# Michigan HM---Round 3---Open Source Doc

## 1AC – NDT 2022

### 1AC – Black Transhumanism

#### The dice are loaded---Silicon Valley giants have partnered with the state to monopolize and exploit transhumanism’s potential---pseudo-monopolies have already secured self-regulation of transhumanist technology to ensure the commodification of human life for capital through technocracy

Giesen, 20 - Klaus-Gerd Giesen, Professor of Political Science at Université Clermont Auvergne, France; 2020(“The Transhumanist Ideology and the International Political Economy of the Fourth Industrial Revolution,” Ideologies in World Politics, Springer, pp. 143-156, Available to Subscribing Institutions via SpringerLink, bam) \*\*NBIC = Nanotechnologies, Biotechnologies, Informatics and Cognitive Sciences

This is an enormous new market in the world economy, and therefore an additional commodification of human life: we will see the birth of the “body-market” (Lafontaine 2014). It will be the result of the fourth industrial revolution. Indeed, the NBIC technology convergence will undoubtedly introduce an important rupture in the evolution of world capitalism, just like the steam engine (1st industrial revolution), electricity (2nd), and electronics and computing (3rd) (Schwab 2015). Countless new products and services will appear on the market. Faced with the explosion of NBIC supply, the transhumanist discourse tries to convey the message that each new device corresponds to a specific need and demand. In other words, transhumanism serves as the ideology that justifies this expansion into the world capitalist market.

The more further commodification of the (post)human being becomes successful, the more state regulations will inevitably be disrupted, especially by the new inequalities that will soon appear between humans who will have remained “natural”—the “chimpanzees of the future” (as they have been called by transhumanist Kevin Warwick (2002, p. 4)—and the future, technologically enhanced posthuman species. Thus, transhumanism poses an immeasurable challenge to the welfare state insofar as the latter, deeply rooted in meritocracy, has been forged to erase the initial social inequalities as far as possible. Transhumanism is also a challenge for democracy and the rule of law, because of the increasing complexity of all issues related to technological hybridization and the intentional “accelerationism” (Mackay and Avanessian 2014) promoted precisely by the transhumanists: the classical advisors to the political decision-makers (bioethics committees and other technology assessment structures) can probably no longer effectively assist them in order to regulate in real time the new artefacts and their marketing. In other words, we cannot exclude the possibility that there will soon be technological limits to democracy.

In addition, with the human-machine fusion, new perspectives are opening up for capital-labour relations. In the near future the worker and the employee can be fully integrated into productive systems (e.g. through chips implanted under the skin or directly into the nervous system) and better monitored. Their productivity—which is the key to competitiveness between firms—could be boosted. A prevalence of the transhumanist ideology, even partial, will undoubtedly cause further dehumanization of work. This would lead to the total adaptability of the individual to the demands of capital, and the very concept of human resources may become obsolete, insofar as the employee will simply merge with technological resources to become merely a production tool. Another possible consequence of transhumanistic policies: the struggles between employers and trade unions could intensify, focusing more on the degree of autonomy that the worker can still maintain in the face of the new productive system technologies than on wages and working time. Due to the mass unemployment that Artificial Intelligence will soon generate, “Luddite” revolts may arise, but probably remain occasional. Clearly, there is a risk that over the next decades we will gradually turn to a posthuman capitalism that will profoundly transform not only the relationships between individuals, to work and to the state, but also the way we relate to humankind itself.

5 The Ideological Outreach

Transhumanism is above all a major political project for the benefit of those industries and economic sectors which are most heavily involved in the fourth industrial revolution which will probably lead to a complete redistribution of wealth in our societies, a large-scale reconfiguration of social classes, and above all a profound change in the way our societies and the entire world system function. We cannot ignore, however, that considerable parts of both the state apparatus and the private sector are promoting this project.

The same Mihail C. Roco and William Sims Bainbridge who had issued the now famous National Science Foundation’s NBIC report in 2003 raised the entire NBIC issue to the ideological level by publishing ten years later (with Bruce Tonn and Georges Whitesides) the voluminous Converging Knowledge, Technology, and Society (CKTS) report that aims to guide considerable social engineering efforts to contain within narrow margins any possible contestation of the NBIC technologies. The new concept of CKTS Meta-Convergence is part of a resolutely “solutionist” strategy, resulting from the transhumanist thinking of the “techno-progressive” branding which does not envisage the “progress” of technology without immediate benefit for society, or at least for a fraction of society. It expressly states that “the study identified barriers to progress; this report proposes a framework, methods and possible actions to overcome them” (Roco et al. 2013, p. 2). On several occasions, it points towards the urgent need for massive mobilization of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) in the targeted dissemination of transhumanist “solutionism”: “traditional institutions have[now] a reduced role, being bypassed by[new] social-media-enabled movements.” (Roco et al. 2013, p. 372). In their view, steering the debate in the desired direction is essential because “emerging technologies have the promise to bring higher than normal returns on public and private investment because of their transforming and disruptive nature. Such returns also depend on the general […] governance methods, and international context.” (Roco et al. 2013, p. 364).

If state agencies and international organizations—including the Council of Europe (Van Est 2014)—are heavily involved in most vectors of ideological diffusion, it is even less surprising that the elite of the big bosses of California’s Silicon Valley both adhere to and promote the transhumanist ideology. The same is true for many entrepreneurs of the countless start-up firms that revolve around them. The extraordinary financial investments made by, among others, billionaires Elon Musk (who has recently founded the Neuralink company for the creation of super-intelligent cyborgs inspired by Warwick’s experience), Peter Diamandis and Peter Thiel, and even more so by the famous GAFAM (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft), weigh heavily in this social debate, because their economic interests in the future of high tech are directly at stake. These firms have already invested heavily in the fourth industrial revolution, and are now also injecting huge sums into political lobbying and social engineering at the national and international level.

One example is the Partnership on AI, which brings together almost all the giants of Silicon Valley (except Elon Musk and Peter Thiel, who have launched their own structure, named OpenAI and funded by US$ 1 billion) to implement a kind of ethical self-regulation of artificial intelligence technologies. It does this however with the aim at spreading to the general public the message that the transhumanist big business is itself taking care of all possible risks incurred by, and limits to be imposed on, artificial intelligence, and this without any need for state regulation (Partnership on AI 2019). This is what may be called the ideological “valium for the people” function. The Partnership on AI is also well-funded and co-opts many academics, which underlines the extreme care with which the U.S. giants try to prevent any social contestation threatening their big business. And indeed, those who oppose the new NBIC convergence technologies, whatever they are and wherever they come from, simply do not have the same financial means to make their point of view known.

6 Conclusion

Obviously, it is clear that the game is not equal. In the societal debate on the world level that has just begun, the dice are loaded: the transhumanist ideology is strongly driven by fractions of state apparatus and even more by those very powerful multinational companies that, objectively, have the greatest interest in ensuring that the NBIC convergence revolution runs smoothly. In this sense, transhumanism is already a dominant ideology, in that it overwhelms all other ideological positions in the face of rapid technological change—especially those of humanists from different backgrounds as well as those with a “deep ecology” stance—merely through the power of money.

#### These transhumanist desires create the surrogate effect, where white transhumanist actors sell “artificial” intelligence while erasing the racialized and gendered labor that is inherent to its functioning

Atanasoski and Vora, 19 – Neda Atanasoski, Professor of Feminist Studies and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz; Kalindi Vora, Associate Professor of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at UC Davis; 2019(*Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures*, Duke University Press, Accessed via Michigan Libraries, pg 89-91, bam)

The “robot” Jibo, also described as a platform, represents a technological update to the domestic architecture that supports the seeming autonomy of the liberal subject. Here, technoliberalism reinscribes a racialized and gendered service labor infrastructure that derives from the domestic division of labor under colonialism. It functions as an architectural update to the hidden passageways and serving spaces in US antebellum residential architecture that were meant to hide the enslaved “hands that served” and yield the service without any sociality between those served and the servants.3 As with the development of technologies promoting outsourced service industries in India built on a design imperative of importing the labor but not the lives of workers, as described in Vora’s book Life Support, Jibo is designed to preserve the architecture of erased service work that allows the nuclear hetero-patriarchal family economic unit to continue.

In this chapter we address how present-day disappearances of human bodies take place in the information milieu, specifically through platforms intended to disguise human labor as machine labor. Whereas Jibo, as a physical robot, can be brought into the center of the hetero-nuclear household without disrupting the erasure of human domestic and service work that supports the reproduction of the whiteness and patriarchy of this family form, the information milieu must rely on a rearrangement of space to uphold the myth of human-free labor under technoliberalism. The racial grammar of the surrogate effect is here tethered to the programming architectures of virtual spaces that erase the sociality of laboring bodies. These disappearances are a part of technoliberal innovation related to the racial dynamics of collaborative robotics and the sharing economy that we addressed in chapter 2, even as they introduce a different aspect of the fantasy of human-free labor. Thus, we might ask, what is the relationship between a techno-futurity in which the human is engulfed into an Internet of Things, and a present in which human labor continues to be irreplaceable even as it is hidden beneath the fantasy of what ai can accomplish? Concealing the human worker as the source of information processing, data collection, and service work has become a central feature that enables the conception of the fourth industrial revolution and the second machine age as the socioeconomic paradigm shifts. Why must the worker be concealed to enable the growth of the digital economy? Design projects that hide service labor advance the project of technoliberalism by contributing to the seeming inevitability of the domestic realm as an atomized and apparently autonomous economy where the support of life is an individual, rather than a social, concern.

Analyzing platforms including the Alfred Club service website and Amazon Mechanical Turk (amt), a data management service, we turn our attention to how humans themselves are performing the work of technologies that are claimed to replace the need for human workers. This is what amt has framed, tongue in cheek, as artificial artificial intelligence. Our emphasis on the disappearance of human labor allows us to theorize surrogate humanity as not just about a set of new technologies, but more importantly, about how the fantasy of human-free social environments, including everything from cyberspace to the domestic sphere, is concerned with replacing the racialized and gendered surrogates enabling freedom for the universalized liberal figure of the human with technological sur- rogates. In other words, we argue that technologies that erase human workers are designed to perform the surrogate effect for consumers, who consume the reassurance of their own humanity along with the service offered.4 The surrogate effect can command capital, as well, when venture capitalists who fetishize automation and digitization see apps that offer a technological veneer to what are in fact long-standing human services.5

Platforms like amt and Alfred Club perform the surrogate effect by affirming the humanity and subjecthood of their users in ways that both rehearse and innovate upon the prior racial and gendered politics of labor. Put otherwise, emerging technologies like amt and Alfred Club simultaneously exploit gendered and effaced service work and demand that the worker participate in effacing herself as a subject.6 Drawing attention to the surrogate effect produced by the socio-spatial dynamics of distancing and erasure of service workers within service platforms enables us to cen- ter questions of racialized and gendered difference where they otherwise may be displaced or obscured in the postracial fictions of technoliberalism. Analysis of the surrogate effect thus requires a feminist, critical race and postcolonial science studies approach to the field of labor politics. The examples in this chapter show how the surrogate effect delimits what counts as work, and what counts as a valued social relation, because it defines those who count as recognizable subjects in those areas.

#### That technocratic domination cements the afterlife of slavery and genocidal clearing through the process of techno-liberalism, attempting to make the racial post-racial

Atanasoski and Vora, 19—Professor of Feminist Studies and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz AND Associate Professor of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at UC Davis (Neda and Kalindi, “Introduction: The Surrogate Human Effects of Technoliberalism,” *Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures*, pg 6-12, dml)

In the desire for enchanted technologies that intuit human needs and serve human desires, labor becomes something that is intentionally obfuscated so as to create the effect of machine autonomy (as in the example of the “magic” of robot intelligence and the necessarily hidden human work behind it). Unfree and invisible labor have been the hidden source of support propping up the apparent autonomy of the liberal subject through its history, including indentured and enslaved labor as well as gendered domestic and service labor. 6 The technoliberal desire to resolutely see technology as magical rather than the product of human work relies on the liberal notion of labor as that performed by the recognizable human autonomous subject, and not those obscured labors supporting it. Therefore, the category of labor has been complicit with the technoliberal desire to hide the worker behind the curtain of enchanted technologies, advancing this innovated form of the liberal human subject and its investments in racial unfreedom through the very categories of consciousness, autonomy, and humanity, and attendant categories of the subject of rights, of labor, and of property.

Our usage of the concept of the surrogate throughout this book foregrounds the longer history of human surrogates in post-Enlightenment modernity, including the body of the enslaved standing in for the master, the vanishing of native bodies necessary for colonial expansion, as well as invisibilized labor including indenture, immigration, and outsourcing. The claim that technologies can act as surrogates recapitulates histories of disappearance, erasure, and elimination necessary to maintain the liberal subject as the agent of historical progress. Thus, framing the surrogate human effect as the racial grammar of technoliberalism brings a feminist and critical race perspective to bear on notions of technological development, especially in the design and imagination of techno-objects and platforms that claim to reenchant those tasks understood as tedious or miserable through the marvels of technological progress—ostensibly dull, dirty, repetitive, and uncreative work.

To understand how claims of human freedom and human loss enabled by technological development allow for the retrenchment of the liberal subject as the universal human, Surrogate Humanity foregrounds the obfuscated connections between the human–machine divide in US technological modernity and the racial production of the fully human in US political modernity. Focusing on the material, social, and political consequences of the mutual generation of “the human” and “the machine” from the US post–World War II standardization of automation into the present, we explore both the social impact of design and engineering practices intended to replace human bodies and functions with machines and the shift in the definition of productivity, efficiency, value, and “the racial” that these technologies demand in their relation to the post-Enlightenment figure of the human. We begin with the second half of the twentieth century because this is the moment when the United States ascends to global political and economic supremacy and cultural influence, inheriting the mantle of its own and Western European settler imperial social structures. At this same historical juncture, the racial architecture of US modes of governance and geopolitical ascendancy were erased in the logics of post–civil rights racial liberalism and multiculturalism.7 Crucially, the advent of what can be termed, ironically, a “postracial” domination translates directly into the perception of new technologies as neutral and disembodied, even as these technologies are anchored in, and anchor, contemporary US imperial power. In short, the technological sphere has been separated from the racial scaffolding of the social in the Cold War and post–Cold War eras. Yet, as we argue, it is essential to assess the racial and gendered architecture of post-Enlightenment modernity as engineered into the form and function of given technologies. This calls for situating techno-objects and platforms in a social relation to what is experienced as a “human.” Thus, although our book is primarily focused on present-day claims about the revolutionary nature of new digital technologies, robotics, and AI, throughout our analysis of techno-objects and the social and political discourses that frame them, we unearth the obscured histories that delimit technoliberal engineering projects focused on efficiency, productivity, and further accumulation through dispossession.

Throughout this book, we insist on the infusion of a seemingly neutral technological modernity with the racial, gendered, and sexual politics of political modernity, based as they are in racial slavery, colonial conquest and genocide, and forced mobility through ongoing racial imperial practices of labor allocation and warcraft. To accomplish this, we extend critical ethnic studies analyses of gendered racialization to include machine “others.” By focusing on machines, we take the weight of an ethnic studies analysis off of racialized people so that we can see how this relationship functions even in their absence. Tracking the surrogate human effect within technoliberal politics enables us to attend to techniques through which difference (whether human–nonhuman or interhuman) is produced, while understanding categories of difference as historically specific.

By tracking how the surrogate human effect functions as the racial grammar of technoliberalism, we connect critiques of historical and political consciousness, freedom, and agency, whether of the machine or of the liberal subject, to calls for thinking beyond the limits of liberal humanist visions of more just futures. We thus position our critique of technoliberalism in relation to how technologies can be used to create relations between the human and the machine that are outside of the use–value–efficiency triad of capitalist modes of production. We see this work of redescribing value, and what or who is valuable, outside of the parameters of racial capitalism and its modes of waging war and staging social relations already happening in artistic and engineering projects focused on creating technologies that blur the boundaries between subject and object, the productive and unproductive, and value and valuelessness, thereby advancing structures of relation that are unimaginable in the present. Pushing against the limits of the imagination imposed by the symbolic logics of the surrogate human effect, the artistic, literary, engineering, and scientific projects we include in juxtaposition with those we critique refuse existing frames for recognizing full humanity, particularly the categories of the liberal politics of recognition such as the subject of labor or human rights.

The Surrogate Human Effect

Like the “others” of the (white) liberal subject analyzed by decolonial and postcolonial scholarship, the surrogate human effect of technology functions first to consolidate something as “the human,” and second to colonize “the human” by advancing the post-Enlightenment liberal subject of modernity as universal.8 The concept of the surrogate brings together technoliberal claims that technological objects and platforms are increasingly standing in for what the human does, thus rendering the human obsolete, while also foregrounding the history of racial unfreedom that is overwritten by claims of a postrace and postgender future generated by that obsolescence. In our usage, the longer history of the surrogate human effect in post-Enlightenment modernity stretches from the disappearance of native bodies necessary for the production of the fully human, through the production of the fungibility of the slave’s body as standing in for the master, and therefore also into the structures of racial oppression that continue into the post-slavery and post-Jim Crow periods, and into the disavowal of gendered and racialized labor supporting outsourcing, crowdsourcing, and sharing economy platforms. Framing technologies through the lens of the surrogate effect brings a feminist and critical race perspective to bear on notions of technological development, especially in the design and imagination of techno-objects and platforms that claim a stand-in role for undesirable human tasks.

As part of the surrogate effect, the surrogate is a racialized and gendered form defining the limits of human consciousness and autonomy. Saidya Hartman conceptualizes the surrogate by citing Toni Morrison’s formulation of slaves as “surrogate selves for the meditation on the problems of human freedom.”9 Hartman proposes that “the value of blackness resided in its metaphorical aptitude, whether literally understood as the fungibility of the commodity or understood as the imaginative surface upon which the master and the nation came to understand themselves.”10 The slave, the racialized fungible body, also acts as a “surrogate for the master’s body since it guarantees his disembodied universality and acts as the sign of his power and domination.”11 As Hartman elaborates, these racialized structures of the surrogate did not simply disappear after emancipation. Rather, “the absolute dominion of the master, predicated on the annexation of the captive body, yielded to an economy of bodies, yoked and harnessed, through the exercise of autonomy, self-interest, and consent. . . . Although no longer the extension and instrument of the master’s absolute right or dominion, the laboring black body remained a medium of others’ power and representation.”12

While Hartman is referencing the rise of new modes of bonded labor following emancipation that were encapsulated by the liberal formalities of contract, consent, and rights, her theorization of surrogacy as a racialized and gendered arrangement producing autonomy and universality of and for the master is useful for thinking about the contemporary desire for technology to perform the surrogate human effect. The racialized and gendered scaffolding of the surrogate effect continues to assert a “disembodied universality” that actually offers the position of “human” to limited human actors, thereby guaranteeing power and domination through defining the limits of work, violence, use, and even who or what can be visible labor and laboring subjects.

