77

These dynamics did not end with slavery. The twentieth century is rich with examples of outerdetermined black objecthood within capitalism.78 The 1939 Federal Housing Authority Underwriting Manual that served as both guide and tool for suburbanization in the US not only ratified the practice of “redlining” whereby neighborhoods of black families were drawn out of mortgage lending, but actually directed homeowners to use racial covenants to prevent black people from moving into their neighborhoods.79 Both redlining and racial covenants acted on black homeowners and potential buyers, making them objects to be circumscribed and excluded. They also prevented black people from becoming privileged subjects of the American mortgage boom, which was built and protected for those consumers who fit within the racialized subject position of homo economicus.

#### “Extinction” is universalist discourse that violently subsumes Black suffering into a monolithic conception of human collectivity.

Douglass 21, assistant professor of gender, sexuality, and feminist studies at Duke University. (Patrice D., March 2021, “Unnatural Causes: Racial Taxonomies, Pandemic, and Social Contagion”, *Prism: Theory and Modern Chinese Literature*, 18:1, pg. 262-263, https://doi.org/10.1215/25783491-8922273)

In “Blackness and the Pitfalls of Anthropocene Ethics,” Axelle Karera interrogates discourses of disaster and crisis in relation to perceptions of ecological disaster. Karera contends that analyses of the immense of disaster are predicated on an insistence on collectivity that is bolstered by racial erasure. Thus, the discussion of the Anthropocene by many theorists presupposes a Human or ecological teleological progression, together with threats of demise that ahistorically subsume Blackness into a collective form of being that is central to Black suffering. Karera argues that, “insofar as the constant recognition of our existential interdependency cannot substantially challenge the many forms of segregations on the steady rise in our current times, it seems to me that assuming the inevitability of our ontological entanglement may need some re-thinking.”24 After citing the work of Fred Moten in relation to what she calls “relationality’s inability to maintain its ethical currency when faced with the extended rupture blackness sustains on ethics,” Karera continues, “In other words, relationality is inherently not only a position that the black cannot afford or even claim. The structure of relationality is essentially the condition for the possibility of their enslavement. I wonder, therefore, whether our naïve reliance on a type of inherent co-dependence has recently done more harm than good—that is to say, has instead worked to obstruct the very possibility of a positive transformation of our ethical sensibilities.”25 According to Karera, the linking of structural relationality to the conditions of slavery is key. For Blackness, segregation, interdependency, and slavery are relational rather than legally imposed. As such, the interdependence thesis (that we are all in this together) overshadows how the social structuring of Black life and death makes the collective “we” a structurally impossible equivalency, despite the affective and emotional desire for such to be true. Integration also constitutes a problem of relationality or the lack thereof. More to the point, the constitution of “we” is a form of violence that makes the particularities of Black suffering indiscernible under the auspices of equal rights and liberties in private and public spaces. In this respect, Hartman contends that “a slippage between race and status can be detected in the uncertain identi­fi­cation of the source of black degradation,” where the locus of suf­fering is frequently underscored because of the insistence on perceiving the problem as the lack of relational congruency across races with respect to specific phenomenon like global sickness.26 Rather, the conditions of suf­fering must be scaled outward, rather than inward with a narrow focus on pandemic and disease, to address the ethical stakes at the heart of Black death. Thus, employing Karera’s “positive transformation of our ethical sensibilities” to address the conditions of Gatewood’s death requires an acknowledgment of negligence on the part of Beaumont Hospital, together with a cognitive mapping of how care, protection, and safety as conceptual frameworks isolate Blackness as an excisable contagion that is subjected to gratuitous violence that so often leads to spectacularized or muted death. By muted death, I mean forms of death produced by anti-Blackness that go unseen, unaccounted for, or unknown.

#### Theorizing a white/nonwhite divide obscures the singularity of anti-blackness.

Nopper 13, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology @ Rhode Island College. (Tamara, “Coalition Karma: on Vijay Prashad’s Uncle Swami”, http://tamaranopper.com/2013/11/03/coalition-karma-on-vijay-prashads-uncle-swami/)

