## 1NC

### 1NC – Kritik

#### Blackness exists as a metaaporia that interrogates the cyclical ways violence onto blackness is morphed and ultimately appropriated. The 1AC relies on a redemptive narrative of humanity that is fundamentally inaccessible for blacks. Their project is ultimately meant to hide and recreate moments of black death for the sake of redeeming Human life.

Wilderson 20 [Frank B. Wilderson, professor of Drama and African American studies at the University of California, Irvine, “Afropessimism”, page 13-17, JMH]

For most critical theorists writing after 1968, the word aporia is used to designate a contradiction in a text or theoretical undertaking. For example, Jacques Derrida suggests an aporia indicates “a point of undecidability, which locates the site at which the text most obviously undermines its own rhetorical structure, dismantles, or deconstructs itself.” But when I say that Black people embody a meta-aporia for political thought and action, the addition of the prefix meta- goes beyond what Derrida and the poststructuralists meant—it raises the level of abstraction and, in so doing, raises the stakes. In epistemology, a branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge, the prefix meta- is used to mean about (its own category). Metadata, for example, are data about data (who has produced them, when, what format the data are in, and so on). In linguistics, a grammar is considered as being expressed in a metalanguage, language operating on a higher level of abstraction to describe properties of the plain language (and not itself). Metadiscussion is a discussion about discussion (not any one particular topic of discussion but discussion itself). In computer science, a theoretical software engineer might be engaged in the pursuit of metaprogramming (i.e., writing programs that manipulate programs). **Afropessimism**, then, **is** less of a theory and more of **a metatheory: a critical project that, by deploying Blackness as a lens of interpretation, interrogates the unspoken, assumptive logic of Marxism, postcolonialism, psychoanalysis, and feminism through rigorous theoretical consideration of their properties and assumptive logic, such as their foundations, methods, form, and utility; and it does so, again, on a higher level of abstraction than the discourse and methods of the theories it interrogates.** Again, Afropessimism is, in the main, more of a metatheory than a theory. **It is pessimistic about the claims theories of liberation make when these theories try to explain Black suffering or when they analogize Black suffering with the suffering of other oppressed beings. It does this by unearthing and exposing the meta-aporias, strewn like land mines in what these theories of so-called universal liberation hold to be true.** If, as Afropessimism argues, Blacks are not Human subjects, but are instead structurally inert props, implements for the execution of White and non-Black fantasies and sadomasochistic pleasures, then this also means that, at a higher level of abstraction, the claims of universal humanity that the above theories all subscribe to are ~~hobbled~~ [constricted] by a meta-aporia: a contradiction that manifests whenever one looks seriously at the structure of Black suffering in comparison to the presumed universal structure of all sentient beings. Again, Black people embody a meta-aporia for political thought and action— Black people are the wrench in the works. Blacks do not function as political subjects; instead, our flesh and energies are instrumentalized for postcolonial, immigrant, feminist, LGBTQ, transgender, and workers’ agendas. These so-called **allies are never authorized by Black agendas predicated on Black ethical dilemmas. A Black radical agenda is terrifying to most people on the Left**—think Bernie Sanders—**because it emanates from a condition of suffering for which there is no imaginable strategy for redress—no narrative of social, political, or national redemption**. This crisis, no, this catastrophe, this realization that I am a sentient being who can’t use words like “being” or “person” to describe myself without the scare quotes and the threat of raised eyebrows from anyone within earshot, was crippling. I was convinced that if a story of Palestinian redemption could be told . . . its denouement would culminate in the return of the land, a spatial, cartographic redemption; and if a story of class redemption could be told . . . its denouement would culminate in the restoration of the working day so that one stopped working when surplus values were relegated to the dustbin of history, a temporal redemption; in other words, since postcolonial and working-class redemption were possible, then there must be a story to be told through which one could redeem the time and place of Black subjugation. I was wrong. **I had not dug deep enough to see that though Blacks suffer the time and space subjugation of cartographic deracination and the hydraulics of the capitalist working day, we also suffer as the hosts of Human parasites, though they themselves might be the hosts of parasitic capital and colonialism**. I had looked to theory (first as a creative writer, and only much later as a critical theorist) to help me find/create the story of Black liberation—Black political redemption. What I found instead was that **redemption, as a narrative mode, was a parasite that fed upon me for its coherence. Everything meaningful in my life had been housed under the umbrellas called “critical theory” and “radical politics.”** The parasites had been capital, colonialism, patriarchy, homophobia. And now it was clear that I had missed the boat. My parasites were Humans, all Humans—the haves as well as the have-nots. If critical theory and radical politics are to rid themselves of the parasitism that they heretofore have had in common with radical and progressive movements on the Left, that is, if we are to engage, rather than disavow, **the difference between Humans who suffer through an “economy of disposability” and Blacks who suffer by way of “social death,” then we must come to grips with how the redemption of the subaltern** (a narrative, for example, of Palestinian plenitude, loss, and restoration) **is made possible by the (re)instantiation of a regime of violence that bars Black people from the narrative of redemption**. This requires (a) an understanding of the difference between loss and absence, and (b) an understanding of how the narrative of subaltern loss stands on the rubble of Black absence. Sameer and I didn’t share a universal, postcolonial grammar of suffering. Sameer’s loss is tangible, land. The paradigm of his dispossession elaborates capitalism and the colony. When it is not tangible it is at least coherent, as in the loss of labor power. But how does one describe the loss that makes the world if all that can be said of loss is locked within the world? **How does one narrate the loss of loss? What is the “difference between . . . something to save . . . [and nothing] to lose”?** Sameer forced me to face the depth of my isolation in ways I had wanted to avoid; a deep pit from which neither postcolonial theory, nor Marxism, nor a gender politics of unflinching feminism could rescue me. Why is anti-Black violence not a form of racist hatred but the genome of Human renewal; a therapeutic balm that the Human race needs to know and heal itself? Why must the world reproduce this violence, this social death, so that social life can regenerate Humans and prevent them from suffering the catastrophe of psychic incoherence— absence? Why must the world find its nourishment in Black flesh?

#### Libidinal investments into phobia render any attempt at coalitionary politics impossible as the unconscious determines how the movements operate and ultimately maintains the structure of black death.

Wilderson 20 [Frank B. Wilderson, professor of Drama and African American studies at the University of California, Irvine, “Afropessimism”, page 11-13, JMH]

My friend spoke openly as we watched the world below us rush by without even looking up to pay its respects. At one point Sameer spoke of being stopped and searched at Israeli checkpoints. He spoke in a manner that seemed not to require my presence. I hadn’t seen this level of concentration and detachment in him before. That was fine. He was grieving. “The shameful and humiliating way the soldiers run their hands up and down your body,” he said. Then he added, “**But the shame and humiliation runs even deeper if the Israeli soldier is an Ethiopian Jew.”** The earth gave way. The thought that my place in the unconscious of Palestinians fighting for their freedom was the same dishonorable place I occupied in the minds of Whites in America and Israel chilled me. I gathered enough wits about me to tell him that his feelings were odd, seeing how Palestinians were at war with Israelis, and WhiteIsraelis at that. **How was it that the people who stole his land and slaughtered his relatives were somehow less of a threat in his imagination than Black Jews**, often implements of Israeli madness, who sometimes do their dirty work? What, I wondered silently, was it about Black people (about me) that made us so fungible we could be tossed like a salad in the minds of oppressors and the oppressed? I was faced with the realization that in the collective unconscious, Palestinian insurgents have more in common with the Israeli state and civil society than they do with Black people. **What they share is a largely unconscious consensus that Blackness is a locus of abjection to be instrumentalized on a whim. At one moment Blackness is a disfigured and disfiguring phobic phenomenon; at another moment Blackness is a sentient implement to be joyously deployed for reasons and agendas that have little to do with Black liberation.** There I sat, yearning, in solidarity with my Palestinian friend’s yearning, for the full restoration of Palestinian sovereignty; mourning, in solidarity with my friend’s mourning, over the loss of his insurgent cousin; yearning, that is, for the historical and political redemption of what I thought was a violated commons to which we both belonged—when, all of a sudden, my friend reached down into the unconscious of his people and slapped me upside the head with a wet gym shoe**: the startling realization that not only was I barred, ab initio, from the denouement of historical and political redemption, but that the borders of redemption are policed by Whites and non-Whites alike**, even as they kill each other. It’s worse than that. I, as a Black person (if person, subject, being are appropriate, since Human is not), am both barred from the denouement of social and historical redemption and needed if redemption is to attain any form of coherence. Without the articulation of a common negrophobogenesis that relays between Israel and Palestine, the narrative coherence of their bloody conflict would evaporate. My friend’s and his fellow Palestinians’ negrophobogenesis is the bedrock, the concrete slabs upon which any edifice of Human articulation (whether love or war) is built. Degraded humanity (Palestinians) can be frisked by exalted humanity (Ashkenazi Jews) and the walls of reason remain standing (notwithstanding the universal indignity of stop-and-frisk). But if the soldier is an Ethiopian Jew . . . Pain gripped my chest. Sameer and I [we] were antagonists, not because as friends we were mismatched, and not because our politics were incompatible; but because the imago of the Black is “responsible for all the conflicts that may arise.” For the libidinal economy that positions the Black imago as a phobogenic object saturates the collective unconscious; it usurps me as an instrument for, though never a beneficiary of, every nation’s woes; even two nations at war. I was no Afropessimist in 1988. In other words, I saw myself as a degraded Human, saw my plight as analogous to the plight of the Palestinians, the Native American, and the working class. Now I understood **that analogy was a ruse**. I was the foil of Humanity. Humanity looked to me when it was unsure of itself. I let Humanity say, with a sigh of existential relief, “At least we’re not him.” To quote Saidiya Hartman, “**The slave is neither civic man nor free worker but excluded from the narrative of ‘we the people’ that effects the linkage of the modern individual and the state** . . . The everyday practices of the enslaved occur in the default of the political, in the absence of the rights of man or the assurances of the self-possessed individual, and perhaps even without a ‘person,’ in the usual meaning of the term.” Black people embody (which is different from saying are always willing or allowed to express) a meta-aporia for political thought and action.

#### Slavery morphs and recodes itself in different ways- it relies on the sadism of liberal progress narratives to perfect itself and maintain “life”. Only the alternative can disrupt this project and render these promises incoherent.

Wilderson 20 [Frank B. Wilderson, professor of Drama and African American studies at the University of California, Irvine, “Afropessimism”, page 94-96, JMH]

Northup’s book implies, without stating directly, why this generalization of sadism—brutality as the constituent element of family bonding—cannot be understood as being triggered by transgressions. It is as ubiquitous as the air he breathes. “It was rarely a day passed without more whippings . . . It is the literal, unvarnished truth, that the crack of the lash and the shrieking of slaves, can be heard from dark till bedtime . . .” Patsey and Solomon, unlike Stella and me, were living in a place and time when civil society and the Human were neither ashamed nor embarrassed by this. A thousand miles upriver and one hundred twenty six years later, Josephine was shocked by this inheritance, but it didn’t take her long to recover, and to claim it. Though the structure of Stella’s “life” (or, better, **the paradigm of social death**, for the quotation marks are essential here) **cannot be reconciled with the** structure of Josephine’s life (or **the paradigm of social life**), there is a connection. But **this connection is parasitic and perverse—regardless of what the socially dead Black person (i.e., Stella and Patsey) or the socially alive Human (i.e., Josephine or Mary Epps) might say about their “relationship.”** It is parasitic because White and non-Black subjectivity cannot be imbued with the capacity for selfknowledge and intersubjective community without anti-Black violence; without, that is, the violence of social death. In other words, **White people and their junior partners need anti-Black violence to know they’re alive.\*** If Hattie McDaniel were to truly die, as Stella proclaimed, it would be tantamount to the death of a parasite’s host. This is what makes social death something more surreal than the end of breath. It is, in the words of David Marriott, a deathliness that saturates life, not an embalming; a resource for Human renewal. **It is perverse for many reasons: one of which is the fact that as civil society matures** (from 1853 to December 1979, when it all went south with Josephine)—and we move historically from the obvious technologies of chattel slavery to universal suffrage, the discourse of human rights, and the concept of universal access to civil society— the anti-Black violence necessary for the elaboration and maintenance of White (and non-Black) subjectivity gets repressed and becomes increasingly unavailable to conscious (as opposed to unconscious) speech. (“I judge people by the quality of their character,” as Dr. King said, “and not the color of their skin”; or the commonly spoken, “At the end of the day, we’re all Americans and we’re in this together”— and other such malarkey of the conscious mind.) But the pageantries of naked and submissive Black flesh, pageantries of bleeding backs and buttocks, whip marks, amputations, and faces closed by horse bits, provide evidence of the role sadism plays in the constitution of White subjectivity, and *12 Years a Slave* makes this visible on the screen, despite its repression in the narrative of both the film and civil society writ large. It is tempting and commonplace to reduce Mary and Edwin Epps’s sadism to individual psychopathology. Or one might think that Edwin Epps is one of a group of exceptionally sadistic people who lived in an exceptionally sadistic time and place. But the film, and to an even greater extent the autobiography, sees (rather than narrates) sadism—the sexual perversion in which gratification is obtained by inflicting physical or mental pain on a love object—not as the individual pathology of a handful of people, but as a generalized condition; generalized in that pleasure, as a constituent element of communal life, cannot be disentangled from anti-Black violence. Conventionally, **the object of sadism can**, tomorrow, **become the subject of sadism**. But the sadism that constitutes the spectacles of *12 Years a Slave*, and which constitutes early nineteenth century society, is not imbued with such reciprocity. The Slaves of social death cannot switch places and make Edwin Epps or his equally cruel wife the love objects of their collective sadism. If they did so in private (if Patsey beat Edwin or Mary in a private bedroom encounter, for example) **it is because such a reversal was occasioned and allowed—in other words, the master used his prerogative and power to play a different game, one in which he suffers because suffering fulfills his fantasy and because, unlike the Slave, his fantasies have “objective value.”** Such role reversals do not imbue the encounter with reciprocity. **The changes that begin to occur after the Civil War and up through the Civil Rights Movement, Black Power, and the American election of a Black president are merely changes in the weather. Despite the fact that the sadism is no longer played out in the open as it was in l840, nothing essential has changed.**

#### Expansion of the internet and capital technologies sustains algorithmic thinking into policy making itself. These technological forms of growth bracket out black life for the sake of sustaining market efficiency and the super exploitation of blackness. Reject their form of predatory inclusion and prefer the alternatives approach towards resistance.