Tracking the endurance of the racial form of slavery as the (not so) repressed or spectral frame for the imaginary of what surrogate technologies do, or who or what they are meant to replace, we insist throughout this book that human emancipation (from work, violence, and oppressive social relations) is a racialized aspiration for proper humanity in the postEnlightenment era. In the US context, reading technologies as they reflect the dominant imagination of what it means to be a human thus means that they are situated in social relations of race, gender, and sexuality, as these derive from embodied histories of labor, Atlantic chattel slavery, settler colonialism, and European and US imperialism, to name the most dominant. The preeminent questions of the politics of the subject, and the derivative politics of difference that consume critical theory—questions that are about political consciousness, autonomy with its attendant concepts of freedom and unfreedom, and the problem of recognition—also drive the preeminent questions we must ask of technologies that perform the surrogate human effect.

The surrogate effect of technological objects inherits the simultaneously seeming irrelevance yet all-encompassing centrality of race and histories of enslavement and indenture against which the liberal subject is defined. As Lisa Lowe writes:

During the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, liberal colonial discourses improvised racial terms for the non-European peoples whom settlers, traders, and colonial personnel encountered. We can link the emergence of liberties defined in the abstract terms of citizenship, rights, wage labor, free trade, and sovereignty with the attribution of racial difference to those subjects, regions, and populations that liberal doctrine describes as unfit for liberty or incapable of civilization, placed at the margins of liberal humanity.13

Lowe explains that while it is tempting to read the history of emancipation from slave labor as a progress narrative of liberal development toward individual rights and universal citizenship, in fact, “to the contrary, this linear conception of historical progress—in which the slavery of the past would be overcome and replaced by modern freedom—concealed the persistence of enslavement and dispossession for the enslaved and indentured” and racialized populations necessary to the new British-led impe- rial forms of trade and governance “expanding across Asia, Africa, and the Americas under the liberal rubric of free trade.”14 Moreover, according to Lowe, “the liberal experiment that began with abolition and emancipation continued with the development of free wage labor as a utilitarian discipline for freed slaves and contract laborers in the colonies, as well as the English workforce at home, and then the expanded British Empire through opening free trade and the development of liberal government.”15 While the history of capitalism tends to be written as the overcoming of serf, slave, and indentured labor through free contract and wage labor, that is, as freedom overcoming unfreedom, as Lowe demonstrates, it is actually the racialized coupling of freedom and unfreedom that undergird and justify capitalist and imperial expansionism.

Rather than freedom being on the side of modernity, which overcomes the unfreedom that is the condition of premodernity, in fact the states of both freedom and unfreedom are part of the violent processes of extraction and expropriation marking progress toward universality. Undergirding Euro-American coloniality, political liberalism maintains the racial temporality of post-Enlightenment modernity that depends on innovating both bodies and resources (and how each will be deployed). David Theo Goldberg argues that liberalism is the “defining doctrine of self and society for modernity,” through which articulations of historical progress, universality, and freedom are articulated.16 Because liberalism’s developmental account of Euro-American moral progress has historically been premised on the transcending of racial difference, as Goldberg puts it, under the tenets of liberalism, “race is irrelevant, but all is race.”17

To articulate freedom and abstract universal equality as the twin pillars of liberal modes of governance, racial identity categories and how they are utilized for economic development under racial capitalism are continually disavowed even as they are innovated. In her writing about how such innovations played out in the post–World War II context, the historical period in which we locate our study, Jodi Melamed has argued that US advancement toward equality, as evidenced by liberal antiracism such as civil rights law and the professional accomplishments of black and other minority citizens, was meant to establish the moral authority of US democracy as superior to socialist and communist nations.18 Highlighting antiracism as the central tenet of US democracy, the US thus morally underwrote its imperial projects as a struggle for achieving states of freedom abroad over illiberal states of unfreedom, racializing illiberal systems of belief as a supplement to the racialization of bodies under Western European imperialism.19 The assertion that the US is a space of racial freedom, of course, covered over ongoing material inequalities based on race at home. As part of the articulation of US empire as an exceptional empire whose violence is justified because it spreads freedom, the history of slavery is always acknowledged, but only insofar as it can be rendered irrelevant to the present day—that is, the history of slavery is framed as a story of US national overcoming of a past aberrant from the ideals of US democracy, and as a story of redemption and progress toward an inclusion as rights-bearing subjects of an ever-proliferating list of others (women, black people, gay people, disabled people, etc.).

#### Linguistic expressions towards a “collective humanity” fail to understand the complexities of black death in relation to white life---only understanding blackness through the lens of transhumanism rejects practices of assimilation in favor of accepting the fluid nature of blackness.

Butler 19 [Philip Butler, Assistant Professor of Theology and Black Posthuman and Artificial Intelligence Systems at the Iliff School of Theology, December 12, 2020, “Black Transhuman Liberation Theology”, pg. 29-31, JMH]

I do recognize that the term “human” is the primary mode of linguistic currency when referring to bi-pedal, predominantly hairless and self-aware beings with supposedly superior intellects. I also recognize that certain rights are given to those who are classified as human. But, in America, those rights and protections evaporate in disparate proportions when the recipient is Black. The utility of the term “human” also evaporates when presented as currency for liberative exchange. Similar to the offering of Anthony Pinn’s reflection on the utility of the term “God,” I would like to move a step further. **I propose that the term “human” which has been employed as a tool for claiming one’s worth has not served to produce any concrete manifestation of Black liberation.**

In his book Black Skin White Masks, Fanon claims that “Black [folks] wants to be white. [Yet, white folks] slave to reach a human level.” While Fanon was attempting to speak to the fleeting relationship that both Black and white folks have with this term, it is also an allusion to the limitations of the term “human.”3 While Fanon claims that Black folks ought to forge a new (hu)man, which I argue has transhumanist implications, the reasoning he employs creates a doublelayered conundrum that highlights the depth to which Black folks are buried in the struggle to break free from the white gaze. The first layer arises through the relationship Fanon rightfully exposes. Black folks want to be white, and white folks want to be human. For Fanon, **this serves as a statement of clarity, because it exposes the never-ending problem of assimilation. Assimilation into white culture does not protect Black humanity.** The second, and most entangling, layer of this conundrum can be found in Fanon’s use of the term “human”:

But, if we want humanity to advance a step further, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries. . . . We must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new [hu]man.4

Fanon’s declarative search for a new human hints at his recognition of the inherently problematic nature of the term. However, his maintenance of the term “human” only recycles the dilemma he highlights earlier. Trying to fit Black existence within Eurocentric codices confines the constructive potential of the chosen descriptor. So, **when I say that Black folks are not human I am suggesting that the deeply racist and exclusivist history attached to the term needs to be considered.** This is especially true since **the use of the term continues to impose boundaries upon Black bodies regarding how we ought to live. The boundaries** associated with the term **stems from its weaponization.** Molly RandellMoon and Ryan Tippet call attention to the necropolitics associated with this weaponization in the introduction of Security, Race, Biopower, suggesting **the human designation was used for the “economisation of . . . resources in favour of those who ‘deserve life.’5** Essentially, the human classification functions to protect the proto-normativity of white supremacy by upholding epistemological systems of anti-blackness, which are dependent upon the meaning disproportionately imbued upon those who bear its monicker. When we consider the role that the technological apparatus of language plays in undergirding anti-blackness, it could also be inferred that white people are not human either. White people are simply the benefactors of this technology, given their status within the cultural milieu in which it is employed. So, when Black folks insist upon participating within the supposedly protective schema of this term, Black folks are actively reifying anti-Black hierarchies inherently embedded within its cybernetic reach.

So, what is a new (hu)man? And why maintain the use of the term (hu)man at all? Why lay claim to a terminology that has been used to leave so many out of its designation, and create hierarchies of race? Why buy into a term that is part of the larger Eurocentric linguistic machinery? Most importantly, why employ a technology that was meant to subjugate the “Other” when it cannot adequately communicate the complexities of embodiment, let alone Black existence? Now, one could easily argue that the use of any European linguistic derivative maintains a connection to Eurocentric power dynamics. I would not disagree with that argument at all. This is not a departure from a term for the sake of being provocative. It is an intentional departure from the cognitive limitations associated with what it means to be human and Black. Nevertheless, **until Black folks become linguistically liberated** (something that I will not be able to unpack here) **the very components that comprise the reality in which Black folks understand themselves will be influenced by Eurocentrism. The term “human” functions as an elusive value marker, of which Black folks have been unable to grasp due to our lack of control of the term**. In this temporality, it is not a derivative of Black epistemic technology. So, in this invitation to unsubscribe to the use of the term “human,” I am taking into account the tumultuous history of the term and positing a temporary marker in its place, something a bit more generative—something a bit more true to form. W. E. B. DuBois’s testament to Black tenacity may be an indicator of the willingness of Black folks to combat maladaptive narratives surrounding Blackness, in order to usurp the suffocation of anti-Black power structures. It is with that in mind that Black transhuman liberation theology calls for a further deconstruction from the term “human,” and ultimately a separation from it**. Black folks are transhuman, flexible, and adaptable.** But why transhuman? Why utilize the very term I am asking Black folks to unsubscribe from as the root of this new label? Simply put**, transhumans do not carry the same boundaries as humans. They are not limited by the constraints of their form, or situation. Transhumans are transcendent, yet grounded in materiality.** Nevertheless, an adoption of the designation of transhuman for Black folks is rooted in the idea that Black bodies are technology—complex auto-/allopoietic biological systems undergoing constant change. But ever more so**, it is a recognition that since transhumans are always in a state of becoming, the term “transhuman” is only a placeholder for categorizing Blackness.** Thus, it is an invitation not only to depart from the human designation but also to wrestle with the uneasiness and potentiality of what Black folks might be. This is also an assertion that futuristic iterations of Blackness are unbounded. So, it has yet to be determined what Black folks are. We are just not human.6

#### The only way to actualize black liberation is through a spirituality of revolt, one that utilizes black biotechnology to imagine liberative possibilities both individually and communally to fight against the technocratic regime

Butler, 19 – Philip Butler, Assistant Professor of Theology and Black Posthuman and Artificial Intelligence Systems at the Iliff School of Theology; 2019(“Black Transhuman Liberation Theology,” Bloomsbury Publishing, pp. 129-130, bam)

Black Transhumanism as Revolt Spirituality

This entire project has led to this point. So far, we have engaged in four distinct explorations: (1) a trek into Black transhumanism; (2) a theoretical outline of panpsychic vitalism which is intended to ground Black bodies as biotechnology; (3) a reflection upon the potential effects of Black spiritual practices on Black biotechnology as a preemptive means to combat a racist white supremacist world; and (4) an exploration of the ways that Black folks are already transhuman, which imagines the potential for emergent technology to interact with Black biotechnology. This chapter will attempt to bring all of these together through the underlying idea that in order for Black folks to materialize liberating realities it is imperative that Black folks operate from a disposition that I call the spirituality of revolt. This chapter will begin with an exploration of the spirituality of revolt. Then it will imagine two futures: a Black transhuman dystopia and an illustration of Black transhuman liberation.

Revolt spirituality

The spirituality of revolt is embodied by nonconformity, rebellion to indoctrination of docility in all forms, and the insistence of absolute justice. It is dependent upon the action of transhumans for the liberation of transhumans. In the case of Blackness, it is dependent on the actions of Black biotech for the liberation of Black biotech. It does not look to God, or the hills, for help. The spirituality of revolt becomes a spiritual disposition originating from individual and communal remembrance. Biotechnology remembers. It combines a recollection of historical pain and ancestral histories. It assesses the limitations of historical actions as it imagines liberative possibilities. It knows that liberation will not come from a God who is somewhere else. God is us. We are . . . incarnate with life itself. Revolt spirituality results in a posthuman spawn that acknowledges the convergence of spiritualities, actions, and complexities toward the goal of freedom. It recognizes the potential for teaming up with others in the fight for freedom and acknowledges historical alliances demonstrated by Bacon’s Rebellion, the Populist Party, and the Poor People’s Campaign. However, based on the fragility of those alliances, it takes seriously the belief that the action of Black biotechnology is key to Black freedom. Realistically, it realizes the fragility of organizing actions that are intended to topple power structures (think COINTELPRO or the betrayal of Denmark Vesey). And so, it employs a mixture of skepticism, foresight, and strategy. It considers technological trends and imagines synchronistic and projective measures to work with while imagining unforeseen tech to fit its own needs. Imagine it as the merger of Black biotech, spirituality, and technology as a means to embody (through the totality of action and thought) the directed evolution of Black biotech, Black spirituality, and Black life, for the freedom of Black folks from organisms of oppression.

#### We might not know our final strategy, but we know that we must be ourselves, no matter how indignant we have to be---that is our spirit of revolt, the way to overcome the oppressive structures of the future by utilizing the resistances of the past

Butler, 19 – Philip Butler, Assistant Professor of Theology and Black Posthuman and Artificial Intelligence Systems at the Iliff School of Theology; 2019(“Black Transhuman Liberation Theology,” Bloomsbury Publishing, pp. 137-139, bam)

Let’s circle back to revolt spirituality. Given the variable nature of life one cannot determine for others which route to take. The apparatuses of nonviolent love/peace, potentially anti-white supremacist assimilation, or active violence each become wildly acceptable means of engagement. So, I’ll reaffirm what was said in Chapter 2. Vitality justifies biotechnology, even meta-biotechnology and its use. Revolt spirituality is an opportunity to live from radical modes of being one’s self. Revolt spirituality is a switch in biotechnology, preoutfitted with existing overlays (programming) that make being one’s self the most generative option, regardless of the outcome. This is not being yourself as in just randomly doing what you want. This is a call to demand the most of what makes you you while engaging in the absolute violence that dismantles the system. Since being one’s self is a mode of violence it becomes an epistemological affront to proto-normative modes of existence. Colonial frameworks work in the binary. Revolt spirituality works in the multivariate. It is an everyday way of pushing against the grain as a way to combat harmful modes of existence that maintain white supremacy. It is a commitment to the expansion of one’s self into the very essence of their Blackness (potentiality). It affirms oppression as a viable means to establish and reassert dominance in the social sphere. So, be you in the most indignant way. Engage in the violence of being yourself. I think the late Neighborhood Nipsey Hustle (Nip tha Great) might have described Revolt Spirituality the best. Revolt Spirituality is being “disrespectful and arrogant, but who gon’ stop us.”23 It signifies a violently antagonistic approach to organisms which seek to subjugate. It’s engages in the violent tactics of oppression for the sake of liberation. And its paradox is a statement to its complexity. But that should not discourage from its embodiment.

Historically embodied revolt spirituality

Revolt spirituality requires a consideration of what may be thought as its former embodiments. Nat Turner can be seen as an example of historical revolt spirituality. His vision of fighting spirits that represented what he perceived as an impending apocalypse ignited his plan which culminated in his all-out attempt to overthrow slavery on August 21, 1831. Harriet Tubman’s clandestine network was an example of revolt spirituality, as a communal practice. The boldness of Ida B. Wells to risk life and limb through her journalism and through her systematic documentation of the lynchings of Black folks across the United States was another example, too. W. E. B. DuBois’s scholarship provided a strategic vision of self-determination which became part of the foundation of decolonial discourse.24 Bishop Henry McNeal Turner embodied revolt spirituality through his insistence on self-consciousness, which he urged was key to revolution. The legendary punch thrown by Stormé DeLarverie that sparked the Stonewall Riots was another example. So are Octavia Butler’s speculative visions, and Assata Shakur’s willingness to participate in self-defense. It is important to note that these are not the only examples of revolt spirituality in history. It is also important to note that the Black spirit of revolt requires a “hundred year plan,” that simultaneously carries the weight of more than 250 slave revolts (conspired or materialized) during the antebellum period, the cunning wisdom of the Marooners, the defiant fortitude of the Deacons for Defense and Justice, the economic strategy of Robert F. Smith, along with the strategic fire of the Black Panther Party.25 The necessary coupling of patience and intensity that an intergeneration plan like revolt spirituality requires can be considered an upward apocalypse; accumulating positions of power and physically dismantling systems of inequity. Because before Black revolt spirituality can make itself known, the moving variables need to be accounted for. The wisdom provided by a hindsight view of the civil rights movement informs Black revolt spirituality. Its manifestation cannot afford the loss of its leaders. It also cannot afford to have just any leaders. Most importantly, it cannot wait and act in reply to acts of injustice. Black revolt spirituality must materialize as an intentionally relentless holistically calculated strategic plan that culminates in a spiritual disposition that will accept nothing less than freedom—nothing less than justice.

I think complete and utter freedom has not been attained because the line of freedom is elusive and continues to move. So, while tremendous organizers like Angela Y. Davis, Fannie Lou Hamer, Shaun King, W. E. B. DuBois, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, and Marcus Garvey have been able to rile the people, garnering strong support not only from the Black community but also from people all around the globe, Dick Gregory so rightfully stated, “Civil rights [are] what black folks are given in the U.S. on the installment plan, [of] civil-rights bills. [They are] not to be confused with human rights, which are the dignity, stature, [personhood], respect, and freedom belonging to all people by right of their birth.”26 The stark reality is that dialogue has not brought freedom. Marching has not brought freedom. Speeches have not brought freedom. Legislation has not brought freedom. Riots have not brought freedom. Slave revolts have not brought freedom. Advocating for the humanity of Black folks has not brought freedom.27 Black folks have historically found themselves contentiously staring at a gaping ravine. Freedom is on the other side, but there is a constant struggle to define what we see and decide on the right action that will get us there.

#### That solves, but refusal to challenge technoliberal structures recreates the surrogate human effect and furthers gendered racial hierarchies---

Atanasoski and Vora, 19 – Neda Atanasoski, Professor of Feminist Studies and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz; Kalindi Vora, Associate Professor of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at UC Davis; 2019( “Introduction: The Surrogate Human Effects of Technoliberalism,” *Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures*, Duke University Press, Accessed via Michigan Libraries, pg 23-24, bam)

Dissident Technologies and the Disruption of Technoliberal Enchantment: Our Itinerary

Dominant techno-utopic imaginaries direct funds and structure engineering research labs around the world, and therefore also impact the distribution of differential conditions of comfort versus misery in the present along vectors of race, gender, class, and other social hierarchies. The surrogate human effect explains how difference continues to inform what subjects become legible as human through technology design imaginaries that respond to market values by focusing on innovating and improving, rather than challenging, social and cultural structures and processes that are predicated by categories of gendered racial hierarchy. To this end, Denise da Silva offers the concept of “knowing (at) the limits of justice,” a practice that “unsettles what has become but offers no guidance for what has yet to become.”59 To insist on “knowing at the limits” of representational categories of difference, we must ask: If the predominant fantasies of systemic social change in mainstream Euro-American public discourse dwell upon the techno-utopics of a world in which all of those who are already human and already subjects ascend into the realm of those whose lives are supported by “human-free” or “unmanned” technological infrastructures of service (whether in factories, in the military, or in the nursing home), then how do we think about the relationship of new technologies to possible fields of political protest or action?

The dissident technological imaginaries we include in each chapter take up categories that challenge those of technoliberal capitalism and its projected futures. We read these design imaginaries as exploring the possibilities of technology to break from historically sedimented dynamics of freedom and unfreedom woven into the fabric of technological modernity. In addition to offering critique, each chapter thinks through how such design imaginaries can push at the limits of what is possible, disrupting the confining notions of (technoliberal capitalist) possibility housed in the engineering imaginaries we critique. We explore these questions through juxtaposing engineering imaginaries that embrace the surrogate effect, thereby advancing the infrastructure of technoliberal futures, with imagi- naries that do not.