Like numerous [other works](http://tamaranopper.com/2012/04/20/george-zimmerman%E2%80%99s-minority-defense-and-the-1992-los-angeles-riots/) calling for non-Blacks to “resist” the pull of whiteness and instead align ourselves with African Americans, Prashad’s *Uncle Swami* relies on a mythical shared moment–Bandung–between Blacks and Asians that was disrupted and must now be pieced back together against the emergence of “bureaucratic multiculturalism.” According to Prashad, to resist whiteness and “bureaucratic multiculturalism,” South Asian Americans should build coalitions with non-comprador Blacks and other oppressed groups. We are to assume, then, that gestures of solidarity from non-Blacks toward African Americans are never animated by anti-Black aggression as interracial coalition “from below” can only be read, per *Uncle Swami*, as the rejection of white supremacy. Yet in the last decade since The Karma of Brown Folk was published, a body of work that could loosely be termed [Afro-pessimism](http://www.incognegro.org/afro_pessimism.html) has been produced, most notably by African American Studies scholars [Frank B. Wilderson, III](http://www.incognegro.org/index.html) (who developed the concept) and [Jared Sexton](http://www.faculty.uci.edu/profile.cfm?faculty_id=5113). A complex approach, Afro-pessimism seeks to demonstrate the “singularity of racial slavery” as the basis of a globalized racial antagonism (as opposed to conflict) between Blacks and non-Blacks. Relevant to *Uncle Swami*, Afro-pessimist writers have interrogated the non-Black demand for interracial coalition as a possible disciplinary gesture against African Americans and Black radicalism. In the process, topics that are common areas of inquiry for Prashad (globalization, incarceration, the war on terror, progressive movements, Black/non-Black coalition, and popular culture) have been addressed. Yet Prashad noticeably does not engage this work in *Uncle Swami.* If anything, the book could have only been written by ignoring it. Consider, for instance, how racism and Black-Asian relations in the United States are historicized in *Uncle Swami*. Like many scholars concerned with the continuity of racism in the post-civil rights era, Prashad suggests that the present period is marked by “new racism” in which explicit references to biology are often replaced with coded language regarding culture, behavior, and temperament and the state seeks to prevent “enfranchised” African Americans from fully accessing its more progressive social welfare programs. An example of coded language used to promote an austerity state is the model minority myth discourse, which posits certain minority groups provide for other minority groups a model for assimilation by rejecting outside forms of support and instead relying on a combination of human capital and ethnic social capital (families, ethnic networks, ethnic pride, and culture) to mediate their outsider status. The model minority myth has been a deserved target of Prashad’s scholarship, most notably in *Karma* where he famously states that it positions Asian Americans as “the perpetual solution to what is seen as the crisis of black America…a weapon in the war against black America.” Prashad rightfully deconstructs the model minority myth as anti-Black and concealing of the state’s involvement in social inequality. To this end, he argues in *Uncle Swami* (as he did in *Karma*) that what many perceive to be “natural” model minority characteristics predisposing Asian Americans to social mobility are actually the result of “state selection, whereby the United States, through the special skills provision in the 1965 Immigration Act, fundamentally configured the demography of Indian America…Those who hold power in the United States use the anomalous demographic of professional desis to show that we succeed while other minorities fail.” By emphasizing the model minority myth as an example of the “new racism,” Prashad neglect its deployment before the publication of what he describes as “one of the first positive articles about Asians”: the oft cited (in Asian American Studies) 1966 *U.S. News & World Report* commentary titled “Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.” While this article (as well as others appearing the same year) championed different Asian American ethnic groups for reportedly being self-reliant and rejecting government intervention so as to condemn African Americans and the Civil Rights Movement, the logic of the model minority myth preceded its publication. Specifically, the claim that Asian Americans’ retention of ethnic cultures brought from elsewhere was key to our “not ending up like Blacks” has appeared in sociological research since at least the 1930s. In short, even during periods of civic ostracism of Asian Americans through racist immigration and citizenship policies (which Uncle Swami discusses), we were nevertheless regarded by some as more assimilable than African Americans due to our presumed cultural retention as immigrants or as the descendants of immigrants—and the belief that we had “good culture” to retain in the first place. My point is not to quibble about when the model minority myth first appeared in discourse. Rather, I am questioning how Uncle Swami conceptualizes the status of Blacks in comparison to Asians as it traces the rise of “cruel cultural nationalism” and “bureaucratic multiculturalism” among people of color and encourages progressive interracial solidarity. Whatever his intentions, Prashad’s consideration of Blacks and Asian Americans involves what [Sexton](http://socialtext.dukejournals.org/content/28/2_103/31.abstract) refers to as a “refusal to admit to significant differences of structural position born of discrepant histories between blacks and their political allies, actual or potential.” Case in point: Prashad states in Uncle Swami that before the 1965 Immigration Act and other such policies, Indians in the United States “were regarded as blacks, but after them we could aspire to