Cottom 2020 [Tressie McMillan Cottom, School of Information and Library Sciences, University of North Carolina, October 9, 2020, “Where Platform Capitalism and Racial Capitalism Meet: The Sociology of Race and Racism in the Digital Society”, American Sociology Association, SAGE Journals, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2332649220949473>, Pages 442-444, JMH]

An early reader of this article posed a provocative question: is there anything analytically distinct about the Internet? My answer revealed my priors. “Of course the Internet is distinct,” I wanted to say. But that is arguing from an embarrassingly basic logical fallacy. The question of what the Internet does analytically that, say, “capital” or “economy” or “culture” or “organizations” does not already do is important. My answer is debatable, but the debate is worthwhile. I do not know if the Internet adds something analytically distinct to our social inquiries, but it adds something analytical precision. Other constructs capture important dimensions of social life in a digital society. For instance, **one can argue that Silicon Valley is a racial project** (Noble and Roberts 2019; Watters 2015) **or a sociohistorical construction of racial meanings, logics, and institutions** (Omi and Winant 2014). White racial frames (Feagin 2020) or color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2006) can elucidate how ironic humor about Black people, Muslims, and immigrants in online gaming platforms reproduces “offline” racism (Fairchild 2020; Gray 2012). These are just two examples of noteworthy approaches taken to studying Internet technologies and “mainstream” sociological interests (i.e., economic cultures and discourses, respectively). Still, sociological practice does not systematically engage with the social relations of Internet technologies as analytical equals to the object of study. **If there is anything particular about Internet technologies for sociological inquiry, we should make it explicit.** And once explicit**, we should give it the same theoretical care as states, capital, and power.** Daniels (2013) points us in the right direction when she argued that, “the reality is that in the networked society . . . racism is now global . . ., as those with regressive political agendas rooted in white power connect across national boundaries via the Internet, a phenomenon that runs directly counter to Omi and Winant’s conceptualization of the State as a primary structural agent in racial formation.” Daniels named to the global nature of both racism and the networks of capital we gesture to when we say Internet or digital. It is an argument for bringing back the political economy of race and racism. Internet technologies are specific in how they have facilitated, legitimized, and transformed states and capital within a global racial hierarchy. An app with which underemployed skilled labor sells services to customers (e.g., TaskRabbit) might be a U.S. racial project. But the capital that finances the app is embedded in transnational capital flows. Global patterns of racialized labor that determine what is “skill” and what is “labor” mediate the value of labor and the rents the platform can extract for mediating the laborer-customer relationship. Even the way we move money on these platforms— “Cash App me!”—is networked to supranational firms such as PayPal and Alibaba (Swartz 2020). Internet technologies have atomized the political economy of globalization with all the ideas about race, capital, racism, and ethnicity embedded within. An understanding of the political economy of Internet technologies adds a precise formulation of how this transformation operates in everyday social worlds: **privatization through opacity and exclusion via inclusion.** Both characteristics are distinctly about the power of Internet technologies. And each characteristic is important for the study of race and racism. Understanding platform capitalism helps us understand how these two characteristics are important. Internet technologies have networked forms of capital (Srnicek and De Sutter 2017; Zhang 2020), consolidated capital’s coercive power (Azar, Marinescu, and Steinbaum forthcoming; Dube et al. 2020), flattened hierarchical organizations (Treem and Leonardi 2013; Turco 2016), and produced new containers for culture (Brock 2020; Noble 2018; Patton et al. 2017; Ray et al. 2017). By that definition, **the Internet has amplified and reworked existing social relations. Platform capitalism moves us toward the analytical importance of Internet technologies as sociopolitical regimes**. Platforms produce new forms of currency (i.e., data) and new forms of exchange (e.g., cryptocurrencies), and they structure new organizational arrangements among owners, workers, and consumers (see “prosumers”). Even more important for the study of race and racism, platforms introduce new layers of opacity into every facet of social life. So-called mate markets move from neighborhood bars to dating apps, moving family formation behind a platform’s velvet rope (Hobbs, Owen, and Gerber 2017; OllierMalaterre, Jacobs, and Rothbard 2019). It transforms public education into “online delivery,” locking student-teacher-school interactions into privately controlled black boxes (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). “Smart cities” extract our routine activities from public life, which shapes democratic access to how our communities are governed (Brauneis and Goodman 2018; O’Neil 2017; Walsh and O’Connor 2019). A colleague recently bemoaned the difficulty of negotiating with Facebook for data on political attitudes. Many sociologists share her lament. In our routine work we realize that different rules produce and govern data, from survey to observational, than the rules even 20 years ago. That is but a minor example of the myriad ways platform capitalism’s opacity is qualitatively distinct. That opacity has a logic. Pasquale (2015) argued that ours is a “black box society.” Administrative opacity is a deliberate strategy to manage regulatory environments. It shields organizations, both public and private, from democratic appeals for access and equity. **As the state legitimizes the use of digital and algorithmic decision making, it also creates new data worlds** (Gray 2018; Milan and van der Velden 2016) to which few sociologists have access. **The inaccessibility of these data is part of their value to state and capital interests. Private data worlds where decision making can be veiled from democratic inquiry fuel economic and political commitment to more datafication**. This brings about more secrecy. Sometimes, a firm or organization performs secrecy just for the sake of secrecy. This reinforces its ability to do so and its right to do so (Seaver 2017). Pasquale outlined three types of secrecy strategies. One of those strategies, obfuscation, is particularly relevant to the study of race and racism. Theoretically, obfuscation operates much like willful whiteness that can always claim ignorance of statistical discrimination, for example, because it owns the means of discovery. Obfuscation does not mean that someone or some organization does not know these data. It means that the information is difficult to access and often couched in needlessly complex technical jargon or process. As we privatize public goods, Internet technologies promise cost savings (usually by reducing labor) and increased efficiency of whatever task is at hand. Those Internet technologies introduce a web of data extraction and valuation that has significant economic value (Zuboff 2015). Obfuscation becomes a technique of privatization through two processes. One, it extracts data that would have previously been public, publicly available or legally discoverable. Two, it expands obfuscation as a logic, even in organizations or institutions that have a public mandate. When full privatization is not possible, obfuscation privatizes information by making it inaccessible in practice**. Information is the vessel for social actions and social facts. If information is inaccessible, the objects of everyday life are too.** Although secrecy and means testing for information have always been features of the administrative state and of capital, platform capitalism is about the scale of secrecy, the value of secrecy, and the logic of obfuscation. By thinking about the politics of the Internet technologies embedded in the current political economy, we more precisely capture a set of social relations than occurs when Internet technologies are tangential to our analyses. Thinking about the analytical utility of the Internet also brought to mind one of the most vexing dialectal tensions of racism under platform capitalism. The Internet expands. This “pervasive expansion” (Castells 2010) is near total. It is no longer a question of whether one is “online.” Whether or not one is online, one’s life chances are shaped by online (Fourcade and Healy 2013). That settles the thing. The expansion requires bringing people into the social relations of Internet technologies. That can happen as a user (Ritzer 2015) or as a site of extraction (Amrute 2016) or by producing a surplus population of users and nonusers (McCarthy 2016). This expansive quality sets us on a crash course with a fundamental understanding of what race does. **Race (as deployed by racism) excludes. It also devalues and stratifies**. But exclusion is one of the most studied aspects of race and racism in social science. The racialized social hierarchy produced these Internet technologies. Also, **Internet technologies became a dominant tool of capital because of their ability to expand markets and consumer classes. To both expand and exclude, the platform-mediated era of capitalism that grew from Internet technologies specializes in predatory inclusion**. **Predatory inclusion is the logic, organization, and technique of including marginalized consumer-citizens into ostensibly democratizing mobility schemes on extractive terms** One of the clearest articulations of predatory inclusion comes from work on education, where educational access and its attendant social rewards are extended to excluded groups on extractive terms (Dwyer 2018; Eaton et al. 2016; Seamster and Charron-Chénier 2017). With higher education, predatory inclusion looks like expanding “access” to higher education (and its relation to labor market and status returns) by offering online college degrees that both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations market to African American women (Cottom 2017). When those African American women disproportionately enroll in these institutions, they most often do so by taking on student loans. Some of those loans are publicly subsidized and others are from private lenders. These students’ loans have been shown to be harder to pay off, easier to default on, and more likely to reach negative amortization than student loans taken out at other kinds of institutions by other kinds of students (Scott-Clayton and Li 2016). African American women’s inclusion in higher education comes at a high individual price and with a significant profit to the financial caretakers of that extraction. Predatory inclusion happens not only in education. It operates through credit schemes, consumer debt (Charron-Chénier and Seamster forthcoming) and small business lending (Nopper 2010). It frames how minorities are “included” in homeownership schemes that pervert the value of ownership because of bad loans and racist social policy (Taylor 2019). Although not explicitly named, another example is found in the “gig economy.” This is where waged work has become harder to secure and surplus labor is nominally included in the “digital economy” on extractive terms. These schemes could happen without Internet technologies. But they happen using Internet technologies, and Internet technologies have made these cases more efficient. Moreover, platform capitalism generates the logic, incentives, and capital for these predatory inclusion practices. Whether they use the Internet to affect these practices, the logic of capital that financializes through algorithmic means at a scale made possible because of network technologies makes these particular processes of the digital society

#### Anti-black exploitation is a global phenomenon that transcends borders, gender, and class. The fungibility of the slave secures white domination over black flesh as white slave masters are able to manipulate and violate black people anyway imaginable.

Wilderson 20 [Frank B. Wilderson, professor of Drama and African American studies at the University of California, Irvine, “Afropessimism”, page 302-305, JMH]

The Black people who worked at Mario’s had little in common politically: Master and DeNight kept their politics to themselves, as did most of South Africa’s thirty-five million Black people when they were at work; this was also true of Sibongile and Liyana. Nicolas and Sipho were IFP members, sworn enemies of the ANC, the South African Communist Party, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Fana, the dishwasher, was a dedicated comrade. All of these differences mattered in important ways. None of them mattered in ways that were essential. We were all positioned in the same place paradigmatically. We were all, in other words, the antithesis of the Human. We were all implements on Mario and Riana’s plantation. **From the Arab slave trade, which began in ad 625, through its European incarnation beginning in 1452, everyone south of the Sahara had to negotiate captivity. At a global level of abstraction we can see how Africa has been carcerally contained by the rest of the world for more than a thousand years. There’s no habeas corpus here. Captivity overdetermined the condition of possibility for everyone’s life.** How people performed on a carceral continent was as varied as the “choices” made by us at Mario’s. Some fled the coast and trekked deeper into the interior to avoid notice and, with any luck, capture—the way DeNight kept to the corners of the restaurant where no one was likely to speak with him when he wasn’t serving his tables. Some made themselves indispensable (for as long as possible) to the White slavers by becoming slave hunters— like Nicolas and Sipho, and impimpis of the Inkatha Freedom Party. Some wore their prowess and pride on their sleeves and lashed out without a plan or foresight—like me. Some confided in the mistress in the hope, perhaps, of attaining some form of sanctuary, or for reasons they themselves could not fathom—like Doreen. **The essential Afropessimist point rests not in a moral judgment of the choices they made, but in an ethical assessment of the common dilemma they all shared—the questions that haunt the slave’s first waking moments: What will these White people do to my flesh today? How deep will they cut?** Some were captured and refused to live. Some sent their children to a different death, as in Beloved. The dreams of all these different captives could not be reconciled, but their place in the paradigm was the same. They woke up each morning with a deeper anxiety than the proletariat, the worker. The proletariat wakes up in the morning wondering, How much will I have to do today and how long will I have to do it? Exploitation and alienation morphed into an early morning ulcer. How much will the capitalist demand of me and how long will I have to do it? Again, the Slave wakes up in the morning wondering, What will these Humans do to my flesh? A hydraulics of anxiety that is very different than exploitation and alienation. If a can of tuna or a bucket of nails could speak, their essential questions would not revolve around how their labor power is being exploited, or how they are alienated from the value that they produce. Exploitation and alienation are not the grammar of their suffering. (How can one exploit an implement?) And the value that a tool helps produce never accrues to the tool. **For the Slave, the implement, exploitation and alienation are trumped by accumulation and fungibility. Slaves themselves are consumed, not their labor power. Slaves are implements, not workers. What Marx called “speaking implements”:** Mario and Riana’s speaking implements. Our response to captivity was as varied as the myriad choices that our ancestors made hundreds of years ago on that continent. But the question was the same: What will these White people do to my flesh? And the answer is the same: Anything they want. **There is no habeas corpus here,** Rebone warned. She didn’t know how right she was: for Black people there is no habeas corpus anywhere. Doreen knew this better than any of us. She negotiated her captivity by fainting: her unconscious attempt to save herself by throwing herself overboard. When she came to, she was staring up into the faces of all her masters, and me, a fellow slave. Freelance pallbearers took her body to the ambulance. She would live, when what she really may have wanted was to follow death into freedom; to jump ship before it docked. Who wouldn’t tell them what they wanted to hear? There’s no habeas corpus here. Doreen and the rest of us lived (if lived is the word) in a paradigm of violence that bore no analogy to the violence of exploitation and alienation suffered by the worker. Doreen was the first Black person specifically hired, and officially sanctioned, to handle money with her Black hands. White South Africans had hired her to break their libidinal laws—to violate the mainstays of their collective unconscious. Then some trickster in the alcove whispers in her ear what her intuition had not let her think out loud: that it was all a setup. **The Black people who worked at Mario’s were different ages, ethnicities, and genders. But these differences at the level of identity did not alter our sameness at the level of position. One does not position oneself in the world; one is born into a name that’s been chosen. Perhaps there was a moment of solidarity sparked by a common acknowledgment of our common position within social death.** If there was such a moment, it was splintered: The stern way Master schooled me in the locker room and the flickers of kindness he showed in the tensest situations, gestures that put his wife and his children in Venda, to whom he sent money each month, at risk. The way Nicolas and Sipho did not hurt me, or worse, when they had the chance; a deed for which they would have been exonerated and rewarded.

#### Only through embracement of disorder and incoherence via the alternative are we able create revolutionary politics that disrupt the generative mechanism of civil society.

Wilderson 20 [Frank B. Wilderson, professor of Drama and African American studies at the University of California, Irvine, “Afropessimism”, page 249-252, JMH]

Again, though this is a bond between Blacks and Whites (or, more precisely, between Black and non-Blacks), it is produced by a violent intrusion that does not cut both ways. Whereas the phobic bond is an injunction against Black psychic integration and Black filial and affilial relations, it is the lifeblood of White psychic integration and filial (which is to say, domestic) and affilial (or institutional) relations. For whoever says “rape” says Black; whoever says “prison” says Black; and whoever says “AIDS” says Black—the Negro is a phobogenic object: a past without a heritage, the map of gratuitous violence, and a program of complete disorder. If a social movement is to be neither social democratic nor Marxist, in terms of its structure of political desire, then it should grasp the invitation of social death embodied in Black beings. **If we are to be honest with ourselves, we must admit that the “~~Negro~~” “Black” has been inviting Whites, as well as civil society’s junior partners** (for example, Palestinians, Native Americans, Latinx) **to the dance of social death for hundreds of years, but few have wanted to learn the steps.** They have been, and remain today (even in the most anti-racist movements, like anti-colonial insurgency) invested elsewhere. Black liberation, as a prospect, makes radicalism more dangerous to the U.S. and the world. **This is not because it raises the specter of an alternative polity (such as socialism, or community control of existing resources), but because its condition of possibility and gesture of resistance function as a politics of refusal and a refusal to affirm, a program of complete disorder. One must embrace its disorder, its incoherence, and allow oneself to be elaborated by it, if indeed one’s politics are to be underwritten by a revolutionary desire.** What other lines of accountability are there when slaves are in the room? There is nothing foreign, frightening, or even unpracticed about the embrace of disorder and incoherence. The desire to be embraced, and elaborated, by disorder and incoherence is not anathema in and of itself. No one, for example, has ever been known to say, Gee whiz, if only my orgasms would end a little sooner, or maybe not come at all. Few so-called radicals desire to be embraced, and elaborated, by the disorder and incoherence of Blackness—and the state of political movements in the U.S. today is marked by this very Negrophobogenisis: Gee-whiz, if only Black rage could be more coherent, or maybe not come at all. Perhaps there is something more terrifying about the joy of Black than there is in the joy of sex (unless one is talking sex with a Negro). Perhaps coalitions today prefer to remain inorgasmic in the face of civil society—with hegemony as a handy prophylactic, just in case. If, **through this stasis or paralysis, they try to do the work of prison abolition, that work will fail, for it is always work from a position of coherence (such as the worker) on behalf of a position of incoherence of the Black: radical politics morphed into extensions of the master’s prerogative.** In this way, **social formations on the Left remain blind to the contradictions of coalitions between Humans and Slaves. They remain coalitions operating within the logic of civil society and function less as revolutionary promises than as crowding-out scenarios of Black antagonisms, simply feeding Black people’s frustration.** Whereas the positionality of the worker (whether a factory worker demanding a monetary wage, an immigrant, or a white woman demanding a social wage) gestures toward the reconfiguration of civil society, the positionality of the Black subject (whether a prison-slave or a prison-slave-in-waiting) gestures toward the disconfiguration of civil society. From the coherence of civil society, the Black subject beckons with the incoherence of civil war, a war that reclaims Blackness not as a positive value, but as a politically enabling site, to quote Fanon, of “absolute dereliction.” It is a “scandal” that rends civil society asunder. Civil war, then, becomes the unthought, but never forgotten, understudy of hegemony. It is a Black specter waiting in the wings, an endless antagonism that cannot be satisfied (via reform or reparation), but must nonetheless be pursued to the death. But lest we forget, this is not a question of volition. It is not as simple as waking up in the morning and deciding, in one’s conscious mind, to “do the right thing.” **For when we scale up from the terrain of the psyche to the terrain of armed struggle, we may be faced with a situation in which the eradication of the generative mechanism of Black suffering is something that is not in anyone’s interest.** Eradication of the generative mechanisms of Black suffering is not in the interest of Palestinians and Israelis, as my shocking encounter with my friend Sameer, on a placid hillside, suggests; because his anti-Black phobia mobilizes the fantasy of belonging that the Israeli state might otherwise strip him of. For him to secure his status as a relational being (if only in his unconscious), his unconscious must labor to maintain the Black as a genealogical isolate. “The shame and humiliation runs even deeper if the Israeli soldier was an Ethiopian Jew.” The Israelis are killing the Palestinians, literally; but psychic life, Human capacity for relations, is vouchsafed by a libidinal relay between them and their common labor to avoid ~~“niggerization”~~ [~~negroization~~] [racialization]  
(Fanon). **This relay is the generative mechanism that makes life life. It is also the generative mechanism of Black suffering and isolation. The end of this generative mechanism would mean the end of the world. We would find ourselves peering into the abyss.** This trajectory is too iconoclastic for working-class, post-colonial, and/or radical feminist conceptual frameworks. The Human need to be liberated in the world is not the same as the Black need to be liberated from the world; which is why even their most radical cognitive maps draw borders between the living and the dead. Finally**, if we push this analysis to the wall, it becomes clear that eradication of the generative mechanisms of Black suffering is also not in the interests of Black revolutionaries. For how can we disimbricate Black juridical and political desire from the Black psyche’s desire to destroy the Black imago, a desire that constitutes the psyche?** In short, bonding with Whites and non-Blacks over phobic reactions to the Black imago provides the Black psyche with the only semblance of psychic integration it is likely to have: the need to destroy a Black imago and love a White ideal. “In these circumstances, having a ‘white’ unconscious may be the only way to connect with—or even contain—the overwhelming and irreparable sense of loss. The intruding fantasy offers the medium to connect with the lost internal object, the ego, but there is also no ‘outside’ to this ‘real fantasy’ and the effects of intrusion are irreparable.” This raises the question, who is the speaking subject of Black insurgent testimony; who bears witness when the Black insurgent takes the stand? Who is writing this book?