#### Through the process of revolt spirituality, our advocacy puts resolutional terms of art into play, intervening in the traditional organization of debate as a limited institutional---but, the imposition of strict limited definitions opens the door for right wing populism and xenophobic nationalism

Taylor, 20 - Paul C. Taylor, W. Alton Jones Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University; 2020(“Black Reconstruction in Aesthetics,” Debates in Aesthetics, Vol. 15, No. 2, August 2020, British Society of Aesthetics, pp. 10-28, bam)

1 Introduction: Moten’s Toys

In a recent interview with Stefano Harney, Fred Moten offers an intriguing picture of the spirit in which theorists may offer terms of art to their readers (Harney and Moten 2013). Refusing the familiar metaphor of stocking a conceptual toolbox, he turns instead to the image of children sharing a toy box. He explains the merits of this image:

With my kids, most of what they do with toys is turn them into props…. They don’t play with them the right way – a sword is what you hit a ball with and a bat is what you make music with. I feel that way about these terms. In the end what’s most important is that the thing is put in play…. [T]here are these props, these toys, and if you pick them up you can move into… a new set of relations, a new way of being together, thinking together. (Harney and Moten 201, 105-06)

Moten expands on the point a bit later, focusing now on the work of writerly reflection:

[A] text is a social space…. [P]eople, things, are meeting there and interacting, rubbing off one another, brushing against one another…. [T]he terms are important insofar as they allow you, or invite you, or propel you, or require you, to enter into that social space. But once you enter into that social space, terms are just one part of it… (Harney and Moten 2013, 108; emphasis added)

To offer a concept is to put something in play, to invite others to play along with you and see how far it takes them. At some point the standard of success must be something other than enjoyment or satisfaction, something like truth or warranted assertibility. But attempting to meet the standard can still involve shared experimentation. And this sharing will come burdened and enriched by the complexities of human relationships, just as it does when children share, or decline to share, their toys.

I’ve started with Moten’s reflections because I mean for this essay to enact, encourage, and embody the kind of ludic “thinking together” that he describes. The editors have generously offered me some space to extend my recent reflections on black aesthetics. I propose to do this by deepening my engagement with a concept that has heretofore remained on the margins of these reflections. I started thinking in earnest about black aesthetics many years ago, and used John Dewey’s notion of reconstructing philosophy as a rhetorical point of entry. But it has since become clear to me that this notion can do more work, both for Dewey and for me.

I propose, then, to put the concept of reconstruction in play, to signal a determination to make an argument and an intervention. The argument will have to do with the parochialism of John Dewey, the institutional inertia of professional philosophy, the aesthetic dimensions of the US politics of reconstruction, the centrality of reconstructionist politics to the black aesthetic tradition, and the staging of a reconstructionist argument in the film, Black Panther (Coogler 2018). But arguments like these tend not to register properly because of certain reflexive and customary limits on some common forms of philosophical inquiry. The sort of professional philosophy I was raised to practice and value, and that largely underwrites forums like this one, tends not to be particularly inclusive and open-minded, especially when it comes to subjects that bear directly on the thoughts, lives, and practices of people racialized as black. Black aesthetics, by contrast, is an inherently ecumenical enterprise, reaching across disciplinary and demographic boundaries to build communities of practice and exchange. Hence the need for an intervention: to create the space for arguments in the latter sphere to do work in the former, and for people to make the arguments across contexts.

The sense of reconstruction that animates this essay, then, maps directly onto Moten’s sense of playful intellectual engagement. It aims to use this sort of engagement to expand the self-conception of the community of inquiry to open it to new members, subjects, methods, and perspectives. The burden of the essay will be to explain this transformation, but I wanted to start, to some degree, by modeling it. This is why I began with Fred Moten rather than with an authorising nod to one of philosophy’s mighty dead. Dewey has already started to push toward center stage, so the dead will have their say. But to start with Moten is to subject myself to the discipline that I’m demanding of the profession. A contemporary stalwart of Black Studies and related fields, Moten is a capacious thinker, as likely to reference Cavell and Wittgenstein as Coltrane and Wynter. He is also a challenging prose writer (in addition to being a celebrated poet), whose style can provoke in the unwary analytic philosopher the same dismay that led to Heidegger’s long banishment from (our part of) the canon. But he is, most of all, a tremendous resource for the study of black aesthetics (and much else). I do not know of any better evidence of the need for reconstruction than my own recently defeated willingness to remain silent about his work.

The analogy to play has the additional benefit of reinforcing the need for ground rules. In this spirit, it’s worth making a couple of comments here at the outset.

First, I will assume in what follows that it is possible to talk coherently about racial phenomena. Race is not, as far as this essay is concerned, an illusion or a lie. It may be a myth, depending on what one thinks myths are; and it is surely not the motive force behind all human history or the most salient variable in every human interaction. But it is, for all that, in a suitably complicated sense of the term that will not get fleshed out here, real enough. Anyone needing argument on the point can consult the growing literature on the topic and return to this discussion at a more convenient time.[1] For current purposes I will simply help myself to concepts like the “black” in “black aesthetics,” fully confident that sufficient backing is available should the need arise.

Second, nothing in what follows entails or requires that one accept blackness as the only racial position with aesthetic dimensions worth exploring. Nor is it the only one that has animated a venerable and vibrant tradition of such explorations. It just happens to be the one I am interested in right now, and it happens, like the others, to repay attention to its specific and distinctive manifestations.

There is of course a great deal to say about the way different modes of racialization interact, just as there is a great deal to say about the way racialization intersects with the forces that animate other social identity categories. But one cannot say everything at once. As the study of these topics is in its infancy in philosophical aesthetics, a provisional narrowing of the subject seems in order. Added to which, as we will see, part of the point of developing a philosophy of black aesthetics is to connect to a pre-existing field of inquiry and practice that goes by that name and insists, much of the time, on this focus.

2 The Wars of Reconstruction

I have not argued for the thought that putting concepts in play is interestingly and productively different from what one might otherwise do with concepts. I have simply appealed to the authority of Moten and Harney, or, better, to the intuitive plausibility of their account of this activity. I do not propose to argue for it—not, at least, in any way other than trying it out and tallying up the results. But granting for now that there is something to this approach, it is worth explaining why I want to put this particular notion in play. Why reconstruction? Why take up reconstruction in relation to aesthetics?

One reason to take up a concept is, of course, that working with the notion in question might be instructive or otherwise illuminating. I will soon offer a reason like this for my approach here. Working through the concept of reconstruction can deepen my account of black aesthetics, instructively complicate the legacy of John Dewey, and highlight the tensions between philosophy as a practice and philosophy as a profession. But pointing to a concept’s uses does not explain how its potential for use became apparent.

Two factors put the notion of reconstruction in my path so that it might occur to me to work through it in the way I have proposed here. The first factor has to do with the accidents of history and biography that led to my interest in black aesthetics, and that led me to the peculiar thought that Dewey could help me nurture that interest. This will, to some degree, be the topic of a later section.

The second factor is the state of racial politics in the US and beyond—or, perhaps better, the convergence of racial politics with politics full stop, for people who need these things to be separated. I chose to put the notion of reconstruction in play in part because the world did it first, and I found myself fairly confronted with the thought that this concept was a resource worth mining, representing a reality worth confronting. That will be the topic of this section.

I received the commission for this essay a few short months after the first, now-infamous “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. A group of alt-right supporters gathered on the University of Virginia campus the day before the rally, galvanized by plans to remove a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee. The mostly young, mostly male protestors “proudly proclaimed their loyalty to a white-nationalist ideology,” (Wallace-Wells 2017) shouted “white lives matter,” “blood and soil,” and “Jews will not replace us,” while marching in “a torchlight procession—a symbolic gathering meant to evoke similar marches of the Hitler Youth and other ultra-right nationalist organizations of the past century” (Helm 2017). The rally on the next day then devolved into violent conflicts with counter-protestors, one of whom died when an alt-right sympathiser aimed his car into a crowd.

The events in Charlottesville were striking for several reasons. The killing of Heather Heyer was tragic, and the apparent fragility of civility and order was sobering. But homicide and antisocial criminality are, sadly, not that unusual. This instance of antisocial and homicidal criminality was striking in part because it came during the latest in a series of increasingly brazen attempts to recuperate and mobilise white supremacist discursive machinery. The torchlight march, the cries of blood and soil, the defense of a Confederate monument in the name of a putatively shared American heritage, and the vocal refusal—which is to say, announcement, then refusal—of a Jewish conspiracy: all of these gestures manipulate familiar racist rhetoric and symbols in support of a white nationalist agenda.

One way to register the familiarity of the Charlottesville conflict is to think of it as another front in what historian Douglas Egerton calls “the wars of reconstruction” (Egerton 2014, 5971, 5863-5864). “Reconstruction” here names the period that followed the US Civil War and the process of rebuilding and recreating the social and political order that the war had destroyed. This process took multiple forms. Some involved straightforward political and policy initiatives, backed by military and police power. Others involved cultural and ethical projects backed by softer and more dispersed forms of power and influence, as we will see in the next section. All were viciously and vigorously contested, in the bitter struggles that give Egerton his animating metaphor and organising theme.

Charlottesville can represent a new front in these wars because these conflicts far outlasted the formal hostilities between the United States and the renegade Confederacy. The war was simply the most concentrated eruption of the violent contradictions that lay at the core of the American project, a project rooted, to put it only a little too crudely, in the valorization and pursuit of freedom by an expansionist, slaveholding, settler colonial state. These contradictions defined the project from the beginning, and committed its architects and managers to periodically renegotiating the basic terms of cooperation to avoid open conflict. In this sense the three-fifths clause of the Constitution, the Fugitive Slave Act, and the Missouri Compromise were all ways of managing tensions that finally erupted in the Civil War. The end of the war did not resolve the tensions and contradictions, although some of the more ambitious advocates for the Reconstruction project imagined that it might. Some people thought that the post-war rebuilding might also be a second founding, serving to re-establish the American project on a new, more secure footing. But what actually happened was that the same cycle of periodic renegotiation resumed, only with new stakes. Before the Civil War the question had been whether the union would hold. After the war, after reconstruction, the question had to do with the prospects for reconciling American democracy with racial justice; or, put differently, for comprehensively rooting out the social, political, and ethical conditions for the persistence of white supremacy. Charlottesville showed that the question has yet to receive a satisfactory answer.

3 The Aesthetics of Reconstruction

Once one notes the persistence of the wars of reconstruction, it is easy to credit the aesthetic implications of this state of affairs. Warfare is always bound up with expressive culture, most clearly in the narratives and symbols that combatants use to cultivate patriotic fervor and to galvanize hatred for the enemy. The wars of reconstruction are no different. The domain of the aesthetic is one of the fronts in these wars, in ways it will pay for us to consider in relation to the broader history of reconstruction politics.

The Reconstruction era got its name from a constellation of programs launched by the US federal government in the wake of the Civil War. These programs aimed mainly to restore order in the vanquished southern states, while also, to varying degrees, uprooting the white supremacist, anti-democratic, and secessionist practices that defined the erstwhile Confederacy. This federal initiative came to an end in 1877, when the provisional consensus of pro-Union and anti-slavery political forces that supported it splintered under the pressures of fatigue and of white supremacist recalcitrance.

The basic reconstructionist impulse—aimed at rooting out the conditions for the persistence of white supremacist and anti-democratic practices—survived the demise of the federal initiative, and worked on multiple levels to animate a variety of activities and projects. There was, for example, a constellation of local and regional movements, policies, and initiatives, many of which began with federal support but continued without it as long as they could manage in the face of lethal and terroristic violence. Underwriting many of these efforts was an ideological commitment to a general cultural reorientation, organized around revised understandings of freedom, equality, community, democracy, and citizenship. And underwriting this ideological program was a project of ethical counter-habituation, calling individual citizens to locate and cultivate the better angels of their natures and repudiate their “unreconstructed” anti-democratic sentiments.

The ethical and cultural dimensions of the broader Reconstruction program point toward the relevance of this program, and of its prehistory, for the work of black aesthetics. Whatever black aesthetics is—a topic we have not come to yet, I realize—it will have to involve the work of people like the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass, whose greatness is constituted in large part by his determination to use culture work to clarify the contradictions and injustices of a slaveholding democratic republic. Douglass’ speeches, writings, and visual culture strategies deserve pride of place here,[2] but there are many other examples of aesthetic strategies being brought to bear on the work of vindicating black humanity and imagining political transformation. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s massively influential novel, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, is just one example, albeit one that also does us the service of raising thorny questions about, for example, the limits of didactic art and the relationship between ethical and aesthetic criticism.

These transformational aesthetic interventions continued into the Reconstruction era proper, and well beyond. Culture workers continued to use visual art, song, oratory, drama, literature, and other forms to insist on black humanity, to reimagine racially oppressive and exploitative social arrangements, and to call attention to the damage that white supremacy was doing to black life and to the causes of democracy and justice. This work did not stop when the federal program ended in 1877, any more than the local struggles for institutional transformation ended. In this spirit one might think of the “New Negro” movement usually associated with the Harlem Renaissance as a continuation of this Reconstructionist cultural program.

Despite the steady persistence of Reconstructionist efforts after 1877, the demise of the federal Reconstruction program did mark a real change in the prospects for transformation. From this point on the US state declined to enforce the new dispensation and then, to varying degrees in various places, threw itself fully into the work of restoring, or “redeeming,” something very much like the old dispensation.[3] Violence flowed into the breach created by the “Redemption” of the political and cultural forces that animated the old south, as lynching and “white riots” became routine methods of reining back in the labour power and political aspirations of the nominally free African American population. Until the passage of federal civil rights legislation in the 1960s, white supremacy reasserted itself and clung assiduously to its cultural importance and political influence.

Then, after the Second World War, the Reconstructionist program found new openings. This was the beginning of what activist and organizer Jack O’Dell calls “the new reconstruction” (2010), and what Manning Marable (1984) calls “the Second Reconstruction”. In the 1950s and 1960s the ongoing struggles of what some scholars call “the long Civil Rights Movement,” reaching all the way back to the 1920s and 1930s, gained new traction with governmental authorities and with US popular opinion. Thanks to the efforts of people like O’Dell, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, and Martin Luther King, Jr., and to the organizations they helped lead and build, the nation now seemed to be returning to the Reconstructionist project nearly a century after the premature end of the project’s first iteration.

As with the first Reconstruction, the twentieth century US black freedom movement accepted aesthetic experience as an appropriate and promising arena for political engagement. Public memories of the movement’s accepted political heroes are bound up with specific styles of oratory, dress, and bodily comportment, though the resulting focus on middle class, Christian, heterosexual black men is in tension with at least some of the movement’s stated goals. In addition, culture workers practicing in a variety of idioms, in various relationships to elite and popular artworld communities, took the movement’s priorities as inspiration and as subject. Think here of everyone from Gwendolyn Brooks and Joan Baez to James Brown and Max Roach. Finally, many of the more controversial inhabitants of this cultural moment, like Malcolm X, Huey Newton, and Angela Davis, found their substantive contributions to the elimination of racial (and other forms of) injustice bound up with their stylistic innovations. Angela Davis has spoken eloquently and poignantly to this phenomenon in a wonderful essay about the reduction of her historical legacy to a hairstyle (1994).

4 The Ironies of American Philosophy

The opening of a new front in the US wars of reconstruction—or, one might say, the revival of Redemptionism as a broadly viable political and cultural force—encouraged me to put the notion of reconstruction in play. But the notion may not have struck me as a potential resource for specifically philosophical reflection, had John Dewey not tried to mobilize it for this purpose first. What really did the trick was the realization that I had tried to use Dewey’s use of reconstruction to build the bridge between professional philosophy and black aesthetics, while mostly ignoring Dewey’s own inattention to the deeper meanings of the concept. This layering of oversights or evasions—layered because Dewey’s came first, to be compounded by mine—interests me now not as an occasion to take the canon down a peg, but as a cautionary tale about the dangers that await and the ironies that attend superficial invocations of the idea of reconstruction.

Almost a hundred years ago, in 1920, Dewey published a little book of lectures called Reconstruction in Philosophy (1948). The book’s organizing theme animated most of his mature work in one way or another: society’s needs and capacities have outgrown its practices and assumptions, he argued, and something must be done. He chose to use the idea of reconstruction to help make this point, but somehow failed, or declined, to notice that this choice points in the direction of an even richer and more challenging philosophical practice than he imagined.

Dewey thought that liberal democratic society (in its industrial, capitalist, and managerial form, we would now add) needed reconstructing, and a reconstructed philosophy was essential to meeting this need. This meant, among other things, uprooting some familiar but damaging intellectual and professional habits in philosophy, and using the newly liberated practice of inquiry to root out similarly damaging habits in the wider society. These bad philosophical habits involved broad misconceptions of experience, knowledge, history, truth, and other such things, all wrapped up in a general inattention to historical and phenomenological context. But the details of this worry are less important right now than the punchline: recovering philosophy from these mistakes would enable it to embrace a vital social role, a role Dewey would describe later as a “criticism of the influential beliefs that underlie culture” (1985).

Equipped with this philosophical model of cultural criticism, Dewey spent much of his career reinterpreting concepts at the heart of vital social institutions and practices. He argues in Individualism Old and New (1930) that the most influential strains of twentieth century political thought are rooted in flawed conceptions of freedom and of the individual, conceptions forged in the fires of earlier social conflicts and carried over without appropriate adjustment (which is to say, it makes sense to demand liberty or death in response to King George in a way that it probably doesn’t in response to the New Deal.) Similarly, he argues in Art as Experience (1934) that the dominant conceptions of art are rooted in flawed conceptions of aesthesis and expression, misconceptions directly traceable to misunderstandings of experience as such.

Dewey’s emphasis on historically informed, phenomenologically responsible, reconstructive cultural criticism comes with several strange ironies in tow. Some are tangentially related to the topic of this essay, but need not detain us. Think here of the way Dewey’s appeals to cultural criticism look rather little like anything a contemporary reader would assign that name. Or think of the way he declines to subject the concept of reconstruction to the sort genealogical scrutiny that he gives concepts like “art,” “individualism,” and “experience”.

The principal irony is that Dewey’s uses of “reconstruction” maintain a distressing distance from the racial politics that surround the term in US contexts. He seems to have employed the notion largely as an allusion to World War I, and to the need for the sort of postwar restoration that the term “reconstruction” broadly signifies. But, as we have seen, this term happens also to name a project that is intimately bound up with the afterlife of the US Civil War and with the bitter and lethally violent racial politics that drove and dominated this war. The struggles over this project cast a deep shadow over US social life during Dewey’s lifetime. Even worse, the shadow fell rather directly across Dewey’s own life—he was born in 1859, and his father fought in the Civil War—and, if Louis Menand is right, across his philosophical commitments (Menand 2001).[4] But it somehow manages not to fall over the Reconstruction lectures, which remain utterly disinterested in the fact of white supremacy, much as the rest of Dewey’s work would lead one to expect.