whiteness.” But one cannot conclude that Asian Americans were “regarded as blacks” before the 1965 Immigration Act unless selectively mining some court decisions and ignoring the “singularity of racial slavery” as an experience specific to African descendants. Further, the aforementioned selectivity of the 1965 Immigration Act is overstated in Prashad’s account. While there were specific provisions that favored particular immigrants, his over-emphasis on this specific act and on this time period neglects that immigration policy [has always been and is inherently selective](http://www.everydaysociologyblog.com/2009/07/the-myth-of-imported-immigrant-success.html) and that immigrants enter the United States positioned above African Americans due to not entering the country as slaves—as the property of someone else—but rather as representatives of another nation. Here we see some of the limitations of Prashad’s mapping of the relationship between domestic racism and imperialism in Uncle Swami. Like many other scholars intent on reclaiming the [“hidden history” of solidarity](http://tamaranopper.com/2012/04/20/george-zimmerman%E2%80%99s-minority-defense-and-the-1992-los-angeles-riots/) among non-whites, Prashad relies to an extent on the colonial analogy in his references to nonalignment and Black-Asian American relations. Popularized in the 1960s and 1970s by scholars and radical activists and artists, the colonial analogy posits that non-whites in the United States constitute a “third world within.” This colonial analogy is a version of the white/non-white model of race relations, which has been called into question by Afro-pessimists as well as other [scholars](https://www.rienner.com/title/Who_Is_White_Latinos_Asians_and_the_New_Black_Nonblack_Divide) who conclude that the U.S. racial hierarchy is structured by a [Black/non-Black divide](http://www.blackcommentator.com/138/138_whiteness.html) (another point ignored in Uncle Swami). By (quietly) emphasizing the rupture of the Bandung moment and the rise of “cruel cultural nationalism,” Uncle Swami echoes a version of the colonial analogy that minimizes the “singularity of racial slavery” by subsuming it under a general oppressed status, i.e., colonized. In doing so, Prashad ignores a caveat of Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton’s 1967 (1992) book [Black Power](http://www.randomhouse.com/book/74220/black-power-by-charles-hamilton-and-kwame-ture), in which they applied the colonial model to African Americans in U.S. ghettos. As they stated, “When some people compare the black American to ‘other immigrant’ groups in this country, they overlook the fact that slavery was peculiar to the blacks. No other minority group in this country was treated as legal property.” While [Sexton](http://socialtext.dukejournals.org/content/28/2_103/31.abstract) has rightfully addressed the limitations of the colonial analogy for dealing with the afterlife of slavery, it is telling that Uncle Swami draws from a colonial analogy approach employing a white/non-white framework than that of Ture and Hamilton’s. Although Prashad acknowledges in Uncle Swami that African Americans are “the descendants of enslaved people,” his analysis nevertheless fails to recognize that immigrants or their offspring, no matter how despised they may be, are inherently valorized compared to African Americans because they are not associated with the material realities or social stigma of slavery. Unlike immigrants who represent sovereign nations or even those coming from occupied territories, African Americans as the descendants of slaves are, again, what Hartman describes as global “strangers.” Or, as [James Baldwin](http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/03/29/specials/baldwin-antisem.html) put it in 1967, the African American “has, effectively, no recourse and no place to go, either within the country or without. He is a pariah in his own country and a stranger in the world.” If Prashad had taken such points into account, he would have had to consider how immigrant–as opposed to slave–origins serve as a condition of possibility for Desis in the United States to establish and participate in the “India lobby” of which he is critical. Overall, despite his best effort to encourage readers “to be much more aware of Black struggles” and to “not take a casually racist attitude toward the social dilemmas of African Americans,” Prashad actually obscures, through the colonial analogy, Black suffering. By doing so he engages in what Sexton terms [“people of color blindness”](http://socialtext.dukejournals.org/content/28/2_103/31.abstract): a “form of colorblindness inherent to the concept of ‘people of color’” that “misunderstands the specificity of antiblackness and presumes or insists upon the monolithic character of victimization under white supremacy–thinking (the afterlife of) slavery as a form of exploitation or colonization or a species of racial oppression among others.” In trying to demonstrate how domestic racism and imperialism are intertwined and to trace the breakdown of Black-Asian solidarity so as to revive it, *Uncle Swami* ultimately misses what Sexton notes “is essential about the situation”: “Black existence does not represent the total reality of the racial formation—it is not the beginning and the end of the story—but it does relate to the totality; it indicates the (repressed) truth of the political and economic system. That is to say, the whole range of positions within the racial formation is most fully understood from this vantage point.” Simply put, regardless of which group is written about, analysis of racism that resists dealing with the “singularity of racial slavery” is doomed to be, at best, extremely limited in its usefulness for understanding white supremacy. Future work exploring contemporary racism, Black-Asian American relations, and progressive politics will greatly benefit from taking up this point, raised by Sexton and other Afro-pessimist scholars, so as to avoid this coalition karma.