### 1NC – Cyber

#### Whiteness is an existential threat— (let’s just do the extinction debate here)

Preston, 17—Cass School of Education and Communities, University of East London (John, “Rethinking Existential Threats and Education,” Competence Based Education and Training (CBET) and the End of Human Learning pp 61-93, dml)

After Marxism, the second existential threat is one of negation and elimination of the subject and here I shall consider conceptions of this from CRT and black existentialism.

Various contemporary educational theories consider the equity and social justice implications of different forms of education with regard to race. The work of Sleeter and Grant (2007) makes the ethical and pragmatic case for multicultural social justice as a key value of education. This has been followed in contemporary work that attempts to consider the various dimensions of social justice. For example, Bhopal and Shain (2014), consider the twin axis of recognition and redistribution as goals of education. Other work examines the role of social distancing from the ‘Other’ by white students as a dynamic process in which Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and working-class students are disadvantaged. In many ways denial of social justice in terms of lack of resources, recognition or access to social space can be considered to be a form of dehumanisation. However, whilst work on social justice and education might consider the lack of humanity in these systems of oppression (applying concepts such as ‘bare life’, Lewis 2006; or ‘othering’ Lebowitz 2016) they do not consider directly existential threats. Threats to humanity on the basis of difference may arise from totalitarianism as much as through war and threats to the environment. The various genocides which have taken place throughout human history have often had a racial, or ethnic, cleansing purpose to them. They have been eugenic threats that are based upon spurious ideas of genetic and moral superiority. Writers on race from Fanon to Du Bois have considered that the threat posed to racial groups may be existential and that there is a short step from psychic, to real extermination. The negation of individuals through economic, social and psychological processes allows for their physical extermination. Du Bois (2014) deals explicitly with existential threat in his short story ‘The Comet’ where humanity is almost wiped out by a threat from space, leaving only a small number of people to carry on. As one of the survivors of the comet is an African American, this leads Du Bois to consider the state of race relations in the USA. The implication of the story is that the existential threat of the comet (which allows the African American character to live in a world entirely free of racial prejudice) allows release from the existential threat of eugenic attitudes. Building on Du Bois, in other work (Preston 2012), I have considered the ways in which preparation for threats, including existential threats such as pandemics and nuclear war, has been in many ways eugenic in that it prioritises the survival of some more than others based upon criteria which include race and ethnicity (Preston 2012). Preparing for disasters and emergencies often prioritises the interests of white people above those of other ethnic minorities. One reason for this is tacit intentionality which means that policymakers and practitioners do not consider human diversity in considering how people may respond to disaster. Policy is often biased as policymakers expect that people will be ‘like me’ which (at least in the UK and USA) means they will often be white, middle-class, educated, English-speaking men. In planning for threats, there will be various ways in which such biases are included. For example, they may not consider publishing advice in a number of languages, the resources necessary to survive a disaster, the mobility of people and the attitudes of emergency responders. This is unwitting prejudice in that by not considering diversity they are actually making it less likely for BAME people to survive, or protect themselves against, the disaster.

Although these biases may lead to a gradient in terms of survival by different groups in a disaster, they do not appear to relate to existential threat. However, existential threat can be interpreted in a different way in perspectives from critical whiteness studies and CRT.

In critical whiteness studies, whiteness is taken to be not a racial identity, but rather a system of power and oppression (Leonardo 2009). Whiteness was created as an identity not simply as a mode of social classification but as a way of exploiting and controlling others. There are obviously periods in history where this was objectively the case. During slavery in the USA, for example, whiteness was used as a means to distinguish between those people who had the right to own property (whites) and those who could not (Africans), Moreover, whiteness was the obverse of property in that only Africans could ‘be’ assets or property. Enslaved Africans were therefore treated as property and did not have access to the basic rights which would constitute humanity in American society (such as access to education, the right to own property, the right to decide who they should have relationships with). There are obviously parallels between this experience and holocaust when Jewish people (and other individuals) were dehumanised by the Nazis and denied access to basic resources. During imperialism there was also a period whereby other races were categorised to be less worthy than white people and this provided the justification for colonial control, exploitation and often extermination.

Advocates of whiteness studies go further than this and consider that whiteness is not merely a past system of oppression, but a continuing system of white supremacy (Leonardo 2009). The economy and society is comprised in such a way that white people will usually benefit, and BAME people will usually not. This is not only an economic and social system but also a psychological system whereby existence as a full human depends upon one’s racial categorisation. This idea has its roots in the work of Fanon (1986) who wrote that black identity was shaped by the white gaze, but also contemporary writers also consider the notion of whiteness as ‘death’, a categorisation that is rooted in past oppression and extermination, whose remnants exist to this day. This perspective on race and existence leads us to consider what is meant by life, and whether we are not currently living to our full potential (as Marxists would also propose) when existential threat is actually amongst us. For Marxists this would be the expansion of the ‘social universe’ of capitalism that flows between and through us, ‘capitalising humanity’. For critical whiteness studies, this existential threat would be one of whiteness and the negation of existence for a racially classified group of people.

In order to make this idea of constant existential threat more tangible (although the term is not used) critical race theorists use what are known as ‘counter-stories’ to consider how racial dynamics might develop in the future, or to highlight inequalities in the present (Delgado 1996). Derrick Bell (1992) who is considered to be the founder of CRT, uses a much cited counter-story ‘The Space Traders’ to consider the ways in which black people’s lives are classed as being not equal to those of whites in the USA. In ‘The Space Traders’ a race of aliens offer the USA a trade: all of America’s black citizens in return for unlimited, environmentally friendly, energy and technology. After some debate, the American people vote on the proposal and decide to give up all of America’s black citizens to the space traders in return for the futuristic technical goods. Of course, Bell is proposing an analogy between slavery in the past and the present situation of black people in the USA, and perhaps even suggesting that such a thing might happen again. On another level, though, there is also the idea that the existence of black people in America is categorised at a different level of metaphysical worth to that of white people. That life could be traded so cheaply, even plausibly (in the thought experiment) makes us pause for thought in terms of how we classify existential threat.

Although the relationship between CRT and black existentialism may not always seem obvious we can see that there is a nihilistic streak in the work of Bell (1992) with regard to the prospects for survival. In addition, the drawing on the work of Fanon by authors who use CRT as part of their work which shows the perpetual violence encountered by people of colour in education as well as the enduring influence of Du Bois on CRT (Delgado and Stefancic 2001) shows the close connection between the two theories. What links CRT and black existentialism is a basic concern with existence and the meaning of human life under constant threat that can be thought to underpin any concern with social justice. From CRT and black existentialism, we therefore see that existential threat is one of negation through economic, social and political systems and there are degrees of graduation between these forms of existential threats and actual genocide or extermination. The links between these points and CBET might be considered as obtuse but, as we shall see in the next chapter, systems of education can play a role in forms of negation. Obviously, there are social justice implications in the way in which people are treated in terms of race and ethnicity in education. The ‘triaging’ by race and ethnicity of access to education courses, the ways in which certain groups are rationed access to educational routes and the fragility of links between education and the labour market for BAME groups are all part of marginalisation, in which vocational education plays a large part. As part of this process, and probably not coincidentally, these groups are also more likely to find themselves in vocational, CBET courses. However, social justice is not the whole story, and there is a more profound form of equality associated with the right to existence. It is this that CBET threatens through the reduction of the subject to a digital organism as I will show in the next chapter.

#### No blackouts

**Larson 18** Selena Larson, Cyber threat intelligence analyst at Dragos, Inc. [Threats to Electric Grid are Real; Widespread Blackouts are Not, 8-6-2018, https://dragos.com/blog/industry-news/threats-to-electric-grid-are-real-widespread-blackouts-are-not/]//BPS

The US electric grid is not about to go down. Though it’s understandable if someone believed that. Over the last few weeks, numerous media reports suggest state-backed hackers have infiltrated the US electric grid and are capable of manipulating the flow of electricity on a grand scale and cause chaos. Threats against industrial sectors including electric utilities, oil and gas, and manufacturing are growing, and it’s reasonable for people to be concerned. But to say hackers have invaded the US electric grid and are prepared to cause blackouts is false. The initial reporting stemmed from a public Department of Homeland Security (DHS) presentation in July on Russian hacking activity targeting US electric utilities. This presentation contained previously-reported information on a group known as Dragonfly by Symantec and which Dragos associates to activity labeled DYMALLOY and ALLANITE. These groups focus on information gathering from industrial control system (ICS) networks and have not demonstrated disruptive or damaging capabilities. While some news reports cite 2015 and 2016 blackouts in Ukraine as evidence of hackers’ disruptive capabilities, DYMALLOY nor ALLANITE were involved in those incidents and it is inaccurate to suggest the DHS’s public presentation and those destructive behaviors are linked. Adversaries have not placed “cyber implants” into the electric grid to cause blackouts; but they are infiltrating business networks – and in some cases, ICS networks – in an effort to steal information and intelligence to potentially gain access to operational systems. Overall, the activity is concerning and represents the prerequisites towards a potential future disruptive event – but evidence to date does not support the claim that such an attack is imminent. The US electric grid is resilient and segmented, and although it makes an interesting plot to an action movie, one or two strains of malware targeting operational networks would not cause widespread blackouts. A destructive incident at one site would require highly-tailored tools and operations and would not effectively scale. Essentially, localized impacts are possible, and asset owners and operators should work to defend their networks from intrusions such as those described by DHS. But scaling up from isolated events to widespread impacts is highly unlikely.

#### It won’t escalate

**Jensen & Banks 18** Benjamin Jensen holds a dual appointment as a scholar-in-residence at American University, School of International Service and as an associate professor at the Marine Corps University, & David Banks, professorial lecturer at the American University's School of International Service. [Cyber warfare may be less dangerous than we think, 4-26-2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/04/26/what-can-cybergames-teach-us-about-cyberattacks-quite-a-lot-in-fact/]//BPS

We agree. However, our research suggests that, although states like Russia will continue to engage in cyberattacks against the foundations of democracy (a serious threat indeed), states are less likely to engage in destructive “doomsday” attacks against each other in cyberspace. Using a series of war games and survey experiments, we found that cyber operations may in fact produce a moderating influence on international crises. Here’s why: Cyberspace offers states a way to manage escalation in the shadows. Thus, cyber operations are more akin to the Cold War-era political warfare than a military revolution. Would you like to play a game? To understand how actors use cyber operations to achieve a position of relative advantage, we designed a series of analytical war games. This methodology lets us assess how multiple factors could combine in a competitive environment, and helps identify recurrent strategic preferences associated with cyber operations. We ran military officers and university students through these war games. Next, we turned the war games into survey experiments via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) — so randomized respondents answered questions about how to respond to an international crisis. War games offer a time-tested means of assessing the changing character of crisis and competition. Following scripted scenarios, players are assigned to different “teams” and armed with resources to meet their objectives. They earn points based on their choices, with referees guiding the play and military/security analysts interpreting the results. [There’s more to Russia’s cyber interference than the Mueller probe suggests] As players seek to win the game, they may choose previously unconsidered options or draw on or combine resources in unexpected ways. By observing these games, recording their results, repeating the plays and redesigning the scenarios, analysts can understand the nature of the complex and highly contingent problems the scenarios represent. And political scientists use war games to create survey experiments to test hypotheses about strategic preferences. Our study of over 100 military officers and students, for instance, gave players a crisis scenario and a range of response options, all of which included the ability to escalate in cyberspace — as well as more traditional diplomatic, economic and military instruments. Players could also choose to de-escalate. What would a great power cyber crisis in East Asia look like? In our first round, “Island Intercept,” we sought to identify whether states escalated using cyber capabilities. Players took on the role of China or the United States in an escalating dispute in the South China Sea. Over the course of multiple war games, we found our mix of military officers and university students often sought to de-escalate the crisis and rarely used offensive cyber operations. Players assigned to the Chinese side often combined cyber espionage and more traditional intelligence activities to identify the U.S. players’ intentions and capabilities. Players replicating strategic decision-making in Beijing seemed to prefer a “wait and see” approach involving increased intelligence and diplomatic lobbying, rather than escalatory offensive cyber operations. [Did the U.S. ‘hack back’ at Russia? Here’s why this matters in cyber warfare.] The broader survey experiment replicated these findings. The 800 MTurk respondents revealed a bias toward not escalating into the cyber domain. Specifically, about 52 percent chose to de-escalate while 30 percent opted for minor escalation in the diplomatic or economic arena. Only 18 percent of respondents preferred escalatory offensive cyber operations. These findings support other studies demonstrating that states do not prefer escalatory responses to cyber intrusions. How will states employ cyber capabilities against their domestic populations? In a second round, we shifted to examine intrastate conflicts. In our “Netwar” game, players took on the role of either the government, a paramilitary organization, a multinational company or a transnational group of hackers and activists, all attempting to achieve their interests in a weak and corrupt state. This scenario sought to replicate the complex, often proxy, multiparty competition in cyberspace. In these games, the results were more mixed. Players replicating the state tended to use offensive cyber operations as a means of targeting domestic opposition groups — while opposition groups used cyber to blackmail the state by leaking sensitive information. In an MTurk survey experiment involving 800 respondents, we found that states still preferred not to jump into the cyber domain, opting about 43 percent of the time to limit escalation. Yet these results appeared to be a function of regime type. When we controlled for regime type in a second round of surveys involving 800 respondents, we found that democracies had a higher than expected count of de-escalatory measures (53 percent). But authoritarian regimes escalated to cyber measures 35 percent of the time, vs. 18 percent for democracies. Where is the escalation? [The Netherlands just revealed its cybercapacity. So what does that mean?] Our findings suggest that cyber weapons may be far less destabilizing than many assume. First, we found that actors in crisis situations were restrained in their use of cyber weapons. Indeed, actors were more likely to use military, economic or diplomatic alternatives before escalating into the cyber domain. How might this work in the real world? We might interpret the Russian shift to cyber operations to be one of desperation, rather than evidence of a calculated strategy. Our findings suggest that actors are uncomfortable in the cyber domain and only operate there when they lack relative influence in other areas — or seek to limit the risk of escalation, likely due to attribution issues associated with cyber operations. Second, fears of large-scale cyber operations are likely overblown due to cyber’s unique “use it and lose it” character. Individual cyberattacks could potentially wreak considerable damage, but any such exploits could — once deployed — be quickly reverse-engineered and the vulnerability in target networks patched. Here’s the catch: Once you convert network access and cyber espionage into an attack payload, you signal your capabilities and lose the ability to conduct similar attacks. There is a unique shadow of the future in cyber statecraft. States have to assess whether they want to jeopardize an exploit in the short term — and lose long-term coercive options against rivals.