The irony of a child of the Reconstruction era remaining silent on the persistence of that era’s conflicts is particularly striking if one considers the extremely public forms that the conflicts had taken in the years leading up to 1920. Lynching, which is to say, lethal and extra-legal violence overwhelmingly visited on black people as a terroristic method of social control, had by that time become a thriving social practice. It had also become, among people who fancied themselves more enlightened than the residents of the unreconstructed south, something of a national scandal. In 1918, Leonidas Dyer introduced legislation in the US House of Representatives to stop the scandalous practice, spurred by the vigorous public advocacy of Ida B. Wells-Barnett and, somewhat later, others (including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP], an organization that Dewey helped create). The Dyer Bill immediately became a source of intense controversy and remained unsuccessfully on the legislative horizon for years. Similarly, there was the so-called “Red Summer” of 1919, when US veterans of colour returned from fighting overseas only to find their freedoms still radically, violently, and infamously curtailed by deadly “white riots” at home.

Perhaps the best example (for an essay in aesthetics, anyway) of the ongoing struggle between reconstruction and redemption might be the bitter cultural debate over works like D.W. Griffith’s landmark film, Birth of a Nation. Released in 1915, this cinematic re-telling of a sensationalist racist novel affirmed a number of troubling racist and sexist propositions. It depicted black people as unfit for democratic self-government and as threats to law and order. The sense of law and order it relied on was rigidly gendered and racialized. It rendered black men as rapacious and predatory threats to white womanhood, and by extension to the political order that required white male authority over and access to all female sexuality. Similarly, it rendered black women as licentious and predatory temptresses, whose wicked influence over white men could, as one of the film’s title cards put it, “blight a nation”. The film motivated its narrative by affirming and amplifying the racist and sexist myths that were at that very moment being used to justify lethal terroristic violence. In these ways and others, it justified mass disfranchisement and extra-legal violence in support of white supremacist modes of social organization. (It is also, as is well known, a landmark in the history of cinema. As one writer puts it, the worst thing about the movie is how good it is (Brody 2013). It is therefore grist for the mill of reflection on the relationship between aesthetic criticism and moral criticism. That is not my topic here.)

The film struck many observers and activists as scandalous and dangerous from the start. It inspired nationwide protests and boycotts, and led to an abortive NAACP campaign to produce a response film, to fight the fire of cinematic propaganda with fire. Nevertheless, the film, along with a great many similar creative works in print, on stage, and on screen, prospered and enjoyed great popularity. Figures like filmmaker Oscar Micheaux and journalist William Monroe Trotter worked tirelessly to dispel the myths that animated these aesthetic products. But their efforts ran aground on considerations that Egerton puts like this: “elegantly written monographs [like Du Bois’s Black Reconstruction (1935), written to counter the pseudo-scholarly version of Griffith’s narrative then current among US historians] were no match for romantic fiction” (like Gone With the Wind (1939)), and “reasoned editorials about the truth of Reconstruction were no match for popular media” like film (Egerton 2014, 5971, 5863-5864).[5]

These glimpses of the state of racial politics in the early twentieth century should sharpen the tensions I have tried to tease out of Dewey’s Reconstruction lectures. If the point of the broad reconstructionist program was to renew the prospects for American democracy and to subdue white supremacy as a political force, then this work was very much still ongoing, with its outcome still hanging in the balance. This work had, moreover, become a matter of national controversy, fueled by extremely high-profile contests over federal legislation, popular art, and appropriate uses of political violence. And while all this was happening, Dewey actively recommended, without irony, something that made almost no contact with any aspect of this wider situation, but that he nevertheless described as “reconstruction”.

5 Missed Connections: Ideas and Institutions

I have read Dewey in a way that opens the door to a number of interesting questions, but the work I have in mind for this essay requires closing the door on most of them. One might ask, for example, what led Dewey to use the idea of reconstruction in 1920 and then to abandon it soon after? How could he fail to notice the rhetorical and potentially substantive alignments between his philosophical program and the challenges of the Jim Crow era?

Answering these questions would require scholarly excursions that, however fascinating, would lead away from the subject of this essay. Insights surely await in the historical record—in Dewey’s correspondence, say. Engaging the literature on Dewey and race would also be instructive, especially since that literature has grown considerably in scope and sophistication in recent years. But my aim in highlighting Dewey’s apparent indifference to the historical baggage of Reconstruction is not to work toward explaining these missteps, if that’s what they are, or toward reconciling them with his considered philosophical views.

(One short digression may not be amiss, though, since it takes on an issue that, if left untended, may distract from the work of this essay. One easy way to account for Dewey’s indifference is to credit the profundity of the world-historical shift that came with the First World War. The sixty-year-old Dewey can surely be forgiven, one might think, for letting this devastating cataclysm that was not really about race turn his attention away from a race-related conflict that happened when he was a baby. Unfortunately, this move just pushes the worry back, or perhaps up, a step. For one thing, and as noted above, the white supremacist commitments that animated the US Civil War also spawned bitter controversies on the domestic front both during and after the war years. For another, and as Du Bois ably argues in “The African Roots of the War,” these same commitments were also very much at work in World War I. We tend not to notice because we falsely think of the war as a contest only involving white people, and because foregrounding the agency of white people routinely discourages people from applying race-theoretic analyses. But race-thinking was central to the evolving conceptions of civilization and progress, and to the great power machinations, that both led to “The Great War” and were undone by it. So: tracing Dewey’s race- and reconstruction-blindness to the greater gravity of a World War somehow purified of racial politics only deepens the problem.)

Dewey’s decontextual lapse is instructive here because it shows him missing connections that philosophical aestheticians are still missing today, connections with important resonances for our current practices. Worse, it shows him apparently failing even to notice that the connections are there. We can learn from his example and work harder to notice these opportunities and to take advantage of them.

First, we see him missing opportunities to bring powerful philosophical tools to bear on important social conditions. His failure to subject the culture of white supremacy to philosophical criticism is in part a failure of theoretical imagination, as is his tardy and partial recognition that cultural criticism might productively involve a robust, sustained engagement with particular artifacts in popular culture and in everyday life.

Contemporary philosophical aestheticians are in danger of a similar failure. We are witnessing the second redemption of exclusionary white identitarianism in the US and the revival and growth of xenophobic right populism in Europe. Both of these developments rely heavily on aesthetic strategies, and so far we have had little to say about them. Taking on board the questions and resources of critical social theories—like critical race theory and decolonial feminism—would be one way to deepen our engagement with these pressing and aesthetically rich phenomena.

A second missed connection involves the institutional conditions that enable the aforementioned failure of theoretical imagination. If we think of Dewey’s indifference to the legacies of Reconstruction as the deliverance of a whitely epistemology of ignorance, it behooves us to consider the social conditions that produce and enable this ignorance (Sullivan and Tuana 2007; Mills 1997). José Medina might say at this point that the conditions for an epistemology of resistance were not sufficiently developed: Dewey was not enmeshed in the circuits of exchange and communities of inquiry that would have pushed back against—resisted—the easy ignorance of racial conditions that white supremacy cultivates even in well-meaning moral agents (Medina 2012). There is an easy story to tell about how this happened to Dewey, working as he did in a rigidly segregated academy. But once again, I mean to bracket the question of whether and how much this historical figure could have fought the constraints of his social environment. I am more interested in learning from his example and actively working to build more responsibly constructed communities of inquiry.

Undertaking philosophical reconstruction in this critical spirit means working on at least two levels. One level involves the sort of work professional philosophers usually do and are most comfortable doing: appealing to theoretical and conceptual considerations to recommend different ways of thinking. But a second level involves the sort of work we do too infrequently and too haphazardly: interrogating and grappling with the institutional conditions under which dominant ways of thinking attain their influence. This takes us back to Moten and Harney’s focus on ways of thinking and being together. Philosophy happens in social contexts, and some of these contexts happen to be curated by professional associations and scholarly societies. We often treat these associations like low-stakes social clubs, charged simply with organizing the next meeting in deference to whatever traditions and customs have governed every other meeting we can remember. But history sometimes brings us to crucial points at which the leaders of these organizations have to take seriously the burdens and opportunities of leadership and organizational design. We have reached one of those points, both because of general challenges facing humanistic scholarship in the higher education sector and because of the broader political challenges of the moment.

#### That prevents an emphasis on efficiency that furthers the drive towards total access, perfecting the algorithm of work under the guise of freedom and equitability

Harney & Moten, 15 – Stefano Harney, Professor of Strategic Management Education at Singapore Management University; and Fred Moten, Professor in the Department of Performance Studies, Tisch School of the Arts, NYU; 2015(“Mikey the Rebelator,” Performance Research, Vol. 20, Iss. 4, Fall 2015, pp. 141-145, Available to Subscribing Institutions via Taylor and Francis, Accessed via Michigan Libraries, bam)

THE REBELATOR

In Upon Westminster Bridge, Mikey Smith is jay-walking through the language.2 It's 1982, the beginning of logistical capitalism. The assembly line is snaking out of the factory and into his mouth. And he cyaan believe it. He won't believe it. He won't go to work. He comes from the property. He's been there before. He's come to undo. He's moved to dissemble. The gathering in his mouth is out of line.

With the rise of logistical capitalism it is not the product that is never finished but the production line, and not the production line, but its improvement. In logistical capitalism it is the continuous improvement of the production line that never finishes, that's never done, that's undone continuously. The sociologists caught a glimpse of this line and thought that they were seeing networks. The political scientist called this line globalization. The business professors named it and priced it as business process re-engineering. Mikey knew better.

Mikey veers back across the street to where Louise Bennett sits, talking about how she inspired him. We can see her in a clip, wronging rights with her words, advocate of an undone language open to respecting what you like, and liking what you respect. Now her words are everywhere, like whispers from a cotton tree, and they have to be. And logistics, which is to say access, is everywhere – again, because it wants to be.

But not just logistics; and not just any kind of access. The capitalist science of logistics can be represented by a simple formula: movement + access. But logistical capitalism subjects that formula to the algorithm: total movement + total access. Logistical capitalism seeks total access to your language, total translation, total transparency, total value from your words. And then it seeks more. At Queen Mary, University of London, before the counter-insurgency, we called this postcolonial capitalism. How does it feel to be a problem in someone else's supply chain? What else is a colonial regime but the imposition of psychopathic protocols of total access to bodies and land in the service of what today is called supply-chain management? The problem of the twenty-first century is the problem of the colour line of assembly.

This logistical capitalism, this postcolonial capitalism, uses the stored, stolen, historical value of words to press its point. But Mikey would not speak that way. He saw what was coming by misremembering what had come to pass. Mikey jay-walked through his audience as they listened the wrong way across his words. Mikey put his hands up to fight one night and surrendered to us. He fought, and by fighting surrendered, to what M. Jacqui Alexander called our ‘collectivized self-possession’3, to our hapticality, which is at the same time our collectivized dispossession. Because a rebelator defends our partiality, our incompleteness, our hands dispossessed to hold one another up in the battle of Zion. Mikey was a rebelator in the battle of Zion. Mikey the rebelator sabotaging a line of words(worth).

Mikey is talking to C. L. R. James on a bed in Brixton in South London, in an unsettled room, Linton Kwesi Johnson standing to the side. You have to move across the language because the language moves the line through you. The line moves now, the assembly line, the flow line, the high line, and that means you. You're moving to work like you always did but now you're working as you're moving, too. James is telling them he used to love Wordsworth and still does, but it was only when he got back to the Caribbean that he realized what was missing in that poetry because something else in that poetry was everywhere. James is talking about language as domination; Mikey is already having to deal with language as forced improvement in production, on the new and improved line, where the Man gives orders to His men. Mikey's working on an old new open secret logisticality, born in the hold, held together in loss and in being lost, and James is giving him some uncoordinates, a sea captain like Ranjit's father, high on the land now, low, shipped, stranded on a bed in Brixton, in an unsettled room. Mikey's not working on improving the English language. He's working on disproving it.

Mikey Smith deregulates the Queen's English in Mi Cyaan Believe It and he's not worried about being incomplete. He's jay-walking through the Queen's English, instituting a sound system to which her standard submits, right across down there so. He's walking across to it right now, on the gully side. Mikey the rebelator. He says that those have ‘been restless a full time, dem go get some rest’. But there's no rest with access; access troubles the unrest it came to steal, and still. This is the early moment of logistical capitalism, with James on the bed aged from industrial capitalism, and all that settler capitalism sedimented underneath them in London in the hard red earth. In an unsettled room they institute. They're the offline institute of the new line, the new poetics of the anti-line, the antillean, multi- matrilinear dispersion of drum and bass and grain against the grain of organized saying, catching logistics in logisticality's crosstown traffic, in crosstown traffic's constant violation of the crosswalk, the sanctioned intersection, the settled, hegemonic term. Mikey's more and less than perpendicular swerve cyaan believe that managed disturbance and keeps on fucking it up as a field of hypermusical staying, crossed between crossing and forgetting, contradicting and misremembering, revealing and rebelling, refusing to believe. Look the wrong way before you cross. Move the wrong way when you cross. That's how we semble.

When we move we move to access, which is to say we assemble and disassemble anew. And in logistical capitalism the assembly line moves with us by moving through us, accessing us to move and moving us to access. We can't deny access, because access is how we roll, and roll on, in and as our undercommon affectability, as Denise Ferreira da Silva might say.4 But we make access burn and we love that, the line undone in the undoing of every single product, our renewed assembly in the general disassembly, our dissed assembly offline on the line, strayed staying, stranded beneath the strand, at rest only in unrest, making all the wrong moves, because our doing and undoing ain't the same as theirs.5 They know, sometimes better than we do, that to move wrong, or not to move, is now no longer just an obstruction to logistics or an obstacle to progress. To move wrong or not to move is sabotage. It is an attack on the assembly line, a subversion of logistical capitalism. To move wrong is to deny access to capital by staying in the general access that capital desires and devours and denies. To move wrong, to move nought, is to have our own thing of not having, of handing and being handed; it is our continuous breaking up – before, and against that, we were told – of our continuous get together. But with the critical infrastructure that is the new line, and with the resilient response that protects it, the jay-walker becomes no longer just a rube in the way of logistics, a country bukee in traffic, but a saboteur, a terrorist, a demon. Jay-walkers do not sabotage by exodus or occupation as once a maroon, or a striking miner, or a ghost dancer may have. Jay-walkers disturb the production line, the work of the line, the assembly line, the flow line, by demanding inequality of access for all. When the line don't stop to let you catch your breath, jay-walkers stand around and say this stops today. Jay-walking is dissed assembly for itself. Such sabotage is punishable by death. It's hard to know what we institute when we don't institute but we do know what it feels like.

Total value and its violence not only never went away, but as da Silva says, they are the foundation of the present as time, the condition of time, of the world as a time–space logic founded on the first horrible logistics of sale, the first mass movement of total access.6 Now continuous improvement drives us toward total value, makes all work incomplete, makes us move to produce, compels us to get online. We are liberated from work in order to work more, to work harder. We are violently invited to exercise our right to connect, our right to free speech, our right to choose, our right to evaluate, our right to right individuality in order that we may improve the production line running through our liberal dreams. Freedom through work was never the slave's cry but we hear it all around us today. Continuous improvement is the metric and metronomic meter of uplift. Those who won't improve, those who won't collectivize and individuate with the correct neurotic correctness, those who do the same thing again, those who revise, those who tell the joke you've heard and cook the food you've had and take the walk you've walked, those who plan to stay and keep on moving, those who keep on moving wrong – those are the ones who hold everybody back, fucking up the production line that's supposed to improve us all. They like being incomplete. They like being incomplete and incompleting one another. Their incompleteness is said to be a dependency, a bad habit. They're said to be partial, patchy, sketchy. They lack coordinates. They're collectively uncoordinated in total rhythm. They're in(self)sufficient.

Paolo Friere thought our incompleteness is what gave us hope.7 It is our incompleteness that inclines us toward one another. For Friere, the more we think of ourselves as complete, finished, whole, individual, the more we cannot love or be loved. Is it too much to put this the other way around? To say, by way of Friere, that love is the undercommon self-defence of being-incomplete? This seems important now when our incompleteness is something we are invited and then compelled to address and improve, when we are told to be impatient with it, and embarrassed by it. We need to be intact. We're told to raise our buzz because we're all fucked up. But in our defence we love that we are complete only in a plained incompletion, which they would have undone, finished, owned, and sent on down the line. We do mind working because we do mind dying.

THE CONSULTANT

The consultant is not here to provide solutions, innovation or even advice. The consultant exists to demonstrate access in the era of logistical capitalism. The consultant is not an ideologue. Ideology operates here only for the consultant himself. He is demonstrably the only one who believes his bullshit, but fortunately for him this is not the point, not his point. The consultant literalizes access to workplaces, demonstrating their openness by showing up in their midst, like a drone. One day you come to work and there he is sitting next to the boss. Nothing she says or does is as important as this demonstration of access. What the consultant introduces into the imposed, exposed workers’ corp is the algorithm. The consultant bears the algorithm, which violates in the name of completion. When the consultant brings his algorithmic charge, the body of the workers, that undesired and constantly invaded enclosure, is finished. We are rendered complete, made free, by the work, in the work, of the algorithm. We are done, and done in by, the consultant's forced, aggressive incorporation of an undoing that was of and for itself, of and for ourself, the undoing we keep on making in the face of every sovereign invasion, every violent ascription of words and worth and (the) work. The consultant completes, so that he can access the private loop of a thwarted desire to be intact. It is not the product or even the organization that interests the algorithm of work. It is the production line's infinite curvature. The algorithm of work is a demonstration within a demonstration. With access comes (the necessity of) improvement, which always takes the form of a demand for more access. As the introduction of the consultant inside the organization demonstrates access, so the introduction of the algorithm demonstrates improvement. The algorithm is the machine of self-improvement; as such, it is the only machine that makes new machines. There is a mirror – marking and instantiating self-envisaging's shared exclusivity, that scary, silly, Stuart Smalleyish binary solipsism – that stands between it and man, the other only machine that makes new machines and, in so doing, improves itself. The mirror between man, the mirror, and The Man, man's mirror, is the algorithm. Meanwhile, the inhuman, which is our fleshly inherence and inhabitation in the general mechanics of a general disregard for self-reflection, makes machines because it does not want to improve. Before the algorithm, machines came from strikes, from resistance, from sabotage. Machines made from the algorithm do not wait for the class struggle.

The algorithm of work subjects every labour process on the production line to undoing, disassembly and incompletion, in order to demand it be completed better, assembled better, done better. It leaves behind not an improved organization but a metric to ensure the organization will never be satisfied. The metric measures everything against its last instance, ensuring that the last instance never comes. The metric demands more access, more measurement of access, more movement, more assembly, more measure of the last instance, which is given in and as enclosure. The consultant is still talking but it does not matter now what he says. The algorithm of work has arrived, algorithmic surplus has gone viral. If the settler could not be heard over the screams of primitive accumulation, and the citizen could not be heard over the noise of the machines, the consultant cannot be heard over the click of the metrics. Mikey heard this noise and walked the other way, another way, so the algorithm could not pass through, so we could hold him up and pass him along.