# 2NC

## K

### 2NC---Ontology/State Good

#### 4---they have fundamentally misread Amaro and Khan. It’s a NEG ontology card! [KU = blue]

Amaro and Khan 20. Ramon Amaro is a lecturer in the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London and a researcher in machine learning, the philosophy of mathematics, black ontologies, and philosophies of being. Murad Khan is a Visiting Practitioner at UAL: Central Saint Martins and PhD researcher at Goldsmiths University, supervised by Dr. Ramon Amaro. His research explores the concept of error through the framework of delirium and computation, encompassing trajectories arising from the the history of biology, philosophies of cognition, fabulation, and noise, as well as contemporary computational research. (“Towards Black Individuation and a Calculus of Variations,” 2020, URL: <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/109/330246/towards-black-individuation-and-a-calculus-of-variations>) vikas

A metastable system is defined by the type of information that it possesses, according to Simondon. In “L’individuation psychique et collective,” Simondon outlines **the notion of information as perception** that **does not preestablish form**. On the contrary, information takes **temporary** possession of its orientation in an ensemble of engagements with the world. Perception is where one retrieves the information necessary to make sense of its orientation, allowing one to orient oneself in the surrounding milieu. On the basis of this perception, the potential for new individuations are brought into conjunction with the collective, if only temporarily. By the study of metastability one might understand the conditions of existence founded on the axiomatic of racial equivalence. **A metastable system would** thereby **designate a flow of energy that circulates within what might appear to be** the **stable** organization of race, **or what we have termed “race equivalency.”** A system of race equivalency appears as a definitive structuring of the self and the world, a dialectic between the body and the world, a maxima or absolute value that reconstructs the fragments of Black existence at the uppermost limit of the myth of racial stereotype within the white imaginary. A normative system of race equivalency further delimits a set of white prototypical values that, in the process of individuation, brings coherence to a collective system. Equivalency weighs elements of comparison as if each characteristic is comprised of a commensurate capacity for value, significance, or equal standard of measure given the relative importance of the relation within the racial system. **A stable system of race equivalency**, in other words, **amounts to a state of being that assigns qualities with comparability** (in this case to whiteness and the colonial imaginary), **as well as an individual’s usefulness within a set of imaginary ideals**. The white imaginary is closely aligned with a colonial epistemic that seeks to estimate and determine individual importance and thereby the likelihood of regard within the system as a whole. Within a system of race equivalency, the act of racism justifies the setting of the white individual over and against the collective. While Fanon asserts that this type of system needs to be overturned, the incompatible Black individual is nonetheless assumed to be an inactive and completely passive form, as defined by the colonial model of racial equivalence: “Many Negroes will not find themselves in what follows. This is equally true of many whites.” It must be asked how the Black individual can be excised from this order if, as Fanon asserts, “in the absolute, the black is no more to be loved.” What if the metastable racial system contained a higher magnitude of energy wherein the Black pre-individual instead possesses a latent potential for a self-love that is manifested from within systemic incompatibility? **What are we to make of those who find themselves within the myth of race—at a stage where, given their race, they are no longer understood?** Answers to these provocations require a shift in the assumption of equilibrium, or more so the necessity for an equal distribution of energies within a metastable racial system. **The substance of race relies on a** false assumption of equilibrium as that which produces stability within a simple racial structure. If we consider a simple racial structure as instead a metastableracial system, then what emerges is—following Simondon—a system that is transient and in a temporary state of stability even as it contains pre-individual, as opposed to stable individual, states. Even though the stable racial system may, in actu as an organizing principle of the system, designate **flows of racialized information**, metastable racial systems **contain a higher magnitude of energy that harbors** latent **potentials and incompatibilities with the system itself**. In other words, a metastable racial system is a fragile milieu in which local information exists as conditions of the overall state of the actual. It is always already in a state of transition and transformation through which the tensions of its incompatibility in the actual can seize upon opportunities found within the pre-individual milieu. A metastable racial system is open to augmentation and expansion by way of new technical inventions, often serving the purposes of maintaining an inequitable racial equilibrium, thereby placing its own set of demands and pressures upon the social system. As a result, the system finds itself already in need of transition, whereby its next phase is actualized through a new set of heterogeneous conditions. **“How does it feel to be a problem?”** “In the Weltanschauung of a colonised people there is an impurity, a flaw that outlaws any ontological explanation. Someone may object that this is the case with every individual, but such an objection merely conceals a basic problem. Ontology—once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside—does not permit us to understand the being of the black [person] man [sic]. For not only must the black [person] man be black; [they] he must be black in relation to the white man.” The relative importance of an assigned racial quality and the relation between the essential properties of race, at the limits of the upper and lower boundaries, is measured by sensitivity to change—or a responsiveness to self-reference as well as external stimuli (such as anti-Black racism). Simondon presents this openness to change as a “margin of indeterminacy” that provides the conditions of possibility for advanced (technical) objects to adapt to changes in their milieu—arresting the tendency towards determinate forms, and instead embracing incompleteness in the process of individuation. Consequently, Black genesis becomes a point of departure for ontology and the theory of knowledge first, prior to a preexisting theory of systemic hierarchy. **A sensitivity to the process of Black individuation**, as such, **lends a certain quality to the registration of affective changes**, small **changes in function, and the mappings of difference in each quality** within the pre-individual state. Sensitivity provides an unelaborated awareness of stimulation apprehended through **experience from within the field of** race relation**, and** of **knowledge transferred from one moment of racialization to the next**—each transferring knowledge of the operation of structures as a procedure or catalyst for subsequent iterations of becoming. **The constitution of the Black individual qua Blackness-as-a-problem allows for the White individual to be constituted at the level of resolution**. The ontogenic problem designates an ontological property, driving becoming through the resolution of tensions and overcoming disparity through new functional structures. For Simondon, **ontogenesis designates the development or becoming of being, framing the individual as an outcome of the process of individuation**, and not the inverse. **The individual therefore operates within a psychic excess that is unsolvable by inter-individual relations**, as they are presented with an affective and perceptive disparity. **Such a being can only resolve a disparity in** the **internal problematic through participation in collective individuation**. For this reason, **Simondon necessitates participation in social life as a precondition for** a form of **individuation which is best understood as a psychosocial process**.