#### The theorization of nuclear warfare as a future potentiality denies the ongoing racialized violence of nuclear warfare since the beginning of the nuclear project---that focus both reproduces the forms of nuclear war they seek to solve and ignores the impact nuclear weapons always already have on racialized groups

Hurley, 20 – Jessica Hurley, 2020(“Infrastructures of Apocalypse,” UMN Press, Accessed Online via Michigan Libraries, bam)

From the Nuclear Sublime to the Nuclear Mundane

During the Cold War, the looming threat of World War III kept the eyes of much of the world fixed on the threat of the future explosion, the mushroom cloud over the New York skyline that signals the end of the world. For this reason, even post–Cold War accounts of the nuclear condition tend to think of the atom bomb as the one that, at least after its Japanese debut, never went off. Looking out over an artwork made from decommissioned fighter planes, Nick, the protagonist of Don DeLillo’s Cold War retrospective Underworld (1997), contemplates the science of nuclear fission before remembering that “the bombs were not released. . . . The missiles remained in the rotary launchers. The men came back and the cities were not destroyed.”3

Nick’s conceptualization of the almost ontologically undetonated atom bomb is widely shared in literary and cultural studies, which largely focus on the future nuclear apocalypse to the exclusion of all other nuclear realities. Daniel Cordle’s States of Suspense: The Nuclear Age, Postmodernism, and United States Fiction and Prose (2008) and Daniel Grausam’s On Endings: American Postmodern Fiction and the Cold War (2011) offer the most productive attempts to historicize American literature after 1945 in the context of the nuclear age, reading canonical works by Thomas Pynchon, Richard Powers, and Don DeLillo as articulations of the anxieties around world making, endings, and the archive circulating in the shadow of nuclear annihilation. For these critics, as for most scholars working in the intersections of literature and the nuclear, the atomic crisis is defined by its pure textuality, its absence from the material world.4 States of Suspense, Cordle writes in his introduction, “is a book about things that did not happen, and the cultural consequences of their not happening,” while Grausam argues that the historiographic crisis registered in postmodern aesthetics is a response to the nuclear weapons that “made newly possible—at least in the imagination—an ending . . . so final that it would preclude any position from which it could retrospectively be represented.”5

In such interpretations, literature registers the nuclear age as a crisis of narrative, a textual imprint of a textual technology whose apocalyptic violence exists only in the imagined future while the present is marked only by a damaging anticipation of disaster, the psychic wound of a bombing that might take place any second but that hasn’t, so far, not yet, not here. In fact, the United States has detonated 942 atomic bombs within the continental United States since 1945. The total number of bombings by the United States worldwide is 1,149: an average of two nuclear tests per month between the Trinity test in 1945 and the Divider test in 1992. Here, now, taking place in the present and yet strangely invisible both in and after their moment, these attacks go by the name of tests and thus are rendered acceptable, compartmentalized into a different category than “disasters,” “crises,” or “acts of war.” Indeed, as Rebecca Solnit has argued, such a categorization arises from a profound misunderstanding of both the nature of nuclear weapons and the scientific culture that produced them. There is no partial test of an atom bomb; there are no laboratory conditions: “a test is controlled and contained, a preliminary to the thing itself, and though these nuclear bombs weren’t being dropped on cities or strategic centers, they were full-scale explosions in the real world, with all the attendant effects.”6

These full-scale explosions have been devastating: each detonation has been larger than those at Hiroshima and Nagasaki; each detonation has released, on average, as much radiation as the 1986 meltdown at Chernobyl. A recent statistical analysis suggests that atmospheric nuclear testing in the United States killed between 145,300 and 429,400 Americans between 1952 and 1988, and the damage continues.7

“From a human-environmental point of view,” Barbara Rose Johnston writes, “nuclear war began with the first use of radiogenic materials for military purposes, and the assault on the world’s environment and its peoples has continued ever since.”8 Given these historical realities, why is it so plausible for both characters and readers to imagine atomic weapons as having refrained from unleashing their violence and to see the potential violence as inhering only in nuclear bombs and not in their surrounding infrastructures? The answer to this question lies at the intersection of historical fact and critical heuristic. Historically, the realities of the ongoing violence of the nuclear complex have indeed been hard to see. This is not, however, because all infrastructures are inherently invisible, as much of the scholarship in the recent “infrastructural turn” in the humanities has argued, but because the nuclear complex has made itself into what Michelle Murphy calls a “domain of imperceptibility” that renders elements of the material world invisible, unnoticed, or incomprehensible.9

Such domains are neither natural nor inevitable but are hot spots of political contestation; the fact that the damage caused by long-term exposure to low doses of radiation seems unknowable to us is not because there is no way to establish knowledge about it but because for decades the state-sponsored corporations and govern- ment agencies that could monitor doses and health impacts and generate such knowledge have refused to do so.10 The nuclear complex is a domain of imperceptibility that makes certain aspects of itself hypervisible in specific forms; the imbrication of “nuclear violence” with “mushroom cloud” was produced by the extensive infrastructures of technological reproduction that surrounded each nuclear detonation (Operation Crossroads at Bikini Atoll has been described as “the most photographed event in history,” captured in 1.5 million feet of film and more than a million photographs).11 Meanwhile all other aspects of the nuclear complex are rendered invisible through overlapping regimes of secrecy, misinformation, and bureaucratic boringness designed to deflect attention. Many nuclear complex fictions are thus dramas of perception in which characters come to realize that indirect violence is being done to them; in Mike Nichols’s biographical Silkwood (1983), for example, the narrative development is structured not around the direct violence of Karen Silkwood’s mysterious death in a car crash but around her slow realization that lax safety standards at the Kerr-McGee plant are habitually exposing workers to harmful levels of radiation.12

Conceptually, meanwhile, the fields of Cold War and nuclear literary studies have been organized around two “charismatic megaconcepts”: the textuality of the bomb and the nuclear sublime.13 The origin of the bomb’s textuality, an organizing concept for both Cordle and Grausam, can be traced to an influential essay by Jacques Derrida, published in the 1984 issue of diacritics that launched the field of nuclear criticism. In “No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives),” Derrida defines the atom bomb as “fabulously textual.”14 For Derrida, nuclear war can only be a referent: since it has yet to take place, it exists only in the form of the language that circulates around it. Literary criticism has unsurprisingly been drawn to the idea of the nuclear weapon as fabulously textual, as with this descriptor Derrida opens up a field usually claimed by politics or science as an area desperately in need of the kinds of analysis that scholars of literature are trained to provide.

Unlike most of his critical heirs, however, Derrida insists equally on the concrete materiality of the bomb’s paratextual infrastructures. The world-ending nuclear war may be a fable, but if that fable is purely textual, then its effects are not: “it is the war (in other words the fable),” Derrida writes, “that triggers this fabulous war effort, this senseless capitalization of sophisticated weaponry . . . this crazy precipitation which, through techno-science, through all the techno-scientific inventiveness that it motivates, structures not only the army, diplomacy, politics, but the whole of the human socius today, everything that is named by the old words culture, civilization.”15 The fictionality of the bomb exists only in a dialectical relationship with the technical and social infrastructures that produce it and that it in turn produces.16 As Millet suggests in her alternation of fictional representation and the description of historical realities in Oh Pure and Radiant Heart, there can be no nuclear fiction without nuclear fact.

Derrida’s insistence on atomic weaponry’s power to structure material realities has not had the same kind of influence on nuclear criticism as has his theory of the bomb’s textuality. Instead, nuclear criticism has both theorized and been held somewhat captive by the operations of what Frances Ferguson has called the “nuclear sublime.” Ferguson coined the term in the same 1984 issue of diacritics to describe the epistemological challenge posed by the threat of atomic annihilation. Here “the notion of the sublime is continuous with the notion of nuclear holocaust: to think the sublime would be to think the unthinkable and to exist in one’s own nonexistence.”17 The nuclear bomb as the limit point of thinkability has been a recurring trope in both literary criticism and other forms of discourse surrounding the bomb; the phrase “thinking the unthinkable” comes from Herman Kahn’s famous book of the same name that stemmed from the RAND Corporation’s nuclear war games, and the atom bomb shows up as a paradigmatic example in David Nye’s influential account of the “technological sublime.”18 As I have argued, however, when we speak of the nuclear as an always-absent referent, as that which we cannot think, we limit our object of study to the bomb itself, and then only to its imagined futures: the mushroom clouds that we imagine blooming across the continents and destroying life on this planet.19 At the same time, the operations of the sublime itself challenge our capacity to challenge it: as Ferguson writes in her gloss of Edmund Burke, “we love the beautiful as what submits to us, while we fear the sublime as what we must submit to” (6). The nuclear sublime is an aesthetic quality inherent in the mushroom cloud and amplified by its mass mediation that inculcates submission in its viewers: the nuclear sublime as embodied in the mushroom cloud is designed to reduce the capacity for critical thought and induce habits of submission to the nuclear complex for which the mushroom cloud serves as both metonym and disguise.

It is for this reason that I propose a third heuristic through which to approach the nuclear age: the nuclear mundane. The nuclear mundane approaches the nuclear age with an eye for its material realities, focusing on the environmental, infrastructural, bodily, and social impacts of nuclear technologies and the politics that prioritize them. Working in conversation with the recent critical turn by literature scholars like Elizabeth DeLoughrey and Molly Wallace toward a more materialist and ecocritical nuclear criticism, it is attentive to moments where nuclear infrastructures intersect with structures of power, making visible things like the co-constitution of nuclear technologies and compulsory heterosexuality in the mid-century lesbian novels The Price of Salt (1952) and Rubyfruit Jungle (1973), where the men who figure the marriage plot that the protagonists are trying to escape are both students of nuclear engineering.20 By only ascribing nuclearity to the bomb, nuclear criticism risks being blinded to the negotiations of power, wealth, status, and vulnerability that are constantly in play around nuclear and contestably nuclear things, from bodies and rocks to highways and international treaties.21 When the sublime teaches us to submit and the bomb blinds us to all that we are submitting to, we find ourselves unable to gain critical purchase on the multiscalar infrastructures of the nuclear age. By redefining the nuclear object as continuous with a set of militarized infrastructures rather than as their exceptional end point, the nuclear mundane makes the nuclear visible both in its extent and reach into every aspect of everyday life and in its contestability, as something that can be named and challenged. The infrastructural perspective of the nuclear mundane turns our attention from the psychic damage of future wars to the material and cultural impact of militarization after 1945.22 When President Eisenhower coined the phrase “military–industrial complex” in his 1961 Farewell Address to the Nation, he warned that the “total influence” of the new confluence of corporate and military structures would be “economic, political, even spiritual,” affecting “the very structure of our society.”23 This “total influence” is what we now call militarization: “the contradictory and tense social process by which civil society organizes itself for the production of violence.”24 Militarization involves obvious structural transformations, such as increased military spending, the transfer of public and private land to the military, and an increased share of the labor force being dedicated to military purposes; for these changes to seem acceptable to the public, it also requires that the public change—or be induced to change—their perspective about what percentage of national resources should be dedicated to the production of violence. Violence is therefore glorified and prioritized in the culture and politics of militarized societies, as we see today in everything from the immense popularity of movies that aestheticize war to the absolute rejection of gun control legislation in U.S. politics.

In addition, militarization impacts the nature of social hierarchies of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, indigeneity, and citizenship, redefining the boundaries of “acceptable” masculinity and femininity, for example, such that to be masculine comes to involve a willingness to become soldierly and to be feminine means to raise soldierly sons from within a traditional home.25 As a total system in the Maussian sense, militarization produces, at every scale, what C. Wright Mills called in 1956 the “military definition of world reality.”26

It is certainly the case that militarization did not begin in the United States with the arrival of the military–industrial complex; “a nation made by war, the U.S. was birthed not just by the Revolution of 1776, but also by wars against Native Americans and the violence required to capture and enslave many millions of African people.”27 The arrival of nuclear weapons onto the military scene did, however, change the nature of militarization after 1945. Catherine Lutz refers to historically specific organizations of violence as “modes of warfare,” arguing that with the invention of nuclear weapons, the United States transitioned from the industrial mode of warfare that had characterized the two world wars to a new, nuclear mode of warfare. This new technopolitical regime had different requirements and imposed different obligations than did the earlier industrial mode of warfare. Where industrial warfare required large amounts of manpower for manufacturing and soldiering and was therefore required to offer increased financial and social compensation to a large number of men (and sometimes women) of all races (though unevenly), the nuclear mode of warfare requires a much smaller number of highly trained, mostly white-collar workers, resulting in the centralization of power and resources to a much smaller, whiter, and more masculine workforce in the nuclear age. The nuclear mode of warfare also changed infrastructures around human knowledge, directing state financial resources toward specific fields (engineering, physics, psychology, area studies) as well as producing entirely new ones (earth sciences, climatology, oceanography, ecology, computing) and, by requiring security clearances to work on federally funded projects, restricting access to those fields and resources to those whose citizenship, race, gender, sexuality, disability, or political orientation would not give the FBI pause. Finally, the nuclear mode of warfare at least partly undoes the distinction between civilian and soldier, since the entire nation is vulnerable to atomic attack. As a result, the home front—and especially the city—began to be seen as a battlefield, producing new national infrastructures such as the highway system and the suburb as well as the redistribution of manufacturing bases to mostly white, mostly nonunion areas in the South and West, radically altering the geographies of race in the United States.28

The nuclear mundane thus asks us to combine an environmental and infrastructural perspective on the nuclear age with an intersectional understanding of how those environments and infrastructures have been structured by, and in turn continue to structure, existing distributions of power along axes of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and indigeneity (which, following Caroline Levine, we might also define as infrastructural inasmuch as they “[impose] order on social relations”).29 Infrastructure, social theorist Lauren Berlant has argued, is not an object or a set of objects but rather a set of relations in movement: “structure,” Berlant writes, “is not what we usually call it, an intractable principle of continuity across time and space, but is really a convergence of force and value in patterns of movement that’s only solid when seen from a distance. . . . Thus, I am redefining ‘structure’ here as that which organizes transformation and ‘infrastructure’ as that which binds us to the world in movement and keeps the world practically bound to itself.”30 Nuclear infrastructures are envirotechno-social systems that keep disparate elements in mobile relation to each other. America’s first plutonium processing plant at the Hanford site in Washington State showcases such a system: the technological infrastructure of the reactors is an envirotechnical system in which the Columbia River is an integral part of the infrastructure as it flows through the Site and serves as coolant for the reactors. At the same time, the Site is a sociotechnical system whose ongoing work is enabled by racially structured federal subsidies that allow white blue-collar workers to live a white-collar lifestyle and keep them segregated from Black and Latinx workers, making white workers more likely to accept the bodily harm that they risk by working at the Site.31 Settler colonialism forms an equally important part of the Site’s infrastructural relations; the first uranium ore to be processed at the Site in 1944 was mined by Indigenous workers on Navajo land in the United States and in what was then the Belgian Congo, and the ongoing cleanup of the Site since its closure in 1986 was mandated by treaty obligations to the Umatilla, Nez Perce, and Yakama tribes on whose sovereign land the reactors were built (I discuss this further in chapter 4).