Nahum Chandler reminds us of a term W. E. B. DuBois invented and employed; ‘democratic despotism’8. When the consultant cannot demonstrate access, and therefore the algorithm cannot demonstrate improvement, the consultant calls for policy as once (and still) the citizen calls for heteropatriachal nationalism or the settler for racist manifest destiny. Policy is past all that, even though all that's not past. Policy comes in to diagnose what's blocking access, and what's blocking access are ‘those people’. What's wrong with those people in Detroit who want water, in British Columbia who want land, in Manila who want some place to stay? Policy says there is something wrong with those people that makes it so that the consultant can't get access. But it is the other way around. The consultant is denied access – those people deny him access – because they embrace the general access-in-antagonism that he denies. And so policy must be called. Self- defence becomes the disease. Love becomes the problem because love is the problem, the self-defence of the accessible. But, hey, maybe governance can help, which is to say maybe those practising self-defence may be willing to self-diagnose, self-reflect, self-improve! One way or another policy will proscribe, or policy will get posed – as democracy, as democratic despotism, where everyone is given the chance to say there is something wrong with those people. Democratic despotism is the imposition of policy and its violent possibilities and impossibilities on the wrong(ed).

Because the thing is, the consultant's not wrong, the algorithm of work is not malfunctioning, the policy hustler is not misdiagnosing. We're wrong, which is why we're wronged. We are incomplete. Moreover, they got the very idea of incompleteness from us! Another word for incompleteness is study, or more precisely, revision. The consultant gets this revision from us, from study, from our sumptuous revisions of one another out of existence, as existence. Study happens and it don't stop. In study, we are engaged consciously and unconsciously. We revise, and then again. This is not just about distinguishing improvement as capitalist efficiency. That is too easy to dismiss. It is about improvement itself, the time-concept, the moral imperative, the aesthetic judgement, which is to say capitalist improvement founded in and on black flesh, its female informality. Revision has no end and no connection to improvement, never mind efficiency.

So the consultant does and undoes institutions but can't access instituted life, can't open black life, can't uncover queer life, can't expose feminist planning around the ‘kitchen table’ as Barbara and Beverly Smith called it and Tiziana Terranova calls to it again, all noting certain paradoxes of freedom and sequestration in little general intellects of surreal life.9 He can't access open secrets, can't incomplete what is already incomplete, can't deform what is always informal already and yet; they can't believe and this leads to the state emergency that goes under such names as resilience and preparedness. When democratic despotism fails, simple despotism in the name of democracy must be imposed. Resilience is the name for the violent destruction of things that won't give, won't return to form, won't bend when access is demanded, won't be flexible and (com)pliant. Stopping when you are told to stop and moving along when you are told to move along demonstrates resilience and composure; but broken, breaking, dissed assembly demonstrates itself openly, secretly, dissembling in captured but inaccessible glance, for us, to us, as incomplete and much more than complete. Its daimonic performance can't be individuated and won't be performed.

# 2AC – NDT Round the Third – GMU BG

## 2AC – Case

### 2AC – AT: Strategies

#### Ambiguity is good---strategies to define blakness are net worse and recreate white supremacy

Peterson, 21—Lecturer, Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts, The New School (Victor, “Black Infinite,” Critical Horizons, August 4, 2021, dml)

Fanon: “The Black man is not. Any more than the White man.”47 This implies that both are constructs. If White created Black, then who created White? A question which returns us to the dark material from which one created the other and in which the former is implicated. It goes to say that a Black identity was created by some unnamed individual which had to give itself a name to justify an act which, in effect, was a projection of an internal contradiction within themselves. Thus, the distinction is arbitrarily made to some benefit or material effect. White, as the system itself, as definitively one thing, is what becomes precarious as the justification of that distinction has no method of validation save by what is external. Per Russell and Kripke, an identity has no scope save its assignment. White determines its position by what it is not, but by that negation affirms the negated as its basis. Blackness is no longer the precarious position for it’s articulated by a recursive operation whose mode of expression is defined by being a proper subset of itself. It need not articulate a “correct” self for validation in a system outside of its form of life.48

If an identity is universal, it is necessary within the contexts in which it is deemed significant. However, necessity comes out of possibility;49 one is not of the system they created as a projection of self, but are represented by how they categorise their creations. Their reference frame comes from no one else but them. Possibility and necessity are modal operators whose functions are closely tied with universal and existential quantification. Necessity can be construed: necessarily-p = for all q, if q then p. Possibility: possibly-p = there does not exist a q such that, if p then both q and not-q (i.e. p does not entail a contradiction). However, if for all = not-exist-not (necessarily = not-possibly-not), and exist = not-all-not (possibility = not-necessarily-not), then it can be shown that a possible domain must be determined before what is deemed necessary can be stipulated. Thus, p dictates q’s possibility from which p’s necessity is entailed by q; with no p, no q by which necessity can be discerned. Otherwise, one could make a necessary stipulation over a vacuous domain that is valid only because it fails to capture any one thing and thus produces no counter-example nor any limitations by which its use could be justified. Thus, a system imposed in turn imposes a restriction on the one doing the construction. The system created oppresses the oppressor, for they have to name the other and then name themselves with the terms of that very same system. That system of value inevitably implodes with increased attempts to fill its finite categories by negating what does not fit and placing the negated in an ever expanding repertoire of what is null for the sake of an identifiable and strictly defined property. Internally, each identity is maintained by negating what is not a member of the category denoted by the features of an individual which by those features gains access to multiple categories. In due course, this creates a pressure the system cannot handle.50 As they did not fit into the presupposed system of categorisation, more and more of the negated pour into the null-category, a non-member member of the system. The result is a violent collapse back into the cosmos.

### 2AC – AT: Extraction

#### No extraction turn---black fugitive planning is integral to cultivating dis/abled sociality---means that either the perm solves or the alt alone fails to recognize how blackness fits into care

Manning, 20—professor of philosophy and cinema at Concordia University (Erin, “Fugitively, Approximately,” *For a Pragmatics of the Useless*, Prelude, 1-4, dml)

Two phrases have haunted the writing of this book. The first comes from Fred Moten: all black life is neurodiverse life. It might also have been black life is always neurodiverse. The second is approximation of proximity. The feeling is that the ambiguity of memory in the first has a connection to the approximation of the second. Moten’s words, written in a manuscript review before the publication of The Minor Gesture (Manning 2016), felt vitally important when I received them. But The Minor Gesture was already too close to completion to fully carry the force of the proposition, and so, while I did signal the alignment between whiteness and neurotypicality in the book, I decided to make Moten’s words the fugitive force of the next one. I say “fugitive force” both to carry forward Stefano Harney and Moten’s (2013) concept of fugitivity, everywhere at work in For a Pragmatics of the Useless, and to emphasize that this is how work comes into itself: with the quality of a reorientation moved by a spark that connects to an intensity already moving transversally across a work. This is what Moten’s words did: their deep thinking-with exposed the stakes of what stirred as yet unthought in the thinking. It is this ethos of thinking-with I take into For a Pragmatics of the Useless, exploring Moten’s words, words less his own now than a refrain heard in fugitive proximity. This fugitivity at the heart of thought is what I want to address here. For what Moten’s words did at that singular moment of writing/thinking was create an opening for thought to travel in directions as yet in germ.

This kind of proximity is something else than citation. How can I properly cite Moten when I am no longer even certain which phrase it was that changed the path of my research? An approximation of proximity might be said to be an alliance with thought-in-the-making, an engagement with the edges of how thinking itself does its work. This is what I heard in Moten’s gesture: that there was space for a thinking-alongside that could bring into relation the concept of black life and the claim that neurotypicality is nothing else than an articulation of whiteness at work—that there was in The Minor Gesture an incipient potential for neurodiversity and black life to come into alliance in a way that would not reduce one to the other but generate a complementarity. The generosity of the thinking-with extended by Moten in his engagement with The Minor Gesture is what lured the writing-to-come into the proximity of black life, an approximation since there can only be a speculative engagement with a question as complex as the one of black life, especially when written from outside the culture of its sociality.

The task was gargantuan. It involved acquainting myself with decades of black studies to explore within this rich literature openings toward the complementarity of black life and neurodiversity. It also involved returning to the concept of neurodiversity to explore whether the terminology of the neurological was really where I wanted to situate the discussion. It had always been clear to me that the neuro in neurodiversity was not, for the most part, the site of my inquiry: my work has aimed to sidestep the neuroreductionism that I believe shuts down the political and social force of the movement for neurodiversity. While much of my work on autistic perception does emphasize neurological difference, and while I am certain that neurological difference is a formative effect in the variation designated by the term neurodiversity, my interest is in the diversity in diversity, locating the neurotypical not as the measure of an individual diametrically opposed to the neurodiverse but as the (unspoken) baseline of existence. I see neurotypicality as akin to structural racism—as the infusion of white supremacy in the governing definition of what counts as human. The assumption that neurotypicality is the neutral ground from which difference asserts itself (an assumption everywhere supported by the neuroscientific literature) suggests that there is still an urgent conversation to be had about how the human, and knowledge as a defining category of the human, is organized and deployed in the image of neurotypicality. The decision to continue to work with the neuro in neurodiversity is therefore less an alignment to the neurological per se than an engagement with the presuppositions of neurology as a science for and of the (neurotypical, white) human, a science that far too rarely calls into question the assumptions that underlie either its humanism or the categorical imperative to perform according to its normative expectations. To address this is to continue the work I began in The Minor Gesture, the work of questioning the volition-intentionality-agency triad at the heart of neurotypicality, that presupposition of (white) existence that places individual executive agency as the motivator of all experience. What of the agencement of forces that compose to facilitate an event’s coming into expression? What of the being of relation, that quality of existence that “informs not simply what is relayed but also the relative and the related,” an “open totality rolling with its own movement” (Glis sant 1997, 192; translation modified)? A deep commitment to the sociality of a facilitation that begins in the relation is at work in my refusal of neuroreductionism, pushing back against the neurotypical presupposition that to do it alone, to do it individually, to do it at the pace of the volition-intentionality-agency triad, is to be truly human.

Writing diagonally across this question, Moten addresses that most baseline of neurological apparatuses: executive function. If executive function, the site of planning in the brain, is altered by a neurological twist, must the assumption always be that this results in a lack of capacity simply because the work at hand requires facilitation? What value system is at work here? What is formulated in this claim with respect to the value of independence? “Black study,” Moten writes, “moves at the horizon of an event where certain instruments, insofar as they can no longer either calculate or be calculated, are bent toward the incalculable” (2018a, 162). The incalculable here is the very question of value. “The assignment of a specific value to the incalculable is a kind of terror. At the same time, the incalculable is the very instantiation of value” (169). Across the thought of value and the incalculable I hear: what might be learned from the fugitive planning of neurodiverse modes of sociality, and how is this sociality allied to black study? What is planning’s approximation in that encounter? What are the consequences of even assuming that the form of planning we understand as executive function, that planning that defines human volition as lone contributor to existence, is a value (has a value) in itself? How does fugitive planning accommodate the kind of being of relation that not only supports facilitation but actively seeks it out?

Moten doesn’t lay any of this out the way I am doing it here—a too-quick read of the powerful chapter from Stolen Life (Moten 2018a) I am thinking-with would probably not reproduce, for most readers, the stakes I am outlining. The diagonality with which the issues are addressed is part of Moten’s project, however. To give in to an executive way of writing about executive function would be to support the value system it depends on.

A diagonal approach allows the unanswerable to remain unanswerable: neither in my engagement with executive function nor in Moten’s work is there the presumption that executive function does not have a vital place in existence—not only because executive function really is affected in autism and in certain other neurodiverse forms of life (schizophrenia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, Tourette syndrome, obsessive compulsive disorder), but also because, after being treated for decades as cognitively deficient, it is often a relief for those who are neurodiverse to map their difference onto executive function.1 Nor does this engagement with executive function and black study mean to suggest in any way that Black folks in general have impaired executive function—such a claim would be ludicrous. The proposition that all black life is neurodiverse life moves at another rhythm, one not of direct alignment but of approximate proximity, asking how the fugitivity of value composes with the being of relation while underscoring the complicity between executive function and whiteness in neurotypicality’s adhesion to an unchecked narrative of superior functioning. It gestures toward how neurotypicality, as a largely unspoken category of existence that nonetheless undergirds every decision made in the name of normopathy, performs a continual selection of who is valued, of who is recognized as truly human. The aim is this: to inquire into how black life, or black sociality, practices a fugitive planning that is in alliance with neurodiverse sociality and to outline how this fugitivity upends the presuppositions executive function carries.

## K

### 2AC – Framing

#### making perfection the enemy of the good destroys the possibility of black liberation in any sense

Splawinski, 16—University of Toronto (A., “The Internal Backlash of Contemporary Black Liberation,” Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy, 2015-2016, dml)

However, as external pressures complicate activist progression on the social scale, internal conflicts threaten collective identity and the ability to define, organize, and move towards a collective goal. This can be internally demonstrated through the radical/moderate dichotomy, a distinction attempting to reconcile those activists who operate within, as opposed to outside, the traditional political system. However, this ignores the means, ability, and education people might have. Respecting diverse tactics used to reach a similar goal is not only ethical, but also strategic. Short-term goals amid long-term objectives leave room for old-school activists who contend we could live outside of the system we are in, as well as the novice who does not know another system is even a possibility. Political scientist Janet Conway articulates that respecting how other activists engage with issues does not necessarily mean one would choose the same, or even agree with the usefulness or ethics of such an action; “rather, it holds that everyone has the right and the responsibility to identify their own thresholds of legitimate protest and to make their own political, strategical, and ethical choices, while also allowing others to do so free from public criticism or censure.”8 A different tactic does not necessarily make it wrong. These internal activist-group interactions can be seen in the qualification of #BlackLivesMatter and other Black activists being cited as nothing more than a “liberal distraction” by other Black liberationists. The article “#BlackLivesMatter: Black Liberation or Black Liberal Distraction” by Halima Hatimy states that #BlackLivesMatter is composed of Western “Black petit bourgeoisie.”9 I agree that addressing global anti-Blackness is necessary, and that activists should be criticized for not addressing anti-Blackness in non-Western countries or not being proper allies to those in non-Western countries. However, the notion we can stretch criticism to a place where we can say all of this is in vain is unfair. According to Hatimy, an honest effort on the part of the #BLM movement would call for the abolition of oppressive, racist, and capitalistic structures, and demand full social and economic equality, rather than state-implemented reforms and deliberate moves to work in the system. However, framing the movement this way ignores the justifications one may have for advocating for reform as opposed to abolition—one group sees abolition as a plan while the other sees it as a goal. Perhaps, as Judith Butler describes in Critically Queer, there is a kind of “necessary error” occurring here. Butler argues we cannot create the terms that represent our liberation from nothing, and we are responsible for the terms carrying the pain of social injury. “[Y]et, neither of those terms are as a result any less necessary to work and rework within political discourse.”10 Perhaps, even in its faults, there is something uniquely necessary about #BlackLivesMatter and similar Black activist groups, and the multiplicity of tactics used within and outside of these groups. The #BlackLivesMatter movement does not state an end goal of police reformation. Instead, it defines one of its primary goals as “(re)building the Black liberation movement,” explaining that Black poverty and the disproportionate number of Black individuals in prisons are manifestations of state violence.11 Though it is misleading to articulate the movment’s goals as otherwise, counter-movements constituently question the credibility of #BlackLivesMatter by doing so. Ironically, it appears the radical and moderate activists often have the same goal—Black liberation—yet they’ve chosen to employ varied means to achieve that goal. Strategies of the #BlackLivesMatter movement are often critiqued, citing its discussions of privilege, reform of the prison industrial complex, reform of police practice, or meetings with politicians, as a sign of moderation.12 Critics contend if activists were indeed radical, as Hatimy’s article states, they would primarily call for abolition, not reform. However, this presupposes the activists are choosing reform as an end in itself, rather than a means to an end. Unlearning a Eurocentric Worldview Activists, like the general public, are inundated with regulations of Black bodies. This extends from the streets where victims of police brutality lifelessly lie, to the halls of the classroom where Black skin and Black hair are wholly unwelcome. Black girls have been kicked out of school for their natural hair, and dark-skinned women have been barred from entering spaces due to their complexion.13 Further, dark-skinned individuals face a high risk of sometimes violent consequences due to their complexion. Some of these consequences include having lower chances of obtaining employment than their light-skinned counterparts, and even being sentenced to 12 percent more time behind bars for the same crime as compared to light-skinned individuals.14 These legacies of colonialism, slavery, and Jim Crow compound alarming statistics that also demonstrate an increased likelihood of Black Americans being unarmed when killed by the police.15 The intersection of sexuality, race, and place— in addition to the historical contexts of slavery, colonialism, and systematic discrimination—impedes activists’ ability to “unlearn,” or envision ways of being that are outside of dominant or mainstream thinking. The process of unlearning requires activists to move away from the status quo, to see above the examples society presents them and apply a critical lens to their very being. Activists have to grapple with colorism’s impact on the sociopolitical world, and/or why African American English vernacular is framed with negative connotation, similarly to the dichotomy between “good” and “bad” hair, for that which is more straight and silky vis-à-vis curly and coarse. In doing so, activists not only undergo a journey of self-acceptance, but also make political decisions in the process, which are political acts rooted in one’s worth, rebuking Eurocentric consumerist ideals that dictate a “preferred” look, action, or being that confirms to the admissible politics of respectability.16 Activists enter and progress through the unlearning process in different ways. At these varied stages, then, it is troublesome for groups to cast one another aside because of differing perspectives, particularly in terms of methodology. Being at different places in the unlearning process is the reality, and activist groups must accept that as fact. The “Problematic” Identity The radical/moderate divide illustrates a larger problem in activist spaces: activists imposing the all-encompassing “problematic” identity onto one another. The power-hungry and ego-latent activist industrial complex employs a problematic identity on dissenters, casting anyone in the group aside who says or does something not in perfect alignment with their arbitrarily set standard of “activism,” or what may be deemed “appropriate” by the group. Though many groups aim to create safe spaces in order to respect a diverse set of voices and experiences, these groups simultaneously conduct, create, and assert “problematic” identities, which essentially rebuke dissenting opinions and differing viewpoints from the group’s intra-space. By silencing or discrediting dissent, the activity of activism is twisted into an unattainable mold an individual can perfect, rather than existing as a transformative activity that an individual strives to perfect. Through this frame, the internal backlasher’s viewpoints, strategies, and opinions are right, while those of the “problematic” activist are wrong. While the “internal backlasher” may purport him or herself as being open to a variety of lived experiences, eventually the “problematic” activist will not be able to reconcile their feelings with this assumed standard, and may even be qualified as being in the “wrong” phase of unlearning. While it seems contradictory for social movements to operate like quasi-political parties, employing a similar “agree-with-me-or-leave” rhetoric, this phenomenon may help explain why activists aligning with radical or moderate ideologies view their means (and only their means) as the best or safest way to proceed. Rather than critique an off-norm perspective for foundational validity, it is more productive for these groups to explore the rationale behind their choices and examine the reasoning of the dissent for both weaknesses and strengths. Labeling “problematic” that which is “different” dismisses the individual realities of each activist. Through this, the “internal backlashers” refuse to consider their collective goal could be achieved in a number of ways. Rather than assuming rigid value judgments, activists should acknowledge the comfort, safety, and value in the multiplicity of strategies as they may stimulate new ways to think about and exist in Black political spaces. The intellectual entrepreneurship in activist spaces is unlike any other. The need to harmonize ideas and reconcile lived experiences with the cause at hand can only occur when individuals feel safe to fully participate. However, there are scenarios wherein those who are labeled “problematic” face adverse consequences. In “Why This Radical Activist is Disillusioned by the Toxic Culture of the Left,” author Bailey Lamon cites after being termed problematic, or being called out, some activists she knew allegedly lost jobs, relationships, and friends.17 Some felt so alienated they avoid attending certain events or going to specific community spaces. The mental distress of the isolated individuals has even led to suicide. The fear and isolation produced in supposed “safe spaces” not only has adverse consequences, but also stunts the crux of activist activity—the process of unlearning. If not properly mitigated, this could ultimately stall the collective progress of the greater movement. The Impact of Fear There is a fear surrounding activist spaces that functions within the boundaries of the state. In The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, lawyer and legal scholar Michelle Alexander carefully describes the waves of reform that did not end racism, but rather merely changed its form. From slavery, through the Jim Crow era, and into the war on drugs and mass incarceration, Alexander explains racism has never left us; it has only become subtler.18 The anxiety of operating within traditional boundaries of institutional politics stems from the idea that perhaps by using purely conventional means, racism will, once again, only change its form—not its quantity or impact. The historical trend of Black activist spaces operating within the confines of the state (either by choice or by force), positions the state as an indicator of morality and success. Yet, when we consider what it means to use the state as an indicator of success, we are reminded the state’s supposed inclusiveness just slightly changes the color of the hierarchy—it does not necessarily reflect day-to-day occurrences on the ground. Clarence Lusane’s What Color is Hegemony? illustrates a version of this by dissecting the appointments of Condoleezza Rice as National Security Advisor and Colin Powell as Secretary of State during the second George W. Bush term. Their appointments raised questions about race relations and the state, as well as the active participation of Black Americans as “high-level functionaries operating within spheres in which they can agree but cannot fundamentally determine.”19 Being an active shareholder in the government’s plan to use economic and military means to ensure a rival power never emerges is worrying, especially when economic and military policy often intertwines with racist and xenophobic ideals. Operating within conventional activist tactics (such as voting) upholds state power, and calling for legislative reform may do the same. However, it is not fair to say these tactics must act in isolation, or that they will forever perpetuate the very systems against which Black activists are fighting. There are ways to simultaneously operate inside and outside of conventional means. For instance, despite being ridiculed as a “miscreant” and an example of “one of the sanctimonious and self-aggrandizing activists [that make] a career out of the Black Lives Matter protests,”20 DeRay McKesson, once at the forefront of unconventional activism, is now running for mayor of Baltimore. When questioned about his intentions, McKesson has said he is not a politician and that a multi-faceted approach to activism is necessary: “It will always be important that people continue to push on the system from the outside. It will also be important that people make the changes that we know are necessary on the inside.”21 We could consider he might be wrong; however, we must also consider he very well may be right. Perhaps a multi-pronged approach to Black activism won’t always be necessary, perhaps it is not the way of the future. Nevertheless, perhaps it is necessary right now. Conclusion Though the use of the radical/moderate dichotomy is necessary to explain the varied tactics employed by activist groups, respecting diverse strategies is sometimes more than ethical—it can be tactical. Demanding perfection via censorship or the constant threat of isolation is not social justice. My argument is not that one should be forced to align with positions for which they fundamentally disagree. However, if the goal is Black liberation, a diverse set of strategies—dependent on varying levels of comfort, ability, knowledge, access, and belief—it should not define alienation. Rather, it should be holistically viewed, with due benefits incurred from each. We should analyze the pros and cons of all tactics, while also exploring the reasons why we choose to use them. Such internal critique is necessary for the future and progress of the Black activist space.