### 2NC---Becoming Link

#### Their lines of flight elaborate a longing for free-form whiteness that can’t be recuperated from its colonial pedigree.

King 17, Assistant Professor of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Georgia State University. (Tiffany, Spring 2017, “Humans Involved: Lurking in the Lines of Posthumanist Flight”, *Critical Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pg. 170-172)

Jodi Byrd in particular attends to the colonialist, genocidal, and therefore humanist impulses of the rhizome in her book Transit of Empire.26 What is particularly instructive is the way that Byrd operationalizes her critique of Deleuze and Guattari’s first chapter, “Rhizome,” in their tome A Thousand Plateaus.27 Byrd’s deconstruction, or picking apart, of the poststructuralist and nonsubject- and nonobject-related Deleuzoguattarian rhizomatics are a masterful (and frankly thuggish and rude) demonstration of refusing to adapt or “repair” colonial epistemologies and geographies. Byrd’s refusal is a moment that further helps one distinguish between the works of postcolonial and decolonial studies. Byrd performs an outright refusal that short circuits the colonial and postcolonial comportments of politesse, which allow genocidal Western thought to continue uninterrupted. Byrd’s interrogation of the “colonial nostalgia” latent in poststructural and nonrepresentational forms of thought like Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizome is an explicit example of how the violence of white nonrepresentational theory creates an immediate space of impasse for Indigenous, decolonial, Black, and abolitionist intellectual traditions. As Byrd argues, the Deleuzian and Guattarian rhizome assumes its errant, untraceable, and de/reterritorializing path through Native genocide. The rhizome obtains its metaphorical and theoretical elasticity from the discursive genocide of Indigenous peoples. The territory of maneuver or ground that the rhizome gains its bearing on is unwittingly or perhaps indifferently anchored in the disavowal of the Indigenous ancestral claims, history, presence, and ongoing relationship with the land in North America. Deleuze and Guattari covet the free-range and bloody movements in the West, described as a land of “Indians without Ancestry” primarily because they do not have to contend with the presence of Indigenous peoples and their prior relationships (ancestors) to the land and space through which they move and clear as nomads. There are no existing people to which Deleuze and Guattari have to be accountable. Therefore, their own and others’ self-actualizing, free-form whiteness can proceed unimpeded. The rhizomatic West—terra nullius—is without a people, history, or a cosmology to navigate.

Byrd’s reading of Deleuze and Guattari’s reproduction or transit of the “Indian” in their book A Thousand Plateaus limns some of the methods in which colonialism and modes of conquest are enacted on behalf of the self-actualization of white subjects who produce nonrepresentational theory. In fact, Byrd argues that the “Indian is the ontological prior through which poststructuralism functions.”28 Byrd traces the appearance or deployment of the Indian as a simulation or “present absent” in Jacques Derrida’s and then Deleuze and Guattari’s work, which creates space for the white subject and the unending frontier. Byrd also argues that nonrepresentational theory heralded as a liberatory path beyond the subject is colonialist. Byrd indicts Deleuze and Guattari’s use of Leslie Fiedler’s work in order to invoke the American West and the Indian as exceptional cases that inspire rhizomatic movement through the notion of an ever-receding frontier.29 It is colonialist on (at least) two accounts: in its need to render the Indian already and inevitably (ontologically) dead as “it” has no ancestors or living community to whom one needs to be accountable; and in its invocation of the vanishing “Indian,” which opens up the possibility of an “ever-receding frontier” and inspiration for the metaphor of the rhizome. This logic and mode of conquistador thought undergirds the Deleuzian and Guattarian ethos of experimental and rhizomatic lines of flight. Their nonrepresentational theory of lines of flight are only possible as a form of white self-actualizing posthumanism due to the death of Indigenous peoples and their excision from the Earth/land. White posthumanism and its flows and lines of flight are made possible through Native death.