To look at nuclear infrastructures within existing patterns of structural violence is thus to follow Gregory Bateson’s assertion in Steps to an Ecology of Mind that “what can be studied is always a relationship or an infinite regress of relationships. Never a ‘thing.’”32 Relational infrastructures allow for domination, as when the government employed the potent combination of eminent domain and settler-colonial white supremacy to claim the Hanford site land, but they also allow for resistance, as when the Umatilla, Nez Perce, and Yakama nations used those same legal infrastructures to mandate the site’s remediation—as well as for unpredictable outcomes in even the most tightly structured infrastructures, as when the wind patterns that planners had thought would be a helpful environmental buffer between the reactors and the populace turned out to be depositing concentrated amounts of radioactive particles in built-up areas. Berlant’s definition of infrastructure as relations in movement, beyond Benson’s more static model of relationships, also suggests the importance of narrative for our representations, understanding, and analysis of the nuclear mundane. The infrastructural perspective of the nuclear mundane requires that we see objects in four dimensions: as networked with other agential objects in three-dimensional spatial relationships structured by racism and other socially structuring principles but also as having what Matthew Eatough calls “infrastructure’s temporal dimension” constituted by both the historical forces that produce the infrastructure and the disposition of the infrastructure itself to produce specific outcomes.33 The title of this book, Infrastructures of Apocalypse, attempts to capture something of the mutually constitutive relationship between infrastructure and narrative form in the nuclear age. Nuclear apocalypse, often imagined as coming sud- denly and out of nowhere, in fact requires a planetary infrastructure to bring it about and a deep and ongoing commitment to maintaining its possibility; it is unique among potential apocalypses in that, as anthropologist Joseph Masco writes, “to prevent an apocalypse the governmental apparatus has prepared so meticulously to achieve it.”34 At the same time, the infrastructures of the nuclear complex that compose this preparation are themselves the product of apocalyptic narrative forms that have long defined U.S. understandings of its geopolitical situation (as I discuss in greater depth in chapter 2). The consensus fictions through which reality becomes shared are key determinants for what infrastructures get built and how, meaning that temporality itself gains an infrastructural function; narratives of nuclear apocalypse centered on America’s cities produced the highway system in the 1950s, whereas in the 1980s, new narratives of nuclear winter produced a massive nuclear freeze movement that accelerated arms control treaties and the reduction of nuclear stockpiles.35 Narrative forms, then, are themselves infrastructural forces that determine the movement of resources. During the Cold War, the narrative form of apocalypse motivates the reshaping of the environment while the structural form of racial hierarchy shapes the environment that will be produced; apocalypse gets the suburb built, but anti-Blackness determines who will live there.

#### Russia will stay restrained

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The recently published US intelligence community's annual threat assessment promotes cyberattacks the most serious threat to US national security. This is nothing new, since "cyber threat" replaced terrorism as the main threat a few years ago. What is new however is that where the emphasis was previously on the threat from Chinese, it is now changed to put the emphasis on Russia's cyber-capabilities. Russia has been developing its cyber-capabilities with big resources for the last 30 years, but it has been fairly restrained in its use so far. At least most of the experts estimate this to be the case. For example, Russia has not been forced to use its more sophisticated capabilities in Ukraine since it has achieved its political goals without it. But if the war in Ukraine gets worse, so will the related cyber-activities. At the moment it seems rather unlikely that Russia would launch a severe cyberattack against any Western country, even if the sanctions against them are elevated. Instead, Western countries should focus more on Russia's less destructive cyber-activities which can turn out even more effective in the long run. This will however require new countermeasures.

#### No access---the tech barrier is too high

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Another claim advances the asymmetric nature of cyber-attacks and its low entry barriers which facilitate its exploitation by non-state actors or weak states. As the Stuxnet case study demonstrates, cyber-attacks on the higher end of the ‘threat’ spectrum are contrary to the asymmetric claim. Effective cyber weapons are costly and impose high technology barriers beyond the reach of non-state actors such as terrorist groups. Furthermore, they often do not guarantee success and are surgical and ‘one-shot’ in nature. Hence, it is more rational for non-state actors to resort to conventional tactics with higher rates of success at much lower costs.

## Block

### Kritik

#### We straight turn reformism.

Kelley, 15—Gary B. Nash Professor of American History at UCLA (Robin D.G., “Beyond Black Lives Matter,” Kalfou, Vol. 2, Iss. 2, (Fall 2015): 330-337, dml)

This implicit appeal to acknowledge us-to recognize our humanity, our dignity, and our right to live-is understandable in a world where the statesanctioned killing and caging of Black bodies is routine. But as George Lipsitz observed, such appeals are embedded in a humanist logic that emphasizes "interiority" and feeling, thereby elevating "the cultivation of sympathy over the creation of social justice."7 That is to say, our feelings of empathy in any representation of suffering are designed to be understood and individually felt rather than transformed into collective praxis. This is partly why concepts like reparations are so antithetical to modern liberalism. Given the trauma produced by an endless video loop of Black people dying at the hands of police officers who are almost never indicted, let alone prosecuted and convicted, collective healing and the cultivation of sympathy are to be expected. On one hand, this makes the movement's counterslogan, "All Lives Matter," all the more offensive and painful. "All Lives Matter" is heard and felt as a belittling or decentering of anti-Black racism. It trades on postracial myths of equivalency in suffering. On the other hand, sometimes we react to "All Lives Matter" with such hostility that it stands in as an unambiguous expression of anti-Black racism. Can we salvage these words? Don't we want to build a world in which every life is valuable, cherished, and sustained? Are we not seeking a world that recognizes multiple sites of dispossession and recognizes that state violence inside US borders is inseparable from US militarism around the world? The fact that we are compelled to a defensive position is a consequence of focusing on proving our value rather than critiquing the system that devalues all of us and destroys the world in the process.

The veracity of our humanity was never the issue-then or now. The problem lies with Western civilization's very construction of the human. As Sylvia Wynter, Cedric Robinson, Aimé Césaire and others have been saying for decades, the "Negro" was an invention, a fiction-like that of the Indian, the Oriental, the "Mexican," etc. Or in Frantz Fanon's oft-quoted line from The Wretched of the Earth: "It is the colonist who fabricated and continues to fabricate the colonized subject."8 Indeed, the entire structure of global white supremacy depends on such inventions, like the fictions of the Arab as non- or anti-Western and the "Immigrant" as essentially Latino/a, or the notion that indigenous people (in North America at least) are all dead. This is why we have such a hard time acknowledging that most so-called immigrants from Mexico and Central America are, in fact, indigenous.

The very foundations of Western civilization were built on such fabrications and enacted through violence. Once they crumble, so goes Western civilization's conceit as well as the massive philosophical smokescreen that enables (racial) capitalism-the greatest, most destructive, most violent crime wave in history-to masquerade as the engine of progress, a pure expression of freedom and liberty, the only path to human emancipation. The modern world that invented the Negro, the Oriental, the Indian, and the Savage as a means of inventing European Man was built on the theft of humans, theft of land and water, indiscriminate murder, violation of customary rights, moral economy, enclosure of the commons, destruction of the planet-outright lawlessness, justified by supposed rationality or what Weber might call instrumental rationality. To leave it at Black Lives Matter unintentionally conceals the crime. After all, these were the very processes that birthed the liberal humanism to which BLM activists seem to appeal.

In his book Forgeries of Memory and Meaning, Cedric Robinson further elaborates on the systems of racial maintenance and myth making, the "racial regimes" responsible for the inventions of the Negro (the Indian, the Oriental) and their relation to capital. What exactly are racial regimes? In Robinson's words, they "are constructed social systems in which race is proposed as a justification for the relations of power." The power is real and formidable but surprisingly unstable. For Robinson, "the covering conceit of a racial regime is a makeshift patchwork masquerading as memory and the immutable. Nevertheless, racial regimes do possess history, that is, discernible origins and mechanisms of assembly. But racial regimes are unrelentingly hostile to their exhibition."9 In other words, to say that anti-Blackness is foundational to Western civilization is not to say that it is fixed or permanent. On the contrary, it is incredibly fragile and must be constantly remade; it is epiphenomenal to the production of Blackness-which is an essential component of modern racial regimes, but not its totality. In the last century alone, racial regimes have been remade, reconfigured, destabilized, and consolidated many times, employing new technologies to circulate old racial fabulations and new fictions in the process of capitalist expansion.

Proving one's humanity will not uproot racial regimes, for the very evidence of our humanity is their raison d'etre. Our exploitation is evidence of our value, but it requires enormous intellectual, juridical, and psychic resources to conceal our humanity. Slavery was not just social death, but was based on a cost-benefit analysis that assumed the disposability of Black lives. The system of extracting surplus emerged within a logic of racial hierarchy and racial subjugation that dragged Africans, Asians, and Europeans proletarianized by enclosure to the lands of the Americas, Oceania, parts of South Asia and Africa, and the Eastern Mediterranean-where indigenous people were dispossessed, enslaved, or exploited by other means. Enclosure is yet another example of theft and violence masking as "law, order, security": backed by the rule of law, the state employs violence to discipline, to reclassify, to criminalize, and to destroy sovereignty and create disorder. Enclosure is part of this process of war-a war on the commons, which ultimately turns some of the expropriated people into a proletariat (including European industrial, maritime, and landless rural labor, as well as prostitutes and beggars), turns a portion into settlers, and sends a portion to the workhouse. Some are merely casualties whose flesh mingles with the earth and whose bodies-sometimes hanging from a tree or broken on the wheel-serve to terrorize those who resist the new discipline.10

While the value of Black labor may have ebbed and flowed with the changing character of the global economy, there has never been a moment in US history when our humanity mattered, when Black people could enjoy full privileges and protections of citizenship. But the same can be said of most of the planet-at least until the mid-twentieth century, although I would venture to say this is still the case. What Black resistance calls into question is the inhumanity of the system, the inhumanity of those who subjugate in the name of civilization; it insists that the survival of humanity (and this is not the humanity defined by the Enlightenment) depends on the complete destruction of racial capitalism, patriarchy, and regimes of normativity.

As I wrote in the aftermath of the George Zimmerman verdict, unless we come to terms with this history, we will continue to believe that the system just needs to be tweaked, or the right-wing fringe defeated, or our humanity acknowledged.11 We will miss the routine character of state violence; its origins in the very formation of colonialism, slavery, and capitalism; and the ways in which routine violence has become a central component of US policies, including drone warfare and targeted killing. We cannot change the situation simply by finding the right legal strategy, the best policies, or recognition.

#### Afropessimism uses psychoanalysis as a tool to go beyond the drive for agency and progress but rather seeks to understand and dismantle the position of dereliction that blackness resides within.

**Malone and Jackson 21** [Kareen Malone, University of West Georgia: Psychoanalytic Association, Emory University, Tiara Jackson, Emory University, Comparative Literature PHD Candidate, July 9th 2021, “Lacan and Race Racism, Identity and Psychoanalytic Theory”, Chapter 11: Dereliction: Afropessimism, anti-blackness, and Lacanian psychoanalysis, Pages 206-208]

For Afropessimism, antiblackness means more than a lack of access to a Symbolic enfranchisement. Antiblackness is, radically, the negation found at the emergence of the Symbolic’s possibility. Afropessimism tracks the genesis of the enslaved black body through its incarnations in the experiential and institutional history of black men and women in North America. In the recounting of current instantiations of antiblackness, it articulates a desubjectivized core of nonbeing within the Black experience. This core implies a different positionality (Hartman and Wilderson 2003: 182), within an essential rather than contingent relationship to violence (Wilderson, 54). Afropessimism disputes the humanistic foundations of Western ontology. It locates a category of nonbeing that exists within the production of Western subjectivity in its condition of possibility, confronting the reader politically and culturally, and pointing to an ontogenesis of the subject that is defined by a relationship to what Orlando Patterson calls “social death,1 ” which is the lot of the Black person produced and reproduced in and through chattel slavery. This precarity of the subject, its liability to repetition, its proximity to its own destitution and the death drive, are recognized horizons of Lacanian work. Lacan’s understanding of the Real, Symbolic and Imaginary suggests that they are not indicative of a breakdown of a constituted total subject. These fundamental concepts orient psychoanalysis in its encounter with the unconscious as nonbeing (1978: especially, 29–42). **One cannot separate this abjection from the question of the Other as the site of this traumatic hole in being, and the void so intimately contiguous to being (Didier-Weill 2017). Psychoanalysis and Afropessimism are joined at this interstice between life and death, the traumatic hole in being in its historical genesis, its embodied effects, and the reversals between inside and outside implicating the subject in a Symbolic structured through antiblackness.** Section 1: epistemology and ontology Afropessimism and psychoanalysis are suspicious of traditional foundations of ontology and the manner of determining truth. Is there not a repressed dimension that is more essential to the truth than accepted narratives? This derelict structuration of the subject is foundational in Lacan’s work. The Lacanian frame in conjunction with Afropessimism makes it possible to address the malevolent power of the white gaze as it touches upon the Real of the black body. It articulates the genesis of human being in relation to the Other—the Other’s inherent capacity for violence, which Afropessimism attempts to articulate in its most radical fashion. The absolute possibility of nonbeing is political in the social link generally, and in the endemic violence towards blackness in that link. Psychoanalysis speaks to antiblackness from the most elemental moments of the superego, to the vicissitudes of the Other, and to new ways of using Lacan’s ideas on sublimation. There are certainly suspicions regarding psychoanalysis voiced by Frank B. Wilderson III, Hortense Spillers, and others who engage with the field of Afropessimism. Nonetheless, there is a recognized insistence on structure, effects of language, and on style that the two endeavors share. For Spillers psychoanalysis is a modality to pose questions, to make arguments and counter arguments, to illustrate the overdetermined nominal properties assigned to blackness and black bodies, and to evaluate the relevance of the split/divided subject of psychanalysis. Wilderson’s reservations regarding psychoanalysis challenge claims of “universality” by psychoanalysis, claims which obscure histories and ontological implications of differences between Western men and women and black men and women. The universal claims of psychoanalysis are tempered by the interdependence of the particular and universal in the generation of its knowledge. Written within the tradition of psychoanalysis itself, Betty Fuks’ Freud and the Invention of Jewishness, for example, acknowledges that Freud’s ethnicity established how psychoanalysis was structurally extracted from singular religious, cultural, and historical positions. Her analysis emerges from Freud’s experience of being Jewish and the social position of the Jewish people. Freud’s subjective assumption of these elements created the radicalism of psychoanalysis. His biographical experience and education translate into a theory of subjectivity. In psychoanalysis, as in Jewish experience historically, one is not the Master of one’s house (a good metaphor for the unconscious over consciousness). Self-division and self-exile are fundamental. Freud’s structural theoretic extraction from life contrasts with more historicist methods. Jared Sexton relates a similar approach of Afropessimism: [Afropessimism] … critically supplements the paradigm of critical ethnic studies …… by moving conceptually from the empirical to the structural or more precisely from the experiential to the political ontological, especially insofar as the question of differential racialization—or the question of racial hierarchy—makes recourse to a comparative history and social science. (“Afropessimism: The Unclear Word”). **Psychoanalysis and Afropessimism generate fundamental terms, e.g. agency, in a movement from a historical, represented, and lived context to a formalized destructuring/restructuring of assumed certainties about what it means to be human**. In Afropessimism, this meaning is tied to histories of slavery and colonization, everyday lived experiences, cultural representations, and past and current positions of black persons as the “dereliction” supporting white subjective positioning. It is a social death produced and reproduced (Patterson 1982). These instantiations of violence and subjection define a nonontological status denoted by Afropessimism as antiblackness, the black person as nonbeing (Terrefe 2016). The alternative building blocks of subjectivity explored by these two disciplines indeed refer to contingent narratives/events but are decoded as theorization and writings that overturn, in different ways, assumptions about human nature (albeit dissimilar starting points in being Jewish or being black). In his Écrits, Lacan states, Let whomever cannot meet at its horizon the subjectivity of his time give it up … For how could he who knows nothing of the dialectic that engages him in a symbolic movement with so many lives …… make his being the axes of those lives? Let him be well acquainted with the whorl into which his era draws him …… and let him be aware of his function as the interpreter in the strife of languages. (“The Function and Field” 264). There is no clearer clarion call for psychoanalysis to think analytically about the social realm and about antiblackness. Antiblackness resides in the strife of the Symbolic and demands the impossibility of a rereading of the writing on the wall: the history of Western violence against black bodies. Similar to Freud, Afropessimism demonstrates an onto-epistemological excavation of antiblackness (Sexton) from within the history, cultural representations, and life worlds of those who are located by color within the story of slavery itself. Frank Wilderson points out in an interview on “Antiblackness and Police Violence” (2014) that antiblackness is about the policing of black bodies, and what is at stake historically and presently is the well-being of all those who can distinguish themselves from the black. Drawing on current and past policing, he states: Policing—**policing Blackness—is what keeps everyone else sane** .… [W]e start to see the policing and the mutilation and the aggressivity towards Blackness not as a form of discrimination, but as being **a form of psychic health and well-being for the rest of the world** … (7) Wilderson’s remarks align with Spillers’: “**My country needs me, and if I were not here, I would have to be invented**” (203) In “First Questions: The mission of Africana Studies: An Interview with Hortense Spillers.” Spillers remarks that Afropessimism finds its ground as it “constructs” what it is to be a black person in a certain field of effects. These effects subvert the constitution of black subjectivity, a subjectivity that is typically attributed to all oppressed groups as their aspirational or foundational state, leading to an emancipation and agency. By contrast, antiblackness brings forth the questions of subjective ontogenesis through the lens of a brutal interpellation of the body, a body whose destiny is to be expendable. This leaves us to perceive the amplification of the essential traumas of existence that are twisted into the regimen of enslavement. Blackness exists more fully in the Real. The misfires of a libidinal body becoming a human body are woven into the view of Afropessimism, indicating parallels in Lacanian thinking.