### 2AC – Perm

#### a---that’s explicit for Butler---he argues that black transhumanism requires embracing the act of becoming, rejecting assimilation into normative conceptions of humanity, and recognizing each person’s interconnections between race, class, and ability as a process of refusing white supremacy

Butler, 19 – Philip Butler, Assistant Professor of Theology and Black Posthuman and Artificial Intelligence Systems at the Iliff School of Theology; 2019(“Black Transhuman Liberation Theology,” Bloomsbury Publishing, pp. 29-39, bam)

I do recognize that the term “human” is the primary mode of linguistic currency when referring to bi-pedal, predominantly hairless and self-aware beings with supposedly superior intellects. I also recognize that certain rights are given to those who are classified as human. But, in America, those rights and protections evaporate in disparate proportions when the recipient is Black. The utility of the term “human” also evaporates when presented as currency for liberative exchange. Similar to the offering of Anthony Pinn’s reflection on the utility of the term “God,” I would like to move a step further. I propose that the term “human” which has been employed as a tool for claiming one’s worth has not served to produce any concrete manifestation of Black liberation.

In his book Black Skin White Masks, Fanon claims that “Black [folks] wants to be white. [Yet, white folks] slave to reach a human level.” While Fanon was attempting to speak to the fleeting relationship that both Black and white folks have with this term, it is also an allusion to the limitations of the term “human.”3 While Fanon claims that Black folks ought to forge a new (hu)man, which I argue has transhumanist implications, the reasoning he employs creates a double- layered conundrum that highlights the depth to which Black folks are buried in the struggle to break free from the white gaze. The first layer arises through the relationship Fanon rightfully exposes. Black folks want to be white, and white folks want to be human. For Fanon, this serves as a statement of clarity, because it exposes the never-ending problem of assimilation. Assimilation into white culture does not protect Black humanity. The second, and most entangling, layer of this conundrum can be found in Fanon’s use of the term “human”:

But, if we want humanity to advance a step further, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries. . . . We must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new [hu]man.4

Fanon’s declarative search for a new human hints at his recognition of the inherently problematic nature of the term. However, his maintenance of the term “human” only recycles the dilemma he highlights earlier. Trying to fit Black existence within Eurocentric codices confines the constructive potential of the chosen descriptor. So, when I say that Black folks are not human I am suggesting that the deeply racist and exclusivist history attached to the term needs to be considered. This is especially true since the use of the term continues to impose boundaries upon Black bodies regarding how we ought to live. The boundaries associated with the term stems from its weaponization. Molly Randell- Moon and Ryan Tippet call attention to the necropolitics associated with this weaponization in the introduction of Security, Race, Biopower, suggesting the human designation was used for the “economisation of . . . resources in favour of those who ‘deserve life.’5 Essentially, the human classification functions to protect the proto-normativity of white supremacy by upholding epistemological systems of anti-blackness, which are dependent upon the meaning disproportionately imbued upon those who bear its monicker. When we consider the role that the technological apparatus of language plays in undergirding anti-blackness, it could also be inferred that white people are not human either. White people are simply the benefactors of this technology, given their status within the cultural milieu in which it is employed. So, when Black folks insist upon participating within the supposedly protective schema of this term, Black folks are actively reifying anti-Black hierarchies inherently embedded within its cybernetic reach.

So, what is a new (hu)man? And why maintain the use of the term (hu)man at all? Why lay claim to a terminology that has been used to leave so many out of its designation, and create hierarchies of race? Why buy into a term that is part of the larger Eurocentric linguistic machinery? Most importantly, why employ a technology that was meant to subjugate the “Other” when it cannot adequately communicate the complexities of embodiment, let alone Black existence? Now, one could easily argue that the use of any European linguistic derivative maintains a connection to Eurocentric power dynamics. I would not disagree with that argument at all. This is not a departure from a term for the sake of being provocative. It is an intentional departure from the cognitive limitations associated with what it means to be human and Black. Nevertheless, until Black folks become linguistically liberated (something that I will not be able to unpack here) the very components that comprise the reality in which Black folks understand themselves will be influenced by Eurocentrism. The term “human” functions as an elusive value marker, of which Black folks have been unable to grasp due to our lack of control of the term. In this temporality, it is not a derivative of Black epistemic technology. So, in this invitation to unsubscribe to the use of the term “human,” I am taking into account the tumultuous history of the term and positing a temporary marker in its place, something a bit more generative—something a bit more true to form. W. E. B. DuBois’s testament to Black tenacity may be an indicator of the willingness of Black folks to combat maladaptive narratives surrounding Blackness, in order to usurp the suffocation of anti-Black power structures. It is with that in mind that Black transhuman liberation theology calls for a further deconstruction from the term “human,” and ultimately a separation from it. Black folks are transhuman, flexible, and adaptable. But why transhuman? Why utilize the very term I am asking Black folks to unsubscribe from as the root of this new label? Simply put, transhumans do not carry the same boundaries as humans. They are not limited by the constraints of their form, or situation. Transhumans are transcendent, yet grounded in materiality. Nevertheless, an adoption of the designation of transhuman for Black folks is rooted in the idea that Black bodies are technology—complex auto-/allopoietic biological systems undergoing constant change. But ever more so, it is a recognition that since transhumans are always in a state of becoming, the term “transhuman” is only a placeholder for categorizing Blackness. Thus, it is an invitation not only to depart from the human designation but also to wrestle with the uneasiness and potentiality of what Black folks might be. This is also an assertion that futuristic iterations of Blackness are unbounded. So, it has yet to be determined what Black folks are. We are just not human.6

Pulling away from transhumanism’s racist roots

Max More envisions the “transhuman” as being actively engaged in the politics of “rising above outmoded human beliefs and behaviours.”7 Being affixed in materiality, while intentionally directing one’s own evolution, is the underlying component of transhumanism. I briefly provided a basic definition of transhumanism in the introduction, but the formal definition is two pronged:

1. The intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of fundamentally improving the human condition through applied reason, especially by developing and making widely available technologies to eliminate aging and to greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities.

2. The study of the ramifications, promises, and potential dangers of technologies that will enable us to overcome fundamental human limitations, and the related study of the ethical matters involved in developing and using such technologies.8

Essentially, transhumanism is a speculative philosophical humanistic disposition that views the merger of technology and human biology as the primary means for exploring the potential of human existence. It promotes an interdisciplinary approach that draws from bioethics, speculative fiction, broad approaches to current and emergent technologies, and literature to imagine the future of human existence. Given that the transhumanist telos is to guide human evolution, its intention is to move into the next phase of existence: posthumanity.9 The transhumanist posthuman is an entity that exists beyond humanity’s current form of embodiment, psychology, intellectual capacity, morals, etc. This is not to be confused with Aristotelian forms. As an extension of Darwinian thought, transhumanism posits that the human form is merely in its nascent stages. Further, it proposes that the human form can, and ought to, undergo guided evolutionary processes to greatly enhance the ways in which humans exist within the environments they inhabit.10 This implies that posthuman existence is grounded in the central idea that the final form of human materiality has yet to be conceived.11

Transhumanists primarily assert two main paths that will produce the transhumanist posthuman. The first is in line with the concept of the singularity.12 This type of transhumanist posthuman is speculated to be uploaded into the digital plane, potentially allowing for eternal digital embodiment. Unless there happens to be a large scale crash, power outage, or loss of digitized psychological backups one could potentially live forever. Digital eternality also implies a mind-body dualism, whereby the body can be bypassed, and replaced, through the digital plane or transference into another body altogether.13 The second transhumanist posthuman configuration would be the result of an extension of human abilities via technological enhancement. An early step toward this posthuman can be seen through the use of dietary supplements which aid in enhancing biological proficiency. This biohacking would lead to genetic enhancements, prosthetic limbs, brain computer interfaces, nanotechnology, etc., in efforts to produce a form of existence superior to the one we currently recognize.14 Now, while transhumanism presents itself in a primarily positive light, it does not negate the reality that technological advancement has its casualties. Transhumanism recognizes that progress is not guaranteed. It also purports to acknowledge the dangerous ways in which technology has been used in the past (especially by governing authorities who emphasized eugenics) and the potential for experimental technology (particularly genetic engineering) to have catastrophic effects, that is, disease, sudden maladaptive mutations, and the possibility of extinction level population drops.

However, when transhumanists talk about embodiment, race is seen as inconsequential. For transhumanists, race refers to the totality of humanity. However, the term for racialization within transhumanist literature is human biodiversity (HBD). This term is meant to encapsulate the varying degrees of phenotypical expression, experience, and life, all while absorbing and thereby invisiblizing the complexities of racial difference. The biocultural import of histories, cultures, socioeconomic classes, genders, sexualities, etc., associated with racial difference, are shelved during transhumanist discussions. These complexities are replaced by an overarching cry for equality in embodiment and faculty, except when cartographies of contribution are concerned. This invisiblization becomes increasingly problematic when transhumanists trace their own philosophical lineage.

Enlightenment thinking, or rational humanism, is the logical foundation for transhumanist thought.15 While notable Enlightenment figures, such as Immanuel Kant and David Hume, were pushing for daring intellectual determination to push humanity beyond its immature belief systems, these thinkers were simultaneously advocating for the dismissal, discrimination, and subjugation of Black bodies by Western civilization. For instance, it is well documented that Kant asserts that “the Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the ridiculous. . . . So essential is the difference between these two human kinds, and it seems to be just as great with regard to the capacities of mind as it is with respect to color.” He also demonstrates his willingness to dismiss the words of a Black man, purely on the basis of his skin, arguing that “there might be something here worth considering, except for the fact that this scoundrel was completely black from head to foot, a distinct proof that what he said was stupid.”16 However, some would suggest that Kant had an evolution of perspective. In “Kant’s Second Thoughts on Race,” Pauline Kleingeld argues that Kant’s racist views on difference were from the 1780s, and his views shifted in the 1790s. Kleingeld’s focus on Kant’s statements from Toward Perpetual Peace and Metaphysics of Morals, where Kant emphasized universal humanity, omitted racial hierarchies, included Black and Native Americans in juridical and contractual agreements, and rebuked the role of chattel slavery in restricting “cosmopolitan rights,” were supposedly evidence that Kant’s racism should not overshadow his philosophical contributions.17 However, every construction of universality, cosmopolitanism, or reference to legal writ was sourced through a lens of white supremacy. Whereas Kant may have criticized the barbaric manner in which European countries functioned globally, his expectation still fell under the Euro-normative considerations of what universality, cosmopolitanism, and legality ought to be. This also included who was expected to take leadership. If his notions of peaceful reciprocation and law stemmed from European notions then it might be safe to suggest that he also thought Europeans ought to take the lead in these collaborations. This is especially poignant, given his thoughts on assimilation:

Intelligence is either comparative (ingenium comparans), or argumentative (ingenium argutans). Intelligence unites (assimilates) heterogeneous ideas, which often, according to the law of the imagination (that is, association), lie apart from each other. . . . Intelligence is a characteristic of the understanding . . . which not only hampers the faculty of assimilation, but also the inclination to use this faculty.18

Assimilation as a mode of nature implies that the natural intermingling of biologies, or intellect, would fall under an epicenter of Eurocentrism. Here, evolution is not the coevolution of human organisms and peoples but the conforming of human biodiversity to European constructs and European biology which alludes to a shifting of racist white supremacist orientations. Kant no longer boldly proclaims racial hierarchy. He merely predicts that it is natural to produce a new amalgamation of human organization, oriented under Euro- normativity. Even though Kant concluded with a prescription that depicted a mutated racist ideology, Hume was a bit more direct:

I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual, eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the Whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present Tartars, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men. . . . They [do] talk of one Negro as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly.19

Hume’s claims are irreconcilable. Still, he is heralded for his contributions to the Enlightenment. But, it is important to be clear. As a predecessor to transhumanist thought the human he referenced in his work was very clearly not the human of African descending bodies. This mode of thought carried over into the earliest transhumanist thinkers.

The Huxley brothers led the transhumanist charge of the early to mid- twentieth century. Julian Huxley, a noted evolutionary biologist, coined the term “transhuman.” Julian first mentioned transhumanism in his 1951 essay, “Knowledge, Morality, and Destiny,” depicting it as “the idea of humanity attempting to overcome its limitations and to arrive at fuller fruition.”20 He is most notable for being the first Secretary General of UNESCO. His brother, Aldous Huxley, was a prominent author. Aldous’s most notable work, Brave New World, is a dystopian novel considered one of the earliest speculative transhumanist fictions. The Huxley brothers were each liberal proponents of progress through scientific advancement, although Aldous seemed a bit more reluctant/realistic than his brother when considering the potential negative aspects of scientifically grounded progress. While these men represented liberal humanism, their racial views exposed them as perpetuators of traditional liberal notions of white supremacy, given whom they considered to be human and subhuman. Each touted a particular transhumanistic telos. However, the direction of their proposed transhumanist telos remained grounded in eugenic approaches to population control and racial hierarchies.

While Julian is lauded for his stance against the racial discrimination of Jewish folks during the holocaust, his track record when commenting on African descendants—which proceeds his efforts to combat racial discrimination in Nazi Germany—is much different. Although Julian insisted that while growing up he thought of Negro men as brothers, his experience with Negro men in the southern parts of the United States opened his mind to the differences in race.21 In 1924 he suggested that the differences among the White and Black races in America were due to temperament, mental capacity, and lack of determination. However, since no sufficient measurable markers for difference in intelligence were validated, so he resorted to arguing against the mixing of races.

Then there is the undoubted fact that by putting some of the white man’s mind into the mulatto you not only make him more capable and more ambitious (there are no well-authenticated cases of pure blacks rising to any eminence), but you increase his discontent and create an obvious injustice if you continue to treat him like any full blooded African. The American negro is making trouble because of the American white blood that is in him.22

Interracial reproduction was problematic for Julian, whether, socially or biologically. He credited interracial offspring with heightening racial tensions in the United States. He remarks that “the Middle Westerner and to a lesser extent the Yankee are for the first time experiencing the [N]egro at balk and at first hand; and there is a certain grim humour in seeing their high moral principles and lovely theoretic equalitarianism dissolving under the strain.”23 It was around this time that Huxley began to acknowledge the faultiness of his own thinking. He slowly recognized that differences in intelligence could not be justified at any level. Nor could claims to egalitarianism be maintained if those of African descent were outwardly discriminated against. Yet, even with an accepted tolerance of the intellectual, physical, and aesthetic prowess of Black bodies, there remained an expectation of that prowess to continue functioning under white hegemonic forces (similar to Kant). This proves to be another example of proto-normative white supremacy, which promotes the maintenance of whiteness in positions of power, whether it is due to comfort and tradition or to a proclivity for the cultural methods of whiteness. At one point, Julian resorted to segregation. During this time he placed value in what he saw as the purity of the Nordic blood. He thought that the closest genetic, or blood, relatives to the Nordic people were Northern Europeans. Similarly, he saw Southern Europeans as having blood lines closer in relation to Africans, given their darker complexions. So, his proposed geographic solution suggested that the North be “where the [N]egro could be kept out, or at least allowed no privileges.”24 He even extended this conceptualization to be a blueprint for the United States.