Because of this, Byrd haltingly stops the reader’s momentum as she critiques Deleuzo-guattarian and poststructuralist tendencies that often emerge in postcolonial work. Rather than allow the preemptive rejoinder that white and some postcolonial scholars use, such as “I know that theorist X did not consider race or was racist, but he enables us to do XYZ with his work,”30 Byrd instead cuts off Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizomatics at the path. As Byrd anticipates that following Deleuze and Guattari will end in genocide, she allows the reader the time and space to let this reality sink in and consider a different route than the normative impulse and course of action that is to repair Deleuze and Guattari’s work. Byrd’s work slows us down and brings us to a point of impasse and a resting place where one can slow down, stop, and make a choice to stay put or move forward with the dismissive, whimsical, white conceit that tolerates Native death. Byrd’s refusal allows the reader to feel the violent puncture of the nonrepresentational gash that it tries to disavow. Byrd gives her reader the space and time to say, “Yes, I understand your attempt to evade signification and thus representation but it is not compelling enough for me to overlook the reality that it requires Native genocide.” The way that Byrd’s and others’ decolonial work brings these kinds of tensions and violence to a head enables us to make other kinds of analytic and conceptual choices. The reader is allowed to think and then say, “If this line of thought requires Indigenous death, why even venture down it? What could one possibly repair or salvage of it?”

### 2NC---Labor Link

#### **1AC Bishop theorizes “the worker’s” dissolution into an autonomous device .**

Bishop and Ross 21 – \*Professor of Global Arts and Politics, Co-Director of the Archaeologies of Media and Technology Research Group,Faculty Director of Doctoral Research (Faculty of Arts and Humanities , \*\*PhD from Monash University in 2002, with a thesis on Heidegger and politics. He has translated 11 books by Bernard Stiegler, most recently Nanjing Lectures 2016–2019 [Ryan, Daniel, “Technics, Time and the Internation: Bernard Stiegler’s Thought – A Dialogue with Daniel Ross,” Theory, Culture, and Society, 3/24/2021, DKP]

The knowledge of the worker, which firstly concerns the use of hands equipped with instruments, is analysed, broken down into discrete elements, in order for it to be programmed into a device that does automatically what the worker did autonomously. The worker thereby finds [themselves] ~~himself~~ deprived of his or her knowledge – proletarianized

### 2NC---AT Agency

#### Afropessimism isn’t a passive accommodation to an anti-black world BUT an affirmation of black being that vitalizes life within social death

Sexton 12, Professor of African American Studies and Film and Media Studies at the University of California, Irvine. (Jared, “Ante-Anti-Blackness: Afterthoughts”, *Lateral*, https://csalateral.org/issue/1/ante-anti-blackness-afterthoughts-sexton/)

Elsewhere, in a discussion of W. E. B. Du Bois on the study of black folk, Gordon restates an existential phenomenological conception of the anti-black world developed across his first several books: “Blacks here suffer the phobogenic reality posed by the spirit of racial seriousness. In effect, they more than symbolize or signify various social pathologies – they become them. In our anti-black world, blacks are pathology.”46 This conception would seem to support to Moten’s contention that even much radical black studies scholarship sustains the association of blackness with a certain sense of decay and thereby fortifies and extends the interlocutory life of widely accepted political common sense. In fact, it would seem that Gordon deepens the already problematic association to the level of identity. And yet, this is precisely what Gordon argues is the value and insight of Fanon: he fully accepts the definition of himself as pathological as it is imposed by a world that knows itself through that imposition, rather than remaining in a reactive stance that insists on the heterogeneity between a self and an imago originating in culture. Though it may appear counter-intuitive, or rather because it is counter-intuitive, this acceptance or affirmation is active; it is a willing or willingness, in other words, to pay whatever social costs accrue to being black, to inhabiting blackness, to living a black social life under the shadow of social death. This is not an accommodation to the dictates of the anti-black world. The affirmation of blackness, which is to say an affirmation of pathological being, is a refusal to distance oneself from blackness in a valorization of minor differences that bring one closer to health, life, or sociality. Fanon writes in the first chapter of  Black Skin, White Masks: “A Senegalese who learns Creole to pass for Antillean is a case of alienation. The Antilleans who make a mockery out of him are lacking in judgment.”47 In a world structured by the twin axioms of white superiority and black inferiority, of white existence and black non-existence, a world structured by a negative categorical imperative—”above all, don’t be black”48—in this world, the zero degree of transformation is the turn toward blackness, a turn toward the shame, as it were, that “resides in the idea that ‘I am thought of as less than human'”49 resides in the idea that ‘I am thought of as less than human’. And yet, the very shame that floods through at that thought, a shame that, were we not human, we would have no capacity to feel, is our best internal evidence that the thought is wrong and vulgar: I feel (shame), therefore I am (human). Acknowledging the permanence of our shame, and its usefulness, may mark the beginning… [of a response to the call] to ‘begin enjoying the humor’ again. The point may not be to become individual and modern, to ever achieve a kind of prophylactic invulnerability to the [discourse] that says ‘Shame on you! Shame on you for being black!’ We do not, at this late date, need yet newer formulations of pride to negate this shame. The point may be to locate, within the transformations of our shame, a way out of scapegoating, and thus, out of the bloodletting that accompanies with such monotonous reliability our attempts to regain our innocence” (389).] In this we might create a transvaluation of pathology itself, something like an embrace of pathology without pathos.  To speak of black social life  and  black social death, black social life  against  black social death, black social life as black social death, black social life in black social death—all of this is to find oneself in the midst of an argument that is also a profound agreement, an agreement that takes shape in (between)  meconnaissance  and (dis)belief. Black optimism is not the negation of the negation that is afro-pessimism, just as black social life does not negate black social death by vitalizing it.