#### Human relations with Slaves drive twin logics of philia and phobia that are pre-consciously reinforced thru civil society’s psychic conditioning – gratuitous response can only be explained thru phobia beyond utility, not the cost-benefit rationales of political economy

Chico et al 11 (A Primer on "Libidinal Economy" in Relation to Black Folks. Cosmic Hoboes: An Afropessimist Meditation (No)Space. <https://cosmichoboes.blogspot.com/2011/08/primer-on-libidinal-economy-in-relation.html>)

People who are interested in struggle need to understand the "libidinal economy." Coalition politicos like Al Sharpton like to tell us to put the unique experiences of black folks in the backseat to the interests of poor folks more generally. Such politicians expect us to submerge our interests as black people on the assumption that if poor people in general benefit from a political concession, poor black people will share equally in such benefits. Such politicos will continue to ignore the repeated evidence that a lot of nonblack people hate black people, even if doing so costs them money. If someone tells you that the problems black folks face are really just the problems that poor people face, they are telling you to ignore the libidinal economy. They are telling you that the political economy of capitalism is more important than the libidinal economy of antiblack racism. What is "libidinal economy"? In Red, White, and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms (2010, Duke University Press), black political theorist Frank Wilderson highlights the distinction between political economy and libidinal economy (p. 9): Jared Sexton describes libidinal economy as “the economy, or distribution and arrangement, of desire and identification (their condensation and displacement), and the complex relationship between sexuality and the unconscious.” Needless to say, libidinal economy functions variously across scales and is as “objective” as political economy. Importantly, it is linked not only to forms of attraction, affection and alliance, but also to aggression, destruction, and the violence of lethal consumption. He emphasizes that it is “the whole structure of psychic and emotional life,” something more than, but inclusive of or traversed by, what Gramsci and other marxists call a “structure of feeling”; it is “a dispensation of energies, concerns, points of attention, anxieties, pleasures, appetites, revulsions, and phobias capable of both great mobility and tenacious fixation.” What does all this mean? Let's interpret this elaborate definition and get to how it thinks of "economy." When we think of economy, we usually think of something having to do with money. Wilderson uses the term political economy to refer to economy in the ways that we usually think of it: the ways people exchange materials and decide on how things are valued. Economy doesn't just mean the economy in the sense of the stock market or banks, but also any means of determining whether something is worth doing or possessing based on how much capital and labor power it yields. In struggle, we see over and over that money talks and bullshit walks. Economy has to do with what they value moves people to act. Economies are therefore very important to political action. But can there be an economy that exchanges something other than money or capital? Yes. To understand "economy" as Wilderson and Sexton use it, we have to think of economy in a more general way as things of all kinds that we can trade or save. You can accumulate not only cash or material items, but also fears and desires. Certain people accumulate more fear (the black athlete) and desire (the blonde cheerleader) than others. The term libidinal economy refers to the systems of exchange and valuation for fantasies, desires, fears, aversions, and enjoyment. Economy is about exchange and accumulation. Everyone feels fear and aggression, but where is it directed? The libidinal is about both people's desires, fantasies, and pleasures AND their phobias, fears, and violent consumptions. A libidinal economy has to do with which groups a subject is attracted to, which groups it is willing to form alliances with, and which people it is willing to provide affection to. Where can we see this libidinal economy? How can we illustrate this distinction? The libido is the collection of things like phobias and desires that are unconscious and invisible but that have a visible effect on the world, including the money economy. Some examples: We see libidinal economies at work any time there is a response by state that is out of all proportion to the material effects of any practice they are regulating. The USA incarcerates three million people, despite the fact that doing so has an adverse impact on US financial security. Hence the libidinal economy of the fear of black and brown people (who together comprise the overwhelming majority of inmates) trumps the political economy of the cost-benefit analysis of maintaining prisons. Let's take another example of the powder - versus crack-cocaine distinction, in which the same drug is punished differently at the federal level. Because the two drugs are chemically identical, there shouldn't be any distinction between how their use and sale is punished. In 2010, the law made it so that these two drugs were punished the same, although the Obama administration isn't in any hurry to make the abolition of this distinction retroactive so that the mostly black and brown people who are locked up because of it will get released. But the legal abolition of this distinction is not essential for us to look at. What is essential is why that distinction was made in the first place. Wilderson's work suggests that, for civil society, black people pose a threat that has nothing to do with the chemical content or the social and cultural effects of crack. Simply by being associated with black people, crack is seen as 100 times more threatening than is powder cocaine. The financial and social costs of locking all those black and brown people up and the financial and social costs of allowing all those white people to go free and continue to sell does not really matter to civil society. What the powder- versus crack-cocaine distinction shows is the desire to contain the threat that blackness symbolizes. This is the mark of libidinal economy. Cops, soldiers, firemen are considered sexually desirable because they become the heroes of civil society. The Oscar Grant shooting. Amadou Diallo was a victim of a extreme kind of violence because of the phobias that converged on his body. What is the exchange? Civil society has an anxiety about crime, and crime is always attached to black in urban areas. Police don't have to get a monetary award, but they get the gratitude of civil society. How does this play out in ways that don't have to do strictly with money? The desire for them may not show up in the amount of money they make. Cops get rewarded for their aggression. When the cop slammed dude into the glass at BART. Prison guards, thought of as having the toughest beat on the planet. They get rewarded for being the last line of defense against George Jackson. Oscar Grant was an accumulation of aggression and phobias. Why are the black people in Prince George's County, Maryland, segregated from white people in their same socioeconomic bracket with the same kinds of high-value real estate, and the same kinds of political-economic values? Living around white people has a value that cannot be explained in strictly monetary terms. AFDC benefited mostly white single mothers, and enjoyed a long history of support from 1936-the 1960s. It initially excluded black people. By the 1960s, when black people started getting it, attitudes changed toward it, making it seem like it was undeserved and a drain on national prosperity, and by 1984, when Ronald Reagan referred to "welfare queens in Cadillacs," it was clear that AFDC was "a black thing." In actual statistical terms, it was still used mostly by white women. But once it became associated with poor black women, it was seen as in need of drastic, radical reforms. But is this "libidinal economy" really that important? Frank Wilderson is using the distinction between a money economy and an economy of desire over and over again throughout this book. Wilderson talks about this by talking about the difference between word and deed. This is not the hypocrisy of the system. It IS the logic of the system. So Europeans tried to resolve the lack of labor power by passing laws that reduced homeless white people to the status of slaves. In the end, however, they never really enforced these laws. Wilderson quotes David Eltis, an economic historian, who says that the costs of settling the "new world" would have been significantly reduced if Europeans has simply enslaved other Europeans. But, Wilderson points out, "what Whites would have gained in economic value, they would have lost in symbolic value; and it is the [symbolic value] which structures the libidinal economy of civil society." In other words, the symbolic costs of Europeans enslaving other Europeans would have been too great. Instead, they went to Africa for their slaves, even though the financial cost of doing so was much, much greater. The radical left doesn't make this distinction. Cornel West and Tavis Smiley say they want to organize a new Poor People's Campaign, but they won't be able to explain why this is a failed project from the start. This is because they won't think about the aspects of coalition building that have nothing to do with money or the lack of money. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the so-called "Reagan Democrats" were poor and working-class white people, many of them in unions, who voted overwhelmingly for Reagan against their own economic interest. The white left mistakenly thinks about the Reagan Democrats as people who were duped. They view them as an example of what Marx called "false consciousness" and they see it as their duty to inform the white poor and working class of why they should vote left. But there were all kinds of signs that white poor and working-class folks simply hated black people and didn't want to live anywhere that there was a large community of black people, even if those black people are of the same or higher socioeconomic status. The Reagan Democrats were excited by Reagan's antiblack rhetoric of law and order, a rhetoric that was in response against the activities of the Black Liberation Army, Weather Underground, Black Panthers, and Black Guerilla Family. Marxists think a person is in a state of false consciousness if her political or social interests go another way than her material or financial interests. If you adopt this view, then you probably think that the Reagan Democrats just need to be educated correctly about what they have in common with the black poor and working class. You have to think that their hatred of black people is somehow "false" simply because it runs counter to their financial interests. But this would be to ignore their interest in maintaining white supremacy and antiblack racism. One of the things white men would lose would be access to black bodies for sexual pleasure and amusement. These examples are not just isolated cases of false consciousness, ignorance, media manipulation, or some mystical thing called "prejudice." They are all of those things, but they are also something much, much greater that any student of struggle needs to be aware of. These examples reveal the contours of an economy of desires that is not primarily concerned with money. It's not that the political economy isn't also antiblack. In fact, both economies are antiblack.

#### Lesion, pharmacological, and deep brain stimulation studies provide empirical neurological support for psychoanalysis

Dall’Aglio 19 [John Dall’Aglio, Department of Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences, Brown University. Developmental Psychosomatics Laboratory, New York State Psychiatric Institute/Columbia University Medical Center.] “Of brains and Borromean knots: A Lacanian meta-neuropsychology” Neuropsychoanalysis, Vol. 21, 2019 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/15294145.2019.1619091>) – MZhu

Affective consciousness and the real

Recall the concept of the real as a negativity (non-representational insistence) which is present from the beginning. Das Ding emerges simultaneously with understanding yet is outside of it (Freud, 1895). Reason (or cognition, understood as a symbolic-imaginary function) cannot represent, and thereby cannot comprehend, the real. In this way, the limit of reason is within reason (Copjec, 2012; Laplanche, 2011).

Therefore, neural areas corresponding to the real should be constitutive of, but not identical with, cognitive functions. As non-representational, they should insist their presence through affect and the compulsive repetition of the drive. At the core of the subject, the real is also at the core of cognition, while simultaneously the limit of that cognition.

The drive (iteration, source/pressure) refers to the real (Johnston, 2013). Freud (1915a) defined drive as:

a concept on the frontier between the mental and the somatic, as the psychical representative of stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind, as a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its connection with the body. (Freud, 1915a, pp. 121–122)

Drive, thereby, refers to the demand upon the mind concerning bodily needs. In the brain, the brainstem and diencephalon contain “need-detectors.” Each has a homeostatic set-point – for example, the ideal amount of salt to have in the blood. The hypothalamus and related systems closely monitor and modulate the internal body (see, for example, Waterson & Horvath, 2015; Williams, Harrold & Cutler, 2000; Woods, Seely, Prote, & Schwartz, 1993). These areas can be dynamically localized as important points of proximity between the body and the mind, and the locus of the pressure of the drive (Solms, 2013).

These diencephalic and upper brainstem systems are fundamentally affective (Panksepp, 1998; Solms, 2013). Deviations from set-points produce unpleasure, whereas moving towards the set-point generates pleasure. One major structure is the periaqueductal gray (PAG), which receives projections from these brainstem areas. Stimulation of the ventral columns of the PAG induces feelings of extreme pleasure, whereas stimulation of the dorsal columns corresponds to feelings of excruciating pain. Here, one finds the pleasure principle as a key dynamic in the process of maintaining homeostasis (Solms & Turnbull, 2002).

Importantly, this affective system is fundamental to consciousness, the feeling state of being. Disturbances to upper areas of the brain disrupt cognitive and emotional functions, but the subject retains affective being (Penfield & Jasper, 1954). For example, hydranencephalic patients are born with little-to-no cortex but intact subcortical affective circuits (Merker, 2007; Shewmon, Holmes, & Byrne, 1999). These patients are still conscious in the affective sense and respond to the environment through these circuits. Summarizing these various lines of evidence, Solms (2013) argues that consciousness can exist without cortex.

However, damage to these affective circuits significantly impairs consciousness (along with cognition). In fact, a lesion to the PAG completely wipes out consciousness, extinguishing affective being. This supports the critical role of the upper brainstem in the generation of consciousness (Moruzzi & Magoun, 1949), which leads Solms (2013) to conclude that affective consciousness is the bedrock of consciousness. Later cognitive functions of the cortex depend upon and are shaped by the affective circuits which function prior to them (Panksepp, 1998; Solms & Turnbull, 2002).

With its (extimate) relationship with the internal body via homeostasis and drives, the upper brainstem and associated structures correspond functionally to Freud’s id. In contrast, the cortical focus on exteroception corresponds to Freud’s ego. Since the upper brainstem is intrinsically conscious (i.e. its activity generates the affective bedrock of consciousness) and the cortex is dependent on the brainstem for consciousness, Solms (2013) argues that the id is fundamentally conscious. Rather than the nucleus of the unconscious, the id is the font of consciousness.

More specifically, the id (upper brainstem and associated structures) is affectively conscious. It generates being as a feeling state without representation. Through a Lacanian lens, this affective consciousness corresponds to the insistence of the real. It is non-representational, a primary affect (Lacan, 1997). It is beyond (indeed, prior to) cognition – constituting a limit, an impasse. Furthermore, as the bedrock of consciousness, it is constitutive of cognition. This fits well within Lacan’s conception of the real and the drive (Johnston, 2013a).

Affective instincts

Additionally, affective consciousness extends into the limbic system. Panksepp (1998) identifies seven affective systems: SEEKING, RAGE, PANIC, PLAY, CARE, LUST, and FEAR.7 Across mammals, they exhibit the same circuitry, neurotransmitters, and stereotyped motor functions (see Panksepp, 1998 for neuroanatomical details). A combination of lesion, pharmacological, and deep brain stimulation studies supports the dynamic localization of their functions.