Still, Julian underwent another evolution of thought concerning race. In We Europeans, published in 1936, he and coauthors Alfred Cort Haddon and Alexander Morris Carr-Saunders present a compelling case dispelling the myth of the Aryan race:

The “racial” concept, as we have seen, is almost devoid of biological meaning . . . the adoption of the evolutionary standpoint in the study of language and culture has often led to rash and reckless use. . . . Language is frequently passed from one group to another. Sometimes a conquering people forces its language on the conquered. . . . Terms like “Celtic,” “Jewish,” “Indian,” Arabic,” “English,” or “Irish” serve to denote a people or group of peoples bound together by tradition, or history, or language, or religion, or geographical continuity, or unity by cultural affinity or political usage (or misusage), even though the members of such a people are diverse in origin. . . . It was Sir William Jones who introduced the word Arya into modern European literature. He used it to . . . distinguish certain Indian language speakers from others. . . . The word itself means “noble” and is applied especially to dieties. . . . It happened that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Romantic school in Germany became attracted to he study of Indian languages. . . . Moreover Max Muller threw another apple of discord. He introduced a proposition which is demonstrably false. He spoke not only of a definite Aryan language and its descendants, but also of a corresponding “Aryan race.” The idea was rapidly taken up both in Germany and in England. . . . There is not need to trace in detail the history of the Aryan controversry. It will be enough to say that while the Germans claimed that the Aryans were tall, gair, and long-headed—the hypothetical ancestors of the hypothetical protoTeutons—the French, mainly on cultural grounds claimed that the langue and the civilization came into Europe with the Alpines who are of medium build, rather dark, and broad-headed.25

Ultimately, Julian spent a considerable amount of his time advocating for eugenics programs. His convictions as an evolutionary biologist directed his inclinations to the more empirical findings of genetics over the politicization of racial differentiation. Even though Julian chose to highlight the germinal variance demonstrated within racial groups, he still chose to employ terms such as “savage” and “hunting pygmy” in the same nomenclature as “Nordic businessman” and “Chinese sage.” He was still committed to proto-normative white supremacist ideologies.26 Now, one could suggest that he was simply utilizing the language of his time. However, just as he could explicate the social implications of Aryan propaganda, one could assert that he also knew the damaging effects of the language he employed. And as champion for eugenics programs, even though Julian began to shift his stance toward racial categorization, he remained elitist in his choice to focus upon the sterilization of the “unfit” within any particular society.27 For him the unfit were those suffering from mental deficits or mental illness.28 Nevertheless, Julian was unable to adequately consider the complex role of racial and cultural implications for difference which allowed for germinal variance within an ethnic group without giving into racial stratification. He simply thought that affirming there is no genetic or intellectual difference that could be determined between races, and that it was enough. It was as if a cavalier admittance of biologically situated racial equality would either gloss over the effects of colonization or render the histories of these races irrelevant, given their current status as operating under Eurocentric power structures. Hence, it could be argued that the lack of racial exploration within current transhumanist discourse persists as a result. But there is no historical engagement of African, or African diasporic, innovation (mathematically, philosophically, or technologically) that has contributed to the transhumanist narrative of progress (theoretically, or otherwise) that is so pressing to its discourse. So, it infers that while Black folks may be capable and welcome to enter into transhumanist discourse/culture, Black folks have no historical gifts to offer.

Current transhumanist discourse only engages racial issues in a cursory fashion, if at all. For instance, in one of two references to racial issues among the entire nineteen-chapter volume of the Transhumanist Reader, Aubrey de Grey mentions slavery as merely a bygone affinity that humans have outgrown due to moral evolution. He does so to demonstrate the capacity for social normativity to change over time. Grey referenced slavery as evidence to support his argument for the use of technology to enhance human lifespan.29 He also adds that those who presently view aging as amoral will eventually be seen in the same light as those who once supported ethnic cleansing. This careless misuse of issues pertaining to race and ethnicity, as inconsequential tools for argumentative construction, demonstrates three things: a lack of connection to these events; a lack of empathy with those who suffered under its proceedings; and a lack of experience exploring the weight or the depth of the histories, bodies, and lineages connected to race, ethnicity, and power. Regardless, within the corpus of transhumanist literature this is actually one of the few instances where race and ethnicity are even mentioned. For transhumanists the bygone affinity of slavery has taken with it the need to address issues of human diversity. Even more so, it reads as if de Grey is pointing a finger toward the past and suggesting that current global landscapes are now different. He is implying that we, as humans, are better now and racially oppressive technologies are no longer in operation. When race is mentioned within transhumanist discourse most of the conversation ends with the holocaust. But, there is a lack of acknowledgment that Hitler’s blueprint for the holocaust came from the American model of genocide and slavery.30 Additionally, current transhumanists admit that transhumanism is built upon Enlightenment humanism’s epistemological edifice to support notions of societal progress—although specifically through technology.31 This also suggests that transhumanism is an inherent carrier (to use genetics terminology) of the pitfalls of Enlightenment humanism, which is why I highlight the histories that Enlightenment humanist philosophical thinkers had with race, particularly Blackness. Race cannot simply be a technology that Euro-descending thinkers once used to stratify the world. The fact that the linguistic apparatus of race is now so easily thrown away due to recent genetic findings, coupled with the shifting tide of social consensus demonstrates its faultiness. But, as a technology of stratification, it accomplished what it was created to; it placed value propositions upon bodies, based upon pigmentation, which manifested in social hierarchies that serve as boundaries of death for bodies that do not fit within the gauge of normative pigmentation. Furthermore, if historically vilified methods such as ethnology, craniometry, and chattel medical practices were used to categorize the differences presented through Black embodiment, liberal social evolutions and genetics are the means that current transhumanists scholars are employing to erase Blackness.

The best example of transhumanist scholarship dealing with issues of race comes from Michael Shapiro. He also contributed a chapter to the Transhumanist Reader, entitled “Performance Enhancement and Legal Theory.” While Shapiro refers to race and ethnicity as being part of the “problematic classifications” that must not persist, he acknowledges the difficulty, and subsequent divide in access to, or reception of, newer technologies that classifications like ethnicity or race provide. He rightfully adds that these gaps in access or reception would exacerbate current disparities and create tremendously dangerous conditions for those left on the margins.32 While this provides a realistic picture of the potential emergent technologies have for creating devastating disparities, it places the onus upon those who bear designations of problematic classifications to avoid these devastating conditions by ridding themselves of these classifications. But, to be rid of my Blackness, let alone to ask anyone to rid themselves of any lineage simply because it is classified as problematic invisibilizes all that it means to be connected to that lineage. This includes all connections of all degrees. Even more so, it creates a larger dissonance for those whose embodiment manifests as an indictment of those who are asking that these problematic classifications be done away with. To them, these classifications are a reminder of all that was necessary to get to this evolved state of civilization.33 Because if these classifications were to end, the system which maintains the forces made visible through classifications would be rendered imperceptible—an offense with the potential to lead anyone trying to understand the foundations of their plight to madness. Therefore, any attempt to remove these classifications is an attempt to diminish, or do away with, the ontological debts and lingering effects of ancestral violence associated with the histories whose success depended upon the ability of these classifications to function. So, for Blackness to be maintained I am proposing that Black folks shed our humanity.

#### b---disability, like transhumanism for Butler, is a process of becoming that requires deconstructing how terms like “cure” or “human” operate and either point towards a nostalgic racist and ableist past or look towards the future

Kim 20 (Jina B. Kim – Assistant Professor of English and SWG (Study of Women and Gender) at Smith College. “Disability in an Age of Fascism” American Quarterly, Volume 72, Number 1, March 2020, pp. 265-276 (Review). <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/752339/pdf?casa_token=niDwaLRLQ5IAAAAA:2lnT5Wl-Jyfj1k7GwKh2nV3KqhIpMflWDVcoLNyfxmCNNFCBHc65Whj228Vyno-81Z9esC35a40>, DOA: 8/10/21, kbb)

This review essay maps a cross-section of this emergent wave of disability thought, represented by recent publications from Nirmala Erevelles, Jasbir Puar, Eunjung Kim, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha. Far from exceptions to the field, these works signal the advent of a new generation of disability theorists—Sami Schalk, Julie Avril Minich, Lezlie Frye, Liat Ben-Moshe, Cynthia Wu, and Therí Pickens among them—that constitute a renewed disability studies grounded in queer, feminist, decolonial, and critical ethnic methodologies. My essay refuses to attach modifiers such as queer, feminist, critical ethnic, and decolonial to this body of work, even though these terms offer accurate descriptions of the work’s scholarly aims and stakes. I bypass these terms not to deny the presence or potency of these fields but to declare that this work is disability studies, full stop. As these books make evident, this is the state of the field.

Published nearly a decade ago, Erevelles’s pathbreaking Disability and Difference in Global Contexts: Enabling a Transformative Body Politic envisioned some of the key shifts in disability studies that have since transformed the field’s central questions and political commitments. I begin with Erevelles’s book, though it predates the other reviewed works by several years, because it is perhaps the most foundational text in this body of scholarship. As one of the earliest full-length monographs to connect disability with questions of race and political economy, it made possible much of the work currently unfolding at the nexus of disability and racial capitalism. Indeed, Erevelles’s chief intervention in Disability and Difference is the foregrounding of transnational capitalism as primary framework and referent for disability analysis, a departure from an often US/UK-centric disability studies implicitly oriented around the nation-state. In expanding the field’s geopolitical reach, she further considers disability’s relationship to other categories of difference (race, gender, sexuality) as they inform and are shaped by the exigencies of globalization. The book’s project thus diverges from a project of inclusion and accommodation, one anchored in the values of visibility, representation, and pride. As Erevelles provocatively asks in the book’s introduction, “How is disability celebrated if its very existence is inextricably linked to the violence of social/economic conditions of capitalism?” (17).

Such a question unsettles the given understandings of disability that have come to govern the field. Traversing an ambitious scope of topics, from the transatlantic slave trade to the school-to-prison pipeline, from the violence of imperialism to the geopolitics of caregiving, Disability and Difference demonstrates how considerations of race, political economy, and economic inequity necessarily unmoor disability from its identitarian foundations. Erevelles’s analysis, for instance, pushes against the all-too-frequent theorization of disability as “possibility rather than a limit,” highlighting how utopian discourses of disability identity can too easily occlude the material and economic conditions creating disablement on a global scale (17). This assertion further critiques the tendency—ever present in the first waves of disability scholarship—to abstract disability from the conditions of its own making in order to focus instead on its transformative, radical, and universalist potential.

Employing a historical-materialist framework as its chief methodology, Disability and Difference instead insists on situating disability in the social, economic, and historical contexts that produce it, highlighting the global inequities of power that disable some populations more readily than others. For Erevelles, disability is not a “condition of being, but of becoming, and this becoming is a historical event” (27). That is, in the context of transnational capitalism, disability operates less as a static category of identity—a descriptor of what someone is—and more as a process, an unfolding, an ongoing event that captures the “materiality of racialized violence” under the demands of capital (26).

Disability and Difference stages a range of encounters between disability theory and decolonial, Marxist, and feminist-of-color thought, and follows a trajectory of local to global—the first half of the book examines questions of captivity, incarceration, and education in the US context, while the second half considers the relationship of disability to globalization, “third world feminism,” transnational care labor, and citizenship (22). Erevelles, notably, does not position any single framework as issuing the ultimate corrective; rather, she places these seemingly disparate theories in dialogue in order to map their resonances, tensions, and potential for mutual transformation. Further, she points up the potential and presence of disability in decolonial, Marxist, and feminist-of-color theories. One of the most significant projects of Disability and Difference, then, is its gesture toward an alternate intellectual genealogy for disability studies. Consider, for instance, Erevelles’s vital crip analysis of Hortense Spillers’s now canonical “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book,” in which she positions “Mama’s Baby” as a rich and overlooked site of disability theorization. In Erevelles’s rereading of this essay, the scenes of dismemberment and mutilation narrated by Spillers become instrumental to the commodification of enslaved bodies—or, in other words, “it is in becoming disabled that the black body is at the height of its profitability” (39). What would it mean, this chapter asks, if a scholar such as Spillers—associated with the adjacent tradition of black feminist thought—were to be considered part of disability’s intellectual lineage? How would this disrupt not only the field’s narrative of origin but also the ways we have come to define disability itself?

Puar’s The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability builds on Disability and Difference by engaging in a related (but nonetheless crucial) project of field disruption and revisioning. Definition, however, is not the political aim of this book.11 Like Erevelles, Puar is “less interested in what disability is (or is not), less interested in adding to the registers of disability . . . and more driven by the question: what does disability do?” (xx). Drawing from affect and critical ethnic studies, The Right to Maim positions disability in relationship to the coordinates of debility and capacity—the triangulation and assemblage that anchors the book’s argument—in order to disrupt the too easy binary of disabled/nondisabled undergirding liberal regimes of recognition, rights, and visibility. The disabled/nondisabled binary, as Puar points out, obscures the ways in which access to the category of disability can actually function as a form of capacitation or enablement, insofar as disability—as diagnosis, as identity category—enables access to necessary social, material, and medical resources for those who can claim it. Further, it fails to serve those who disproportionately experience debilitation, but for whom disability as a legal or rights-bearing category is not available, much less the salve of health care. Debility, according to Puar, attends to the structural violence that renders “injury or bodily exclusion” much more likely for certain populations than others—it is the shadow self or infrastructure upholding a disability rights framework that champions capacitation, accommodation, and inclusion (xvii).

The constellation of disability/debility/capacity outlined in The Right to Maim emerges out of necessity from the conditions of settler colonialism, US empire building, the “work machine,” and the “war machine” that need “bodies . . . preordained for injury and maiming” (65). Identitarian concepts of disability have little traction in these settings, and in fact obscure the workings of what Puar terms the “biopolitics of debilitation” (72). This term usefully foregrounds the populations “made available and targeted for injury” (i.e., the process of debilitation), as well as the purposeful production of debilitation as a tactical means of “[creating] and [precaritizing] populations and maintaining them as such” (73). It further highlights the relationship between capacitated populations and debilitated ones, a distinction that often maps onto global North and South, in which “the global north holds the key to the liberalization of disability while the global south bears the brunt of its weaponization” (66).

The biopolitics of debilitation thus offers vital interventions into theories of disability, race, and biopolitics: (1) it enables scholars to shift focus from the disabled individual (a push that other disability scholars have also deemed necessary) to the “precarity of populations,” thereby framing precarious populations—the disenfranchised communities of global South and North—as the basis for, rather than the exception to, theorizations of disability; and (2) it nuances ongoing debates around bio/necropolitics by introducing another element into the poles of life and death that govern such conversations: the production of disability and debilitation as “biopolitical ends unto themselves” (72, xvii). The “right to maim” describes the production of disability/debilitation as biopolitical aims and, further, names a key tactic deployed by the Israeli settler state in its occupation of Palestine. The chapters on Israel/Palestine are among the strongest in the book, showcasing the utility of disability/debility analysis for scholars of settler colonialism and empire. As Puar argues, maiming is often framed as a more humanitarian strategy on the part of the settler state because it spares populations from death—from being targets of the right to kill. However, the right to maim remains related to the right to kill, not due to a difference in gradations of mercy, but because both imperatives work in service of the “racializing biopolitical logic of security,” a logic that deploys death and disability as the embodied evidence of a near-totalizing will to power (x).

While Puar’s book underscores the imperative to maim and its relationship to settler regimes of debilitation, Kim’s Curative Violence: Rehabilitating Disability, Gender, and Sexuality in Modern Korea takes as its subject the imperative to cure, a condition or process often placed in binaristic opposition to disability/ debility. Curative Violence troubles this seemingly oppositional relationship, emphasizing instead the persistent presence of disability within the “drama of cure,” as well as the “in-between spaces” where “cure and disability coexist as a process” (7, 9). Kim’s exploration of cure as a messy, nonlinear process—one that unfolds alongside and through disability—thus intervenes in a disability studies that has historically refused to engage at length with cure, and has understood it uniformly as a way to negate disabled existence.12 However, as Kim argues, “simply objecting to cure as a way to affirm disabled embodiment does not capture the way that individuals make complicated moral, economic, and relational decisions to alter their bodies” (14).

Curative Violence thus does the important theoretical work of delving into the complications of cure. It contests the dominant narrative of cure as a teleological journey with a clear end-goal, conceptualizing it instead as a “transaction” or “negotiation” of potential risks, benefits, and harms taken on by bodies seeking transformation (10). In this way, Kim’s project mirrors Puar’s, insofar as it also seeks to disrupt the all-too-easy binary between disabled and nondisabled. Curative violence, in particular, describes the harms generated through the imperative of cure, capturing the instances when cure “is what actually frames the presence of disability as a problem” and in fact “[destroys] the subject in the curative process” (Kim 14). The book explores this phenomenon of curative violence in the context of modern Korea, looking to cultural representations of disability and medical intervention in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In so doing, it examines the significance of curative rhetoric for a nation grappling with the ongoing effects of war, US militarism, IMF interference, and colonial domination. Curative rhetoric, in a Korea following “Independence, the division, and the Korean War,” is often tied explicitly to the “rehabilitation of the disabled nation,” in which cure translates to decolonization and sovereignty under the aegis of capitalist development (19).

Like Erevelles, Curative Violence draws on the insights of transnational and decolonial feminist frameworks in its theorization of disability, displacing the US nation-state as primary site of inquiry. Kim pays particular attention to cure’s interconnections with gender and sexual regulation, mapping out how these systems of domination work together to discipline Korean populations. Accordingly, the chapters of Curative Violence take up questions of eugenics, reproductive control/coercion, motherhood, filial piety, and care as they intersect with national and popular narratives around rehabilitation, healing, and proper embodiment. Reading against the grain of these filmic and literary texts, many of which frame disability as a problem to overcome, Curative Violence also integrates into its analysis the movements organized by disabled women activists who “advocate for livable lives free of violence” (38). It describes, for instance, the gratitude of Bae Bogjoo, a “longtime leader in the disabled woman’s movement,” for refusing a surgery that would later cause chronic pain for those who had received it—an encapsulation of the violence and harm that is often endured in the pursuit of cure (225). In this way, Kim challenges long-standing narratives that view non-Western nations as less enlightened in terms of gender, sexuality, and disability, or that frame disability as universal across time and space, offering instead a nuanced portrait of disability oppression and resistance in the context of postcolonial Korea.

Ultimately, Kim asks us what it would look like to inhabit the disabled present, contesting the temporality of cure that either orients us toward the future—the hope for a cured body—or toward the nostalgia of a pre-disabled past. This would, out of necessity, orient us differently toward disability, not as an experience best left in the past, but as a present, persistent, and “disruptive vulnerability that refuses to disappear.”13 This would further allow us to embrace the crip here and now, and, against the imperatives of cure, envision a crip future.14 After all, “to rethink cure is to unfold the past, present, and future in order to recognize the presences of disabilities and to create spaces for them” (Kim 41).