A living death is a much a death as it is a living. Nothing in afro-pessimism suggests that there is no black (social) life, only that black life is not social life in the universe formed by the codes of state and civil society, of citizen and subject, of nation and culture, of people and place, of history and heritage, of all the things that colonial society has in common with the colonized, of all that capital has in common with labor—the modern world system.50  Black life is not lived in the world that the world lives in, but it is lived underground, in outer space. This is agreed. That is to say, what Moten asserts against afro-pessimism is a point already affirmed by afro-pessimism, is, in fact, one of the most polemical dimensions of afro-pessimism as a project: namely, that black life is not social, or rather that black life is  lived  in social  death. Double emphasis, on lived and on death. That’s the whole point of the enterprise at some level. It is all about the implications of this agreed upon point where arguments (should) begin, but they cannot (yet) proceed.

Wilderson’s is an analysis of the law in its operation as “police power and racial prerogative both under and after slavery.”51 So too is Moten’s analysis, at least that just-less-than-half of the intellectual labor committed to the object of black studies as critique of (the anti-blackness of) Western civilization. But Moten is just that much more interested in how black social life steals away or escapes from the law, how it frustrates the police power and, in so doing, calls that very policing into being in the first place. The policing of black freedom, then, is aimed less at its dreaded prospect, apocalyptic rhetoric notwithstanding, than at its irreducible precedence. The logical and ontological priority of the unorthodox self-predicating activity of blackness, the “improvisatory exteriority” or “improvisational immanence” that blackness is, renders the law dependent upon what it polices. This is not the noble agency of resistance. It is a reticence or reluctance that we might not know if it were not pushing back, so long as we know that this pushing back is really a pushing forward. So, in this perverse sense, black social death is black social life. The object of black studies is the aim of black studies. The most radical negation of the anti-black world is the most radical affirmation of a blackened world. Afro-pessimism is “not but nothing other than” black optimism.52, 53

## Case

### 2NC---Extinction Turn

#### Extinction’s non-unique, placing it in the future smooths over the ongoing Black apocalypse that coheres Anthropocene ethics.

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In all their shocking glory, Summers’s remarks epitomize a pervading instrumentalization of black existence, which challenges much of the totalizing gestures of Anthropocene narratives. It is the logic intrinsic to these gestures that I have attempted to lay out thus far. Braidotti, Morton, Tuana, and even Colebrook in her incisive interventions, are unable to relinquish or effectively resist the homogenizing consequences of the discourse.42 Their respective ethical and critical prescriptions sidestep an engaged account of social antagonisms, and more specifically those enacted along racial lines. Instead, these are smoothed over and displaced in the name of an ethics of futurity grounded on a deeply naturalized variation of relationality—namely that all beings, insofar as they are earthly at least, are fundamentally interconnected and can (or must) only be perceived as such. This affirmation, as well as Braidotti’s own brand of vitalism, is not only symptomatic of a more entrenched form of historical amnesia concerning questions of culpability (i.e., how did we end up here and who is responsible). More perniciously, they appear to be yet another instantiation of Saidiya Hartman’s provocative claim that “the white bourgeois family can actually live with murder in order to reconstitute its domesticity.”43 In its most blatant form, Summers’s secret memo is precisely this! There is nothing sacrificial in his proposition; it is not about preserving the air quality that matters—so to speak—at the expense of Africans. Rather, Africa—and therefore blackness—remains the disposable trash container of the world par excellence; a case of instrumentalization in its most primitive execution. Under these conditions, one is thus pressed to inquire how can a global ethics of care44 be possible when fundamental questions of racial culpability are eluded in the name of a shortsighted conception of “becoming” and an aggrandized notion of ontological relationality—both of which remain unwilling to sustain engagements with their violent racial foundations. Indeed, in her critical essay evocatively titled “The Mattering of Black Lives: Octavia Butler’s Hyperempathy and the Promise of the New Materialism,” Diana Leong asserts that the “reduction and disavowal of race [. . .] is something of a structural necessity for the new materialisms.”45 In ways that significantly resonate with my own argument in this article, she contends that, in addition to being a discursive necessity, circumventing the race question in this discourse “enables an ethics of relation or affect that further legitimizes the reduction and dismissal of race.”46 In other words, as I have also maintained, the ontological realism that naturalizes this “hyper-ethics” of relationality can only be maintained by the concealment of systems of racial oppression.