SEEKING closely resembles the Freudian libidinal drive (Solms, 2012a). It is an objectless, volitional system that carries its own subjective quality of excitatory pleasure (as opposed to a reduction of tension). The rest of the circuits are more specialized. For example, RAGE characterizes the aggressive impulse to destroy that which frustrates the subject’s goals. PANIC activates in response to separation from a loved object, connoting separation-anxiety. Generally speaking, all seven systems generate a distinct response to an experience of the external world.

Furthermore, these experiences also concern socio-emotional needs, such as attachment needs in the PANIC system (Solms, 2012b). These limbic circuits qualitatively elaborate upper brainstem affective consciousness through distinct socio-emotional needs. These affective instincts prepare the organism to interact with the world and meet its needs, albeit in a rough-and-ready way (Solms & Turnbull, 2002).

Insofar as these affective instincts are prepared for certain types of experiences, I would suggest that they are not the real proper and are better localized at the intersection of the real and the imaginary. Nevertheless, they also have built in “holes” – the potential to acquire new objects. For example, the FEAR system has certain built-in objects (such as a fear of falling). However, it also has the potential to learn new objects, such as electrical outlets. This potential is never exhausted, for these areas are subject to neuroplasticity (Ansermet & Magistretti, 2007; Solms & Turnbull, 2002). I suggest that these seven affective instincts might be considered “highways” from the real to the symbolic-imaginary. Similarly, Verhaeghe (2004) highlights Panksepp’s (1998) instincts as potential neurobiological underpinnings in the child’s turn to the Other (symbolic-imaginary registers) to answer the pressure of the drive (the real).

These instincts contrast with the upper brainstem homeostatic drives. Each instinct represents a socio-emotional need. In the perspective of drive as representative of bodily need (i.e. located in brainstem and diencephalon “need-detectors”), there is not much flexibility in terms of what objects might satisfy the drive. Only water can satisfy the demand made upon the mind when dehydrated, for example. However, affective instincts are more flexible – emotional needs may find any number of objects.

Therefore, the flexibility attributed to the psychoanalytic drive (i.e. alteration, the aim and object) corresponds with the plasticity and potentiality of these affective instincts. In contrast, the brainstem, corresponds to the real of the drive (i.e. iteration, the source and pressure). Indeed, drive itself is split – here, neuro-structurally and evolutionarily, for the affective instincts are more evolutionarily recent than the upper brainstem (Solms & Turnbull, 2002). For Lacan, the tension of the drive is never eliminated. SEEKING corresponds best to this notion of excitatory pleasure in the drive, for it is innately objectless (Solms, 2012a). However, this inexhaustibility may be attributed to all seven affective instincts.

### Case

#### We solve extinction your own Thompson evidence says people should make bunkers the alt could do those things meaning black people survive.

Thompson 18 (Nicole Akoukou. Chicago-based creative writer. 4-6-2018. "Why I will not allow the fear of a nuclear attack to be white-washed." RaceBaitR. [http://racebaitr.com/2018/04/06/2087/#](http://racebaitr.com/2018/04/06/2087/))

[Kansas Card Ends]

If you’re Black and nervous about nuclear war too, but you’re also broke and can’t afford to head to a protected island, be sure to **make an emergency plan for** yourself **and your family**. **Design a shelter** plan, an **evacuation** plan, **and consider** what goods or **equipment you** may **need**. Keep necessities on hand: non-perishables, canned goods, medical supplies, several gallons of water, a communication device, tools, a flashlight, fresh batteries, garbage bags, and duct tape. This information could be useful for everyone, but Black people this is for you. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also publishes great information on Emergency Preparedness. In case of nuclear attack or any emergency, pay attention to the news and take advisories seriously. If evacuation is possible, safely find your way to an area that’s a bit of a **distance** from commercial ports, airfields, or **centers of government**.

#### The 1AC performs an act of pornotroping from which they derive entertainment from saving those they are responsible for subjugating

Weheliye (Alexander G., professor of African American Studies at Northwestern University) 2014 (Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human, Duke University Press, pg. 90-91 C.A.)

Spillers has referred to the enactment of black suffering for a shocked and titillated audience as “pornotroping”: “This profound intimacy of in- terlocking detail is disrupted, however, by externally imposed meanings and uses: (1) the captive body as the source of an irresistible, destructive sensuality; (2) at the same time—in stunning contradiction—it is reduced to a thing, to being for the captor; (3) in this distance from a subject posi- tion, the captured sexualities provide a physical and biological expression of ‘otherness’; (4) as a category of ‘otherness,’ the captive body translates into a potential for pornotroping and embodies sheer physical powerless- ness that slides into a more general ‘powerlessness’” (“Mama’s Baby,” 206). Spillers directs our seeing to several facets of the body/flesh, human/not- quite-human, sovereign/bare life, and so on pas des deux in her insistence on the simultaneous thingness and sensuality of the slave, which lays bare the extralegal components of this volatile Ding. Pornotroping unconceals the literally bare, naked, and denuded dimensions of bare life, underscor- ing how political domination frequently produces a sexual dimension that cannot be controlled by the forces that (re)produce it. As Daphne Brooks remarks, “born out of diasporic plight and subject to pornotroping,” black flesh has “countenanced a ‘powerful stillness.’”5 The hieroglyphics of the flesh, embodied here by pornotroping, circumnavigate the connubial abyss of subjection and freedom, displaying at once the physical powerlessness of the dysselected slave subject and the untainted power of the selected mas- ter subject. In order to better follow Spillers’s brilliant coarticulation of porno and trope, a brief etymological detour is in order. Originally porno signified “pros- titute” and in the ancient Greek context whence it sprang, the term referred to female slaves that were sold expressly for prostitution. Also a derivation from Greek, trope, according to Hayden White, refers to “turn” and “way” or “manner”; later, by way of Latin, trope is aligned with “figure of speech.” White states the following of the palimpsestic structure of this word: “Tropes are deviations from literal, conventional, or ‘proper’ language use. . . . It is not only a deviation from one possible, proper, meaning, but also a de- viation towards another meaning.”6 In pornotroping, the double rotation White identifies at the heart of the trope figures the remainder of law and violence linguistically, staging the simultaneous sexualization and brutaliza- tion of the (female) slave, yet—and this marks its complexity—it remains unclear whether the turn or deviation is toward violence or sexuality.7 90 Chapter Six Pornotroping, then, names the becoming-flesh of the (black) body and forms a primary component in the processes by which human beings are converted into bare life. In the words of Saidiya Hartman, it marks “the means by which the wanton use of and the violence directed towards the black body come to be identified as its pleasure and dangers—that is, the expectations of slave property are ontologized as the innate capacities and inner feelings of the enslaved, and moreover, the ascription of excess and enjoyment to the African effaces the violence perpetrated against the enslaved.”8 The violence inflicted upon the enslaved body becomes syn- onymous with the projected surplus pleasure that always already moves in excess of the sovereign subject’s jouissance; pleasure (rapture) and vio- lence (bondage) deviate from and toward each other, setting in motion the historical happening of the slave thing: a potential for pornotroping.9 In Christina Sharpe’s words, the black body and flesh “become the bearers (through violence, regulation, transmission, etc.) of the knowledge of cer- tain subjection as well as the placeholders of freedom for those who would claim freedom as their rightful yield.”10 How does the historical question of violent political domination activate a surplus and excess of sexuality that simultaneously sustains and disfigures said brutality? Or what are the sexual dimensions of objectification in slavery and other forms of extreme political and social domination? My argument is not about erotics per se but dwells in the juxtaposition of violence as the antithesis of the human(e) (bondage) and “normal” sexuality (rapture) as the apposite property of this figure.11 Once again, I am bracketing questions of agency and resistance, since they obfuscate—and not in a productive way—the textures of enfleshment, that is, the modes of being which outlive the dusk of the law and the dawn of political violence

**Embracing extinction as a narrative—not biological—phenomenon is a prerequisite to disrupting white desires**

**Schotten, 18**—Associate Professor of Political Science and an affiliated faculty in Women's and Gender Studies, University of Massachusetts-Boston (C. Heike, “SOCIETY MUST BE DESTROYED,” *Queer Terror: Life, Death, and Desire in the Settler Colony* pg 108-111, dml)

How, then, to articulate and effect the radical abolitionism of revolutionary desire without getting caught up in the stranglehold of futurism? Futurism’s inescapability means **not simply that politics is irredeemable** and **reform insufficient**, but also that the deconstructive or queer practice of **subversive redeployment** is a **naïve delusion** regarding our own ability to **think** and **act outside** or **beyond futurist mandates**. As Edelman simultaneously argues and demonstrates, futurism’s **stifling determination** of the very domain of the political itself means that **any** and **all resistance is always already coopted**, while revolt is an impossibly queered space that is simultaneously named and foreclosed by the death drive. Yet Edelman’s solution to this dilemma is to recommend neither **capitulation** to futurism nor some sort of **compromise** with it but rather an **accession to its worst nightmares** in an embrace of queerness that will **destroy it from within**, “shortcircuit[ing] the social in its present form.”74 In other words, rather than **defend** society, which Edelman finds indefensible, much less **deconstruct** society, as a queer critique of norms might recommend, or even (dear me!) **redeem** society, by **entreating a utopian vision** that imagines the overcoming of all suffering and oppression, Edelman instead declares we must **destroy society**. And we do so by **taking up**, **inhabiting**, or “**embracing**” the very “**death**” that futurism **inevitably produces** as the queer by- product of its social ordering. He thus **dismisses utopianism** in the name of an **immediacy** that “**the future stop here**,”75 challenging us to live life as an **insistent presentism** that will **do nothing else afterward but die**, and casting this alliance with death as the **act of revolutionary resistance**.

While Dean vociferously rejects this “embrace” because of its psychoanalytic impossibility, Edelman, I think, is well aware of this fact and recommends it precisely for this reason, a contradiction that becomes more intelligible if understood politically rather than solely psychoanalytically. Indeed, Edelman’s recommendation of this “embrace” is a clearly political position— despite what he may say otherwise— in two specific, complex ways. First, recall the historicization of Edelman’s argument provided in chapter 2, wherein I characterized his version of “politics” as a distinctly modern, European, settler colonial sovereignty. An important consequence of this historicization is that, even in his allegedly non- or antipolitical advocacy, Edelman **cannot actually be rejecting politics per se** since, despite his own claims to the contrary, there is **no such thing**. Abolishing modern politics or futurist politics is **not equivalent to abolishing politics as such** and could only mean as much if **every modernity were European modernity**, if **every politics were a sovereign biopolitics**, and if **every temporality were futurist**. To understand Edelman’s refusal of politics as a **refusal of any and all politics existing anywhere** is to **go along with** his unmarked **universalist presentation of** reproductive **futurism** as the **logic of everything existing everywhere all the time**, itself a frequent conceit of psychoanalytic frames.76 But if futurism is the **temporality of modern biopolitical sovereignty**, it **immediately becomes clear that other temporalities are possible**, even as other versions of politics **must necessarily exist**.77 As Audra Simpson argues, for example, “Indigenous political orders are quite simply, first, . . . **prior** to the project of founding, of settling, and as such **continue to point**, in their persistence and vigor, to the **failure of the settler project to eliminate them**, and yet are subjects of dispossession, of removal, but their polities serve as **alternative forms of legitimacy** and **sovereignties** to that of the settler state.”78

Historicizing futurist politics in this way means that alternative temporalities or political schemas **exist** but are queer(ed) and **represented as existential threats** to it: as **unintelligible**, **unlivable**, **immoral**, **backward**, and “**savage**.” While Edelman does indeed conflate all politics with futurism, such that his call for the destruction of politics seems to portend an unthinkable and intolerable nihilism, it is nevertheless the case that, once situated historically, the advocacy that queers **accede to the deathly positioning** to which they are always already relegated by reproductive futurism is **not some sort of unthinkable**, **antipolitical vision**, nor is it an **advocacy of suicide** or **some sort of necropolitical imperative**. Rather, in the context of a **European modernity** built on the colonization of most of the rest of the world, Edelman’s embrace of death can be read as a **prescription** for an **anticolonial allegiance to** and **alliance with those forms of politics** and **temporality that thwart**, **refuse**, or **deny futurism’s colonial mandates**. No Future’s embrace of the “death drive,” in other words, is a **championing of resistant futures** and **political systems** that **show up as death from a futurist perspective** and are various surrogates for the broad, structural category he designates as “queer.” In advocating for a revolution on behalf of queers and arguing for an embrace of queerness, then, Edelman is very much arguing in the name of something— not the future, of course, and certainly not life in any biological sense. But he is also **not quite arguing in the name of death in a biological sense**, either. Rather, he is arguing that “the dead” should “live,” that is, that they “come to life” (or insistently exist) and **animate the destruction of the settler order** that they are always already **consigned by that social order to symbolize**. This is, in other words, an argument for indigenous existence as resistance to settler sovereignty. Siting and situating futurism historically make clear that Edelman’s recommended accession to queerness/death is another name for radical resistance to sovereign biopolitics and that, **far from nihilism**, it is an **emancipatory** and **decolonizing political recommendation** of the first order. In this sense, even Edelman’s own project is wedded to life, albeit a life that is unlivable as life, which is the status of native life within settler colonial regimes. As he says in recommendation of embracing the death drive, “political self- destruction inheres in the only act that counts as one: the act of resisting enslavement to the future in the name of having a life.”79 Edelman’s opposition to the political can therefore be reread as a **wholesale opposition** to the sovereign biopolitics of European modernity and an **imagining of the death of that political order** as the **content of revolutionary politics**. Indeed, his suggestion of a necessary “counterproject”80 to futurism makes clear that his recommendation of this refusal is the **essential**, **necessary**, and **definitive act of political resistance**, even as it is a **championing of the lives** and **political temporalities** of those **determined to be emissaries of death**.

Importantly, this destructive refusal is a threat that redounds back on Edelman himself and on **all of us who share** his **habitation of futurist politics** in Western modernity (or who were ourselves **trained in the history of that thought**). This is the second, complex way that Edelman’s rejection of politics is in fact a **maximally political entreaty**. The tension at work in Edelman’s inevitably futurist call to end futurism means that he is also and necessarily calling for the destruction of his own revolutionary project and subjective/authorial position. This is a queer revolution that **queers the aims of revolution itself**, divesting itself of futurism even as it speaks in its name. As a political act, it amounts “to **put[ting] one’s foot down at last**, **even if doing so costs us the ground on which we**, **like all others**, **must stand**.”81 It is a revolutionary desire that seeks to dispossess revolution of its failed foundations without thereby relinquishing either revolution or its animating desire. This revolutionary discourse exceeds the parameters of revolution as it has hitherto unfolded in modernity, even as it promises a liberation from modernity’s— and liberation’s— moralizing constraints.

This paradoxical, queer(ed) revolution is therefore **unmistakably tied to death**, and in more than one way: not only because queerness is the structural position of anything antisociety and antilife; not only because it **demands the destruction of all that has been construed as life** (as **valuable life**, as **worthy life**, as life **worth living** and **endowed with a future**); but also because the revolutionary call to destroy society and its futurist temporality will **necessarily result in the eradication of its own revolutionary demand in the process**. This is why Edelman’s queer political project **can never recommit us to sovereignty**, whether of a charismatic revolutionary leader, a vanguard revolutionary class, or a theological vision of an allpowerful monarch, much less the **sovereign subject**, whose **very European coherence requires futurism’s linear temporality**. It can commit us **only to the destruction of these things**, as well as to the **eradication of our own commitments precisely to that very destruction** if, as, and when they **threaten to become the next crushing futurist ideal**. Edelman’s formulation of the **impossible** yet **wholly revolutionary goal** of refusing futurism— a refusal achievable only in a future that lies beyond its textual articulation and summary rejection there— offers a **rich** and **provocative articulation** of a revolutionary desire that seeks to **dispossess revolution of its very foundations**, even as it speaks in its name.