#### d---the perm solves---being oneself provides the impetus for new forms of organizing based in the action of individuals---but, foreclosing individual action because it doesn’t fit one type of “activism” only reinforces ableism

Piepzna-Samarasinha, 18 – Leak Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, queer femme disabled author of *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*; 2018(“FOR BADASS DISABILITY JUSTICE, WORKING-CLASS AND POOR-LED MODELS OF SUSTAINABLE HUSTLING FOR LIBERATION,” in *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*, Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018, Accessed via Michigan Libraries, Available through EBSCOHost, bam)

B. Loewe’s piece “An End to Self Care” made me really angry and really scared when it came out in 2012. For folks who 53 need a reminder or missed it the first time, “An End to Self Care” is an article where white, nonbinary, able-bodied labor organizer B. Loewe argues against any focus on care and healing in radical movements, seeing it as a form of weakness in organizing. The first thing that gave me the feelings? B.’s anecdote about Don Andres, a working-class brown man who didn’t need “self-care” because going to a meeting after a day labor workday that began at six a.m. was his self-care. Here’s the thing: middle- or upper-class organizers from the 1800s to now just looooooove painting majestic, romanticized, simplistic pictures of poor and working class people. Hint: we’re not all one thing. We are amazing, diverse, complicated in our poverty and working-class scholarship. My life as the kid of a working-class Irish/Roma rust belt mom who grew up in recession Massachusetts in the 1980s and who won a bunch of scholarships is real different from my friend who grew up the daughter of a poverty-class, sex-working, white mama in the ’80s. And that’s the great thing—as broke folks, we get to have conversations with each other about all the different things being poor or working class has meant to us, looked like to us, taught us, gifted us with, and our genius, which could give birth to entirely new galaxies of movements and forms of organizing. (Sarcasm definitely in there, and definitely may only be picked up on by other folks who were raised poor or working class.) Sometimes, anyway. There are so many things that make it difficult for us to find each other.

One thing I know for sure we aren’t? Cardboard cutout workers who work selflessly for the movement seventeen or eighteen hours a day, handing out leaflets. In middle- and upper-middle-class writing about broke folks, we’re always either noble, selfless, salt-of-the-earth worker warriors with nary a sensitive need to be found or lumpen, loud, rude-ass, stupid criminals and welfare class. We don’t get to speak for ourselves—especially about how brutalizing classist stereotypes about our lives like these are, and how these stereotypes affect the health of our poor and working-class minds, bodies, and spirits. Or about the ways we find to care for ourselves every day, how we struggle against how “self-care” has been defined as a luxury for white and middle/upper-class people. Salt of This Earth would look reaaaaal different if it was written by and for street-involved, poverty-class, femme of color sex workers.

So in the meantime, while we’re trying to find each other to have those conversations? Maybe don’t write about working-class/poor folks as if you know what our experiences are from the inside—especially when it’s something as deeply complex as issues of work, hustle, need, softness, our tough and vulnerable bodies. ’Cause that brown farmworking man who got up at six a.m.? Maybe he did want some sleep. Some community acupuncture. A limpia. Some love. Maybe he’s got it. Maybe he’s not talking about that stuff to you because it’s real personal.

Oh, working-class and poor folks hustle our asses off, sure we do. I’ve had multiple jobs and hustles for as long as I can remember. I always have fifteen things on the go. Guess what else I have? A chronic illness and disability that don’t allow me to get out on the picket line eighteen hours a day. Guess what else I have? Badass resilience strategies of loud-ass working-class, femme of color laughter and shit-talking; organizing methods with other disabled and/or chronically ill folks who find ways to do amazing organizing that centers what our bodies can actually do; trading massages as we sit in court praying for a youth who’s been locked up on bullshit charges, doing grounding and praying to our ancestors outside court, a spiritual practice that is banging; doing yoga every morning in my house, for free, that allows me to manage my pain, fatigue, and cognitive challenges and helps me do my work from a grounded place of love that centers my crip body. I could add: good food that is cooked by me and my (queer, brown, disabled) housemates, herbs that are cheap brewing in a mason jar on my stove, and a sense of what I can do well and how much time it actually takes to do it. Disabled imperfect collective care models that are works in progress but still show up, with folks who help each other with personal care, rides to the grocery store, hanging out to combat total isolation. Shared rides and money. Shared resources. These are working-class/poor, POC, disabled, and femme strategies for self and collective care. Because it’s not either/or.

There’s something deep I want to tease out here—about working-class and poor folks and work. Some of us, we work so hard. We work so much. We don’t sleep. We don’t stop. We have our own somatics, a way of being in our bodies, of toughness and sucking it up and making it happen. We do it because we have to, because we love it, because it’s a way of saying fuck you to everyone who’s ever said we’re lazy and it’s our fault we don’t have money. And this can be a gift. And it can also kill us. And there’s so much in here about care and sensitivity and being able to breathe being coded as luxuries for the wealthy. And what about folks who are on SSI, unemployed, too sick to work? What about the complex interplay between labor and pain and our bodies and how poor and working-class bodies are supposedly too tough to feel anything? Yet we do. Deeply. And in much talk about sustainability, there’s not enough talk about how we, as broke/disabled folks, do it—what sustainability means to us.

Yes, self-care—like non-Western, non-biomedical models of healing—has been co-opted by people who want to make money off it. And typical burnout movement organizations that are, maybe, starting to try a little bit to not run their workers into the ground ’til they get sick, sometimes they do the same work at the same breakneck crisis pace they’ve done it, and then take them away for a four-day yoga retreat. But that’s not actually using a model of sustainability that comes from disability justice! It’s doing the same kind of organizing nonprofit-industrial complex movements have insisted on for years—which pushes out parents, broke folks, and disabled folks, to name just a few, but tacks on a little self-care on the side. Getting rid of yoga is not the solution. Listening to broke-ass, disabled, and femme communities about how we actually create ways of organizing where we’re not just grinding ourselves into the dust and we’re not going on some $4,000 spa vacation once a year might be.

“We can’t knit our way to revolution,” Loewe says. Oh yeah? Wow, what a femmephobic and classist statement. Many, many people have organized politically through cultural work—which includes knitting and quilting bees—for a very long time. I think it’s a problem how Lowe dismisses this femme-identified form of cultural creation (and just managing your anxiety and making a sweater for your kid during a meeting). I think conversation and mutual support is a particular form of organizing that is often a femme organizing skill (not that other genders can’t also do this) that isn’t valued or witnessed enough in organizing because of sexism and femmephobia and transmisogyny. I think that knitting through meetings, and creating an organizational culture where that’s seen as badass, is something that many of my badass working-class femme of color and white femme organizers do. But Loewe has a point I agree with—maybe the one they hoped would be picked up the most. It’s the point that collective care should be lifted up, that self-care shouldn’t just be this individualized bourgie thing. But I wish Lowe’d had any kind of disability justice model in their article at all. I wish they hadn’t reified this idea of good movement work as going back to an eighty-hour-a-week hustle. I wish they hadn’t gone right into “self-care is just for the privileged, look at this noble worker on the corner, he doesn’t need yoga” stance.

Sure, movements can be healing. But are they? Many, many broke folks, parents, and/or disabled folks who have been forced out of movements would say no. What disability justice and healing justice talks about—and asks—is: Are they really? Or are they set up in burnout models that destroy folks’ physical and spiritual health? And I think that a big part of what movements I’m part of do to make movements that aren’t shitty is centering disabled, working-class and poor, parenting, and femme of color genius. Burnout isn’t just about not having a deep enough analysis. It’s about movements that are deeply ableist and inaccessible.

Like many disabled and chronically ill folks, Loewe’s article terrified me. As able-bodied organizer after organizer posted it on Facebook with glowing praise, all I could think of was the ripple effect of reinforcing ableism—already vastly present, like air, in movements and completely ignored (as a crip, you get used to the blank look nondisabled activists give you when you try to talk about ableism, access, that disabled people aren’t just tragic or heroic, etc.)—and how people using this article to shit-talk “self-care” was going to make shit so much worse for folks with disabilities and chronic illnesses, parents, and caretakers trying to be activists. Including folks who have chronic health and disability, but who are deeply in the closet about it because they’re terrified of losing their jobs or activist cred or self-worth if they come out as disabled. This is just one example of how I want non-disabled activists to be accountable—for real—about making fighting ableism central in everything we do, and to pay attention to how invisibilized anti-ableism struggles are in a lot of mainstream social justice work.

I’m used to people saying to me, “Wow, your self-care is so good!” I always look at them blankly. I never think of what I do—cooking good food for myself on my budget that supports my body and my chronic illness, going to working-class acupuncture twice a month, stretching, drinking a lot of herbs, making sure I get sleep—as “self-care.” I think of it as the stuff I do to love myself in a fucked-up world, to help me have more days with less pain, and to help me give my body love when I’m having days with a lot of pain and fatigue.

Let’s tease it out further—when my friends who use power wheelchairs need a personal care attendant many times a day to pee and transfer from bed to chair, is that “self-care”? It’s not commonly thought of that way—but it’s part of the whole continuum of bodily need that gets trashed as a pain in the ass by an ableist world. Loewe writes, “I have literally gone from being in debilitating pain and only being able to accomplish three hours of work each day to working 18 hour shifts the same week in a completely different context. The difference was not the conditions of my work. It was my connection to my purpose.” I’m glad that works for them. But, as a friend of mine remarked, “Okay, that method does not work for some of us. Some of us are in debilitating pain no matter what.” And to say that we can just be “more deeply committed to the struggle” and leave our disabilities behind is an incredibly dangerous, ableist stance to take—that also just plain ignores the reality that some people are just disabled and can’t think or organize our way to able-bodiedness.

But we can do things differently, as organizers. We do it all the time. For example, that moment I mentioned before—us massaging each other in court while witnessing and supporting a youth who’d been locked up under gang injunction and anti-terrorism laws? That really happened, to a student. We came together as a community to raise money for her lawyer, spread the word, support her family, show up in court, and much more.

Now, we could’ve done this in a typical movement burnout way—speed, panic, conference calls, panic, no food or breath or sleep. But instead, we prayed to our ancestors at the rally before her first day in court. We cooked for each other. Knowing that many people at the rally had either been locked up or had loved ones who are, and being inside the courthouse could be really hard, a community member led us all in a somatic grounding so we could feel our bodies’ power before we went into the courthouse. We shared food and rides and supported each other. There was always a feeling that if people couldn’t make it because of work or parenting or disability/illness, other folks would move up.

This is the kind of movement I want to be part of. I want movements to embody a disabled, working-class, brown sustainability that celebrates femme organizer genius. We deserve nothing less. And we—disabled, working-class femmes of color—have been creating these kinds of movements for a long time. Listen up. (Or read the captioning.)

### 2AC – Links

#### Link turn---the role of blackness subverts and deconstructs the humanistic binary between blackness and normative conceptions of Man---this produces the same questioning of the human central to the 1ac---

Bey, 16 – Marquis Bey, Cornell University; 2016(“Between Blackness and Monstrosity: Gendered Blackness in the Cyborg Comics,” Gender Forum, Iss. 58, Available Online from <http://genderforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/201606-Complete-Captivity-Issue.pdf#page=44>, pp. 41-43, bam)

Birth of a Cyborg

1 The term cyborg is short for ‘cybernetic organism,’ and was coined in 1960 by Manfred Clynes and Nathan S. Kline. Used today to describe a being that is part human and part machine, it was originally used to describe being technologically altered to better cope with the conditions of outer space. Moving away from the astronautic context, a cyborg is now symbolic of the ways in which “technology is transforming and maybe even transcending the human” (Muhr 339). Cyborgs disrupt traditional categorical definitions of ‘the human’; they, in a sense, unsettle homeostasis. The cyborg interrogates what qualifies as human, and to what end the human exists as human.

2 Conventional understandings of cyborgs, though, are complicated when, like DC comic book superhero Victor Stone, the cyborg is Black, understood here as extending beyond mere epidermal hue. Victor Stone as Cyborg first appeared in the pages of a series called The New Teen Titans, back in 1980. A former Teen Titan and current Justice League member, Stone is a young African American born as a “human computer” (Sable et al. n.p.), his father used to say, with an IQ of 170. He was nearly killed in a laboratory explosion, only to have his life saved, and his body restored, through the use of advanced cybernetics. Stone being a Black cyborg is consequential: it modifies, disrupts, and complicates cyborg-ness, so to speak. In the context of contemporary policing and ontological invalidation of Black bodies via fatal police brutality— and Victor Stone himself being subject to gangs, drugs, and racism in Detroit—João Costa Vargas and Joy James say this about the Black cyborg:

a black cyborg: a modified, improved human whose increased ethical, spiritual, and physical capabilities generate unusual strength, omniscience, and boundless love. In this narrative, the black cyborg is a “creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Social reality is lived social relations, our most important social construction, a world-changing fiction.”…[T]he black cyborg is able to overcome the brutality of imposed limits—the conditions of social and physical death. (Vargas and James 18)

Black cyborgs are superhuman insofar as that superhumanness rests on their Blackness. Contrary to discourses about Black inhumanity, pathological monstrosity, and subhumanity, the Black cyborg subverts those assumptions and exudes a more-than-human ethos. In this context, what Stone says about himself is even more telling: “There’s more to being a cyborg than artificial limbs and sonic disruptors” (Sable et al. n.p.)—namely, his Blackness.

3 Vic Stone exists in corporeal paradox in more ways than one. He is both human and machine, yes, but his machinery, his ‘Cyborg,’ is also “his disability,” says David F. Walker, the writer of the 2015 solo series of Cyborg. But Walker also says that “Cyborg isn’t so much of persona as it merely is his state of being—the result of this devastating accident that almost took his life. The technology that is used to keep him alive makes him look more like a robot, gives him incredible strength, and allows him total access to the Internet by way of the computer implanted in his brain” (Clark n.p.). Stone is ‘disabled’ by his accident and machinery, yet this disability is in fact the acquisition of superhuman abilities. While Blackness is not a disability, it typically carries with it burdens and ontological circumscriptions (e.g. beliefs of Black subjects’ intellectual inferiority, perceived innate criminality, licentiousness, undeservingness of life, Afro-pessimistic position of abjection, etc.) that ‘disable’ the subject. However, Vargas and James’s characterization of Black cyborgs as superhuman marks Black cyborgs as simultaneously ‘disabled’ and in possession of superhuman qualities. This paradoxical, but generative and insightful, state is expressed on the front cover of the first issue of the 2015 series of Cyborg on which Vic Stone stands powerfully in the foreground, part (Black) human, part machine—’disabled’ in many ways—while in the background is the iconic image of Vitruvian Man, the ‘perfect’ human. Vic Stone, the underlying message says, is (or can be) archetypically human too, and Sarah Charles, Stone’s ex-girlfriend, says as much. She tells Stone, “You are not a piece of machinery, Victor! You are a human being. Or am I the only one who realizes that?” (Walker n.p.). Her insistence on Stone’s humanity, coupled with the front cover image, asserts the validity of Stone being human rather than part human. Stone’s cyborgian Blackness, in his superhuman human-ness, interrogates the purported naturalness of the human and reveals what Sylvia Wynter calls the human as “meta-Darwinianly, a hybrid being, both bios and logos (or, as I have recently come to redefine it, bios and mythoi)” (McKittrick 16–17).1

**FOOTNOTE 1:** Wynter goes on to write, “Or, as Fanon says, phylogeny, ontogeny, and sociogeny, together, define what it is to be human. With this hypothesis, should it prove to be true, our system of knowledge as we have it now, goes. Because our present system of knowledge is based on the premise that the human is, like all purely biological species, a natural organism.” This is all to say, simply, that the human is a very specific construct predicated on racial and gender and geographic biases, which Vic Stone, I assert—and which Blackness, Wynter asserts—troubles and interrogates.

The front cover image and Charles’ anthropo-reminder deconstructs and rearticulates what bodily perfection is, critiquing the whiteness and able-bodiedness of corporeal perfection, making the Black cyborg not merely archetypically human but archetypically superhuman.

#### Link turn---Humanistic representations of transhumanism misplace the question of dis/ability for prosthetic narratives---but, posthuman conceptions of transhumanism challenge those depictions and interrogate dominant conceptions of humanism

Doat, 18 – David Doat, Little Catholic University; 2018(“A « post-validocentric » reading of Limbo by Bernard Wolfe from a posthuman disability studies perspective,” Abstract from The 10th Beyond Humanism Conference, 2018, Available online from <http://beyondhumanism.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/BeyondHumanWroclaw2018_abstracts-rev2.pdf>, pg. 24, bam)

Not all but many transhumanist texts and science-fiction writings depict disability under the influence of classical, biomedical and typically humanistic representations which turn disability into a deviant and defective condition with regard to the "normal" human one. This is partly why « disability activists and disability scholars are [in general] radically skeptical about the promise of enhancement technologies » as transhumanism « sounds like it misplaces the disability problem » (Shakespeare, 2014). Yet, it is not uncommon for the disability condition to be presented in the transhumanist litterature as a predisposition to human enhancement, and the first humans to access posthumanity are often people with disabilities. Furthermore, the human species is often depicted in transhumanist narratives (Allan 2013 ; Miah, 2016) as disabled as such when compared to the posthuman. However, transhumanist depictions of the ascension of people with disabilities to posthumanity coincide in general with the achievement of a posthuman condition that is most of the time imagined from dominant humanistic « able-bodied » psychologies and imaginaries.

Though a large range of transhumanist discourses in public media and in science-fiction litterature reproduces what David Mitchel and Sharon Snyder (2000) call « prosthetic narratives » in which « a disabled character serves as a crutch to shore up normalcy or super-normalcy somewhere else », there are also, on the other side, disability or post-validocentric counternarratives in science-fiction and transhumanist litteratures. These narratives openly challenge depictions of disability as an abnormality, a wound or a pathological condition in need of cure or in need of restitution within the range of the normal. One of these proto post-validocentric counternarratives is the 1952 protocyberpunk, cybernetic-inspired and post-apocalyptic science-fiction book Limbo by Bernard Wolfe (1915-1985). Such interpretation hasn’t yet been proposed as Limbo hasn’t get yet the attention it deserves from a posthuman critical disability studies perspective. This is precisely the aim of this talk to fill this lack as it seems clear to me that in this book, Wolfe completely reverse the logic of classic humanistic prosthetic narratives.

In order to achieve this goal, I will firstly introduce to the core contribution of the disability studies to the critics of transhumanist depictions of the posthuman. By questioning notions of health, normality, disability and validity from a disability studies outlook, a posthuman disability studies perspective (Goodley et al., 2014) provides interesting conceptual tools to reinterrogate dominant conceptions of the posthuman, and opens the path to prospective imaginaries and possible futures freed from the humanistic habits of thougts of the modern able-bodied subject. After a short summary of Limbo and its public reception, the converted perspective a posthuman disability studies perspective implies will be then illustrated through the analysis of Bernard Wolfe’s novel. More precisely, I will present the reasons why Limbo exhibits the characteristics of a proto « postvalidocentric counter-narrative », in the way it reexamines our evaluations of human enhancement and the posthuman condition, and challenges humanistic depictions of disability. Indeed, in Limbo validity and ableist transhumanistic depiction of the posthuman condition are viewed as the abnormal and defective condition par excellence.