Recall that the ethical dimension of Braidotti’s becoming-posthumanist strives for the actualization of a community-to-come unrestrained by “the guilt of ancestral communal violence, or the melancholia of unpayable ontological debts.”47 This suggests that posthumanist reconfigurations of subjectivity and its creative invention of a “future people” as solutions to our ecological demise, hinge on the forgetting of the atrocious making of “another people” by slavery and the responsibility such violent history bestows on the Western world. What remains at stake here, however, is not so much the general (and generic) recognition of the differential effects of our environmental crisis on vulnerable populations. The literature exists, and the work continues to be done.48 Rather, we must return to the structural conditions that facilitates and renders possible the “symptomatic desire to abandon race.”49

If indeed, as Leong forcefully argues, “Blackness [. . .] is the specter that haunts the Anthropocene and its possible futures,” it is imperative that we incisively revisit the conditions that make “blackened” life and death unregisterable and therefore un-grievable. And if indeed grievability and the imperative to survive constitute, as Colebrook suggests, the “we” of the Anthropocene, it behooves us to attend to those ungrievable lives for which even survival requires facing death. That is to say, those lives for which existence requires suicidal decisions such as deadly expeditions across the Mediterranean Sea, the Mexico-United States border, and the many “border-fortresses” of the EU. How can we possibly ascertain to possess an “adequate cartography of our real-life conditions,” when we continue to sidestep considering the precarity of “social practices of human embodiment,” which necessitate one to gamble with one’s own death in order to envisage the possibility of a future?50

Insofar as Tuana’s viscous porosity, Morton’s hyperobject, and Braidotti’s vitalist posthuman politics are mostly interested in giving an account of the ontological foundation of species entanglements, they cannot account for the violent foundational structures that make Summers’s indifference I mention above possible. In my opinion, this is the discursive gift that philosophical interventions in the study of anti-black racism have offered us in the past couple of decades, namely (and I quote Jared Sexton here): “A meditation on a poetics and politics of abjection wherein racial blackness operates as an asymptomtic approximation of that which disturbs every claim or formation of identity and difference as such.51 Unlike Braidotti, whose main concern is to reconfigure the boundaries of subjectivity so as to recompose, with a materialist politics of posthuman difference, a “missing people,” critical black philosophies interrogate the very foundation of becoming—of this “we” to come. In addition to its demystifying agenda, which unremittingly unsettles the self-aggrandizing gestures of Western theory, critical black philosophies consider black suffering to be a crucial site of interrogation. They question what it means to inhabit a structural position whereby by the black philosopher is always already forced to align herself with exclusionary terms in order to register antiblack violence as violence. They investigate, for instance, what using the general lexicon and terms of philosophy “insubordinately” entail for the black philosopher. What matters for this critical tradition is to assess the conditions of a world when blackness is, at last, understood to be a decisive organizing principle.

In his poignant essay “Onticide: Afro-Pessimism, Gay Nigger #1, and Surplus Violence,” Calvin Warren challenges us to think of those who fall “outside the cultural space of ethics, relationality, and the sacred.”52 In fact, he provides us with robust grounds to remain suspicious of the hasty impulses of an affirmative politics of life and relationality profoundly unequipped to recognize the mundane and persistent ways in which death and perhaps even extinction always already constitute existence for the “fungible” object/being. In this text, Warren returns to the brutal killing of Steen Keith Fenrich by his white stepfather. It is not the gruesome details surrounding Fenrich’s death that are at stake here; in the same ways the morbidly grandiose performances of anti-black violence across the globe do not necessarily hold explanatory power in and of themselves. Rather, Warren uses this story to show how the violent spectacularity of Fenrich’s death—its operation, protocols and structure - “indicate a certain ontological violation that preconditions physical injury.”53 This violence that shocks both in the simultaneity of its excessive gratuitousness and indiscriminate indifference, a violence that “exceeds the logics of utility,” to use Warren’s language, is indispensable for the constitution of the human self and necessary to maintain the coherence of its solipsistic contours and concomitant socio-political institutions.54