#### Actors initiate war out of fear of future decisions:

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The Nuclear-Cyber Connection

These links exist because the NC3 systems of the United States and other nuclear-armed states are heavily dependent on computers and other digital processors for virtually every aspect of their operation and because those systems are highly vulnerable to cyberattack. Every nuclear force is composed, most basically, of weapons, early-warning radars, launch facilities, and the top officials, usually presidents or prime ministers, empowered to initiate a nuclear exchange. Connecting them all, however, is an extended network of communications and data-processing systems, all reliant on cyberspace. Warning systems, ground- and space-based, must constantly watch for and analyze possible enemy missile launches. Data on actual threats must rapidly be communicated to decision-makers, who must then weigh possible responses and communicate chosen outcomes to launch facilities, which in turn must provide attack vectors to delivery systems. All of this involves operations in cyberspace, and it is in this domain that great power rivals seek vulnerabilities to exploit in a constant struggle for advantage.

The use of cyberspace to gain an advantage over adversaries takes many forms and is not always aimed at nuclear systems. China has been accused of engaging in widespread cyberespionage to steal technical secrets from U.S. firms for economic and military advantages. Russia has been accused, most extensively in the Robert Mueller report, of exploiting cyberspace to interfere in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Nonstate actors, including terrorist groups such as al Qaeda and the Islamic State group, have used the internet for recruiting combatants and spreading fear. Criminal groups, including some thought to be allied with state actors, such as North Korea, have used cyberspace to extort money from banks, municipalities, and individuals.[4](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-11/features/cyber-battles-nuclear-outcomes-dangerous-new-pathways-escalation#endnote04) Attacks such as these occupy most of the time and attention of civilian and military cybersecurity organizations that attempt to thwart such attacks. Yet for those who worry about strategic stability and the risks of nuclear escalation, it is the threat of cyberattacks on NC3 systems that provokes the greatest concern.

This concern stems from the fact that, despite the immense effort devoted to protecting NC3 systems from cyberattack, no enterprise that relies so extensively on computers and cyberspace can be made 100 percent invulnerable to attack. This is so because such systems employ many devices and operating systems of various origins and vintages, most incorporating numerous software updates and “patches” over time, offering multiple vectors for attack. Electronic components can also be modified by hostile actors during production, transit, or insertion; and the whole system itself is dependent to a considerable degree on the electrical grid, which itself is vulnerable to cyberattack and is far less protected. Experienced “cyberwarriors” of every major power have been working for years to probe for weaknesses in these systems and in many cases have devised cyberweapons, typically, malicious software (malware) and computer viruses, to exploit those weaknesses for military advantage.[5](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-11/features/cyber-battles-nuclear-outcomes-dangerous-new-pathways-escalation#endnote05)

Although activity in cyberspace is much more difficult to detect and track than conventional military operations, enough information has become public to indicate that the major nuclear powers, notably China, Russia, and the United States, along with such secondary powers as Iran and North Korea, have established extensive cyberwarfare capabilities and engage in offensive cyberoperations on a regular basis, often aimed at critical military infrastructure. “Cyberspace is a contested environment where we are in constant contact with adversaries,” General Paul M. Nakasone, commander of the U.S. Cyber Command (Cybercom), told the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2019. “We see near-peer competitors [China and Russia] conducting sustained campaigns below the level of armed conflict to erode American strength and gain strategic advantage.”

Although eager to speak of adversary threats to U.S. interests, Nakasone was noticeably but not surprisingly reluctant to say much about U.S. offensive operations in cyberspace. He acknowledged, however, that Cybercom took such action to disrupt possible Russian interference in the 2018 midterm elections. “We created a persistent presence in cyberspace to monitor adversary actions and crafted tools and tactics to frustrate their efforts,” he testified in February. According to press accounts, this included a cyberattack aimed at paralyzing the Internet Research Agency, a “troll farm” in St. Petersburg said to have been deeply involved in generating disruptive propaganda during the 2016 presidential elections.[6](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-11/features/cyber-battles-nuclear-outcomes-dangerous-new-pathways-escalation#endnote06)

Other press investigations have disclosed two other offensive operations undertaken by the United States. One called “Olympic Games” was intended to disrupt Iran’s drive to increase its uranium-enrichment capacity by sabotaging the centrifuges used in the process by infecting them with the so-called Stuxnet virus. Another left of launch effort was intended to cause malfunctions in North Korean missile tests.[7](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-11/features/cyber-battles-nuclear-outcomes-dangerous-new-pathways-escalation#endnote07) Although not aimed at either of the U.S. principal nuclear adversaries, those two attacks demonstrated a willingness and capacity to conduct cyberattacks on the nuclear infrastructure of other states.

Efforts by strategic rivals of the United States to infiltrate and eventually degrade U.S. nuclear infrastructure are far less documented but thought to be no less prevalent. Russia, for example, is believed to have planted malware in the U.S. electrical utility grid, possibly with the intent of cutting off the flow of electricity to critical NC3 facilities in the event of a major crisis.[8](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-11/features/cyber-battles-nuclear-outcomes-dangerous-new-pathways-escalation#endnote08) Indeed, every major power, including the United States, is believed to have crafted cyberweapons aimed at critical NC3 components and to have implanted malware in enemy systems for potential use in some future confrontation.

Pathways to Escalation

Knowing that the NC3 systems of the major powers are constantly being probed for weaknesses and probably infested with malware designed to be activated in a crisis, what does this say about the risks of escalation from a nonkinetic battle, that is, one fought without traditional weaponry, to a kinetic one, at first using conventional weapons and then, potentially, nuclear ones? None of this can be predicted in advance, but those analysts who have studied the subject worry about the emergence of dangerous new pathways for escalation. Indeed, several such scenarios have been identified.[9](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-11/features/cyber-battles-nuclear-outcomes-dangerous-new-pathways-escalation#endnote09)

The first and possibly most dangerous path to escalation would arise from the early use of cyberweapons in a great power crisis to ~~paralyze~~ undermine the vital command, control, and communications capabilities of an adversary, many of which serve nuclear and conventional forces. In the “fog of war” that would naturally ensue from such an encounter, the recipient of such an attack might fear more punishing follow-up kinetic attacks, possibly including the use of nuclear weapons, and, fearing the loss of its own arsenal, launch its weapons immediately. This might occur, for example, in a confrontation between NATO and Russian forces in east and central Europe or between U.S. and Chinese forces in the Asia-Pacific region.

Speaking of a possible confrontation in Europe, for example, James N. Miller Jr. and Richard Fontaine wrote that “both sides would have overwhelming incentives to go early with offensive cyber and counter-space capabilities to negate the other side’s military capabilities or advantages.” If these early attacks succeeded, “it could result in huge military and coercive advantage for the attacker.” This might induce the recipient of such attacks to back down, affording its rival a major victory at very low cost. Alternatively, however, the recipient might view the attacks on its critical command, control, and communications infrastructure as the prelude to a full-scale attack aimed at neutralizing its nuclear capabilities and choose to strike first. “It is worth considering,” Miller and Fontaine concluded, “how even a very limited attack or incident could set both sides on a slippery slope to rapid escalation.”[10](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-11/features/cyber-battles-nuclear-outcomes-dangerous-new-pathways-escalation#endnote10)

What makes the insertion of latent malware in an adversary’s NC3 systems so dangerous is that it may not even need to be activated to increase the risk of nuclear escalation. If a nuclear-armed state comes to believe that its critical systems are infested with enemy malware, its leaders might not trust the information provided by its early-warning systems in a crisis and might misconstrue the nature of an enemy attack, leading them to overreact and possibly launch their nuclear weapons out of fear they are at risk of a preemptive strike.

“The uncertainty caused by the unique character of a cyber threat could jeopardize the credibility of the nuclear deterrent and undermine strategic stability in ways that advances in nuclear and conventional weapons do not,” Page O. Stoutland and Samantha Pitts-Kiefer wrote in 2018 paper for the Nuclear Threat Initiative. “[T]he introduction of a flaw or malicious code into nuclear weapons through the supply chain that compromises the effectiveness of those weapons could lead to a lack of confidence in the nuclear deterrent,” undermining strategic stability.[11](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-11/features/cyber-battles-nuclear-outcomes-dangerous-new-pathways-escalation#endnote11) Without confidence in the reliability of its nuclear weapons infrastructure, a nuclear-armed state may misinterpret confusing signals from its early-warning systems and, fearing the worst, launch its own nuclear weapons rather than lose them to an enemy’s first strike. This makes the scenario proffered in the 2018 NPR report, of a nuclear response to an enemy cyberattack, that much more alarming.

#### They “might” launch

Gartzke et al. 17, \*Erik Gartzke is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Peace and Security Studies (cPASS) at the University of California, San Diego, where he has been a member of the research faculty since 2007; \*Jon R. Lindsay is Assistant Professor of Digital Media and Global Affairs at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy and the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto. He is the co-editor of Cross-Domain Deterrence and China and Cybersecurity; (March 2017, “Thermonuclear cyberwar”, https://academic.oup.com/cybersecurity/article/3/1/37/2996537#64534849)

In the other direction, the unstable cyber domain can undermine the stability of nuclear deterrence. Most analysts who argue that the cyber–nuclear combination is a recipe for danger focus on the fog of crisis decision making [[85–87](javascript:;)]. Stephen Cimbala points out that today’s relatively smaller nuclear arsenals may perversely magnify the attractiveness of NC3 exploitation in a crisis: “Ironically, the downsizing of U.S. and post-Soviet Russian strategic nuclear arsenals since the end of the Cold War, while a positive development from the perspectives of nuclear arms control and nonproliferation, makes the concurrence of cyber and nuclear attack capabilities more alarming” [[88](javascript:;)]. Cimbala focuses mainly on the risks of misperception and miscalculation that emerge when a cyber attack muddies the transparent communication required for opponents to understand one another’s interests, redlines, and willingness to use force, and to ensure reliable control over subordinate commanders. Thus a nuclear actor “faced with a sudden burst of holes in its vital warning and response systems might, for example, press the preemption button instead of waiting to ride out the attack and then retaliate” [[85](javascript:;)].

#### Assumes it “begins” and needs to be “predicted” as a threat

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Nuclear war has no winner. Beginning in 2006, several of the world’s leading climatologists (at Rutgers, UCLA, John Hopkins University, and the University of Colorado-Boulder) published a series of studies that evaluated the long-term environmental consequences of a nuclear war, including baseline scenarios fought with merely 1% of the explosive power in the US and/or Russian launch-ready nuclear arsenals. They concluded that the consequences of even a “small” nuclear war would include catastrophic disruptions of global climate and massive destruction of Earth’s protective ozone layer. These and more recent studies predict that global agriculture would be so negatively affected by such a war, a global famine would result, which would cause up to 2 billion people to starve to death. These peer-reviewed studies – which were analyzed by the best scientists in the world and found to be without error – also predict that a war fought with less than half of US or Russian strategic nuclear weapons would destroy the human race. In other words, a US-Russian nuclear war would create such extreme long-term damage to the global environment that it would leave the Earth uninhabitable for humans and most animal forms of life. A recent article in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, “Self-assured destruction: The climate impacts of nuclear war,” begins by stating: “A nuclear war between Russia and the United States, even after the arsenal reductions planned under New START, could produce a nuclear winter. Hence, an attack by either side could be suicidal, resulting in self-assured destruction.” In 2009, I wrote “Catastrophic Climatic Consequences of Nuclear Conflicts” for the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament. The article summarizes the findings of these studies. It explains that nuclear firestorms would produce millions of tons of smoke, which would rise above cloud level and form a global stratospheric smoke layer that would rapidly encircle the Earth. The smoke layer would remain for at least a decade, and it would act to destroy the protective ozone layer (vastly increasing the UV-B reaching Earth) as well as block warming sunlight, thus creating Ice Age weather conditions that would last 10 years or longer. Following a US-Russian nuclear war, temperatures in the central US and Eurasia would fall below freezing every day for one to three years; the intense cold would completely eliminate growing seasons for a decade or longer. No crops could be grown, leading to a famine that would kill most humans and large animal populations. Electromagnetic pulse from high-altitude nuclear detonations would destroy the integrated circuits in all modern electronic devices, including those in commercial nuclear power plants. Every nuclear reactor would almost instantly meltdown; every nuclear spent fuel pool (which contain many times more radioactivity than found in the reactors) would boil off, releasing vast amounts of long-lived radioactivity. The fallout would make most of the US and Europe uninhabitable. Of course, the survivors of the nuclear war would be starving to death anyway. Once nuclear weapons were introduced into a US-Russian conflict, there would be little chance that a nuclear holocaust could be avoided. Theories of “limited nuclear war” and “nuclear de-escalation” are unrealistic. In 2002 the Bush administration modified US strategic doctrine from a retaliatory role to permit preemptive nuclear attack; in 2010, the Obama administration made only incremental and miniscule changes to this doctrine, leaving it essentially unchanged. Furthermore, Counterforce doctrine – used by both the US and Russian military – emphasizes the need for preemptive strikes once nuclear war begins. Both sides would be under immense pressure to launch a preemptive nuclear first-strike once military hostilities had commenced, especially if nuclear weapons had already been used on the battlefield. Both the US and Russia each have 400 to 500 launch-ready ballistic missiles armed with a total of at least 1800 strategic nuclear warheads, which can be launched with only a few minutes warning. Both the US and Russian Presidents are accompanied 24/7 by military officers carrying a “nuclear briefcase,” which allows them to transmit the permission order to launch in a matter of seconds. Yet top political leaders and policymakers of both the US and Russia seem to be unaware that their launch-ready nuclear weapons represent a self-destruct mechanism for the human race. For example, in 2010, I was able to publicly question the chief negotiators of the New START treaty, Russian Ambassador Anatoly Antonov and (then) US Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller, during their joint briefing at the UN (during the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference). I asked them if they were familiar with the recent peer-reviewed studies that predicted the detonation of less than 1% of the explosive power contained in the operational and deployed US and Russian nuclear forces would cause catastrophic changes in the global climate, and that a nuclear war fought with their strategic nuclear weapons would kill most people on Earth. They both answered “no.” More recently, on April 20, 2014, I asked the same question and received the same answer from the US officials sent to brief representatives of the NGOS at the Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee meeting at the UN. None of the US officials at the briefing were aware of the studies. Those present included top officials of the National Security Council. It is frightening that President Obama and his administration appear unaware that the world’s leading scientists have for years predicted that a nuclear war fought with the US and/or Russian strategic nuclear arsenal means the end of human history. Do they not know of the existential threat these arsenals pose to the human race . . . or do they choose to remain silent because this fact doesn’t fit into their official narratives? We hear only about terrorist threats that could destroy a city with an atomic bomb, while the threat of human extinction from nuclear war is never mentioned – even when the US and Russia are each running huge nuclear war games in preparation for a US-Russian war. Even more frightening is the fact that the neocons running US foreign policy believe that the US has “nuclear primacy” over Russia; that is, the US could successfully launch a nuclear sneak attack against Russian (and Chinese) nuclear forces and completely destroy them. This theory was articulated in 2006 in “The Rise of U.S. Nuclear Primacy,” which was published in Foreign Affairs by the Council on Foreign Relations. By concluding that the Russians and Chinese would be unable to retaliate, or if some small part of their forces remained, would not risk a second US attack by retaliating, the article invites nuclear war. Colonel Valery Yarynich (who was in charge of security of the Soviet/Russian nuclear command and control systems for 7 years) asked me to help him write a rebuttal, which was titled “Nuclear Primacy is a Fallacy.” Colonel Yarynich, who was on the Soviet General Staff and did war planning for the USSR, concluded that the “Primacy” article used faulty methodology and erroneous assumptions, thus invalidating its conclusions. My contribution lay in my knowledge of the recently published (in 2006) studies, which predicted even a “successful” nuclear first-strike, which destroyed 100% of the opposing side’s nuclear weapons, would cause the citizens of the side that “won” the nuclear war to perish from nuclear famine, just as would the rest of humanity.